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Screen Memories: Trauma Theory and the Reinvention of Style

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the contributions and interventions of twentieth-century trauma theory into the question of style, beginning with an inquiry into what form a traumatic style might take in different historical texts that deal directly with issues of violence or severe trauma. Each of the chapters of this thesis inquires into the nature of the "voice" that speaks out of the symbolic constraints pertaining to a given historical period, genre, discursive domain, aesthetic practice or work, with a constant being that each "text" under consideration exemplifies what Derrida calls the state of "half-mourning": a suspended, quasi-allegorical movement or moment that brings into relief the operation of conscious and unconscious affect. From the events in Merovingian Gaul to those of AIDS epidemic, one commonality persists in these texts: a form of memory that has eluded attempts to define the primal scenes of history and culture.

Preface

In his essay, "By Force of Mourning," Jacques Derrida boldly and, I think, correctly asserts that "one cannot hold a discourse *on* the "work of mourning" without taking part in it, without announcing or partaking in [*se faire part de*] death, and first of all in one's own death . . . [thus] one should be able to say that . . . that all work is also the work of mourning" (172; original emphasis). Each of the essays in this thesis proceed with the *work* of mourning in radically different ways. Following Derrida, I wholeheartedly agree that when someone endures this work of mourning, one *authorizes* oneself to do it; and in so authorizing, one finds that this work and the mourning are "interminable," "impossible," and "irreconcilable," even, perhaps especially, when such work illuminates dark areas in the thinking around the issues of mourning. If, as Oscar Wilde proposed, criticism is the sincerest form of autobiography, then perhaps to choose this type of work is also to mourn that trace of self-identity that disappears into the differends that are produced through the criticism's own epistemic gaps, elisions, and erasures. However, those gaps, ellipses, and moments of epistemic despair, signify not the figurative form of mourning that Derrida is referring to above, but the literal mourning that

has gone on in different places and venues, that displaces itself through criticism actively to produce a dialogue amongst the various chapters in this collection. This dialogue is what I consider to be the most fruitful and productive part of the mourning process, of the work that I have produced for this thesis. I am grateful and indebted to those, at various conferences, institutes and classrooms, who have both listened to my work and listened *for* those impossibilities within my own discourse. For one never *masters* this work; one becomes this work of mourning, interpellated by and introjected within its imaginary boundaries, thenceforth signified as the "voice" that speaks out of those symbolic constraints. One thus reinvents oneself according to the *style* of mourning that one *finds* as a result of that impossible work. My own style of mourning is strongly influenced throughout this project, if not entirely motivated, by the theories of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok on a form of mourning that they call "endocryptic identification." Perhaps the most challenging of theories to *incorporate* into a work of mourning because of its tendency *not* to work systemically or generally within usual parameters of academic discourse by *not* lending itself to methodological coherence, their theory involving the transformation of semantic content across lexical and linguistic boundaries, and the metapsychological

transformation of identificatory relations into proper objects (installed within the subject's ego), proves to be the most promising in terms of understanding the intertextually-produced *screen* that I deem a traumatic style or idiom. Abraham and Torok's work on this phenomenon of "half-mourning" functions as a testimony to the necessity of finding ways to speak about screened voices, images, memories, and phrases, as they appear within different forms of literary, theoretical and historiographical discourses. Without understanding this phenomenon and its modes of operation, we cannot approach the simultaneity and heterogeneity of such conscious/unconscious affects which bring into relief the absent (and forgotten) causes that inaugurate such works of mourning in the first place.

Chapter one, "Lingua Vulgaris: The "Rhetorical Verso" of the Grand Style?" takes up the question of whether and to what extent a traumatic idiom or style might exist as the eclipsed under- or backside of the "grand style" of intertextuality being practiced in the highly influential theoretical discourses of various historical periods, through such thinkers as Heidegger, Nietszche, Freud, Derrida, and Auerbach. J-F Lyotard describes the possibility of "seeing" or apprehending such a "style" in his statement that "[t]he thing one sees has a backside which is no longer or not yet seen and which might be seen"

(*The Differend* 45). In the early medieval text by Gregory of Tours, that which is "no longer or not yet seen" is the presence of a vernacular encoded within the traumatic memory of the historical scene of violent events, which makes itself known through the paratactic style of the narrative, a style that affords the representation of parallel or simultaneously occurring events (as in the present). The presence of this vernacular, its *force* upon the mnemonic reconstruction of those traumatic events, points to the ways in which unconscious and conscious forms of representation produce a screen memory that stands behind the ostensive "subject of history" being produced in the account. This screen memory serves as the rem(a)inder of another history, the history of trauma, which cannot be directly narrativized, but encrypted within the form of the narrative, in its gesture towards both the representation of the present and what was never fully present to memory. Moreover, this "screen" can itself be conceived as a traumatic style or idiom, which emerges only belatedly in our own textual reconstruction to mark the place where nothing is remembered, yet where another reality and its memories exist to demarcate, within the form itself, the specificity of that historical occurrence as a coordinate of the subject's own culturally and historically specific desire. Such a *style* does not work to recuperate historical

losses as such, but to trouble the distinction between the grammatical subject and what Lukacher understands as the "subject of history," which is the primal scenes being retroactively constructed through acts of intertextuality, thus exposing something "essential about the historical experience," as Ned Lukacher argues in *Primal Scenes*.

The question I am asking in this chapter and in the thesis as a whole is whether a traumatic style can *appear* only through the melancholic mode of address, which, in seeking to recuperate its lost object (real or imagined) aims its gaze or its question at a point beyond the immediate "subject" to another temporal coordinate (encoded within traumatic memory itself), such that it then defines an impossible position or lack within a given symbolic order. As Judith Butler observes, "[m]elancholia produces a set of spatializing tropes for psychic life, domiciles of presentation and shelter as well as arenas for struggle and preservation. Such tropes do not "explain" melancholia: they constitute some of its fabular discursive effects" (171). Constituting such spatializing tropes, enclaves or crypts of psychic representation, melancholia functions like allegory to produce a *structure* that offers itself as a question of the Other. And in so doing, melancholia dissolves the metaphysical distinction between subject and object, thus reconstituting the metaphysical equation

through the stylization of its own ontological premises, its recto and verso, through an imaginary relation with the very edges of discourse. To apprehend the object or addressee of such a melancholic address can only be accomplished through the traversal of affect, that is, through the fictive insertion of the "subject" into the space created by the process of mourning lost memories and images.

This is the very project, I am arguing, that Henry James takes up with respect to his creation of an aesthetic unconscious in his late writings and autobiography. In chapter two, "'Wrought Effects': The Primal Scene of Style and the Development of the Aesthetic Unconscious in Henry James's Late Writings," I examine how James understands and reconstructs his own primal scene of style through a form of intertextuality, one that involves bringing across unconscious representations and images through the act of dream-telling, in such a way that he effectively "queers" or "troubles" his own elaborately constructed versions of himself in his late fictions. Obsessed or possessed by a certain dream image that contains his earliest childhood memories of a trip to the Louvre, James repetitively returns to the question of his own primal scene of style in order to fathom how the *reverberations* of style inscribed within unconscious thought might "sound" themselves across aesthetic, historical, and temporal boundaries: how, in

other words, such reverberations might traverse affect to enable him to mourn properly those lost memories of his own stylistic genesis. As Butler notes, "[r]epresentation is itself implicated in melancholia, that is, the effort to re-present that is at an infinite distance from its object" (*Psychic Life* 177). What we are able to discover through James's intertextual recovery of his own stylistic primal scene is that a phenomenological "transparency relation," a form of intertextual lamination of memory, exists as a traumatic idiom or screen onto which different *figures* (representing abstract "things" such as anxieties, desires, drives or memories) then can be projected, sometimes even onto each other in the form of an elaborately-conceived textual screen memory.

But whereas James is able to *pursue* his own primal scene of style, that avenue of exploration remains forever (fore)closed to the witnesses and survivors of the Holocaust, who testify to their experiences in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*. In chapter three, "Stylizing the Real: Holocaust Remembrance and the Ends of Trauma Theory at the Fin-de-Siècle," I take up the question of the relation between the speaking body of the trauma witness and the Real. I argue that trauma theory becomes the very means by which we might understand the reinvention of style that *is* oral survivor testimony in its temporal unfolding within the

present of the narrative. At stake in such an investigation is a better understanding of the ways in which such forms of technological interpellation function within the discursive loopholes and blind spots of scientific discourses (such as trauma theory) to authenticate and stylize the historical real as it emerges from behind and, sometimes, through the censor or "screen" that is the speaking body of the witness. In this way, the "ends" of trauma theory play an important role the genesis of style, in the creation of a mise-en-scène that takes as its telos the very attempt to find "proper words" for "improper places," as Lawrence Langer defines the "primal scene" or invention of style in *Holocaust Testimonies*. The inception of style, in this instance, cannot be dissociated from the form, the cinematic production which is itself a form of traumatic re-occurrence.

This same question of the relation between the "body" and the "real" is posed and inflected somewhat differently in chapter four, "Aesthetic Identity and the AIDS Memorial Quilt: The Reinvention of Style?" This chapter is indebted to the different experiences I had when thinking about and mourning this object over a period of four years: in Dr. Savoy's classroom (Winter 1995), at the Washington Mall (October 1996), at the various conferences and symposia where I presented versions of this chapter (1996-98), and at

the AIDS Summer Institute (May/June 1997). I am especially grateful to Cindy Patton for encouraging me to think about the Chinese and Japanese AIDS Quilts, and to the professors in the Department of German, Slavic, and East Asian Studies at the University of Calgary for translating Akase's panel for me. At these different times and places, my thinking about the Quilt has come back to the question of whether or not its style and its stylizing of the real could be considered a form of transhistorical and transcultural traumatic address. Insofar as the Quilt addresses each of its "readers" or spectators according to the idioms and idiolects that they possess as part of their larger social repertoire, its mode of transmission defines and interpellates its witnesses according to a "vision" or "weltanschuung" they already hold with respect to the epidemic. The sublimity of the Quilt and its "anti-bodies" cannot be separated from the question of how the field of vision and/or worldview (not entirely coincident with each other) frames or introjects the individual panels, which I consider in many ways to be singularities in terms of their personal modes of traumatic address. By re-enacting different forms of vision and silencing, the "sublime anti-bodies" of the AIDS Memorial Quilt frame a question of the Other, the Other, in this instance existing as those evolving styles, idiolects, and expressions of grief encoded

within the larger production, in itself an "exquisite corpse" that functions as a silent marker of the very limits of style and of the human body.

The conclusion I want to draw about the different styles being explored within this thesis is first and foremost that they are not "transparent" to the critical eye, and especially not to myself in working through these different forms of mourning. But their opacity does not derive from any inherent linguistic or semiotic interference or obstruction *per se*. Rather, I would argue that the styles being reinvented through trauma theory (which is itself a number of disciplines and discourses that intersect) also work to reveal the limits of trauma theory and to expose the epistemic blind spots that exist within those various discourses that, in themselves, purport to think through or, perhaps even, "unthink" the enigma of style in its manifestation as a form of historical testimony.

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That, by my trouthe, I take no kep
Of nothing, how hyt cometh or gooth,
But as yt were a mased thyng,
Alway in poynt to falle a-doun.
Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*

The thing one sees has a backside which is no longer or not yet seen and which might be seen.
J-F Lyotard, *The Differend*

The crime that is not forgotten but signified through forgiveness, the written horror, is the requirement for beauty.
Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*

Lingua Vulgaris: The "Rhetorical Verso" of the Grand Style?

In his preface to his book, *Primal Scenes*, Ned Lukacher proposes to "demonstrate across a broad range of texts, how the notions of memory, the event, and the subject have '[lost] their constructive force and become nothing'" (13). By juxtaposing the critical interventions of such theorists as Hegel, Marx, Freud, and Heidegger (to name only a few) with the creative texts of Shakespeare, Balzac, Dickens and Henry James, Lukacher examines how this "nothing" emerges within an these various narratives as an unconscious force or "subtext": that is, it emerges as an historical real that inaugurates the melancholia of historiography proper.

melancholia functions allegorically to "magically" incorporate what cannot be consciously avowed or recognized, it also works, in its theoretical application and as a mode of literary criticism, to organize or amalgamate singularities of various sorts - aesthetic, historical, linguistic and political - into some culturally intelligible shape, into what we tentatively might call the "subject of history." The criticism that brings the elusive "subject of history" into relief is part and parcel of the phenomenon that Derrida recognizes as "half-mourning," the state or interval suspended somewhere between melancholia and mourning in which the "end" of metaphysics begins to take place. The beginnings and endings of theory and the production of discursive loopholes through which the subject of history can only be retroactively construed are pivotal to the thinking of the primal scene of history that Lukacher elaborates in his book. Beginning with Freud (whose notion of the primal scene as a screen memory that is composed of memory fragments and experiences that formatively, yet only retroactively, constitute the "character" of the individual subject) and moving through Heidegger (who subsequently proposed that "to overcome metaphysics would mean to incorporate metaphysics, perhaps with the hope, but not with the certainty, of elevating it to a new reality" (*The End of Philosophy* 84)), Lukacher is able to forge productive new

Philosophy 84)), Lukacher is able to forge productive new links between psychic and philosophical forms of intertextual "memory." Specifically, Lukacher extends the work of these two fundamental thinkers by incorporating the work of other secondary, yet equally crucial, theorists such as Derrida: in particular, Derrida's work on the relation between metaphysics and mourning in "Ja, ou le faux-bond," where Derrida argues that theory and criticism entail "both the work *of* mourning and the work *about* mourning, the work of mourning in all its forms: reappropriation, interiorization through introjection or incorporation, or between the two (half-mourning again), idealization, nomination, etc." (98; original emphasis). Thus Lukacher arrives, in the last three chapters of his book, at the suggestion that "the subject of history is not the human subject - whether defined as an individual, a class, or a species - but rather the intertextual process itself" (13). Lukacher's project, however brilliantly conceived, does not and perhaps cannot examine reflexively the "work of mourning" that founds its own historically-based theoretical presuppositions. Indeed, as Lukacher would accede, such an examination could only take place through the further juxtaposition of another set of intertexts that could "retorque" existing theoretical lines of inquiry, such that the subject of history, once again, could be "unmasked,"

thus making new forms of recollection and (re)membering possible.

Here it is useful to recall, via Lukacher, the connection between the Heideggerian notion of the subject's individualization as a form of "fundamental torsion" and the Freudian notion of individualization as a form of unconscious incorporation, a melancholic and phantasmatic form of preserving the other within/as the self. As with the Lacanian figure of the Borromean knot, the torsion which signals the "closure" of metaphysics is also what creates the subject, that is, what reveals the subject to be a temporally and spatially reconfigurable entity, a symbolic entity that continually seeks to cross the line over into the Real where the imaginary fullness of Being ex-sists. Hence, the "work of mourning," and the testing of reality that ultimately defines such theoretical work, in Lukacher's analysis takes the form of "a kind of historical event" (13). What invariably haunts his project is, somewhat paradoxically, what Lukacher desperately attempts to recuperate: a form of textual unconscious whose proportions can only be intuited precisely through the fundamental incapacity to recognize *what it is* that is "lost" is the loss that is being intertextually reenacted. In this sense, the meta-critical enterprise is itself inherently melancholic, precisely in the way that Freud understood this

process or state, as implicated in the "loss of a more ideal kind" (253). According to Freud in "Mourning and Melancholia," this ideal or idealized loss (implying a phantasmatic projection and ambivalent identification on the part of the subject) occurs "even if the patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him (254; original emphasis). Caught in a suspended state of "half-mourning" - between knowing and not knowing the proper objects of its own theoretical inquiry - the theory creates a double bind, one in which the subject of history and the historicity of the subject come to define each other in ways that are not entirely coextensive with each other. Indeed, they may relationally define each other only through a much more unstable and amorphous, historically produced desire to "see" the "'event' that cannot be thought outside the question of intertextuality" (Lukacher 13). This historical allegory of desire may take place along two intersecting axes, where the point of connection may signify a nexus or node in which "knowing" and "not knowing" collide, as in the representation of unconscious affect.[1] This node of representation,

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[1]Here my point is indebted to Joel Fineman's excellent discussion of different allegories of reading in "The Structure of Allegorical Desire," where he elaborates the intersections between psychology, literature and theory, noting the intricate relationships between different forms

straddling the metaphysical boundaries of intelligibility, might be conceived as a "style," a traumatic style whose effects exist as a form of conceptual eclipse, where the address of the "Other" through the intersections created by historical desire create distinctive, if not entirely legible, idioms.

In this way, Lukacher's deconstructive "nothing" could be usefully compared with Lyotard's "something," as that which emerges only belatedly to mark the place where nothing is remembered, yet where something persists and nevertheless marks the specificity of that occurrence precisely as a gap in ordinary memory. Despite Lukacher's fascinating and illuminating critical juxtapositions that reconstitute the primal scenes of the historical subject, what he conceives as intertextuality, *something* persists and escapes his melancholic historiography. This is not simply a question of semantics, however. In his attempt to raise the "possibility of a deconstructive theory of history" (13), there is a necessary failure to recuperate and thus to transfigure historical losses (conscious or not) into a hermeneutic framework that allows for those same intertextual constructions to destabilize the "fusion" that he sets up in the first place. For Lukacher, "[i]t is never

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of representation, both conscious and unconscious (such as the Freudian notion of the dreamwork and its connection to

a question of "applying" philosophy or psychoanalysis to a literary text but rather of fusing these discourses at the most fundamental level of their historical production" (14). Although, as I've already pointed out, where the critic makes his "cuts" into the fabric of the historical real is not entirely subjective, since the primal that s/he is able to reconstruct and thus to privilege, to a large extent, will obey the identificatory imperatives of Western metaphysics, the construction of self and other according to the spatio-temporal dynamics of a given body politic (here roughly the equivalent of the Freudian ego). Notwithstanding, the enormous value of this process of intertextual fusion (what some might see as a contradiction in terms)comes not from its ability to capture "something essential in historical experience"(13), as Lukacher argues; but rather, the contribution of this fusion will come from its capacity to expose the incommensurability between different epistemic, cognitive, topographical and geographical positions, as that which ultimately defines the "subject of history" as a crisis in representation. It is perhaps necessary here to remind ourselves of the Derridean disclaimer that deconstruction, strictly speaking, is impossible. To think of history as a "sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions come into

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the medieval dream-vision). Further references to Fineman's

play" (Derrida, "Sign, Structure and Play" 1117), while functioning at the level of cultural difference as a form of disavowal, can be a way of approaching the unthinkable and unrepresentable traumatic events that find their way into idiom and style. As a beginning point, this notion of history can enable the discovery of "the differend," which Lyotard defines as the "unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be" (*The Differend* 13). In other words, for deconstruction to operate as an historiographical praxis, it must expose the constructed nature of the very interstices between philosophy, psychoanalysis and literature. Its task, then, is to enable the means by which it is possible to "bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them" and, further, to "institute idioms which do not yet exist" (Lyotard, *The Differend* 13). What Lukacher pursues in his study, but does formulate as such, is the question of the idiom of historical desire, but particularly, how it relates to [the] *something* that we are only beginning to recognize as a traumatic style.

The burden of having to distinguish between the subject of history and the historicity of the subject (only intelligible through the retroactive reconstruction of its primal scene) adds to the theoretical (con)fusion already

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work come from this essay, to be cited as "SAD."

present in studies of this sort, where the difference between the flip-sides of this rhetorical question revolve around the notion of memory. Deciding whether it is ordinary (or narrative) memory or traumatic memory that directs the narrative and determines its content significantly can alter the ways in which an historical "text" is to be read. Recalling Pierre Janet's work on the distinction between these two forms of memory in "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma," Van der Kolk and Van der Hart explain that

> narrative memory consists of mental constructs, which people use to make sense of experience" (e.g. Janet 1928). Janet thought that the ease with which current experience is integrated into existing mental structures depends upon the subjective assessment of what is happening: familiar and expectable experiences are automatically assimilated without much conscious awareness of details of the particulars, while frightening or novel experiences may not easily fit into existing cognitive schemes and either may be remembered with particular vividness or may totally resist integration. (160).

Further they emphasize that "in contrast to narrative memory, which is a social act, traumatic memory is

inflexible and invariable. Traumatic memory has no social component; it is not addressed to anybody" (163). Lukacher, like most of the theorists that he appropriates, is speaking of intertextuality and the process of historical narrativization in terms of the linguistic pathways set up by ordinary, not traumatic memory. Thus, the enigma of how traumatic memory "appears" or inscribes itself within his own hermeneutic practice is worth examining. Perhaps, as Janet first suggested, this textual enigma exists within newly constituted cores of consciousness called "subconscious fixed ideas," which bear the capacity for understanding parallel realities and memories that may share, as in Lukacher's notion of intertextuality, historical coordinates in common, though not be fully constituted by them.

An understanding of intertextuality as an historical primal scene, albeit one that is created arbitrarily by the critic, thus needs to make room not only for understanding the effects of severe trauma upon the historical subject or witness but also for recognizing how even the "normal" subject is constituted in the trauma of the primal scene. As Cathy Caruth observes, "[t]o be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. And thus the traumatic symptom cannot be interpreted, simply, as a distortion of reality, nor as the lending of unconscious

meaning to a reality it wishes to ignore, nor as the repression of what was once wished" (Intro. I, 5). What this statement implies is that a method of reading for traumatic style does not exist as such. The psychoanalytic method of "reading," which identifies "areas of incoherence, discontinuity, disruption, or disturbance in self, reality, object, experience, meaning, present, past, other, etc., even as it postulates the need for finding a level of coherence which can absorb the non-coherence" (Rand, *The Shell and the Kernel* 76-7, cannot suffice in itself. As Lukacher correctly points out, in and of itself psychoanalysis cannot elucidate something as enigmatic as a traumatic style, especially if this "style" or idiom only emerges as the result of the intertextual enterprise. Lukacher's contribution to the ongoing discussion about the subject of history, then, derives from the ways in which he crucially revisits and reworks the historical connections amongst various theoretical narratives and styles in order to inadvertently expose what is missing from these prior articulations: the concept of a traumatic style and its relation to the historiographical enterprise.

To find this "style" requires a retracing and remapping of what it is that is lost in Lukacher's conscientious act of melancholic historiography. What this means is that something either not considered to be substantive (or is not

in and of itself substantive) can be apprehended within or perhaps even beyond the historical object of inquiry. To understand this something as a conceptual eclipse, a hazy symbolic effect whose very spectacularity can produce its own epistemic or cognitive blind spots, is to enact the phenomenological desire to "see" what cannot be thought outside of intertextuality. But it is to perform this mimetic and, in many ways, highly parodic act in order to avert the possibility of installing another "ground" that subtends the specific historical desire. For when the metaphysical boundaries are challenged in the process of "half-mourning," when cause and effect, inside and outside, beginnings and endings become blurred or folded into each other, the resulting inward collapse creates, as in the case of a black hole, a new singularity. This emergent phenomenon, the new singularity, cannot be dissociated from the (meta)physical forces that initially formed it because it repeats this collapse, changing existing conceptions of space and time and destabilizing what qualifies as a beginning or ending within a given suspended moment or space.

To what extent, we might ask, can this emergent phenomenon or "style" be considered a volitional construction, given that its own performative discursive premises inaugurate both the space for agency and the

potential for transformation, the phantasmatic promise of political change? Perhaps given these parameters, then, this "style" is only volitional in the sense that certain selections have been made which produce, without foreknowledge, the specific configuration that occurs. One way of approaching this emergent "style" is to rehearse the notion of a "will to style" as a means of understanding what underlies this hyperbolic form of theoretical mourning process and its metaphysical transformations.

Lukacher's prologue to one of his chapters, subtitled "The 'Will to Style,'" is extremely valuable in this regard. Bringing together as many different viewpoints on the question of style (including those of Hegel, Nietszche, Auerbach, Lyotard, Barthes, Heidegger and Jameson) and thus hyperbolically performing what Nietszche called the "grand style," Lukacher brilliantly parodies what he inadvertently creates, a form of collapse that is the theoretical state of half-mourning. Lukacher's summary of Heidegger's and Nietszche's thinking on the "grand style" reads as follows:

> The grand style is a style that completely transforms the subject's will to power. Indeed, the will to power is overcome by the "will to style," which opens language to desire and to history in an unprecedented way. The grand style, as the purest expression of the "will to style,"

> would constitute the concealed, dispossessive element within the will to power. (184)

In this statement, Lukacher very nearly apprehends what it is that is eluding his own melancholic historiography: the "concealed, dispossessive element" within "style" or the "will to style." And it is precisely because the parodic imitation of the grand style is not fully intentional on Lukacher's part that it operates in this manner. What Lukacher is seeking to do is to collate as man different (inter)texts as possible in order to demonstrate how intertextuality functions as the subject of history, thereby transforming the Nietzschean and Heideggerian notions of the "grand style" from "that which changes the very nature of the historical self" to that what constitutes the "subject of history." For instance, there is an enormous appropriation of other philosophical, psychoanalytic and literary texts in Fredric Jameson's work on the political unconscious alone, which Terry Eagleton once wrote, "resembles nothing quite so much as some great Californian supermarket of the mind, in which the latest flashily dressed commodities sit stacked alongside some more tried and trusty household names, awaiting the moment when they will be casually scooped into the Marxist basket" ("Fredric Jameson: The Politics of Style" 17). Using this above example of hyperbolic citation alone, we can appreciate the

anxiety that propels Lukacher in his discussion of, and his will towards, a traumatic style, one that directs the project towards the recovery of an ur-narrative that manifests itself as the theoretical unconscious of his text. The anxiety that subtends his "will to style" is one that is born of the (historical)desire to reach to the edges of style and history without going beyond interpretation. As Lukacher explains,

> to go beyond style is to go beyond interpretation. The overcoming of style is an event that has never occurred but whose possibility defines the very nature of style. Style is defined in the continuum between the possibility of an absolutely private language and that of an end of style.(183)

Given the historical span that Lukacher's investigation covers, it should be clear that this interpretative "beyond" that is the "end of style" is not necessarily a modern or even postmodern phenomenon, nor is it an apocalyptic horizon of intelligibility brought on by the advent of new forms of writing technologies (as in the examples of electronic or artificial memory in our own age or textual production as in the Middle Ages). The "end of style," in this sense, would be the beginning or innovation of something else.

Instead, it is possible to conceive of an interpretative horizon in which a traumatic style makes its

cameo appearance as a form of symbolic expression or effect, as an idiom, perhaps, whose system of reference takes the form of a rupture and a redoubling. An example of this would be the forms of representation proper to the Holocaust, where "something" that exceeds what is directly symbolizable or narrativizable - the unconscious affect - emerges from the far side of the censor in the form of an enigmatic presence, a feeling or affect which undoes history and which Lawrence Langer, in the case of oral testimonies, understands as the inception of style. As in the Freudian notion of the primal scene, this unconscious or traumatic affect only exists as an entity when it is reconstructed retroactively, or in Lyotard's words, as

> [s]omething [that] will make itself understood, "later." That which will not have been introduced will have been "acted," "acted out," "enacted," . . . played out, in the end - and thus re-presented. But without the subject recognizing it. It will be represented as something that has never been presented. Renewed absurdity. For instance, as a symptom, a phobia . . . This will be understood as a feeling, fear, anxiety, feeling of a threatening excess whose motive is obviously not in the present context. (*Heidegger* 13)

Unconscious affect is not, in and of itself, to be considered a form of style; but it can be *stylized* through certain forms of symbolic intervention (such as that of the cinematic apparatus), thus enabling a partial symbolization and a partial traversal of what otherwise ex-sists outside the realm of historiography proper. Only in this sense can we speak of the existence of a traumatic style. Taken a step further, we might also speculate that the performative criteria and capacities of this traumatic style would differ from normative modes of transmission, that is, historically determined modes of symbolization and narration. Invoking the "masters" of style, thus, would not take us to this "event" any sooner than if we studied (as Auerbach does in *Mimesis*) barbaric expressions of this emergent phenomenon. Since the traumatic style consists of partial symbolizations (memory traces, affects, and enigmatic signifiers) and other inconsistencies in syntax, grammar or figuration, it taxes the social imagination, tending, as it does, towards a vacuity or evacuation of social content and a state of temporal flux.

The task of conceiving the grand style, according to Lukacher, is to "locate the dispossession or expropriation within the event of appropriation" (185), as Derrida does with Heidegger's conception of the *Ereignis* or event of appropriation. With respect to the traumatic style, we

the grand style. This is not, strictly speaking, an incorporation of one style within the other *per se*, even though it functions as a means of contextualizing and historicizing the telos of such a textual presence as the "will to style." Yet, the political potential of such a style or idiom, unlike the potential of what Jameson terms the political unconscious (existing as an untranscendable horizon of interpretability) would be difficult to ascertain, insofar as the desire for this idiom is always already the historically produced, subjective desire that epistemically frames and forms the "subject of history." If, indeed, this "desire for idiom" can be construed as a political act, it would follow a certain logic of semantic, syntactical or linguistic aberration. But the political subtext of this form of speech act or style ought not to be conceived as simply "an aberration without no foundation or future" ("Fors" xlvi), as Derrida enjoins within respect to the mundane operations of mimesis and its specific "motivations." With respect to a "new" logic being developed through the metapsychological process that Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok call "endocryptic identification" (a psychic process situated somewhere between mourning and melancholia), Derrida writes,

> the situation would be quite different if we focused on what is produced in speech or in

> the situation would be quite different if we focused on what is produced in speech or in writing by a *desire for idiom* or an *idiom of desire*. There, a system is wrenched open within the system, general (national)codes are diverted and exploited, at the cost of certain transactions, in a type of economy that thenceforth is neither purely idiomatic (the absolutely indecipherable) nor simply commonplace (conventional and transparent).
>
> ("Fors" xlvii; original emphasis)

Like the system created by this cryptic, subconscious form of mourning that Abraham and Torok elaborate, an historically specific "idiom of desire" - also conceived as a covertly converted and somewhat convoluted semantic or grammatical system - consists of a "system of edges," the edges, for example, where the grand style meets its putative beginnings and endings; that is, where it meets its historically symbolic limits, those limits that are not necessarily determined or contained by the traumatic "event" or set of events.

Lukacher's notion of intertextuality as the subject of history thus needs to make room for the "event" of having another system contained within it or alongside it, a system of traumatic reference that not only haunts the grand

narrative style of such a project, but also anchors a dialectical style that "echoes in the mind simply as the rhetorical verso or buzz or inexhaustible implications" (Eagleton 19). Although a "desire for idiom" suggests a nostalgic evocation of some sort, perhaps in the form of an aesthetic labor of return and recovery, such an idiom, here conceived as a complex form of reference to a traumatic event or scene, ought not to be confused with the grand style's pretensions to "the purest expression," either conceived as the sublime or as an "utopian solution."

Terry Eagleton's point about the "rhetorical verso" of the grand style is instructive here. Neither Lukacher nor Jameson make room for such a recognition in their respective writings on the subject of history, perhaps because they fear a recidivism to the *lingua vulgaris* of prior academic (and historical) times and the reduction of this "subject" to some essential presence or being. But it is worth reminding ourselves that "a barbarism is not only and necessarily a vulgar speaking habit, but even occasional slips of the tongue and practically all sorts of unprecedented innovations" (Hermann 35). One of these innovations to the "grand style" is the way in which the traumatic style, devoid as it is of social content, directs our attention back to the form that obscures its presence

and yet asserts its claim upon social memory as that which it must not forget.

In his discussion of the "will to style," Lukacher takes up Eric Auerbach's notion of parataxis and the way in which it makes history present within the syntactical form of the narrative. Yet, Lukacher misses a valuable opportunity to note the ways in which this "barbarism" or "innovation" enables a reconsideration of the relation between the subject of history and the historicity of language, especially as they are mapped out according to a reconfigured allegory of desire. As Joel Fineman observes, "historically, we can note that allegory seems regularly to surface in critical or polemical atmospheres, when for political or metaphysical reasons there is something that cannot be said" (28). A reason for this appearance of allegory under such political conditions, Fineman writes, is that "[i]t is though allegory were precisely that mode that makes up for the distance, or heals the gap, between the present and a disappearing past, which, without interpretation, would be otherwise irrecuperable and foreclosed, as, for example, the pseudo-hieroglyphology of Horapollo, whose magic, hermetic graphesis is developed just at the moment when the legibility of hieroglyphs is lost" (29). The allegory of desire that Auerbach discusses with respect to Gregory of Tours's writing of the traumatic

present in *History of the Franks* occurs under the same necessity of trying to make up for a temporal distance that would be, as Fineman states, "otherwise irretrievable and foreclosed" (29). Parataxis is a style of writing that "involves a certain overcoming of grammar" (Lukacher 188), since the strict use or obeisance of syntactical elements such as prepositions, connectives and conjunctions is dispensed with in order to represent parallel or simultaneously occurring events. Because the notion of a universal grammar or order also implies the existence of God, Nietszche believed that the overcoming of grammar also marks the overcoming of metaphysics. There is the moment where allegory can itself be considered a state of "half-mourning," insofar as what surfaces in the paratactic narrative is the dissolution of the individual subject into his or her traumatic predicate, the subject of history. As each of these theorists in turn remarks, the stylistic occurrence in which the overcoming of grammar and metaphysics re-produces the subject of history has key implications for thinking about the relations between reality and the present, between writing and remembering, and between presence and being. Yet, it is vital to note that Gregory of Tours's paratactic style is not, as Auerbach stresses, a rhetorical device; rather, the use of this style

lends itself particularly well to the description of history or to historiography proper.

Auerbach begins his analysis of Gregory's text by trying to locate, at the level of syntax, the absent cause that is the traumatic historical event, an occurrence whose initial effect upon the reader must be that of confusion, given that the outbreak of violence, "sufficiently confused in itself" is also "very obscurely narrated" (81): "At that time grave civil disturbances broke out among the inhabitants of Tours. For" (81). Auerbach breaks off the narrative here to comment that the "cause" of the disturbance, in the present, ought to follow in sequence, but does not; instead what is given is an account of earlier events. Rather, an oral style of narrative ensues. Auerbach points out that Gregory, intending to give the reason for the outbreak of violence at Tours, does not have the foresight to order the facts syntactically or through the use of a synoptic introductory statement (such as "It happened like this:" (82)). In Auerbach's view, "[h]e [Gregory] has neither the energy to dispose all of it in a single construction through the aid of a system of independent clauses, nor the foresight to recognize the difficulty" (82). The implied reason for this is that Gregory of Tours, as a secondary witness, is himself reliving the trauma of the unfolding events as they

occurred. Auerbach's point is that the conjunction "nam" (used here in the sense of "for" and indicating a weakened causality) is not functioning properly: "the *nam* is neither exact nor justified"(82). This same grammatical dysfunction occurs again in a later sentence; and Auerbach takes this opportunity to point out that "in both cases the impression of disorder is considerably increased by a change in the grammatical subject" (82): The fighting among the citizens of Tours, which was ended as we have related above, broke out again with renewed fury. After slaying Chramnesindus's kinsmen, Sicharius had become very friendly with him, and they loved each other so dearly that they often ate together and slept together in one bed" (81).[2] The change in the grammatical subject results when Sicharius, the primary witness, is replaced (or displaced) by what Auerbach calls "the subject of that portion of the complex of facts which represents all he is capable of getting into a single construction" (82). As the narrative progresses, the violent events between Sicharius and Chramnesindus become literalized through the incorporation of actual speech situations, where threats and insults are exchanged between the two men, and ending with a scene where Chramnesindus

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[2]Bellum vero illud, quod inter cives Toronicus superius diximus terminatum, in rediviva rursum insania surgit. Nam Sicharius, cum post interfectionem parentum Cramsindi magnum cum eo amiciciam patravissed, et in tantum se caritate mutua diligerent" (78).

avenges the death of his kinsmen by dousing the lights and splitting Sicharius's head with his blade. Significantly, the grammatical subject - Sicharius - becomes predicated upon the sequence of events that ends with his own literal death; the grammatical subject is thus transformed, by the paratactic style, into the *subject* of history: in this case, the traumatic Real.

This "subject" of history differs in kind from the "subject of history" that Lukacher envisions. The disappearing grammatical subject - Sicharius - becomes the subject of syntactical confusion: it becomes the subject of the facts that Gregory is able to fit into one construction. For Auerbach, this disappearance is decisive in that it marks the historicity of the semantically weakened, causal particle "nam." As Auerbach relates, "[i]t may be that such instances can show us how "nam" came to be weakened as a causal particle by being so often used laxly - here the weakening process is still going on, it is not yet complete" (82). According to Auerbach, the scene between Sicharius and Chramnesindus stands as the pivotal moment in the historical representation of reality, where the shape of the Real can be glimpsed precisely through the effects of parataxis, through the attention it draws to form. Recognizing this rupture in representation for what it is - the inclusion of concrete reality within the "decadent

Latin" Gregory is forced to use because of the current state of the vernacular - means that a new theory of the subject emerges or surfaces, one that is itself a "new variant of style" (Auerbach 90). Auerbach argues that Gregory's appropriation of this style, what we might see as an appropriation of a dispossession or expropriation, "release[s] forces which are already present in Gregory and his epoch. For everywhere in his History the spoken language of the people unmistakably makes its presence felt; though the time when it can be written is still far away" (89). Gregory's use of direct dialogue transforms individual moments into a scene, whereas, as Auerbach observes,

> [i]n the Roman prose of the golden age there is a predominant tendency to simply report matters of fact, if possible only to suggest them in very general terms, to allude to them, to keep aloof from them - and, on the other hand, to put all the precision and vigor of expression into syntactical connections, with the result that the style acquires as it were a strategic character, with extremely clear articulations, whereas the subject matter, the stuff of reality, which lies between them, though it is not mastered, is not exploited in its sensory potentialities. (89)

What Auerbach valorizes here is akin to a primal scene of language, insofar as the sound and sensory possibilities of the vernacular are occluded or "screened" by the paratactic style. In Gregory's defense, Auerbach writes that "he has no stops to pull, as he has no public he might impress with an unfamiliar excitant, a new variant of style. But he does have the concrete events which take place around him; he witnesses them or he hears them 'hot from the oven,' and in a vernacular which, though we may be unable to form a completely clear idea of it, is obviously present to his ear as the raw material of his story while he labors to translate it back into his semi-literary Latin" (90). Because he witnesses such atrocities and events in his everyday existence, and because they form an integral part of his own memories of the place (Tours) and the time (an especially violent era in what would later constitute part of the Carolingian Empire), Gregory's aesthetic labor comes extremely close to being that of an oral testimony, except for the fact that it is barred (from the subject of history) by the necessity of having to use Latin, an imperfect vehicle for the expression of presentness. Gregory, as a secondary witness, encrypts the vernacular - the lingua vulgaris - within the form of his vulgarized Latin, which suggests that the act by which he re-composes the traumatic scenes of Merovingian Gaul is neither completely conscious

nor unconscious: "[w]hat he relates is his own and his only world. He has no other, and he lives in it" (90). Yet, it is not entirely his world, in that the scenes which unfold before him are not witnessed by him directly: he does not experience them directly. His attention to the individual and the individual event is in keeping with Christianity's similar emphasis on the mundane and the singular. But this does not exactly explain why the grammatical subject, the individual who loses his life as a result of the violence, simply disappears into the traumatic "event" and metamorphoses into the "subject" of History, whose trace can only be picked up by successive acts of intertextuality.

Auerbach calls the paratactic style used by Gregory "a reawakening and a reemergence of the insensible, what Freud would have called the "unconscious affect." Sensory reality is not restricted, in Gregory's text, to what can be presented of the horror generated in witnessing those traumatic scenes. Gregory's own memory of similar scenes occurring in Tours during this time - again vicariously rather than directly experienced - create within the apprehension of the paratactic style the traumatic idiom or style which "hears" and "sees" the symbolic other, which addresses the "subject of history" that apparently only the vernacular, in its immediacy to the everyday, can express. Though the vernacular is not the traumatic idiom *per se*, it

does exert a constant presence on the narrative and thus impacts the historicity of the "subject," the "complex of facts" Gregory is incapable of ordering. The subject of history and the historicity of the subject thereby acquire new proportions in the aesthetic singularity that is Gregory's narrative; the grammatical subject, predicated upon a process of metonymical displacement in the order of "langue," becomes the series of events that constitute the subject of history. In this sense, the "of" in the "subject of history," as in Fineman's example of the "structure of allegorical desire," can be "read backwards and forwards, its "of" taken as objective and subjective genitive" (26). An allegorical reading strategy in which certain reversals are performed in order to expose the verso of a given style makes possible the understanding of how singularities function grammatically to constitute a subject predicated not simply on historical facts but on forms of traumatic memory. This realization still does not answer the question of "what happens to interpretation when its desire is no longer controllable by a figure" (27) that Fineman poses with respect to allegory's beginnings and endings.

If the allegorical "figure" that is appropriate here is that of the mourning theory, it may be because, as Fineman avers, "[e]very metaphor is always a little metonymic because in order to have a metaphor there must be structure,

and where there is a structure there is always piety and nostalgia for the lost origin through which the structure is thought" (44). Whereas Auerbach places his emphasis upon the historicity of the causal particle "nam," remarking its weakened or etiolated state as a direct reflection of the aural presence of the vernacular, I would emphasize instead how the historicity of the subject takes place along an axis that is produced by unconscious affect, in contradistinction to the grammatical subject, who is produced by the conscious events and represented emotions, images and scenes in/through which his "life" is literally extinguished. In another act of intertextuality, Jameson observes that Auerbach's "series of synchronic moments is intersected, albeit very imperfectly, by the structural opposition between paratactic and syntactic styles which inaugurate his work: ("Marxism and Historicism" 59). The allegory of historical desire which forms Auerbach's comprehension of parataxis as that which makes history present in the form of narrative itself not only includes, but also determines, how the "subject" of history in Gregory of Tours's text is to be read. However, it is also only through this frame that the subject, I would argue, has any form whatsoever. It is a form that accrues its singularity through the intersection of unconscious and conscious affects. As such, the "rhetorical verso" that Eagleton describes with respect to

the "grand style" works as a misrecognition on Lukacher's part, one that fundamentally misunderstands and produces intertextuality as the "subject of history." The verso of the paratactic style, which Auerbach maintains is not rhetorical (in the sense of being a consciously or conspicuously ordered sequence of events) can only be the traumatic idiom, an idiom whose shape emerges precisely along the axes of conscious and unconscious forms of "knowing" and affect.

The question is whether style is able to negotiate the loss of singularity that occurs when its structures are "linguistified" (to use Butler's term), that is, when such structures are being foregrounded as the very limits of symbolic representation through a noncodifiable or nonmimetic act. Perhaps this kind of question can only be answered in a comparative, and necessarily incomplete, manner, as, for example, by comparing "western" and "nonwestern" idioms of desire. An interesting intertext that takes up precisely this question is Kumkum Sangari's essay, "The Politics of the Possible." What Sangari refers to as a "politics of the possible" takes on the dimensions of what, in Gregory's text, might be deemed the "persistence of emergence" or emergent phenomena in the writing of the present. She argues that the current academic fixation on the relation between singularities and universalities,

between individual and collective identity categories, and between western and nonwestern modes of expression, can be attributed to an anxiety arising from the uncertain epistemological "voice" that speaks out of the "space" circumscribed by hegemonic discourses of various sorts. Addressing precisely this theoretical preoccupation, Sangari makes the claim that "[t]he nonmimetic modes of Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Salman Rushdie inhabit a social and conceptual space in which the problems of ascertaining meaning assume a political dimension qualitatively different from the current postmodern skepticism about meaning in Europe and America" (157). Like Auerbach and Lukacher in this respect, Sangari is concerned with the ways in which the political present comes to "mean" within/as the structures of narrative. As opposed to Gregory's writing of the political and historical present in Frankish Gaul, Sangari examines the ways in which the nonmimetic narrative act impacts the forms the state and the body politic will (or can) take as a result of such aesthetic interventions. Because, as Anthony Wall claims, discursive loopholes are the result of epistemological gaps created by metaknowledge, the tension between different forms of metaknowledge might serve as the conceptual space in or through which opposing voices could contest the phenomenological "ground" of the visible and the invisible world: the putative symbolic and

social "ground" upon which the architectonics of the subject is predicated. The contestation of such a "ground," according to Sangari, takes place because Márquez's "[m]arvellous realism answers an emergent society's need for renewed self-description and radical assessment" (162), which occurs through its discovery of "a figurative discourse that produces a knowledge inseparable from its performance in language, image, and metaphor that can be understood in its total configuration but not necessarily explained" (163). In this sense, Sangari's argument parallels, though not necessarily replicates, a hermeneutic model already in circulation in the social sciences, which purports that "[a]n emergent phenomenon is at once a whole but made up of parts; intuitively simple yet infinitely complex; universal in the process by which it comes into being (emergence) but specific to its particular instance. In our attempt to understand it, we are left with the paradox of the rules giving a succinct, complete description of the system, whilst revealing almost nothing about it" (Mihata, "The Persistence of 'Emergence'" 33). To make sense of the ways in which emergent structures (of which parataxis is one) performatively constitute or influence future events, "making possible the evolution of qualitatively different kinds of systems" (Mihata 33), Sangari draws our attention to the syntactical and figural

devices by which the phenomenological paradox of embedded materiality and signification are reconfigured in Márquez's political fiction. Sangari underscores that "[e]ven in its most excessive moments the intent of the style is neither to surprise nor to draw attention to its own uniqueness (as in Euro-American modernist fiction) but to convey the shared social basis of the extraordinary or singular effect" (164). Style, in this respect, can be conceived as a constraint that "impels and sustains performativity" (Butler, *Bodies* 95), such that the fictional text can "mime the operative modalities or political effectiveness of an ideology without recourse to the mimetic mechanics of exposure" (Sangari 64). Specifically, this occurs in the text when Márquez uses metaphor literally. Sangari explains that, in this way, "[m]etaphor is turned into *event* precisely so that it will *not* be read *as* event, but folded back into metaphor as disturbing, resonant image" (164; original emphasis). One of the examples that Sangari provides is when "Colonel Buendia's distance from reality is a white chalk circle demarcating ten feet of space around him" (164). The point is that in this cultural idiom the literalization of metaphor actualizes a unique mimetic effect.

The epistemological status of the "singular effect" arising from Márquez's style and the "voice" that this style implies, however, is not as clearly outlined or fleshed out

as it could be. Does the literalized or involuted metaphor function as a semiotic enclave coincident with the political subject's limits of symbolic or (more narrowly defined) hegemonic constraints of signification? Or, does this culturally distinctive form of figuration reproduce what Bennington calls the "phenomenologist's dream" - the imaginary unification of language and the world, the speaking body and the perceiving body - through a narrative structure and syntax that functions like a social rebus whose images and latent meanings are indissociable from the oneiric or hallucinatory satisfactions deriving directly from the figure's containment from the mundane realities of social existence? In the work of Abraham and Torok, the metapsychological process by which the literalization of metaphor occurs is what creates enclaves or crypts within the subject's ego and what performs a necessary mode of survival. This survival involves the imaginary containment of illicit desires and fantasies (especially those pertaining to paternal prohibitions of various sorts) within the semantic boundaries of language and the ego, in order to preserve, through a form of "magical" incorporation - a state of half-mourning - what is otherwise unspeakable or unrepeatable within a certain order of language.

This psychoanalytic conception of the literalizing fantasy of incorporation is called "endocryptic

identification," and while it is productive of a singular "idiom of desire," it operates similar to the figuration strategy in Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, insofar as the metaphor is "taken literally in order to refuse the introjective effectiveness - an effectiveness that is always . . . a form of idealization" (Derrida, "Fors" xxxviii). That is to say, the literalization of metaphor discursively re-enacts what it is impelled to keep silent, it enacts a form of silencing, that is, whose cultural and historical parameters are determined through a reiterative, and necessary, act of redrawing the lines of intelligibility for any given speech act, especially those that designate collective forms of knowing and desire. Such forms of figuration substantiate certain identificatory relations, while enabling other potentially dangerous political and social liaisons to be *contained* through a process, not quite foreclosed but perhaps not immediately recognizable either form the perspectives of certain paternal or hegemonic orders. If this form of narrativization is meant to counteract hegemonic forces, in their attempt to regulate and to direct cultural life, then it seems that what subtends this discursive strategy is a romanticization of ordinary language or, at least, collectively recognizable forms of subversive speech, in which, as Butler notes, "[t]he play between the ordinary and the non-ordinary is

crucial to the process of reelaborating and reworking the constraints that maintain the limits of speakability and, consequently, the viability of the subject" (*Excitable Speech* 144). As Butler observes in *Excitable Speech*,

> [t]o account for such speech acts, however, one must understand language not as a static and closed system whose utterances are functionally secured in advance by the "social positions" to which they are mimetically related. The force and meaning of an utterance are not exclusively determined by prior contexts or "positions"; an utterance may gain its force precisely by virtue of the break with context that it performs. Such breaks with prior context or, indeed, with ordinary usage, are crucial to the political operation of the performative. Language takes on non-ordinary meaning in order precisely to contest what has become sedimented in and as the ordinary. (145)

Since it is equally possible that not images or metaphors can be compressed or literalized successfully, or that their meanings will perform the break with the quotidian while inaugurating the novel or the subversive context within which further rearticulations can occur, or even that highly abstract ideological structures and concepts might fail to

lend themselves to this form of narration, such constraints ought not to be taken necessarily as a failure of the performative's political operation, as Butler suggests above. Indeed, Sangari argues that marvellous realism's "interrogative mode" not only creates a space for the collective "voice" of the people to speak out of, but leaves that space open for further interventions, identifications, and dialogues, to take place (166).

What is interesting about this mode of figuration, in its function as an interrogative mode, is how it throws into question the very criteria of performativity, but more precisely, how singularities can operate within narrative as "meta-semiotic of Semiotics judgment[s]changing common codes" (Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* 272). Crucially, such "meta-semiotic judgments" appear to be what Sangari calls the "voice of epistemological despair" (161): the hermeneutic malaise that is a cultural product of western poststructuralist and postmodern discourses, symptomatized by the "felt absence of the will or the ability to change things as they are" (161). The "voice" in Márquez's fiction that speaks out of this enclave is the lingua vulgaris, the popular and indigenous register of traumatic political and historical events. It is a "voice" that purports to change things, to *stage* and to *perform* what is not yet realizable in the historical present; and as such, it is thus the voice

that frames a question of the Other, the Other, in this instance, being the hybrid and performative offspring of the evolving idiolect or aesthetic judgment, only belated realized through its dialectical transformation in the reception practices of its readers, the political subjects that "know" and "see" what always already ex-sists as a political possibility.

What Lukacher points out, using Derrida's work on sound and hearing the Other, is that "[s]tyle is what philosophy can't hear, what defers voice from reference, and what renders the identity of the sense into the drift of difference" (195). What philosophy also apparently can't hear is the "voice" that serves as the register of traumatic political and historical events, the voice that is screened by the same linguistic aberrations and transformations that make the acts of seeing and knowing a form of political impossibility. Sangari's theory of the singular effect speaking for the collective in ways that are not determined in advance does not leave room for the ways in which those voices, in their attempt to represent the present, serve instead to represent the unrepresentable, in the form of a traumatic style or idiom. As Miriam Hansen remarks in her work on Holocaust representation, "[t]he breach inflicted by the Shoah has not only put into question, irrevocably, the status of culture as an autonomous and superior domain (to

invoke an often misquoted statement by Adorno); it has radicalized the case for a type of aesthetic expression that is aware of its problematic status – the nonrepresentational, singular and hermetic écriture to be found in the works of high modernism" (84). Or, as Lyotard advises, "[i]n order to establish clearly the difference between a representational, reversible forgetting and a forgetting that thwarts all representation, it would be useful to read side by side, though scrupulously preserving their immense differences, the Kantian text on aesthetics and the Freudian text on metapsychology, i.e., the work that, all in all, Jacques Lacan has begun . . . [especially] with respect to the way in which neither the Kantian sublime nor the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* lets itself be inscribed in "memory," even an unconscious one" (*Heidegger* 5) The "reversible forgetting" that defines the traumatic style as a form of symbolic amnesia only emerges conceptually through the exposure of the symbolic limits that permits a "forgetting that thwarts all representation," that is, through the juxtaposition of conscious and unconscious memories, contained within or screened by various forms of linguistic aberration. Given this understanding, it may be possible to avoid the trap of valorizing the kinds of "temporalization implied in memorial history" (8) which, as Lyotard argues, serves a specific political function: that

of forgetting that which is "not only heterogeneous to the Self but heterogeneous in itself, foreign to this sort of temporality" (*Heidegger* 8). To get at this instance of heterogeneity, however, we need to recognize how the traumatic idiom inscribes, within the text, what is other to its own conscious modes of inscription or to its own "style." The loss of voice, of mind and of language that occurs in instances of severe trauma thus can be tracked perhaps only through the intertextual means that expose the otherness of this sort of historical temporality.

> *The illusion given to us by the dreamt dream is that of being able to reach that mythical place where nothing is disjointed: where the real is imaginary and the imaginary real, where the word is a thing, the body a soul, simultaneously a body-matrix and body-phallus, where the present is the future, the look a word … but all of this in a narcissistic space. Surely the wish to penetrate the dream is an answer to the guilty fear of being penetrated by the dream, a defence - which is successful - against the nightmare.*
>
> Hanna Segal, "The Function of Dreams"

"Wrought Effects": The Primal Scene of Style and the Development of the Aesthetic Unconscious in Henry James's Late Writings

The primal scene of his own style, as Henry James conceives of it in his autobiography and late writings, inheres within a number of complex acts of intertextuality, only James himself does not fully realize that the means by which he attempts to produce an aesthetic unconscious in his works effectively "queers" his own elaborately reconstructed versions of self. Because style is not usually something we think of as having a primal scene, its precise relation to either the author's own distinctive personality or to the textual development of his authorial subjectivity remains, at best, imperfectly understood in current psychoanalytic

theories. Yet, long before it was fashionable or, to a large extent, even fully possible to talk about style's primal scene, Henry James proposed in his 1913 autobiography, *A Small Boy and Others*, that style was of the same order as a psychological enigma, that it was a set of relations or experiences whose full force could be recognized only belatedly, in the manner of a disposition or bent that subsequently underwrites the artist's sense of history and self. Considering that James was unaware of Freud's own contemporaneous efforts to theorize the existence of the primal scene and its importance to identity formation, his prescience in this matter is remarkable. With respect to this style, Ned Lukacher proposes that "[f]rom his brother William, and from the family's experience with mental disorder, Henry recognized that psychological analysis was situated somewhere between a reductive literality and an ambiguous figurality - which is to say that the Jamesian "tone" is situated somewhere between philosophical truth and the literary lie" (*Primal Scenes* 119). According to Lukacher, Henry James's staging of the primal scene in *The Turn of the Screw* exemplifies the writing process by which the "subject of history" comes into relief, such that "[t]he primal scene … defines a kind of historical "event" that cannot be thought outside the question of intertextuality" (13). In many crucial

respects, Lukacher's notion of the Jamesian primal scene opens up a area of inquiry -- "the question of intertextuality" -- which is extremely valuable to the rethinking of the compositional process or *écriture*, and not simply the words, that constitute such primal scenes. However, Lukacher misses an important opportunity to examine how James himself retroactively understands and reconstructs the primal scene of style in the writing of his corpus: that is, how such a scene (in actuality, a *mise-en-scène*) accrues both its aesthetic signature and its singularity through the reiterated triangulation between the most ephemeral of historical "events" (a nightmare vision), his authorial subjectivity, and what James refers to as the "psychology in art."

Recalling his highly impressionable childhood visit to the Gallerie d' Apollon at the Louvre, James writes in his autobiography that "I had never heard of psychology in art or anywhere else - scarcely anyone then had; but I truly felt the nameless force at play" (194). For the mature Henry James, this "nameless force" becomes synonymous with the unconscious when takes on the uncanny proportions of the "most appalling yet most admirable nightmare" of his life (196). James does not specify, or perhaps even remember exactly, when this vivid nightmare takes place, only that it occurs a number of years after his visit to the Gallerie.

The fact that James was remembering and writing about this nightmare at the age of seventy, only three years before his death, and that throughout his writing career had transposed elements of this nightmare vision into his various fictions and travel writing, suggests that he retained a special relation to this dream for his entire life. Indeed, this nightmare becomes for him a haunting and formative "scene of something" (197) that he would obsessively return to, rewrite, and reinsert into his gothic fictions, and, at the end of his life, reinvent as the key to understanding his own "queer" (James's word) authorial subjectivity. James's implicit faith in this process of fictionalization and in its capacity to expose a formative process, incompletely understood by him, ought to be taken seriously as way of further comprehending the intersection of conscious and unconscious processes in the intertextual construction of such "historical" primal scenes.

In *A Small Boy and Others*, James remains cautious about attributing a precise moment when "style" becomes fixed in his consciousness: "[w]e [William and Henry] were not yet aware of style, though on our way to become so, but were aware of mystery, which indeed was one of its forms - while we saw all the others, without exception, exhibited at the Louvre, where at first they simply overwhelmed and bewildered me" (195). Yet, having taken this serious

approach to his first experience of and apprehension of style, only a page later Henry recants somewhat by poking fun at his own nostalgic sojourn into the past, when he offers, "[b]ut who shall count the sources at which an intense young fancy (when a young fancy *is* intense) capriciously, absurdly drinks? - so that the effect is, in twenty connections, that of a love-philtre or fear-philtre which fixes for the senses their supreme symbol of the fair or the strange" (196). Significantly, what follows this statement directly is James's account of his most unforgettable nightmare. Because not only the dream but the act of telling the dream assumes such importance for James (e.g. the "twenty connections" he will make throughout his life), this passage is worth quoting at some length:

> I recall to this hour, with the last vividness, what a precious part it[the Gallerie] played for me, and exactly by that continuity of honour, on my awaking, in the summer dawn many years later, to the fortunate, the instantaneous recovery and capture of the most appalling yet most admirable nightmare of my life. The climax of this extraordinary experience - which stands alone for me as a dream-adventure founded in the deepest, quickest, clearest act of cognition and comparison, act indeed of life-saving

energy, as well as in unutterable fear - was the sudden pursuit, through an open door, along a huge high saloon, of a just dimly-descried figure that retreated in terror before my rush and dash … out of the room I had a moment before been desperately, and all the more abjectly, defending by the push of my shoulder against hard pressure on lock and bar from the other side. The lucidity, not to say the subliminity [sic], of the crisis, was probably still more appalling than the awful agent, creature or presence, whatever he was, whom I had guessed, in the suddenest wild start from sleep, the sleep within my sleep, to be making for my place of rest . . . Routed, dismayed, the tables turned upon him by surpassing him for straight aggression and dire intention, my visitant was already but a diminished spot in the long perspective, the tremendous glorious hall, as I say, over the far-gleaming floor of which, cleared for the occasion of its great line of priceless vitrines down the middle, he sped for his life, while a great storm of thunder and lightning played through the deep embrasures of high windows at the right. The lightning that

> revealed the retreat revealed also the wondrous place and, by the same amazing play, my young imaginative life in it of long before, the sense of which, deep within me, had kept it whole, preserved to this thrilling use; for what in the world were the deep embrasures and the so polished floor but those of the Gallerie d' Apollon of my childhood. (196-7)

In this passage, a number of stylistic features are worth noting, especially since there is an abrupt change in "tone" from the preceding sentence on the capriciousness of "young fancy" to the stunning description James gives of the nightmare. It is as though James is reliving the nightmare once again, and his prose cannot quite keep up to the images and feelings which assault and mesmerize him. For example, his use of extraordinarily long sentences creates in the reader a rushed, slightly frantic, and out-of-breath feeling, thus effectively miming the oneiric affects in the dream itself: a mixture of fear, surprise, excitement, wonder, and aggression. Another stylistic feature is James's extensive use of superlatives (e.g. suddenest, deepest, clearest, quickest) and adjectives (such as wondrous, amazing, thrilling, and appalling) to heighten the sense of how, for James, the dream rebus miraculously preserves his "young imaginative life." James's style,

here, implies and perhaps even betrays the significance of this "event" and its *meaning* in the present for the author. The dream-vision, as it is narrated, consists of an interesting mix of images, all of which constitute a screen memory in which at least two fantasies will be projected onto each other (the visit to the Gallerie and the apprehension of the shadowy "other"). In this sense, the nightmare itself can be considered a traumatic event for James. As Cathy Caruth observes, "[t]o be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. And thus the traumatic symptom cannot be interpreted, simply, as a distortion of reality, nor as the lending of unconscious meaning to a reality it wishes to ignore, nor as the repression of what was once wished" (Intro. I, 5). For James, the dispossession of consciousness that occurs in dreaming works to miraculously recuperate what otherwise might have been lost in childhood memory to him.

It is crucial to ask, therefore, what purpose(s) the *act* of retelling the dream serve for James when he transposes the shadowy figure of his nightmare vision into his later writings and fictions (especially "The Jolly Corner"), which deal with a return, on the part of the protagonist, to the place of his earliest childhood memories in order to hopefully recover a sense of what it is that was lost in his absence away and who he might have become had he

stayed. In her chapter, "That Mystical Other World," Donna Przybylowicz argues that

> [t]he sense of ambivalence these heroes experience on their return to America is revealed through a transferential dialectic, whereby the characters identify their sense of self in the image of the other, thus producing an Imaginary relationship predicated on alienation and aggressivity. They manifest a distinct nostalgia for a lost presence(either that of the past or an imagined, alternate present) that would transform temporal and spatial heterogeneity, but this desire for plenitude of experience (in a simultaneous capture of self and other) is also a realization of difference, of radical alterity, for the subject can never be a "total personality," and is divided forever from the object of its desire. Instead of attempting to introject sources of pleasure, the ego expels disturbing aspects of the psyche, resulting in the projection of unconscious desire onto the hallucinated or tangible other that is separated definitively from the body of the individual. (113)

For Przybylowicz, James's fictional acts of melancholic historiography occur through a process in which the repression of negative affect erupts through a projection of the fantasized "other" onto the recreated scene of his protagonist's (and his own) childhood memories and experiences; and as such, this form of historiography oscillates between a "sense of ambivalence" and "a distinct nostalgia," implying the agency of both unconscious and conscious processes respectively. Yet, beyond the repression theory, there is another aspect to this process of dream telling that Przybylowicz does not consider. The "returns" that are being enacted in James's fictions underscore how, as Kihlstrom notes, "[v]ariations in environmental support can … cause the appearance or disappearance of an unconscious structure" (118). As a way of recovering this "unconscious structure" and attributing some meaning to it in the *present* of his writing, that is, *of making it present*, James literally "moves" elements of his nightmare vision from one fiction to the next, engaging in a creative process that imaginatively reconstitutes different versions of his own stylistic primal scene. The resulting emergence or disappearance of an "unconscious structure" in these fictions thus operates as a form of aesthetic unconscious, in precisely the way that Nicolas Abraham describes it in "Psychoanalytic Esthetics: Time,

Rhythm and the Unconscious": it is a process, that is, whereby "the ego … denotes its own genesis as part of the fictional fabric of the work itself" (8). In displacing and reconfiguring elements of his nightmare vision, that formative "scene of something," from one text to the next, Henry James creates a series of screen memories that perform a crucial act of intertextuality that is his own primal scene; but it is a primal scene that does not conform to Lukacher's notion of the "subject of history" insofar as the "historical" event that is being enigmatically, yet consistently, referred to is the "event" in which style comes into *being* as his own artistic consciousness.

In this respect, it is not simply a matter of being able to interpret the manifest or latent content of the dream. As J.B. Pontalis points out, "the pathology of the subject itself is revealed in the "use" of the dream, not in the content" (113). Though Pontalis intends the "subject" to mean the dreamer, the individual, in James's fictions the "pathology of the subject" also signifies the *state* in which the subject (whether James himself or one of his heroes) is possessed by an image or event, not simply that subject himself is somehow to be categorized as pathological (as in "queer," neurotic, obsessive, perverted, etc.). The pathological routes by which James achieves (or, more correctly, fails to achieve) his recognition of the primal

scene - the pathology of memory known as melancholia and the pathology of history known as traumatic memory (or, somewhat anachronistically, post-traumatic stress disorder) - make the *framing* of this intertextual "event" a difficult enterprise. Expressing his frustration at the methods of dream interpretation (mainly Freudian) currently in vogue at the time that he was writing his 1953 biography of James, Leon Edel professes that

> [t]he remembered dreams of our lives are comparatively few and seldom recorded; they are evanescent tales told by ourselves to ourselves, built of the tissues of timeless experience. There is no question here of seeking to interpret Henry James's nightmare. It is doubtful whether the most skilful [sic] explorers of the unconscious could do very much with it save indulge in gratuitous exploration. (68)

Preferring to treat the "dream-adventure" like any other literary text, Edel not only overlooks the significance of the process itself, but mistakenly assumes that the dream's manifest content is referentially stable, that it functions straightforwardly as an index of the author's life and experiences. Instead, Edel sees the dream as a reflection of the power struggle between William and Henry, a struggle

he claims is mirrored in the frescoes of Greek mythology on the vaulted ceilings of the Louvre. Somewhat ironically, then, Edel interprets the dream in true Freudian fashion, preferring to "see" in the struggle between siblings (through a conversion of the "presence" into William) the larger struggle between men, with historical resonances that are *not* reflected in any of James's own fictionalizations of this dream. Przybylowicz commits the same error when she contends that "[t]he other who haunts him [Henry] in this dream represents the antithetical image of William, and the phantasy manifests Henry's repressed and aggressive desire to defeat his superior and "ideal" elder brother in whose presence he felt powerless, paralyzed, and helpless" (*Desire* and *Repression* 215). In her partly Freudian, partly Lacanian reading of James's nightmare vision, Przybylowicz argues that "[t]he elder brother is the alter ego, constructed on the narcissistic mode of the "mirror phase" of the pre-oedipal stage"; but because Przybylowicz also believes that for James, "the world is created in the image of the artist, and corresponds precisely to the dimensions of the self" (214), she repeats the same error as Edel in assuming that the "scene" is *about* the ongoing power struggle between the two brothers. In effect, then, what these two critics overlook is a whole other critical and theoretical dimension in the narration of dreams, which is,

as Pontalis puts it, "the conditions of their *creation* and of the creative power that they bear testimony to" (110; original emphasis).

Extending this very point in "Dream as an Object" Pontalis argues that "a dream, even if it is caught at the moment it was dreamt, and whatever may be the impact of the day's residues, is certainly never *actual*, but it can *actualize* what is repressed in a resurgence that is often startling. *It is the relation that we maintain with it that commands its effects* … Perhaps the very perception of the dream is the model for all perception: *more perception* than any perception in an awakened state" (113; original emphasis). Understood as the *actualization* of a set of effects produced by the intertextual reconfiguration of the hypothetical primal scene, James's "dream-adventure" simultaneously averts *and* constitutes a representational crisis in which the "subject of history" is itself an introjected object within the space constituted by the dream-work. In other words, as a model for ultimate perception, the dream acts as screen by which the elusive "scene of something" can emerge as a hauntingly traumatic idiom or style, one that averts a crisis in "historical" representation by presenting itself instead as a pathology of memory and negative affect (repression) that *enables* the creative process. Henry James, in his description of the

visit to the Louvre, remarks the sublimity of aesthetic relief in the great gallery, especially those indistinguishable parts with "their endless golden riot and relief, figured and flourished in perpetual revolution" (195). For James this aesthetic *foreground* (which exists, in fact, as the very limits of his vision or gaze) creates a perspective, a *mise-en-scène*, between two abstract categories, style and history, insofar as the scene at the Louvre acts as that which "threw off the rest of Paris somehow as a told story, a sort of wrought effect or bold ambiguity" (195). This statement is in keeping with James's constant privileging of style over content, even historical content, in his writings and fictions. Elsewhere he professes that "[i]n literature we move through a blest world in which we know nothing except by style, but in which everything is saved by it, and in which the image is thus always superior to the thing itself" (cited in Donadio, 204). Envisioning the historical scene, the Paris of his childhood, as "somehow a told story, a sort of wrought effect or bold ambiguity," James identifies which image (the Louvre) and which perspective takes precedence over "the thing itself," what we might conceive of as the Real. To those critics who have insisted upon how the revelation of "the thing itself" in the dream symbolism (whether conceived of as actual or repressed familial conflict), James would

have apparently disagreed, insofar as they would have missed the *spirit* of his own dream exegesis. Addressing precisely this issue of the "real" earlier in his autobiography, James writes that "[t]o look back at all is to meet the apparitional and to find in its ghostly face the silent stare of an appeal. When I fix it, the hovering shade, whether of person or place, it fixes me back and seems the less lost" (93). Hence, for James to obsessively reinvent this ghostly meeting in his fictions and to theorize about its significance in his autobiography suggests that the *use* of dream, as a model for perception, becomes the key to understanding how his own unconscious authorial processes create a sense of *déjà vu* in his writings: the sense of arriving at the "scene of something" (encoded within the dream symbolism) but not exactly knowing when, how, or what that "something" first occurred. But more than this, for James it is not knowing what is 'lost' in that *something*, in not being able to recuperate that loss or its precise meaning through the juxtaposition of various historical and personal intertexts, as they are experienced vicariously within or as his own characters - his own alter-egos - as they "meet the apparitional."

James's failure to recuperate those losses pertaining to his own (imagined) primal scene of style is not without its productive and performative effects. As

Lynn Enterline points out, the various symbolic dislocations caused by melancholia, "in turn, produce further shaping effects on what the subject counts as "lost"" (*The Tears of Narcissus* 18). In each of James's fictions which involve the reconfiguration of the dream-vision, the losses which are imagined do, indeed, take on different meanings and proportions. By dislocating the very conditions of intelligibility for his formative "scene of something," James develops and installs an aesthetic unconscious in his works, precisely through the temporalization of style's primal scene. It is possible that what Henry James envisions as his primal scene could be constituted by the literal dislocation that occurs when he moves with his family from America to Europe. The dislocations that he creates in his narratives figuratively attempt to absorb and to comprehend that initial dis-location. This makes sense given that in "The Jolly Corner" the initial relocation of James's own family from America to Europe is reversed and then revisited in Spencer Brydon's return to America, but particularly, to the family home on the "jolly corner" where he grew up and where generations of his family had lived. Nicolas Abraham, in his formulation of the aesthetic unconscious, proposes that "the necessary dissatisfaction of unconscious wishes and its consequence, the triangular articulation of time, as well as symbolization - the a

priori condition of temporal genesis - are founded upon the prospective nature of maturational affections" (PE 7-8). Although Abraham does not fully develop this notion of the "triangular articulation of time" in his essay, "Psychoanalytic Esthetics: Time, Rhythm and the Unconscious," this concept lends itself well to the theorization of James's narrativization of his own artistic primal scene. With respect to the existence of the aesthetic unconscious, Abraham writes that "[t]he aim of psychoanalytic criticism is not the reconstruction of the past - what could be meant by the past of the *Jeune Parque* or of a Brandenberg Concerto? - but the genetic unraveling of the unconscious … belonging to the specific ego that inhabits a work of art" (7; original emphasis). In other words, it would be ludicrous in some senses to try to historicize the aesthetic unconscious in James's *writing* of the primal scene. For example, it would be nearly impossible to specify exactly which artistic scenes or paintings caused the young Henry James to make his frightful identification with the "presence" or other that he subsequently represses from conscious memory, yet which he continually (even perhaps, surreptitiously revisits). Paintings such as Couture's *Romains de la Décadence*, which were in the Gallerie during James's childhood visit, could possibly have aroused such an identification; this is a work

in which there are many nude bodies on display that, in Jonathan Freedman's words, graphically illustrate "recognizably decadent preoccupations - cultural degeneration and deliquescence, the intertwining of sexuality and violence, the coalescence of art and madness" (*Professions of Taste* 203). And, indeed, the many resonances of cultural degeneration that resurface in James's fictions, like "The Jolly Corner," could be factored into what James calls an aesthetic projection of "reconstituted history" (*SBO* 194). In his autobiography, James uses this phrase "reconstituted history" to indicate the "queerness" of a mode of aesthetic reproduction in which an artifact or image is reproduced from memory at a much later date. What defines this stylistic "queerness," for James, is that it inheres in the "reconstitution of a far-off history of the subtlest and most "last word" modern or psychologic kind"(194). Thus, the "queerness" of this form of artistic expression, one that might be conceived loosely as an identificatory relation of some sort, cannot be directly applied or attributed to a given art piece, in its narcissistic reflection or deflection of some latent "homosexual" desire. Yet, rather than completely discounting the possibility of the young Henry James vicariously experiencing a sexual primal scene in such an work, what I would like to point out (and both Abraham and

James seem to agree here in their respective notions about the nature of an aesthetic unconscious) is that the *history* of the actual artifact (even if it were possible to locate *one* such artifact) matters less than the unraveling of unconscious structure that occurs precisely through the successive dislocations of that *structure* in the composition process itself.

James's primal scene, in itself a "triangular articulation of time," thus is constituted when three distinct temporal moments are (re)connected: that is, when the childhood visit to the Louvre, the nightmare vision, and the transposition of the dream's elements into his fiction (i.e. "The Jolly Corner") form a distinctive screen memory. Coinciding with Freud's definition in his essay, "Screen Memories," James's version of the screen memory also partakes of, and represents, "the memory impressions and thoughts of a later date whose content is connected with its own by symbolic or similar links" (123). When Freud proposed that dreaming was really just another form of remembering in his essay, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," he conjectured that "[i]t is this recurrence [of screen memories or "scenes"] that I regard as the explanation of the fact that patients themselves gradually acquire a profound conviction of the reality of these scenes, a conviction which is in no respect inferior to the

one based upon recollection" (419). Yet, like Freud, James is more intrigued by the "wrought effect[s]" of such recollections (or intertextual reconstructions, as it were). The "queerness" of this aesthetic or stylistic mode that produces such "wrought effect[s]" derives from a form of symbolic remembering or, more precisely, memory where a "transparency relation" (Ihde, *Experimental Phenomenology* 176) is created through the double-sided projection of the object onto a screen constituted through a phenomenological process of *lamination.* What I am describing as the process of lamination, and what Ihde understands as a "transparency relation," imply the existence of an invisible agency or agent that effects a will-to-style by (re-)constructing through memory the symbolic relations between stylistic effect and unconscious affect. In James's case, what is being reconstructed through memory is the imaginary line between the unconscious memory (the childhood primal scene) and its reconfigured textual form(s). But, like Freud in this respect, James assigns a pathological value to this form of remembering. Describing himself as "that queer monster, the artist, an obstinate finality, an inexhaustible sensibility," Henry James explains how "his reactions - appearances, memories, many things, go playing upon it [his consciousness] with the consequences that I note and "enjoy" (grim word!)" (cited in Donadio, 206).

The quota of "grim" pleasure that James derives from reliving his (negative) affective sensations and memories proves that he is, indeed, also getting something from compulsively returning to that "scene of something" that occurred at or before the trip to the Louvre. According to Pontalis, that *something* could be any number of things: a belated attempt at mastery, a form of fantasy or wish-fulfillment, an investment in the fantasy of self that dream-telling sustains, or even an attempt "to assign limits to the unconscious" (115). As Derrida puts it, the "original [or primal scene] is only an *asymptotic* place of "convergences" among all the possible translations and betrayals" ("Fors" xxvi; original emphasis). Whatever the precise satisfaction James might have received from his various reconstructions of the primal scene, it seems clear that this *something* is what *authors* and *authorizes* the text: this *something* - satisfaction or not - is what unconsciously speaks through the artistically "wrought effect[s]" in his works.

The fact that critics seem to overlook this effect of triangulation and temporalization seems curious, but perhaps can be explained by the sheer complexity of the images and symbols he creates through this process. Yet, as J.B. Pontalis underscores,"[i]t is important therefore to grasp which aspect of oneiric activity is … [being] valorized,

invested, eroticized even. It could be the dream as such, as a representation of an *elsewhere*, guarantor of a perpetual *double*, or a staging, a "private theatre," with its permutation of roles that allows one never to assume any of them; or it could be one of the mechanisms of the dream - in which case there would be more sources for interpretation. One can find something useful in the functioning of these mechanisms much as a writer does in his methods of writing" (117). Having already rehearsed some of these possibilities, it is necessary to examine the screen memory itself from "The Jolly Corner." In this short story, the protagonist - Spencer Brydon - functions as an alter-ego to Henry James. In this sense, there is a redoubling of the ego function that occurs in the dream, what Pontalis would identify as the "guarantor of a perpetual *double*. " Returning to his family home in America after a thirty-three year absence, Spencer Brydon remembers (uncannily, as in the nightmare) that the large black and white marble squares in the lower hallway in his house were "the admiration of his childhood, and that made in him, as he now saw, for the growth of an early conception of style" (353). This literary recognition of Brydon's/James's "conception of style" functions here as an encrypted moment of déjà vu. For James the author, it is a manner of returning to a place he has not quite yet articulated for himself as a primal

scene (insofar as this fiction precedes his autobiographical reflections): that is, he has not yet written or even consciously recognized the "ground" for what it is, another form of screen memory also symbolized in his nightmare via the "polished floor" of the Gallerie d' Apollon. In this sense, Henry James - the author and dreamer - is split between, or perhaps more accurately, inhabits the split between his hypothetical double in the story, Spencer Brydon, and the "creature" that he meets in the house on the jolly corner, the projected double of Spencer Brydon and a version of his own oneiric apparition. The splitting, as it were, performs a necessary labor: the "representation of an *elsewhere*" (to use Pontalis's phrase) which functions here as a form of wish-fulfillment for both the fictional character, Spencer Brydon, and the author (who describes in *The American Scene* his return to his missing childhood home in New York as an experience which was like "having been amputated of half my history." But the "elsewhere" that is illustrated in this tale is also, doubly, the scene at the Louvre and the one in his nightmare. The redoubling and splitting that occurs because of the "triangulated articulation of time" in these encoded intertextual acts of memory thus illustrate beautifully what Freud meant when he said that it takes two traumas to make a trauma and two fantasies projected onto each other to make a screen memory.

The aesthetic unconscious that James develops, then, in this fiction is not a univocal or essential presence or ego, at least not in the sense that Freud would have understood it. But it is also unequivocally not, in my view, a projection of the "birth trauma," as Przybylowicz claims. In an otherwise engaging and persuasive reading of "The Jolly Corner," Przybylowicz contends that Spencer's traumatic experience in the house where he meets his alter-ego - the man he would have become if he had but stayed -

> symbolizes not only the dynamic character of the birth trauma but the synchronic structure of the psyche as well: the hero's encounter with his own unconscious, repressed aggressivity and sexuality, as represented by the upper region of the house, the lair of the other: the familiar preconscious/conscious memories of childhood, contained in the more accessible lower floors; and the intersubjective world, observable beyond the open front door, which is what he finally affirms through his acceptance of Alice's love. (119)

Przybylowicz's reading, here, corresponds with the dream symbolism that Freud elaborates in "The Interpretation of Dreams," where houses are believed to represent the body. In this instance, however, Brydon's house on the "jolly

corner" symbolizes more properly the body-ego and its psychic topography. If this is the case, however, then the body-ego and the very projection of a psychic topography onto/as the house works to completely absorb the *other* history that is James's own unconscious expression, the nightmare and its status as "event."

What gives us the impression that the absorption of this other "history" is not James's intent (at least not his conscious one) are the number of clues he leaves within the narrative itself, not the least of which is the transposition of the nightmare's own "creature or presence" onto the *screen* that is the house on the corner. But the "creature" itself, Spencer Brydon's alter-ego or double, is also referred to as "the virtual screen of a figure which stood in it as still some image erect in a niche or as some black-vizored sentinel guarding a treasure" (396). When Brydon first sees this "figure," he imagines that he might meet "this particular wanton wonderment" at "a turn of one of the dim passages of an empty house" (375). Then he further conjures that this "figure" would present itself at the moment "of his opening a door behind which he would have made sure of finding nothing, a door into a room shuttered and void, and yet so coming, with a great suppressed start, on some quite erect confronting presence, something planted in the middle of the place and facing him through the dusk"

(375). But Brydon's actual confrontation with the "presence" or "figure" does not take place at this lesser residence, but at his childhood home "in which various members of his family had lived and had died" (372). When Brydon is confiding to Alice Staverton about the possibilities of whom he might have become had he stayed in America, he states, "it's only a question of what fantastic, yet perfectly possible, development of my own nature I mayn't have missed. It comes over me that I had then a strange *alter ego* deep down somewhere within me, as the full-blown flower is in the small tight bud, and that I just took the course, I just transferred him to the climate, that blighted him for once and for ever" (379; original emphasis). Staverton responds by saying that, indeed, she believes in the existence of this "monstrous" possibility because she has seen his alter ego twice over in an identical dream:

> [Alice] "I've seen him in a dream."
>
> [Spencer] "Oh a 'dream' - ! It let him down.
>
> [Alice] "But twice over," she continued. "I saw him as I see you now."
>
> [Spencer] "You've dreamed the same dream--?"
>
> [Alice] "Twice over," she repeated, "The very same." This did somehow a little speak to him, as it also gratified him. "You dream about me at

> that rate?"
>
> [Alice] Ah about *him*!" His eyes again sounded her. "Then you know all about him." And as she said nothing more: "What's the wretch like?"
>
> She hesitated, and it was as if he were pressing her so hard that, resisting for reasons of her own, she had to turn away. "I'll tell you some other time!" (382)

The introduction of Alice's dream as somehow containing the "truth" to the existence of this other (which we remember was initially James's own childhood nightmare), and Brydon's initial disappointment and his expressed incredulity at this possibility of her "knowing" his own other, albeit through her dream, suggests that a form of dissociation on James's part, as author, is taking place. That is, for James to give Alice the dream and Brydon the hallucinatory projection means that another split is occurring along an imaginary line between "unconscious" memory and stylistic effect to generate a situation where the queerness of Brydon's own "reconstituted history" can be conceived as the very film of memory that superimposes itself upon the "other" narrative, the narrative belonging to the other. Eric Savoy understands this transposition to belong to the "general register of autobiographical lamination," whereby this

lamination of retrospective and introspective life-writing onto a narrative of the double is itself doubled" (5).[1]

After yet another imagined encounter with his ghostly double (again the number two figures prominently, as in the two houses, two egos, two dreams, etc.), Brydon finally encounters "the penumbra, dense and dark" (396): "So Brydon, before him, took him in; with every fact of him now, in the higher light, hard and acute - his planted stillness, his vivid truth, his grizzled bent head and white masking hands, his queer actuality of evening-dress, of dangling double eye-glass, of gleaming silk lappet and white linen, of pearl button and gold watch-guard and polished shoe. No portrait by a great modern master could have presented him with more

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[1]Here I think Eric Savoy's and my own notion of lamination very nearly coincide, which is no accident given that this "idea" was born in a classroom we shared in which the discussion of American Gothic and screen memories was taking place. My initial conception of the lamination taking place in James's intertexts became the "full-blown flower" that now appears within my own conception of a traumatic idiom or style. It seems fitting, therefore, that this word, *lamination*, has been *projected* quite differently onto the very different critical projects that we each take up with respect to "queer" James. Contrary to Savoy's reading in "The Queer Subject of "The Jolly Corner," I am inclined to read Staverton more sympathetically in light of James's own shift from the "boy" to the "girls" in his autobiographical discussion of the "queerness" of a form of "reconstituted history" taking place through memory. That is to say that perhaps James's own heightened sense of irony is running away with what he calls in his autobiography, the "love-philtre or fear-philtre," implying that the "filter" or "screen" can be read from both sides, in the manner of a suspended identificatory relation. In other words, perhaps James gives Alice the dream not to manipulate Spencer but to

intensity, thrust him out of his frame with more art, as if there had been "treatment," of the consummate sort, in his every shade and salience" (397). The specificity of the "treatment" James gives to this presence serves as another way of temporalizing style, that is, of giving it a cultural and historical specificity - a corporeal specificity - that functions as a singularity of sorts, one that recuperates the childhood scene at the Louvre through the encoded reference that "[n]o portrait by a great modern master cold have presented him with more intensity, thrust him out of his frame with more art, as if there had been "treatment," of the consummate sort, in his every shade and salience." To thrust oneself out of one's own style, that is, to consider the very premises for the style which defines an author and an individual is, at once, to consciously frame what eludes both historical and personal "memory." Yet, to completely invest oneself in one's alter ego, as a projection of one's own subjective desires or identificatory relations, is also to recognize, as Brydon does, that "[s]uch an identity fitted his at no point, made its alternative monstrous" (397). For Brydon, this alternative identity or *alter ego* takes the form of a ruthless but enormously successful American businessman, while Brydon himself comes to represent the "achieved, the enjoyed, the

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manipulate his reader into identifying with the "queerness"

triumphant life" (396). After fainting on "the cold marble squares of his youth" (398) (which appear to act as the "ground" for all the unconscious activity in this narrative), Brydon awakes to find his head in Alice Staverton's lap, the moment in which he is able to decide his future with her. The future here is monstrous, but what gives it this quality of monstrosity for James, the author, is that he cannot project himself into this or any other future, even with another man, without in some sense sacrificing his entire project of dream-telling, which involves the *nostalgic* preservation of the "self" in a form of an aesthetic unconscious.

From this tissue of allusions to the nightmare vision James had in his childhood, it is possible to suggest that perhaps it is not so much that the "physical structure of the house represents the conscious and unconscious formations of the psyche" as Przybylowicz claims, but that the house and the other dream elements represent the artistic process by which they become projected onto each other as in the psyche, whose very composition thus involves that of an uncanny psychic doubling and return, the return of the 'other' into the present of the dream telling. Building upon B. D. Lewin's work on dream screens, Pontalis explains that

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of his own vision.

> [e]very dream image is projected onto a screen or, as I would prefer to put it, supposes a space in which the representation can effect itself. The main point is not that the dream unreels like a film … It can also take the form of a drama, a serial novel, or a polyptych. But there can be no film without a screen, no play without a scene, albeit just an imaginary line, no picture without a canvas or a frame. The dream is a rebus, but to be able to inscribe the rebus we ask for something like a sheet of paper, and to reconstruct the puzzle we ask for a thin piece of cardboard. (114)

We will notice a similar process of projection and inscription occurring in "The Jolly Corner," where elements of James's own nightmare vision are *laminated* onto the screen of the narrative, or more specifically, onto the screen of another symbol, the house.[2] In this way, features such as the black and white marble squares are transformed into symbols of the Real, which in this case, are those oneiric elements that stand in for a form of literal

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[2] With respect to Pontalis's comment about the difference between a film and the dream inscription, here it is useful to identify a similar phenomenological process that occurs in the double-sided projection of the "object" onto the screen, which Vivian Sobchack explains at some length in The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience. See Sobchack's invigorating discussion of this phenomena in this text, or Ihde's discussion of the "transparency relation" in Experimental Phenomenology: An Introduction, where he conceives of as a relation between effect and affect (e.g. the imaginary line between the representation and the thing) as that which indicates the "intentional correlates of perceptual consciousness: the noesis or intending act and the noema or intentional object of perception" (179-80).

transference, and thus retain their significance as markers or *imprintations* of unconscious activity. Importantly, the inscription of the dream rebus into the narrative occurs as a form of inversion - an etiolated or reduced vision - existing itself as the "penumbra" or epistemological cusp of a hypothetical plenitude, as in the notion of the dream as a model for all perception. As in the Gallerie d' Apollon, where the mystery of style "filled the halls with the influence of some complicated sound, diffused and reverberant, than of such visibilities as one could directly deal with" (*SBO* 195), the house on "the jolly corner" also resonates with an "indescribably fine murmur" like that of a "precious concave crystal" or as a "sigh" of "all the old baffled forsworn possibilities" (JC 384). For James, it is not simply that the image that matters over and above content per se, but that the *reverberations* of style itself come to occupy the sensory foreground of his writings in which such primal scenes *figure* centrally. What makes these individual elements, strains, or images intelligible as a screen memory that can then be deciphered in different ways are the aesthetic cues (or clues, as it were) that James *engraves* into his narratives through his own transferential activity.

The question is, Who is the "I" that inhabits the epistemological and ontological cusp within the Jamesian dream world of all-seeing perception and consciousness? Since it is extremely difficult to even determine the extent to which certain processes of narration and remembrance function consciously or unconsciously, it is also equally impossible to ascertain whether or not James intended for his readers to catch a glimpse of his "queer" predilections or disposition. Certainly the displacements and dislocations of the individual dream elements into different narratives, bodies, scenes, and places can enable or even produce such "queer" effects, even (or perhaps especially) without the conscious interventions of the author. Even James's conception of the "psychology in art," which he purports to have never heard of before, might itself be considered a form of unconscious expression or appropriation, what some psychologists would refer to as "cryptomnesia," an unconscious form of plagiarism whereby ideas are transferred or taken without a conscious acknowledgment of their source. This theory might even explain why James does not project onto the shadowy presence, as his critics are wont to do, the image of his elder brother, thus exhibiting the manifestation of internal conflict or ambivalence. But then again, perhaps this very refusal to interpret the image as his brother acts

as its own form of testimony, announcing the very emergence of "philosophy" as the absent cause within the specter of the occluded "historical" event. What is clear, in this hypothetically full realm of interpretative possibilities, is that the production of the primal scene of style in James's late writings coincides with a process of interpretation that is not indebted to one school of thought, whether history, psychoanalysis, or philosophy. The aesthetic unconscious that James develops in his late writings, while not entirely coincident with Lukacher's notion of the primal scene, also in many senses exists as "a kind of historical "event" that cannot be thought outside the question of intertextuality" (13). Yet, this "event" only emerges as an intelligible entity -- a screen memory -- through the intersection of conscious and unconscious thought processes, as they are themselves reconfigured into the "wrought effects" of a "reconstituted history," not quite remembered, but certainly not forgotten, by the Jamesian intertexts themselves.

"Psychological pain" … is really only a fat word standing in place of a skinny question mark.
Friedrich Nietzsche,
On the Genealogy of Morals

Consciousness in us is lacking of what, above, explodes or splits.
Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes*

I swear to you, the sun was not bright. It was red, or it was black to me … The sun was never life to me. It was destruction. It was never beautiful. It was destruction.
Edith P., Auschwitz,
Yale Video Library

Stylizing the Real: Holocaust Remembrance and the Ends of Trauma Theory at the Fin-de-Siècle

If at the end of every hundred years or so theory seems to come full circle, it may be because the unarticulated elements of a given theoretical trajectory or nexus crystallize as crucial sites of cultural production in which much political, social, and intellectual energy tends to be invested. Research into the phenomenon known as "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) occupies one such site of production, especially given the current cultural impetus to recover and to videotape oral

testimonies of traumatic events (such as those of the Holocaust) before they are permanently lost to historical record. The correlation between what Lacan would identify as the hysteria of scientific discourse (particularly in the "memory sciences" where knowledge serves as an end in itself) and popular culture's appropriation and redeployment of such forms of knowledge has a history going back at least to the nineteenth century. With respect to Lacan's formulation of science as the hysteric's discourse, Bruce Fink explains that "the truth [and the cause] of the hysteric's discourse … is the real" and, therefore, its intent, in the name of "something that it is impossible for us to know," is not only to expose but to push the paradoxes and contradictions of a given theory or discourse to its furthest possible limits (*The Lacanian Subject* 134-5). Trauma theory, in its investigation of such conceptual impossibilities and anomalies, thus functions as the hysteric's discourse by continually exposing and [then] proving the inadequacies of both scientific knowledge and forms of cultural "knowing." What we now call trauma theory and what Michael Roth refers to collectively as nineteenth-century scientific discourses on the "maladies of memory" similarly involve complex means of internally (re-)producing forms of symbolic memory or amnesia, in such

a way that "the medicalization of memory include[s] a certain amnesia [because] … the new discourse about maladies of memory depend[s] in part on a blindness to the status of this discourse itself" ("Remembering Forgetting" 55). Somewhat paradoxically, this form of discursive hysteria, with its endemic blindness to its own epistemological status, can be seen to function as a "pathology of history" (which is, ironically, one of Caruth's definitions for PTSD),[1] a pathology in which different kinds of epistemic and cognitive blind spots will be reproduced and yet occluded by the discourse itself, while enabling the observer or scientist (as in the clinical creation of "blind sight" where "holes" of blindness can be created in specific visual fields) to

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[1] In "Trauma and Experience: An Introduction" Cathy Caruth notes that "[m]odern analysts as well [as Freud] have remarked on the surprising literality and nonsymbolic nature of traumatic dreams and flashbacks. It is this *literality* and its insistent return which thus constitutes trauma and points toward its enigmatic core: the delay or incompletion in knowing, or even in seeing, an overwhelming occurrence that then remains, in its insistent return, absolutely *true* to the event. It is indeed this truth of traumatic experience that forms the center of its pathology or symptoms; it is not a pathology, that is, of falsehood or displacement of meaning, but of history itself. If PTSD must be understood as a pathological symptom, then it is not so much a symptom of the unconscious, as it is a symptom of history. The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (5; original emphasis).

maintain that s/he has not seen *anything*.[2] Hence, the vicious circle that is produced through such forms of cultural amnesia and its will-to-blindness, in the form of the hysteric's discourse, leads us back to Martin Heidegger's recognition that "[t]he essence of technology is by no means anything technological" ("The Question Concerning Technology" 387). Existing as the means by which different forms of scientific knowledge performatively constitute and sustain their own ideological effects, the vicious theoretical circle created reciprocally through the interaction between popular culture and "science" actively works to disavow its own historical blind spots in order to serve as a "screen," Roth avers, "on which a culture projects its anxieties about repetition, change, representation, authenticity and identity" (Roth 54). Given this complicated exchange of forms of knowledge and its effects that are generated by the memory sciences (in what Ian Hacking broadly conceives of as an historical process that brings about the secularization or "rewriting of the soul"), it is imperative at this time to try to fathom the implications for certain individuals or groups being called upon and

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[2] See Daniel R. Robinson's discussion of this phenomenon in "Psychobiology and the Unconscious."

"interpellated" as trauma witnesses and survivors. To invoke the name "Heidegger" and the question of technology is at once, according to J-F Lyotard, to view the Holocaust as both caesura (an absolute rupture with Western metaphysics) and catharsis (in its revelation of the "pure Law" and "the categorical imperative in the impossibility of its actualization"). As Lyotard further argues,

> the Holocaust signifies the impossibility not only of the tragic-political fulfillment but also that of the stage where it takes place. It attests to a mutation of the *mise-en-scène* itself, that is, in Heidegger's terms, of the way in which the Being of beings gives itself to and hides itself from *Dasein*, a way that is now no longer tragic, but rather technological. (86; original emphasis)

The historical *mise-en-scène* being staged in Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* - a nine-and-a-half hour composition of oral Holocaust testimonies - also testifies to the impossibility of, on the one hand, ever comprehending the *mutation* that the Holocaust connotes, and on the other, fully understanding the "technological" agency that enables the transaction from Being (which I interpret here as also meaning "Spirit") to Dasein, a form of being or "essence" that emerges precisely through a form of technological

interpellation specific to the cinema and its apparati. At stake in such an investigation is a better understanding of the ways in which such forms of interpellation function within the discursive loopholes and blind spots of such scientific discourses to authenticate and to stylize the historical "real" as it emerges from behind and, sometimes, through the censor or "screen" that is the speaking body of the witness.

Such blind spots in trauma theory and in the theorizing of productions that are themselves a form of traumatic re-occurrence can be partially attributed to the fact that there has been scant attention paid to the temporality of affect. It is affect or, perhaps more tellingly, a lack of affect that can serve as the index by which clinicians and scientists judge the severity of trauma and the etiology of its symptoms. Yet, despite the importance of affect to the clinical and theoretical comprehension of trauma, Alexander McFarlane points out that "[v]ery few studies have used the time between trauma and the point of measurement as a covariate in analysis" (40). Although literary and film critics have been less concerned with calibrating the intensity and temporality of affect than scientists, current theories of performativity that understand gender and other bodily meanings to be "the

effect of sedimentation that the temporality of construction implies" (Butler, *Bodies* 245) may need to be adjusted to account for the temporality of otherness that affect implies and for a notion of the body as a memorial to the unbinding of language's historicity. Such an approach to "reading" the speaking body of the trauma witness aims not to de-prioritize the temporal modality of gender construction. It is instead to raise the possibility of understanding bodily meanings, traces, and affects as the dislocation of reference, in which surface identity will not necessarily refer to what was unconsciously incorporated and disavowed (as in the Freudian notion of melancholia), but can itself be conceived as a discursively produced screen memory through which we catch a glimpse of the survivor suspended in cyclic time. The feelings of deadness or nothingness that constitute affect in clinical conditions such as melancholia might be extended, but also radically questioned, in certain cinematic representations where the experience of trauma is being re-invoked, re-membered, and re-produced for an audience that will bear witness not to a "real" historical event, but to the affects produced in the survivor. Affect, in such cases, might be radically rethought as a form of reference, where reference is

understood to be "the very object - and the very content of historical erasures" (*Testimony* 267), to use Shoshana Felman's apt phrase.

Lanzmann's *Shoah* is one such production that both solicits and produces traumatic affects in the witness so as to be "read" against a landscape that bears only the faintest traces of the historical real. Historical reference here occurs precisely through the *presence* of traumatic affect, through its predication upon the real and the energies it continues to exert upon the symbolic in the form of foreclosures, ellipses, and erasures. Miriam Hansen, in "*Schindler's List* is Not *Shoah*," crucially points out that "[w]hat gets left out [in the high-modernist aesthetic and its focus on vision and the visual] is the dimension of the other senses and of sensory experience, that is, the aesthetic in the more comprehensive, Greek sense of the word, and its fate in a history of modernity that encompasses both mass production and mass extermination . . . [I]f we understand the Shoah's challenge to representation to be as much one of affect as epistemology, the specific sensory means of engaging this challenge cannot be ignored" (85). To purposely stage the temporality of affect (both conscious and unconscious) through the mimetic re-production of those "original"

traumatic experiences for the purpose of invoking specific traumatic memories, as Lanzmann's film does, requires the cinematic manipulation of affect and epistemology (in the forms of "scientific" and "popular" (though also properly historical) forms of knowledge. For example, in *Shoah*, "popular" knowledge often takes the form of testimony by witnesses, not Holocaust survivors. These witnesses consist of town-folk, farmers, shopkeepers, and so forth, who are asked specific questions by Lanzmann and then answer those questions by weaving together their first-hand experiences, tidbits of hearsay or folklore, and historical fact in their composition of a narrative that reflects (or not) their own (believed) specific cognitive and topographical relation to those occurrences. To bear witness to the temporality of affect as a means of apprehending the historical real means that the film's spectator first must recognize what is affecting "the physics of the speaker" (Lyotard, *Heidegger* 13) outside of the realm of conscious experience. As Lyotard explains in *Heidegger and "the jews,"* the excitation or excess that comes from inside, but must be sparked from without, is what Freud called "unconscious affect." It is a "feeling that is not felt *by anyone*" (13), and its *staged*

temporality in the form of a cinematic *mise-en-scène* derives from the fact that it is

> "[s]omething … [that] will make itself understood, "later." That which will not have been introduced will have been "acted," "acted out," "enacted," . . . played out, in the end - and thus re-presented. But without the subject recognizing it. It will be represented as something that has never been presented. Renewed absurdity. For instance, as a symptom, a phobia … This will be understood as a feeling, fear, anxiety, feeling of a threatening excess whose motive is obviously not in the present context. A feeling … which therefore necessarily points to an elsewhere that will have to be located outside this situation, outside the present contextual situation, imputed to a different site than this one. (13)

What Lyotard describe above in terms of unconscious affect, it needs to be emphasized, works from within the framework of historiographical melancholia in *Shoah*, whereby the attempt to recuperate what is "lost" from the present historical scene implies an imaginary border or threshold of intelligibility, thus recuperating the "cause" of the traumatic memory even as it seeks to "contain" the content

and its possible forms. The speaking witness in *Shoah* is thus both literally and figuratively juxtaposed and superimposed within/on the "natural" scenes of the German and Polish landscapes (the sites of the previous death-camps), as means of giving "form" or ground, as it were, to the historiographical enterprise, while acquiring from this more literal "ground," the scene in the historical present, memory traces of what existed previously as "an absence of form and of transformation, [what was] untransformable to be precise" (Lyotard, *Heidegger* 15), the unconscious affect. According to Lyotard, *Shoah* exists as an "exception," even perhaps a "singularity" within existing genres or modes of Holocaust representation, "[n]ot only because it rejects representation in images and music but because it scarcely offers a testimony where the unrepresentable of the Holocaust is not indicated, be it but for a moment, by the alteration in the tone of voice, a knotted throat, sobbing, tears, a witness fleeing off-camera, a disturbance in the tone of the narrative" (*Heidegger* 26). An example of this representation of the nonrepresentable comes at the earliest possible moment of the film, the very first testimony, when Simon Srebnik returns from Jerusalem with Claude Lanzmann to the site of his family's and his own near death in Chelmno, Poland to

remember the atrocities that occurred thirty-four years earlier when he was only 13½ years old. In one scene from the film, Srebnik is seen walking along a dirt road in the Polish countryside, taking in the expanse and viewing with some disbelief that this is actually the site of the death-camp where so many unthinkable scenes once occurred. Srebnik very calmly states to the cameraman,

> It's hard to recognize, but it was here. They burned people here. A lot of people were burned here. Yes, this is the place. No one ever left here again. The gas vans came in here . . . There were two huge ovens, and afterward the bodies were thrown into these ovens, and the flames reached to the sky. It was terrible. No one can describe it. No one can recreate what happened here. Impossible? And no one can understand it. Even I, here now … I can't believe I'm here. No, I just can't believe it. It was always this peaceful here. Always. When they burned two thousand people - Jews- every day, it was just as peaceful. No one shouted. Everyone went about his work. It was silent. Peaceful. Just as it is now.
>
> (*Shoah* 5-6)

Given this exchange - one that occurs not only between the trauma survivor and his immediate audience, but between himself in the present and an earlier version of himself as a child during the Holocaust, and between himself and the others that spectrally haunt the landscape of his past memories - we can see the ways in which traumatic affect manifests itself not only somatically, but in symbolic representation and in the field of vision as the symptom or effect of a larger (invisible) process, the cinematic introjection of trauma theory into its own representational domain. One of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder is "emotional "anesthesia" or [the] blocked ability to react affectively" (Van der Kolk, *Psychological Trauma* 5). But because, as Lyotard remarks, "[n]ot even the protective shield of banal temporality can deal with it [unconscious affect]"(*Heidegger* 13), the detection of the presence of this non-presence, which has a specificity in relation to the specific scene being remembered and re-produced for the secondary witness (the film's spectator) occurs only through a conceptual framework that interprets this "affect" as the unraveling of History. Yet, as Lyotard also impresses, "this sudden feeling [which points to an elsewhere that will have to be located outside this [present] situation]… is as good as testimony" (*Heidegger*

13). I am especially interested in exploring how the cinematic process of introjection works to re-produce, albeit invisibly, by eliciting a number of affects and enigmatic signifiers a primal scene of style that is proper to oral testimony, one in which the semantic content of those signifiers is being psychically manipulated, *contoured*, and cinematically reconstituted to produce a screen memory that substitutes for the historical (un)real: the traumatic memory that enigmatically conveys a sight unseen.

Although the comprehension of trauma increasingly will be directed by the highly specialized disciplines of neuroscience, biophysics, and psychiatry (to name only a few), it is cinema itself which has the capacity to incorporate, rework, and problematize those scientific assumptions about traumatic memory and experience. Yet, if film has the capacity to expose and to rearticulate assumptions about traumatic experience, it is also simultaneously the medium that sustains certain epistemic and perceptual blind spots through the introjection of trauma theory, in what might be referred to as the "doctrine of immaculate perception" (Fisher and Pipp, UR 90). For Jacqueline Rose, such a representation of trauma remains "in itself problematic precisely *because of* the

status it accords the instance of perception" (202-2; original emphasis). Using Rose's insight, the question we might frame, then, goes like this: "[s]ince the effect of the cinematic apparatus is to conceal its distance from, or construction of reality, how can it be compared with [the] instance of traumatic perception" (*Sexuality in the Field of Vision* 201-2). To begin to answer this question, we need to recognize that because film, like the individual subject, tries to incorporate into its conceptual (and sometimes, perceptual) framework "as large a part of the world as possible" - its creates, through its own necessary failure to do so, its own ontology of lack. But this ontology of lack - understood here as the cinematic embodiment of complex phenomenological and epistemic relations produced through the process of introjection - involves the development of a unique filmic idiom, a traumatic style, as it were, that possesses a specificity: one that offers itself up as a proper object for historical inquiry, insofar as it poses the question of what a traumatic style "is," and possibly "means," within this realm of historiography proper.

The task of deciphering the ontological and epistemological status of the traumatic style or idiom, what Julia Kristeva calls the "new rhetoric of apocalypse"

(*Black Sun* 223) is a difficult labor, one that is further complicated in the areas of cultural and literary criticism because of (the existence of) a methodological aporia. Addressing this hermeneutic aporia in *Seduction, Translation, Drives*, Jean Laplanche underscores that starting out with enigmatic signifiers (in which the affects of the trauma witness's speaking body serve as one example) "is a way of temporalising, starting out from those unarticulated elements. But this usually cannot be done, and maybe should not be done in literary analysis, because we don't have the whole material, we don't have the method for it" (34). The problem is not only the existence of this methodological dilemma as it applies to the transference and symbolic reconfiguration of such enigmatic signifiers, but the insistent foregrounding of such "unarticulated elements" (such as memory traces, traumatic affects, and symbol fragments) in cinematic productions like *Shoah*. To state the problem somewhat differently, it is crucial for us to be able to understand the complex ways in which cinema dramatically fuses scientific knowledge (in the form of trauma theory) and corporeal affect to produce a new entity: a cinematic body or ontology, composed entirely of enigmatic relations and questions, that has the

ability to performatively constitute and stylize its own versions of the impossible-Real.

This cinematic fusion of scientific knowledge and the body of the trauma witness comes about through the process of introjection. According to Sandor Ferenczi, who coined the term in 1909, introjection is the process whereby the subject attempts to cure itself, to make itself "whole," by "taking into the ego as large a part of the outside world, making it the object of unconscious fantasies" (40). As the subsequent work of Abraham and Torok shows, however, a distinction ought to be made between the process known as introjection (intro- jection: literally throwing within) and the metapsychological fantasy known as incorporation, "just as one would differentiate between a metaphorical image and a photographic image, between learning a language and buying a dictionary" ("Introjection-Incorporation" 5) or, in other words, between the figurative and literal registers of acquisition and appropriation. The difference between introjection and incorporation is not merely one of semantics or even hermeneutics, as the above definition suggests, but involves the equally crucial question about the representation of history, in this case, a traumatic history that was never fully present or experienced in the first place. Considered by psychoanalysts to be a two-stage

process that consists of incorporation *and* projection, introjection can be conceived as a complex historical process that brings into relief its own metaphorical preconceptions and premises. Introjection, in films such as *Shoah*, *performs* the otherwise impossible marriage between affect and effect, between knowledge and flesh, and between history and its representation, precisely because what is being incorporated and then projected (both inwardly and outwardly) is memory, or more accurately, the traumatic memories of historical events. Interrogating the limits of such a process, in its "closure" of metaphysical boundaries through its induced state of "half-mourning" (a state suspended somewhere between mourning and melancholia), means that we need to account for the kind of "history" we are intending to explore. As Cathy Caruth stresses in her introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*,"[f]or history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the inaccessibility of its occurrence" (8). What Caruth's statement implies for such an investigation is that there likely cannot be a proper theory of meaning for the speaking bodies that constitute the nebulous zones within

such "historical" representations of trauma. What we blindly approach when we ask such questions is, as one Holocaust survivor - Charlotte Delbo - phases it, "[a]rt [that] has been reclaimed and transformed back into the fragment of truth that had inspired it" (cited in Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies* 5).

What needs to be addressed at this particular historical moment, when it is imperative that Holocaust testimonies are filmed and transcribed before they are lost to cultural memory, are the ways in which the speaking body of the witness functions as the blind spot in current epistemic regimes. To what extent, we might usefully ask, does the corporeal affect recuperated and reworked for cinema become a *figure* for the traumatic scene? Or, conversely, in which senses does the witness's speaking body literalize unthinkable relations and cryptic identifications, so that what enters the field of vision are precisely the phantasms of prior materialities and modes of being-in-the-world. For example, when Charlotte Delbo is asked by an interviewer if she lives with Auschwitz after her return, she answers, "No - I live beside it. Auschwitz is there, fixed and unchangeable, but wrapped in the impervious skin of memory that segregates itself from the present 'me.' Unlike the snake's skin, the

skin of memory doesn't renew itself" (cited in Langer, *HT* 13). The dissociative relation Delbo describes here between her current sense of self and her prior body (the body that experienced the horrors of Auschwitz), between her "deep" (or traumatic) memory and her ordinary memory, and between her notion of reality and the Real, also speaks to the difficulties a cinematographer or interviewer has to face when eliciting such traumatic memories and affects in the name of "history." A pressing "aesthetic" concern for Claude Lanzmann in his direction of *Shoah* (though he vehemently denies the existence of any such "aesthetic") must have been how to contain, within the opposition between words and things, the trace that this word "Shoah" (meaning "annihilation") leaves upon an event that has never been present. Or, as Abraham formulates this question in "The Shell and the Kernel," "[h]ow can we include in a discourse -- in *any* one whatever -the very thing which, being the precondition of discourse, fundamentally escapes it? If non-presence, the kernel and ultimate ground of all discourse, is made to speak, can it- must it- make itself heard in and through presence to self?" (84). Simone de Beauvoir pinpoints Lanzmann's strategy in this matter by observing that "Shoah succeeds in recreating the past with an amazing economy of means-

places, voices, faces. The greatness of Claude Lanzmann's art is in making places speak, in reviving them through voices and, over and above words, conveying the unspeakable through people's expressions" (*Shoah* vii). By recreating an historically and temporally distant *mise-en-scène* from that of the Holocaust, Lanzmann's "art" parallels the ways in which the oral testimonies or reconstructions are, for all intense purposes, *constitutive* of the events that have never been fully *present* to the witnesses, and which makes itself seen, heard, and felt through the cinematic intertextual juxtapositions of those places, faces and voices that designate those prior horrific scenes and alternate realities.

Here it is instructive to recall what Lawrence Langer, in *Holocaust Testimonies*, says about the primal scene of style: namely, that when "[o]ral survivor testimony unfolds before our eyes and ears, we are present at what, when we speak of written texts, we call style" (58). Or, put somewhat differently, Langer writes, "[w]hat is style … but the search for proper words in proper places? This question suffers a sea-change, however, as anguished memory tries to find proper words for a narrative whose *subject* is improper places like Auschwitz and the other camps" (58; original emphasis). What *unravels* before the spectator

watching oral survivor testimony is precisely the question of the Other, posed as cinematic juxtaposition and superimposition of the proper object/subject of historical inquiry, "improper places like Auschwitz and the other camps," with a form that both imitates and actualizes the operations of traumatic memory in the survivors, wherein the "edges" of discourse and history (not being temporally coincident with each other) collide and coexist in/as the very spectacle of bearing witness, as the very staging of the *mise-en-scène*. The invocation of and the instance of traumatic affect in the speaking witness functions here as a form of reference, achieved through an interrogative mode that properly constitutes a "proper name effect," which means that the survivor's body designates, refers to, "a scene, a multiple economy of places, instances and safes [or crypts]" (Derrida, "Fors" xlviii). Recalling Maria Torok's work on the "exquisite corpse" (where she proposes that an objectal loss associated with fixation can become buried in the psyche (in a crypt in the ego) like a corpse ("Exquisite Corpse" 124), we can also note that, in contradistinction to incorporation, "introjection works entirely in the open by dint of its privileged instrument, naming" (114). As a cinematic process, we also can see how the introjection of trauma theory functions as a means

of interpellating the witness or survivor through the creation of exemplary (and allegorical) scenes, as Judith Butler suggests, that "stage the call" through a series of questions in which literal historical events can present themselves, can make themselves present, as a simulacrum of the Real, as unconscious affect. When conceived as a cinematic or representational process, introjection needs to be carefully distinguished from incorporation in the psychoanalytic sense, which Torok notes (in "The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse") "operates by means of representations, affects, or bodily states, or use two or three of these means simultaneously. But whatever the instrument, incorporation is invariably distinct from introjection (a gradual process) because it is instantaneous and magical" (113). Here what we need to approach conceptually is the notion of "[m]ourning reading itself" (Derrida, "Shibboleth: For Paul Celan" 39). Thomas Pepper, in *Singularities*, understands the distinction between the two forms of mourning somewhat differently, proposing instead that "[w]hat wants to be introjection, interiorization, defusion of the shock experience, *Erinnerung*, turns out to be a failure, an incorporation, an experience that is forever walled off - understanding - because it never was an experience in the

first place" (165; original emphasis). The introjection of trauma theory, in his account, literally would seek to contain the shock experience by isolating, identifying, querying, and defusing its terrifying excess. The failure of this experience, then, to "contain" the Shoah - the annihilation and its effects - would result in an incorporation, as in the cinematic experience whereby unconscious and conscious affects prove the absolute failure of both comprehension and apprehension. Pepper evinces that "[w]hat criticism does is to attempt to understand a literary text, a singularity, a real, a chance and unique event by introjecting it into a story of which it would be a part. But what we call literary texts are thus because we keep reading them, because we keep trying, and failing, to master the absolute singularity of the events of their constellation" (165). A similar observation can be made about the introjection of trauma theory into/as the cinematic apparatus and as the modus operandi by which incorporation functions, that is, by "representations, affects, or bodily states" (Torok 113), insofar as introjection - the process of naming and interpellating the trauma witness - also frames and forms that witness, fixes the witness into an historical framework, a narrative of the Shoah, through which the

"absolute singularity of the events" (Pepper 165) can be intuited despite their inherent state of incompleteness and incomprehensibility. In this way, as Pepper says, the "absolute anteriority implied by the structure of allegory [implied by the framing process of introjection] may project itself forward toward a moment of understanding, whether it is Proust's 'later I understood' or Hegel's projection of the spirit's self-recognition over the course of its trajectory" (166). In Freudian terms, we can point to the way in which the past shock gives rise to a formation, to a *structure* that both precedes and exceeds the intelligibility of the witness's speaking body, but particularly, to the ways in which it re-presents the Real.

Trauma theorists are only beginning to understand the enigma that is the speaking body of the witness or survivor. Building upon Felman's work in this field, Butler observes that

> [i]n speaking, the act that the body is performing is never fully understood; the body is the blindspot of speech, that which acts in excess of what is said, but which also acts in and through what is said. That the speech act is a bodily act means that the act is redoubled in the moment of speech: there is what is said, and then there is a

> kind of saying that the bodily "instrument" of the utterance performs. (*Excitable Speech* 11)

Somewhat differently, the speaking body of the trauma survivor does not consciously *intend* necessarily coherent speech acts or utterances, but neither does the speaking body unconsciously intend to display symptoms or affects that betray and reveal the memories that have been buried, in many cases, for the better part of thirty years. The phenomenon of Holocaust signification has been examined by Edith Wyshogrod in *Spirit in Ashes*, where she writes that "[i]n the death-world, new meanings become affixed to the body through the systematic substitution of pain for the ordinary complex of meanings that constitute our corporeal transactions. This fixing of meaning through the language of pain lies outside any linguistic referential system. In fact it is first noticed as a gap in linguistic possibility: there seems to be no language which can make sense either of the death-world as a whole or of the particular experiences it generates" (30). Traumatic fixation also incurs the transformation of bodily meanings into enigmatic signifiers, whereby sedimented bodily meanings such as gender can themselves be suspended or annexed by the forces or acts of mourning and re-membering. Given Butler's earlier statement on how the speaking body

serves as the blindspot of speech, we might further ask if certain forms of speech or symbolization, those inflected by trauma and loss, might not act as the blind spot of History? The survivor's speaking body, an entity that is dissociated from the speech acts and lost objects to which they refer, functions as a metaphorical image to the extent that it "screens" the survivor's own traumatic history. But this same speaking body, with its truncated expressions and helpless gestures, also functions as a photographic image, as a literalization of the horror of the death scene, a scene that is both psychically refused and yet indelibly imprinted upon the flesh. In his discussion of unconscious affect, Ron Katwan asks, "How is it that the symptoms of the neurotic, the memories of the victim or the repetition compulsion of the survivors of traumas display a meaningful pattern that is obviously associated with a particular, earlier event? How do we account for this fact if the event was never experienced, never represented, and never symbolically registered?" ("Affect in the Work of J-F Lyotard" 13). To answer this question, we could speculate that what the viewers of *Shoah* "see" resembles art insofar as what appears in a meaningful pattern are the shifting optical registers of the speaking body, oscillating imperceptibly between metaphorical and literal images of

the survivor as he or she is suspended in cyclic time. This "aesthetic" effect can be conceived as a chiaroscuro, one whose perceptual and cognitive boundaries are themselves effected by the oscillation between the processes of cinematic introjection and incorporation, thus also representing the epistemic shifts between the subject's own shadows of incomprehension and blinding moments of revelation. Torok identifies this form of oscillation as an important element in the creation of desire, with her statement that "introjection confers on the object, and on the analyst, the role of mediation toward the unconscious. Moving back and forth between the "narcissistic and objectal realms," … introjection transforms instinctual promptings into desires and fantasies of desire, making them fit to receive a name and the right to exist and unfold in the objectal sphere" ("Exquisite Corpse" 113). Introjection, in the film *Shoah*, similarly works to transform "instinctual promptings" (such as traumatic affects and memories) into an historical allegory of desire, one that seeks to confer a name upon the events that are being interrogated and exhibited as objects of historical inquiry. As Edith Wyshogrod adds, "[o]nce the desire to represent the dead is conceived as the motive for survival, this hope begins to

irradiate behavior in the present. If one survives, one retains a memory of one's stance in extremis" (19). Hence, the catastrophic knowledge that the film's spectator must come away with is that, as these bodies speak, they are also reliving the moments of their own prior deaths. Or, in other words, as these bodies speak, they are also dying. They are speaking from the inside of death which, turned "right-side out," makes the "skin of memory" that Charlotte Delbo describes as her traumatic "self" at once immortalized and mortified as a singular expression of the cinematic body (and of the body of knowledge it transmits).

Thus we approach the paradox that exists at the very center of any attempt to speak from out of the enigma of traumatic remembrance is one that Felman defines as the act of "testifying from the inside of death, the deadness and the very suicide of the witness" (*Testimony* 228; original emphasis removed). What exactly does this *mean*? In what ways can we even begin to comprehend the idiom that bears the death imprint, to understand the syntax or grammar of a vernacular that speaks both to and from out of the death camp experience? Felman singles out a scene in *Shoah* between a Polish witness, Czeslaw Borowi, Claude Lanzmann, and his interviewer, which illustrates her point about speaking from inside of death. The segment to

which Felman is referring is part of a longer interview, interspersed with the testimonies of other witnesses, set in present-day Treblinka, regarding the interactions between participants and observers at the time:

Borowi: Lots of people opened the doors, or escaped through the windows. Sometimes the Ukrainians fired through the car walls. It happened chiefly at night. When the Jews talked to each other, as he showed us, the Ukrainians wanted things quiet, and they asked … yes, asked them to shut up. So the Jews shut up and the guard moved off. Then the Jews started talking again, in their language, as he says: ra-ra-ra, and so on.

Lanzmann: *What's he mean,* la-la-la? *What's he trying to imitate* ?

Interviewer: Their language.

Lanzmann: *No, ask him. Was the Jews' noise something special*?

Interviewer: They spoke Jew.

Lanzmann: *Does Mr. Borowi understand "Jew"*?

Interviewer: No. (30-31; italics in original)

Regarding this exchange, Felman suggests that "[t]o testify *from inside Otherness* is thus to be prepared, perhaps, to bear witness from within a "ra-ra-ra," to be prepared to

testify not merely in a foreign language but *from inside the very language of the Other*: to speak from within the Other's tongue insofar *as the tongue of the Other* is by definition the tongue we do not speak, the tongue that , by its very nature and position, one by definition *does not understand*. To testify from inside Otherness is thus to bear witness from the living pathos of a tongue which nonetheless is bound to be heard as mere noise" (231; original emphasis). Though it might seem at first that the unintelligibility of the Yiddish dialect being spoken by the Jews at Treblinka functions as a straightforward case of linguistic non-comprehension, as Felman points out, much more is going on here in terms of the abyss that exists not only between languages, but between groups of witnesses in relation to such historical scenes. In the ear of the other, to Czeslaw Borowi (the other to the experience of either the train rides or the death-camps), the enigmatic sounds of the Jews speaking to each other becomes translated and remembered only as a set of enigmatic signifiers - "ra-ra-ra" - that signify "mere noise."

The untranslatability of the Jews' speech or dialect by Borowi, the primary witness, similarly fails to transmit or to *mean* something to the interviewer, who thus cannot interpret Borowi's imitation of the language being spoken

by the Jews. Lanzmann, in his direction of this exchange, rather astutely picks up on the possibility of a different idiom occurring within the death-camp language, one that might be described as "something special," that is, something that exists outside the mundane or quotidian experience of language. By gesturing towards the impossibility of ever knowing or understanding the experience of the Jews in that particular situation, the signifier "ra-ra-ra" functions to encrypt that scene and thus to literally *contain* the horrifying implications of those scenes and events. In other words, the "ra-ra-ra" - not quite babble, but certainly not intelligent speech - serves as a linguistic monument to the unspeakable and, for the most part, unthinkable death scenes which occurred in the train cars and the death-camps. Klaus-Dieter Gottschalk, in "The Dis- and Reappearance of Reference in Idioms," notes that that when "reference is out of question for those who have the expression as part of their lexicon[,] [t]he idiom has reached the ultimate stage in frozen decomposability" (410). In other words, since idioms do not acquire their denotative meanings from the meanings of their individual constituents or grammatical parts, signification takes place through a system of semantic reference characterized by its "contextual

oddness" (408). The disappearance of reference, therefore, accrues a "stylistic effect" (410), thus reconstituting the very conditions by which an idiom (in this case, the death idiom) comes into existence as a "diachronic process," a slice in time and in memory. What is at stake in the deciphering of the "ra-ra-ra" for Lanzmann and his historiographical project is being able to establish the reality of certain situations and phrases, being able to decode expressions otherwise devoid of sense. As Lyotard observes in *The Differend*,"[i]t is when the object of history is further submitted to a procedure for validating a cognitive phrase (when it becomes an object of historical inquiry) that it also becomes the referent of ostensive phrases and thereby finds itself situation in a field by means of deictics. (look there it is, the proof I was looking for!)" (50). Crucially, Lyotard goes on to emphasize that "[t]he referent of an ostensive (object of perception) and the referent of a nominative (object of history) are utterly different" (51). In Borowi's eye-witness account, the idiom (and ostensive phrase), the "ra-ra-ra," similarly serves as the object of perception, of what was "seen," whose relation to the referent of a nominative (the Jews' and their speech) does not correspond logically, or at least not in the way that would make this

utterance belong to "the cognitive genre" (Lyotard, *The Differend* 51).

In part, this cleft between the object of history and the object of perception, in their relation to an interrogative mode that seeks to synchronically "situate" the enigmatic signifier and its field of reference, can be attributed to the fracture within the act of interpellation itself that is occurring throughout this exchange. Using an idiom, which is little more than a smudge in the symbolic, an enigmatic signifier, to allocate and to validate historical reference to a scene witnessed by an outsider, a non-Jew, works in another way within the film as a form of introjection and interpellation. With respect to the first process, introjection, Abraham and Torok state that "[t]o introject a wish, a grief, or a situation is to dispose of it through language in a communion of empty mouths. To achieve this transition, the presence of the object must be superseded by the auto-apprehension of its absence" ("Introjection-Incorporation" 6). What Lanzmann is trying to do is to "fill-out" the enigmatic signifier "ra-ra-ra" for the spectator, to assign some value to the speech and to the scene, the object of perception, in which the Jews' fate within history can be temporalized or calibrated, given some semblance of historical and

linguistic recognition. How this happens is through the introjection - or more precisely - the interjections of Lanzmann and the interviewer (re)constitute the semantic and social content of the enigmatic signifier. Langer, *in Holocaust Testimonies*, acknowledges that such forms of semantic contouring occur through an interrogative process or mode in which "the subtle urging of the interviewer … can lead a witness to shift from one form of memory to another, and indeed control and shape the content of each" (9). Laplanche, in *Seduction, Translation, and the Drives* describes a similar process that occurs in the psychoanalytic session, whereby the "implantation of the message of the other" in the form of an enigmatic signifier reproduces the "primal situation" (the primal scene). In this cinematic instance, however, the primal scene being reproduced or represented is the primal scene of style, one that unfolds within and through, as Langer envisions, the linguistic "event" that is oral testimony. The primal scene of oral survivor testimony remains here, for all intense purposes, an act of intertextuality: there can be no unfolding or unraveling of History without the interjections of the cinematographer or director that frame and form the "subject of history" (taken in Lukacher's sense as "something essential in historical experience"

that emerges from the intertextual juxtapositioning and fusing of philosophy, psychoanalysis and literature at their most fundamental level, that is, their historical level (*Primal Scenes* 13)). Regarding this situation, Laplanche offers a theory of seduction in which the enigma of the traumatic scene figures centrally. This passage is worth quoting at length because it illuminates the *sculpting* process of *Shoah's* interrogative mode in its creation of a cinematic body:

> First, there is the traumatic element -- or Better, micro-traumatic situation - of the subject faced by the enigma posed by the other, who, in this case,says nothing. As in all trauma, "energy" is created this way … My second aspect concerns the difference between what I call "hollowed out" transference and "embossed" transference (transfert en creux et transfert en plein). Whether explicitly or not, all formulations of transference continue to say that the subject on the couch continues to relive past events in relation to the analyst. The analyst is sufficiently neutral to allow these experiences to modify and elaborate in their own way. In this view, the analyst is in a "hollowed

> out" position. If, though, the analyst projects into this hollowed out space the fullness of associations in relation to an imago or unconscious image of a former object, he will fill it. This is what I call an "embossed transference … So the essential in all this is that we do not only or mainly re-live in analysis painful experiences of people who were cruel to us … but rather an enigmatic relationship - what could that have meant at the time. (12-13)

In the Borowi interview, the subject faced by the enigma of the other is Czeslaw Borowi, who either does not or pretends not to understand what the experience of seeing the Jews dying in the train cars could have possibly "meant" at the time. Put into the position of the analyst or the "subject supposed to know," Claude Lanzmann seeks to "emboss" the enigmatic signifier designating the Jews' speech and, by extension, reconstructing the scene both as an object of perception (but specifically, Borowi's topographical and cognitive relation to the scene(s)) and as the subject of history. What is interesting about this process, whose psychoanalytic principles form the foundation of trauma theory, is the way in which it poses the question of what it means to speak from the inside of

death in ways that expose the operations of introjection in the constitution of meaning around the "subject of history." What eludes understanding, and what it seems Lanzmann is trying to get at in this interview, is also the dynamic of the temporal relation between the "event" or scene of a cognitive disruption and its incorporation into linguistically structured, conscious experience. The etioliation or weakening of linguistic connections in lieu of unthinkable realities and scenes contribute to the cognitive rupture that exists in/as the speaking witness; as Wyshogrod states,

> the very failure to develop a radically new language … attest to the unique linguistic situation of the death-world. Since new syntactic and semiotic possibilities arise from the enrichment of the field of experience and not from its depletion, the linguistic process itself must reflect this shrinkage. In fact the older language remains. It is permitted to subsist while new and contradictory meanings are added. The existing system is made to go proxy for these Additions which occur at the most primordial levels of experience. (30)

Given this statement, we can see how, in many ways, the scene of traumatic witnessing resembles, in its linguistic situation, the scene of seduction that Laplanche recognizes as inherently lacking a proper methodology or process with respect to its inability to either decode such a scene's temporal doubleness or analyze its archaic, affect-laden "style." But there is also something else at stake for comprehending the premises of such cinematic reconstruction: namely, that the person asking the questions is not "sufficiently neutral" (as in the case of the psychoanalyst) and that his or her position necessarily influences the ways in the film's spectator interprets the "enigmatic relationship" between the witness and the event that is unfolding before his or her senses.

Such a recognition becomes important for understanding the second part of the process of "translation" or transference that is taking place in the Borowi interview, that of interpellation. Felman astutely points out that "[w]hat is at stake in this [the film's] division [of the various positions of witnessing] is not only a diversity of points of view or of degrees of implication and emotional involvement, but the incommensurability of different topographical and cognitive positions. More concretely,

what the film exhibits [are] different performances of the act of seeing" ("Film as Witness" 93). There is another factor Felman does not entertain in her analysis of this film, which is the role of the camera and of the cinematic apparatus in creating or enforcing those spectatorial and cognitive incommensurabilities. Indeed, as Vivian Sobchack points out in *The Address of the Eye*, "descriptions of the "physiology" of the camera's perception and the projector's expression and the screen as an organizing and organized field have not adequately accounted for what the film is as a particular form of existence and meaning" (167). The question of how to *structure* such forms of "seeing" and "meaning" is one that Lanzmann wrestled with in his final editing and composition of the film. His primary question, the one he asked himself repeatedly, was "[a]t which moment is it too late? When was it not too late? How will this story be helped?" (Interview 89). He admits in his own interview about the making of *Shoah*, "I know I was obsessed with these questions. I was asking myself: "How to transmit these questions? How to transmit these feelings to the spectators, to the viewers of the film?" (89). But Lanzmann also asserts, [b]ut these were all the … I don't want to say moral questions, but all the questions of content were immediately questions of technique and

questions of form" (90). For the most part, the corporeal and psychic topographies being evoked through the questions being asked and the survivor's or witnesses's speech frame a question of the Other (the Other in one of its manifestations being the inside of death) that cannot be answered, or at least not in the idiom that we are accustomed to listening for.

The interpellation of the film's spectator as a secondary witness to the events of the Holocaust through these means, however, implies a prior staging of the mise-en-scène in which the primary spectators and witnesses are hailed or interpellated as subjects. In her essay, "Conscience Doth Make Subjects of Us All," Butler points out that not only does the "call" through which a subject is hailed arrive "severally and in implicit and unspoken ways," but the scene itself in which such a call is staged can be conceived of as "exemplary and allegorical, [insofar as] … it never needs to happen for its effectivity to be presumed" (*Psychic Life* 106). Butler goes on to say that if it [the scene of interpellation] is allegorical in Benjamin's sense, then the process literalized by the allegory is precisely what resists narration, what exceeds the narrativizability of events. Interpellation, on this

account, is not an event, but a certain way of *staging the call*, where the call, as staged, becomes deliteralized in the course of its exposition or *darstellung*" (106-7; original emphasis). Consequently, we can understand the *mise-en-scène* being staged in and through the cinematic introjection of trauma theory, with its emphasis upon having the witness relive, remember and reenact the "original" historical scene in order to remove the blockage in memory and in the subject's ongoing character formation, as also operating to expose the *something* (whether in the form of an enigmatic signifier, the unconscious affect, or the historical Real) that exceeds and resists narration.

The assumption and assignation of guilt that is implied in the very structure or form of that staging and its call is what, according to Althusser, enables subject formation to take place. But it is also, crucially, what exposes the absence of a proper history for such forms of ideological interpellation, insofar as this mode of representation, of representing the unrepresentable, is also (using Langer's earlier observation) *about* finding proper words for improper places, that is, about naming and categorizing - introjecting (in the psychoanalytic sense) - what only exists as an abstract category or non-entity. In

Heidegger and the "jews" Lyotard offers a valuable insight with respect to this form of categorical confusion, when he explains,

> I use the lower case [in "the jews"] to indicate that I am not thinking of a nation. I make it plural to signify that it is neither a figure nor a political (Zionism), religious (Judaism), or philosophical (Jewish philosophy) subject that I put forward under this name. I use quotation marks to avoid confusing these "jews" with real Jews. What is most real about real Jews is that Europe, in any case, does not know what to do with them: Christians demand their conversion; monarchs expel them; republics assimilate them; Nazis exterminate them. "The jews" are the object of dismissal with which Jews, in particular, are afflicted in reality. (3)

Returning to Borowi's interview, we can see how both the category "the jews" and the "real Jews" are being invoked and circulated to produce a "vision" of an historical reality whose specific "ends" may, in effect, be the affective disruption that occurs through the temporalization of such "unarticulated elements" and their embedded or implied scenes. If we recall, Lanzmann is the

one in the interview who asks, "Was the Jews' noise something special?" (31). To which the interviewer replies, "They spoke Jew" (31). Being a Jew, in this situation, coincides with the speech acts themselves; Borowi cannot "read" more into the situation, cannot interpret the "new meanings" that bodies accrue under such circumstances, precisely because of a refused identification. As Butler also argues, "[i]nterpellation is "barred" from success not by a structurally permanent form of prohibition (or foreclosure) but by its inability to determine the constitutive field of the human. If conscience is one form that the passionate attachment to existence takes, then the failure of interpellation is to be found precisely in the passionate attachment that also allows it to work" (*Psychic Life* 129). In some senses, then, the interpellation enabled by the literal staging of the trauma scene fails to fully constitute the category of the Jews for Borowi, the primary witness; and as a result of this failed interpellation, the Jews who were falling out of train cars do not occupy the "field of the human" for Borowi: they become, like the language they speak, an abstract or reified identity category, foreclosing upon the possibility of ever forging a "passionate attachment" to their persons or their plight. "What does testimony mean,"

Felman queries, "if it is not simply (as we commonly perceive it) the observing, recording and remembering of an event, but a unique and irreplaceable *position* with respect to what is witnessed? ("Film as Witness" 92; original emphasis). Or, as she further stresses, testimony becomes defined by "what and how they [the witnesses] do not *see* and *how they fail to witness*" ("Film as Witness" 93; original emphasis). Insofar as testimony refers back to a structure that makes representation possible in the first place, it also simultaneously erases or negates the symbolic "attachments" that figuratively and phantasmatically perform the temporality of "being" on the historical stage.

If, as Lukacher argues, "[s]tyle is defined in the continuum between the possibility of an absolutely private language and that of an "end of style"" (*Primal Scenes* 183) then perhaps even the stylizing of the traumatic Real in such productions can be conceived as the dispossession of historical consciousness leading to the parodic dissimulation of fixed (social and individual) identity. The primal scenes of oral testimony literally being fleshed out in this film speak directly to the ways in which style, or any other form of mnemonic expression, "cannot bring

back the dead, undo the horror, or reestablish the safety, the authenticity and the harmony of what was home" (Laub, "Truth and Testimony" 73-74). Rather, an attention to style, but specifically, attention to the style of oral survivor testimony and to its constitutive blindness may be the "only way not to turn away from a reality which is literally blinding" (Lanzmann, "The Obscenity of Understanding" 204). Reconstructing the "exquisite corpse" of traumatic memory in the form of a cinematic body or presence, style is what embosses and colors the otherwise "blank rhetoric" of the critical discourse that circulates around the Shoah. As Felman points out, "both the film and psychoanalysis institute a quest for the past that nevertheless chooses to take place though the present, through images and events of the present and of the present alone, through the contemporaneous event of speech" ("The Obscenity of Understanding" 202). In this sense, Shoah's cinematic style acts as the means by which the temporal distance between the traumatic event and its corporeal effects or affects can be calibrated to better gauge the space between the *arche* and *telos* of trauma theory itself, including its presuppositions and purposes for understanding and generating the "truth." Style thus enables the secondary spectator a way of entering into the

relation between what is said and what is remembered, the relation to understanding the virtually incomprehensible events of the Holocaust, by positioning the witness *within* the enigmatic relations being filled-out and re-presented by the film's specularization and interrogation of the witness's speaking body.

To whom? To what does a name go back? But a present going back, a going back in the present, a bringing back to the present, to whatever kind of haunting return or unheimlich homecoming: isn't that already the law of the name?
Jacques Derrida, "Fors"

Incommensurability, heterogeneity, the differend, the persistence of proper names, the absence of a supreme tribunal? - A well-executed work of mourning for Being?
J-F Lyotard, *The Differend*

Souvenirs of the mortal body are not so much a nostalgic celebration of the past as they are an erasure of the significance of history.
Susan Stewart, *On Longing*

Aesthetic Identity and the AIDS Memorial Quilt: The Reinvention of Style?

The reinvention of style through written and oral testimony that takes place in and through the cultural event known as the AIDS Memorial Quilt requires yet another reconsideration of the ways in which a traumatic idiom can be developed, or more precisely, enveloped within the heterogeneity of hegemonic signifying practices. Distinguished from other forms of memorial and historiography, the AIDS Quilt is the only one of its type constructed for lives lost to an epidemic. Unlike any other

memorial in the history of Western civilization, the Quilt literalizes both psychic and symbolic forms of mourning by incorporating some of the bodies of the dead into its very fabric of representation. The complex and diverse means by which this cultural artifact names, remembers, inscribes, represents, buries, and memorializes the dead accords it a singular position within the history of the epidemic. In part, the Quilt's singularity derives from its capacity to restructure and to performatively reconstitute the aesthetics of mourning in Western culture; but, perhaps even importantly with respect to the social performance of memory, the Quilt serves as the site in which the primal scenes of the epidemic can be symbolically revisited and reenacted through the construction of a "ground" whose very failure to represent the unrepresentable necessitates and enables its function as a traumatic *mode* of address. What gives this object its singular status within the representation of history, or more specifically, a history-in-the-making is that it consists of an epidemic of mourning practices, each of which seeks to recreate or reproduce either the lost object or the trauma itself. Producing a range of psychic, social, political and linguistic effects in this way, the Quilt exists as the index of a Real, or, as Cathy Caruth would put it, as the index of a "history that literally *has no place*, neither in the past, in which it was

not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood" (Intro. II, 153; original emphasis). Because the history of the AIDS epidemic is also a traumatic history, the means by which this artifact seeks to transmit the unrepresentable across political, cultural, and even temporal boundaries becomes crucial to understanding the ways in which primal scenes of the epidemic (especially with regards to science and to identity politics) are being reconstructed in the *present* through the *mise-en-scène* of this aesthetic event.

Consisting of over fifty thousand panels, the AIDS Quilt display in its entirety affords the spectator a unique opportunity to witness the epidemic's conspective death scenes. By walking into and amongst a virtual field of dead bodies, partially symbolized by the semiotic paraphernalia of nostalgic remembrance, the spectator can partake in a mourning ritual that purposely seeks to orchestrate public emotion and the performance of social memory by garnering sympathy and support for those who have died from AIDS. This semiotic paraphernalia involves, as a bare minimum, the inscription of names and dates upon each of the panels allotted the actual space of a dead body or coffin (roughly four by six feet). Transitional objects and other *memento mori* used to remember and to represent the dead include such diverse items as screen prints, photographs, clothing

articles (such as pajamas, jeans, leather jackets, ballroom dresses, high-heeled shoes), feather boas, sequins, handcuffs, baby outfits and toys, stuffed animals, opera tickets, credit cards, and bowling pins. The revival of such forms of mourning in our own age, Caroline Bynum notes, "evidence a sophisticated understanding of the role physical transitional objects can play in carrying our love and grief as we mourn" (11-12). As in the Middle Ages, the display of such personal relics and *memento mori* produce the illusion of the dead body's *presence* or *immanence* to the object itself. Bynum recalls that in the Middle Ages "dead bodies were extraordinarily charged objects - fields of force which emanated miracles or the work of demons" (23), and that "relics, especially pieces of clothing that were worn next to the body, were what kept the person *present*" (11; original emphasis). The deployment of such images and transitional objects in the AIDS Quilt act as a device through which "discourse and policy about epidemics constitute the body through its location, re-, dis-, trans-, and mis- location prior to the inscriptions of coherent notions of self- other" (Patton, "Performativity" 176). Moving from one display site to another, the Quilt literalizes a process that occurs at the macro-political level, in its constitution of both the body politic and the "others" that will define and delimit its boundaries of

social intelligibility. On the one hand, as in the medieval medical imagination, the Quilt allegorizes both the psychic relation and the perceived otherness that occurs when the grieving subject cannot properly incorporate or introject the lost other or love object; in this way, the monstrosity of the loss and the monstrous transformation of the grieving subject are figuratively given a *place* within the cultural imaginary. The spectator or mourner's activity at the Quilt display functions both as a socially symbolic act (an expression of collective mourning) and a form of traumatic repetition or return, one that is indissociable from the nature of the event itself, often conceived as a form of theater. On the other hand, the Quilt's public spectacle of melancholy and mourning can be conceived as a form of theatrical contagion, indissociable in many senses from the communicable disease [HIV/AIDS] to which it refers, in its transgression or violation of any number of metaphysical boundaries: physical, social, conceptual and linguistic.

What contributes to this metaphysical process of semiotic transvaluation, enacted through the very spectacle of mourning, is the death image or, more precisely, the *force* of the death image, which, as Derrida suggests, is that which would "trouble, disturb, dislocate the very form of the question "what is?," the imperturbable "what is?," the authority of what is called the ontological question"

(174). In his essay, "By Force of Mourning," Derrida theorizes that because the force of image "protects" itself and is protected from such ontologies, it is that which "envelops or develops within itself a thought of death" (175). He proposes that "only death, which is not, or rather mourning, which takes its place in advance, can open up this space of absolute *dynamis*: force, virtue, the possible as such, without which one understands nothing of the power of the image" (175-6). Mourning, therefore, constitutes the name, "or one of the names, of this affect [the force of being], which is the "being of the image" or "the *being-to-death* of an image that has the force" (176; original emphasis). Derrida's ambiguous formulation of the ontological status and the force of the death-image (the example he uses is the "*face* of the dead in their portraiture" (177; original emphasis)) gestures toward the existence of an "essence [in the work] that remains possible *as such*" (177). As in the Quilt, the death image is what is immanent to the object and essential to the understanding of its performative force in the reconstitution of other structures of mourning and in the transfiguration of those bodies and death images into icons of the disease itself. Such modes of representation differ drastically from other forms of visual or oral testimony such as Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, which refuse to represent mass-extermination and the

death-worlds of the Holocaust through the usage of death images. Lanzmann opts instead for a deceptively simple interrogative mode that operates in complex ways to introject (that is, to incorporate and then to project) the traumatic memories of those prior death scenes onto a "screen" that defuses or deflects cultural anxieties about the ethics of those forms of historiography. But similar to other historical *styles* of mourning and remembrance, especially those that arise in plague conditions, the Quilt involves a complex interrelation of tomb, literary tradition, and visual image, thus re-enacting the epidemic's own primal scenes in terms of identity politics and medicine through the very staging of the *mise-en-scène* wherein the forces of mourning and intertextuality coalesce.

The Quilt's *mise-en-scène* is the result of a complex aesthetic labor that produces a mirage of dead bodies virtually strewn upon the surface of a holographic Real. Part of the Quilt's sublimity derives from its ability to invoke and to reproduce a traumatic real through its imaginary construction of the conspective death scene, wherein past, present, and future imaginings of death, deterioration, and disease are powerfully condensed into a symbol of the Real.

Both the sublimity of the Quilt's scale and the force of its accumulated effects could not have been anticipated

by Cleve Jones, the Quilt's co-founder, when he told reporters early in the epidemic and in the Quilt's history that "if this were a meadow and there were one thousand corpses lying out there and people could see it, they would have to respond on some level" (interview cited in Sturken, 73). The spectator's response, elicited through the sensory (visual, aural, and tactile) experience of this artifact, is always already implicated in the ways that this object creates patterns of intelligibility for the epidemic by constituting the scenes and images in which disease becomes consolidated *as* identity. Susan Stewart argues that such macabre souvenirs and images of death "mark the horrible transformation of meaning into materiality more than they mark, as other souvenirs do, the transformation of materiality into meaning" (*On Longing* 140). Thus, the transformation of pre-existing social meanings (though the Quilt's presentation of culturally overdetermined objects of remembrance) into materiality (e.g. into the practices, whether institutional, medical, legal, social and so forth that affect the bodies of Persons With AIDS (PWAs)) take place through the *staging* and *performance* of those arbitrary semiotic relations. But the performance of those meanings also requires that the object itself acts as the mode by which the literal displacement of the epidemic's primal scenes -- the primal scenes of words and images -- occur.

If the AIDS Memorial Quilt functions as a cultural screen for the epidemic's primal scenes, as a screen onto which the general public quite literally can dis-place its own fears and anxieties about the disease or the epidemic, then it does so through a form of transubstantiation: one in which the *experience* of traumatic or melancholic affect transpires precisely through the "horrible transformation of meaning into materiality." David Lemos, the Quilt's former director, points out that the "opening ceremonies of folding and unfolding the panels, reading the names, signing signature panels, and walking through the display [serve] as highly orchestrated elements of a direct experience" (cited in Sturken, 76). But this "direct experience" does not account for the forms and the formation of unconscious affect, whether in the form of a traumatic address or its possible after-effects. What needs to be examined more closely are the ways in which such forms of traumatic address traverse linguistic and cultural divides, yet similarly *refer* to and reconstruct the originary scenes of seduction, that is, those primal scenes of the AIDS epidemic. As Susan Stewart further argues, "[i]n contrast to the restoration offered by such gestures as the return of saints' relics, these [death] souvenirs mark the end of sacred narrative and the interjection of the curse. Ironically, such phenomena themselves can later be reframed in an ensuing metonymic

displacement such as the punk and kitsch appropriations of fascist material culture" (*On Longing* 140). Perhaps, as Daniel Harris and other AIDS activists have noted, it is not so much that the return of relics and souvenirs mark "the interjection of the curse" as they do the introjection of certain taboos and prohibitions *within* the signifying practices of the Quilt, as they are protected or enveloped by the sanctified images found without.

The question of whether or not the Quilt's kitsch constitutes a metonymic displacement of queer identity already in circulation within scientific discourse and mainstream culture is one that activists such as Daniel Harris considered early in the epidemic. In his article, "Making Kitsch From AIDS," Harris acidly remarks that AIDS is the first disease to have its own gift shop (55). For Harris, the Quilt serves as the "sublime expression of AIDS kitsch" because it represents America's boundless commodification of the disease itself, packaged and sold in the form of folkloric nostalgia to a "general population" that hitherto had been unresponsive to calls for support from the gay community. Identifying the Quilt's nostalgic modes of production and representation as a "device that is intended to manipulate the way the Quilt is judged by the uninfected" (60), Harris defines this form of AIDS representation as taking place along a horizon of

intelligibility that also invokes sacred narrative in order to reiterate the "curse" of American epidemic culture, the homosexual threat being reframed precisely through those hegemonic kitsch appropriations, as Stewart suggests above. Harris's point is well taken, for the most part reflecting what Lyotard observes as being true more generally of (post-)modern aesthetics: namely that "modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure" (*The Postmodern Condition* 195). Following this logic, Timothy Engström further suggests that "[i]n order for radical postmodern form to be capable of denying solace and pleasure … there must be an association between what has just been disassociated: form and content" (195). Because for those on the 'inside,' those who occupy the death-worlds and the limits of the social per se as outsiders or abjects, the Quilt's association between gay and/or queer identity and its putative social content must be "read" as false, as that which in some way distorts their own experience of mourning. In line with this recognition, Harris criticizes the "recognizable consistency" of the Quilt's representation of queers in the following way: "[j]ust as activists attempt to make the disease appealing

to the consumer by counteracting homophobic stereotypes with desexed images of AIDS martyrs, so the Quilt wraps the epidemic's infantilized victims in what amounts to a macabre security blanket, an ideological shield" (60). Yet, there is an important contrary function of the object as "ideological shield"; for it is what enables the apprehension of sublimity and unconscious affect. As Engström further states, "we sense sublimity only by relative comparison to what is culturally paradigmatic (or normal), that we work or play in the spaces between paradigms and their margins as these become figured (i.e. when artifactual producers - scientific, aesthetic and/or their culture-critics -- succeed in generating or illuminating some sort of ill-fit, when they get us to be interested in or attend to a compelling difference)" (194). If inadvertently the Quilt's producers manage to generate or produce some "ill fit," as Engström proposes, then that semiotic rupture works doubly to obscure and to secure a set of regulatory fictions about gay identity that circulate as a form of "truth." Early in the epidemic, one such fiction was that there existed a homogeneity of social intention (evidenced vicariously through the Quilt as the manifestation of a political desire to end the disease and the epidemic), and the other fiction was that there was social homogeneity in the face of the suffering and deaths

exacted by the epidemic (evidenced in the myth that the deaths and the death-worlds of AIDS victims were comparable irrespective of race, class, sexuality, gender, age and so forth). Queer representation and the representation of queers (in the public's appropriation of kitsch symbols), then as now, occludes and elides the specificity (and singularity) of the lives and the losses resulting from AIDS.

The invocation of the sublime effect through a distinctive "will-to-style" poses a unique set of problems with respect to the status of testimony and witnessing. "It is very important, very important," Lyotard stresses, "to remember that no one can -- by writing, by painting, by anything - pretend to be witness and truthful reporter of, be "equal" to the sublime affection, without being rendered guilty of falsification and imposture through this very pretension" (*The Differend* 45). In keeping with the idea of the sublime as a "feeling of the mind"(44), Lyotard emphasizes that "[t]he sublime cannot be produced, nor does it "project" itself, it simply happens" (45). As a feeling of the mind, a state which may or may not be fully conscious, the sublime enters into history as that which somehow escapes being fully represented; indeed, it appears only through the pretensions of the symbolic, that is, through its pretense to effect what it only imperfectly

refers to. One of the problems gay critics have had with the Quilt is its disturbing elision between the form (its sublime scale) and its referents (the central one being that of "homosexuality"). Because the formal illusion of a "sublime rupture eventuating in unity" (Yingling 307) slides into the referent of identity, the preterited queerness and horror of this object cannot be incorporated by heteronormative structures of knowledge. Thus, what Lyotard calls the "sublime affection" becomes coincident with the representation of queer *affectation* and *stylization;* hence, although the formal and referential "sublimities" of the Quilt are intimately connected and mutually enforcing, they are not necessarily identical in terms of how they constitute social memory around the event.

Insofar as the Quilt's aesthetic "unity" also sustains a form of cultural amnesia that takes the form of an avowed indifference to sexual difference, it becomes necessary to differentiate this form of willful forgetting from the "reversible forgetting" (Lyotard, *Heidegger* 5) implied in traumatic address itself, in its "defection" from the sensible or the ordinary. In contradistinction to ordinary or narrative memory, traumatic memory contains no social content as such and proves to be intractable to forms of narrativization and symbolization. In this way, the traumatic memory evoked under highly specified conditions

(such as the invocation of the original trauma or any its particular elements or memory triggers) can also be conceived as a form of sublime expression, one which traverses cultural and linguistic boundaries in the form of a traumatic address. Caruth ventures that

> [t]he meaning of trauma's address beyond itself concerns … not only individual isolation but a wider historical isolation that, in our time, is communicated on the level of cultures . . . Such an address can be located . . . more generally in the survivors of catastrophes addressing the survivors of another . . . In a catastrophic age, that is, trauma itself may provide the link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves. (11)

Given this statement, it seems crucial to consider the ways in which "trauma's address beyond itself," as the sublime expression of what cannot be directly signified or symbolized, functions as a way of stylizing the real, that is, of reconfiguring past memories and future constructions of the epidemic in such a way that affects real bodies.

Since international quilts occupy the periphery of the visual field when the American AIDS Quilt is shown in its entirety, the isolation of these national and non-Western quilt sections constitutes a form of *cultural* sublimity, thus shading into the sublimity of scale and queer referentiality by virtue of their physical and optical placement rather than solely through their semiotic differences.

What seems like an abyss in terms of deciphering the semantics of sex and death across cultures may turn out, as Caruth suggests, to exist at the level of culture, but as the social hieroglyphs, enigmatic signifiers, idioms, phrases, and differends that encode the temporality of disease within a metaphysics of "identity." The example of the international quilts points to the ways in which such forms of traumatic address are recognizable only retroactively, and along a horizon of intelligibility created precisely by the "lateralities" and peripherals of our own failed ways of cultural seeing and knowing. Regarding this form of traumatic memory reconstruction (what Freud would have called *Nachträglichkeit*) and the linkage of the proper name to *sense* or meaning, Lyotard states that

> [t]he thing one sees has a backside which is no longer or not yet seen and which might be seen. The phenomenologist says: similarly,

> vision does not take place along a line which puts the viewer and the viewed in contact, but within a field of visibility full of half-glimpsed lateralities. In order to see, one oscillates between the current or actual and the possible by repeated pulsations.
>
> (*The Differend* 45)

Because, for Lyotard, "[r]eality is not a matter of the absolute eyewitness, but a matter of the future" (53), the act of bearing witness in the present involves an obstruction in the form of a perceptual or conceptual eclipse; the "backside" or *verso* of the thing which one does not see is what we might understand as a traumatic style, characterized by the temporal oscillations made possible through the object (the Quilt) as a *mise-en-scène*. Through these oscillations, representations of the "current or actual" and the "possible" encode and transmit queer identity in and through a field of vision that semiotically transforms the sublime scale into the sublime referent, the peripheral sexualities or homosexualities that exist as "half-glimpsed lateralities" within the purview of the public gaze. In *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* Jacqueline Rose states that "[i]n fact it is clear that the perception of an absence can have meaning only in relation to a presence or oppositional term, to a structure - that of

sexual difference -within which the instance of perception *already finds its place*" (202; original emphasis). The materialization of identity must always be understood in the context of the Quilt's own status as a sublime object, an object, that is, whose ontological composition is a frame of reference through which a form of cultural "truth" structures itself as a question of the Other. To be able to perceive the sublime anti-bodies featured on the Quilt as somehow lacking means that the spectator already is aware of the social structures in which the notion of such "lack" is discursively grounded. The "knowing" spectator (especially the queer or gay subject) must respond to the demand or imperative for identity that this artifact and its instance of perception constitutes as a form of interpellation. To be absented from certain forms of *representation* (also to be understood in the legal sense) in the larger social order as well as in its aesthetic manifestations is to be "fixed" as a queer subject, a locus of non-meaning, in a representational field that is aesthetically coded as a production largely by and for middle America. To find a place within this *structure* (despite one's identificatory estrangement from it) thus is to be able to give testimony, to address the incommensurability between the materiality of the text and the materialities of the bodies signified within.

Finding a "place" is what Derrida understands as the moment of linguistic and stylistic invention, a moment that occurs precisely through the process of naming and assigning meaning to a thing.[1] The oscillation between present and future (or actual and hypothetical) in constructing social identity that becomes indissociable from the disease itself and its acquired meanings thus constitutes a "model" for further stylizations; as Umberto Eco remarks in *A Theory of Semiotics*, "what in a given historical period may be viewed as an invention projection, in another period becomes a stylization" (260). Crucially, he also points to the way in which a topographical mode exists prior to the dislocations and transformations being enacted, because this mode is "the result of a previous transformation . . . which has definitely become a stylization and as such is the result of a replica. Clothes in general are replicable" (260). The sublime anti-bodies and proper names that comprise the AIDS quilt might be considered a form of aesthetic identity. This form of identity is precisely a mode of structuring individual experience and social norms of identity through a highly ritualized production, a field of vision, that takes as its object, not the referent - the persons named and

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[1] In *Acts of Literature* Derrida writes, "[w]hat is an invention? What does it do? It *finds* something for the first time. And the ambiguity lies in the word "find." To find is to invent when the experience of finding takes place for the first time" (337).

represented - but a real social and political impossibility that will circulate as truth in a given representational field. Aesthetic identity, then, is not merely an imaginary effect constituted by the synecdochal logic that is proper to the Quilt's primary signifying modes, but the structuring tension between the form of testimony being made in the name of an aesthetic mode and the social matrix. It is precisely through the inscription, circulation, and display of these sublime anti-bodies that a reality for AIDS and the PWA become mutually enforcing myths or, to use Eco's term, "topographical transformations" (257) whose performative potential exists in and through the prior status of these regulatory constructions in hegemonic discourse. Elsewhere with respect to cryptic inscriptions, Derrida explains that "[i]t is because the associations in themselves constitute words or parts of words that act like visible and/or audible bodies or things that … [Abraham and Torok] are hesitant to speak of metonymic displacement here, or even to trust themselves to a catalogue of rhetorical figures" ("Fors" xlii). That is to say that in the conversion of a traumatic event or occurrence (which the AIDS Quilt display in its entirely certainly is) into some form of regulatory norm or fiction, the "topographical transformations" which happen are literalized in such a way that an identificatory

relation comes to function like authentic or "actual" identity, as that which symbolizes the Real.

When we view the AIDS Quilt, we look into it as we would a fractured mirror. What we think we see is a surface that reflects, ever so imperfectly, the coordinates of our own desires, but which may be, in fact, a form of historical desire evidenced through a culturally distinctive "will-to-style." Perhaps what informs the Quilt's virtual performance of the Real is what Derrida describes as "a desire for idiom" or an "idiom of desire" ("Fors" xlvii); such idioms refer to a system wherein "general (national) codes are diverted and exploited, at the cost of certain transactions, in a type of economy that thenceforth is neither purely idiomatic (the absolutely indecipherable) nor simply commonplace (conventional and transparent)" (xlvii). A "desire for idiom" thus might be conceived as that which appears to render the Quilt immediately intelligible, as in the desire to make legible a sense of trauma and loss at the mundane level of utterance. I am thinking here of the writing on many of the panels, with comments such as "Marvin, your grandson has your smiles" or "I didn't get a chance to say goodbye." While these phrases seem devoid of any referential significance, the *desire for idiom* (in Torok and Abraham's work) means that certain words or images are excluded from representation because of a fear to speak out,

to betray too much information, for example, to an angry and unpredictable public (at least this was the case early in the epidemic). Richard Mohr argues that "[b]ecause the panels are not essentially tributes, in the sense of honor paid to the dead, their stories -- the dead's - need not have been sanitized, as so many have obviously been. Lies of omission abound" (21). In making this statement, Mohr does not seem to realize that such omissions or elisions conform to a preteritive economy of language in which the specificity of homosexual acts is defrayed or deflected. This is a linguistic situation in which, as Abraham and Torok identify, "*the words themselves, expressing desire, are deemed to be generators of a situation that must be avoided and voided retroactively*" (*Wolf-Man's Magic Word* 20; original emphasis). Preterition is usually understood as a rhetorical function of language that invokes a thing precisely through the imperative to absent, with the effect that the imperative is itself brought into relief and often functions instead to demarcate exactly what is excluded from a given symbolic order. But preterition can also work through semiosis, as in the AIDS Quilt, where the imperative to represent homosexual identity primarily through the mundane symbols of cross-dressing and other cultural stereotypes operates to reinforce a nation's scrupulously maintained borders of social intelligibility.

Conversely, the "idiom of desire" that pervades every fiber of the Quilt is also what marks it as a sublime object, that is, as a certain *lack* in the social imaginary. For to desire the dead, to desire to be dead, to desire the P WA, and by extension, to have or desire "homosexual" desire, entails the thinking of a list of cultural taboos that the Quilt must reflect, on some level, but also semiotically deflect or displace. When quilt panels are left unsigned, or the names, dates and details of personal identity are withheld for fear of public retribution, this does not necessarily mean, as Marita Sturken remarks, these panels "are not about authorship or individual production" (72). Rather, I would argue that a blank or effaced panel can just as easily signify loss, trauma, and death as eloquently as a signed or highly decorated panel, if not more so. Preterition, in this sense, signifies the presence of a traumatically induced or produced desire within the order of language. What is preterited in such cases is the differend which, according to Lyotard, is

> the unstable and instant of language wherein something which must be able to put into phrases cannot yet be. This state includes silence, which is a negative phrase, but it also calls upon phrases which are in principle possible. This state is signaled by what one ordinarily

> calls a feeling: "One cannot find the words," etc.
>
> (*The Differend* 13)

Silence, however, is also the means by which constraints are placed on what can be said in a given order of language, within a given regime of power. As part of what defines the "national" boundaries of an "idiom of desire," silence also works to foreclose upon other expressions of loss and identity that in some way challenge the status quo of a given mode of intelligibility.

For the most part, there has been a protracted silence about a particular panel on the part of the NAMES Foundation and by critics more generally. It is not that anyone has "forgotten" about this panel per se, but as a proleptic act of mourning - as a personal act of remembrance and dedication that takes place prior to the artist's own death from AIDS - this exquisitely beautiful panel by Noriyasu Akase constitutes a cognitive and political rupture in terms of the "style" and the "will-to-style" that the American Quilt as a whole represents, since most of the other quilts are constructed *in memoriam*. As Marita Sturken first remarked, one of the significant features of this panel is that the "dying artist painted calligraphy using red paint mixed with his own blood, literally fixing his body and virus within the quilt" (74). Transformed by the virus and

the discourses informing its cultural intelligibility, this artist's self-inscription of AIDS identity marks quite literally the loss associated with witnessing one's own death, one's own traumatic real. As such, this panel represents a grieving process that is both conscious and unconscious - a state of half-mourning - whereby the subject is acutely aware of some of the losses he is experiencing as a result of having AIDS, but at the same time is not conscious of *what* it is he has exactly lost as a result of those other more material losses, whether they take the form of his own sexuality and desires, his physical ability, loss of employment, loss of contact with the outside world, or any number of things. For Cleve Jones, Akase's presentation of this panel at the NAMES Foundation in San Francisco very early into the epidemic constituted an unforgettable moment in his own activist work; everything about the panel - its macabre mode of inscription, its cultural idiom, and its classical rather than kitschy aesthetic - stood outside of Jones's own world-view and the one he projected onto the AIDS Quilt.

Yet, looking back, there is a crucial sense in which Akase's panel, even at the time of its presentation to the NAMES Project, fit into a larger national pattern of AIDS discourse, one that Cindy Patton identifies as a form of

"linguistic orientalism" (*Fatal Advice* 115).[2] As opposed to the symbolic and stylistic orientalism of Akase's panel, this "linguistic orientalism" resulted from efforts by safe sex educators in the late 1980s and 90s to appropriate and redeploy sexual vernaculars as a means of refashioning clinical discourse in the image of popular culture. In this linguistic and corporate economy, Cindy Patton points out, "[l]inguistic transgression signaled a sublime realism" (115), whereby the recontextualized, though still "unvarnished," prose of popular culture and certain sexual subcultures operated as an "erotic ground zero" (115). The failure of such campaigns to inaugurate or sustain a sexual will-to-knowledge, one that would impact precisely those communities they were trying to target, occurred largely because, as Patton observes, those "bawdy terms were treated like foreign words that have become standard usage but remain italicized to indicate their perpetual otherness and

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[2] I am grateful to Cindy Patton for encouraging me to think about the AIDS Quilt panels being produced in Taiwan and in other eastern locales, and for offering her assistance in trying to secure a videotape or photographs of the Quilt display in Taiwan in the spring of 1997. The mistakes I make in interpreting this panel or the larger events in which such panels appear are entirely my own, and are not the result of the astute observations and suggestions that Cindy Patton made regarding such panels during our conversations at the Summer AIDS Institute (Spring 1997). What is worth noting about the construction of these panels, as opposed to the "American" panels, is that entire sections are being produced and displayed by those *subjects* as political statements on the part of those who have

their magical power to remain untranslatable" (115). In other words, the appropriation of such vulgar sexual language only served to estrange those terms from the cultural context that they were intended to reflect and to represent in the first place. This form of "linguistic orientalism" also informed the argument about whether or not the AIDS Quilt ought to be responsible for informing its public about the erotic and sexual practices of those individuals who were named and represented on its panels. But despite protests from activists (such as Harris and Mohr), the Quilt's overarching "will-to-style" remained (in the words of one supporter) a "carnival of tackiness," whose political and performative potential was thought to inhere in its ability to garner public support and sympathy for the gay community in the form of a highly commodified product. The Quilt's purpose, therefore, was always less of an attempt to "educate" the public about the disease and its modes of transmission, than it was to reassure the "general public" that AIDS remained specific to and contained within certain communities, and that those communities or counter-cultures were immediately recognizable under the rubric of certain signs or symbols. Given this political agenda, Akase's panel exemplifies how certain representations exist as forms of traumatic address within such discursive

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contracted HIV/AIDS, precisely as proleptic acts of

economies. In a crucial sense, the addressee of the panel is the Quilt itself and its preteritive economy, with its political silencing of the cultural "others" included within, and constitutive of, its own stylistic boundaries. To address the Quilt, however, risks having the Quilt quite literally incorporate the stylistic singularity of the individual panel, with its own culturally-specific will-to-style. Since Akase's panel used to be a part of the American AIDS Quilt, this incorporation and ensuing silence around this panel appear to substantiate this claim. Yet, crucially, Akase's panel also enables an understanding of how certain forms of traumatic address not only become such within certain discursive domains but how they circulate at the level of culture, as Caruth suggests, in the form of returns and reenactments that come back to haunt us, precisely through their status as enigmatic signifiers of "other" scenes of sexual seduction.

This is, it seems, what Caruth means when she says that "trauma itself may provide the link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves" (11). That is, the "histories" which enable us to decipher cultural difference do not further the knowledge of

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mourning.

"the traumas of contemporary history," seeing as the history of a trauma implies a principle of incommensurability and epistemological indeterminacy. But neither does the panel as a form traumatic address necessarily reveal any more about the individual's past history, as a reading of the inscription on Akase's panel will illustrate. Indeed, Akase's panel involves a number of linguistic situations in which back-translation cannot be used, as in the places where single words (as stimuli for word or sense association) must be translated without context. The Japanese symbol for love at the very top of the panel and the symbol for the heart in the dead middle of the panel are two such instances. For both of these symbols, the mode of inscription, the mixing of Akase's HIV infected blood with the red ink, makes the intended inflection (political and linguistic) of the classical Japanese calligraphy even more difficult to interpret as the sign of a cross-cultural universal of affective meaning. Is it that both love and the heart are themselves infected by the virus and the artist's untimely death from AIDS? Do these symbols, in and of themselves, carry cultural resonances that are here literally tainted with the presence of the virus and the blood? Are these blood-soaked letters to be "read" against the gold (and untainted) calligraphy that exists alongside these symbols in Chinese script? Given that only the

Japanese characters are written in blood, is it significant that these blood-soaked inscriptions frame another form of ideological discourse or hermeneutic possibility? Or is it that such signifiers and their means of inscription are what carry within them the possibility for re-inscription and traumatic return, as that which can only be repeated as a form of singularity? Across the top of the panel (fig.1), under the symbol for love, Akase's Japanese calligraphy invokes the title of a Buddhist sutra - "hannya - ha-ra-mitsu-ta-shin-kyo" -- whose incantation insures the individual of a favorable after-life.[3] Does the voice speaking from out of this form of incantation or repetition act as form of "self-declared rapture" (to use Gayatri Spivak's phrase), in which the letting of blood and the lettering in blood serves as a form of mimetic act that forestalls against a form of "false triumphalism," largely Western in its conception of the imperviousness of the

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[3] I would like to express my indebtedness and gratitude to the two scholars in the Russian, Slavic, and East Asian Studies Dept. at the University of Calgary, who provided me with an impromptu translation of Akase's quilt and a perceptive, invigorating reading of its aesthetic codes and nuances. Also, it must be noted that a number of versions of this paper were presented at other academic venues, such as the Free Exchange Conference (1996) at the University of Calgary and published as proceedings (1997), at the "Women, History and Medical Discourse" Conference at the University of Western Ontario (Oct. 96), at the AIDS Summer Institute (May/June 1997), and at the Intra-University Aesthetics Symposium (University of Calgary, Nickle Arts Museum, Feb. 1998).

individual's spirit.[4] A form of suicide is implied in the letting of blood that goes against, yet also parallels, the mode of survival that dying from AIDS ironically gestures towards. The Chinese characters on the panel, neatly arranged into groups of five characters interspersed amongst the Japanese script, read "Death, birth, originally are fate. The rich and wealthy are from heaven. This is a word by the ancient people. My life is not "special" [or singular]. The clever one has a short life; the ignorant one has a long life. The ignorant one has a lot of money, the smart man has no money." This prose is then framed by the date of the artist's death - April 3, 1991 - and the words, "Wind. Clouds. Convey it! Akase writes." The entire panel, whose background is a luminous white silk, is framed by a red border, just inside of which are the blood-soaked hand prints of the artist, strategically placed at each corner of the panel. Akase's imprintation of personal identity through the preservation of his hand- and finger- prints seems to suspend the prior assertion in Chinese that his life is not "special."

As a form of sublime expression, this imprintation marks the advent of the primal scene of style for this act of testimony; it is the "voice" that speaks out of the

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[4] This phrase was taken from a plenary speech given by Gayatri Spivak at a conference called "Flesh-Eating Technologies" at the Banff Arts Centre (Dec. 97).

silence imposed by the past of a given culture in an idiom that does not yet have a "place" within a particular "universe" of possible speech acts. The singularity of the "voice" that articulates, remembers, and identifies the speaking body of the witness -- the body which succumbed to AIDS - does not exist outside of the "sexual mosaic" (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 72) that the Quilt represents, but neither does it completely exist within its conceptual parameters. The abiding question here is not whether the speaking body is real, but that the "voice" with which it articulates its intentions becomes its constitutive silence. In *The Differend* Lyotard approaches this question by asking,

> [b]ut the body is real? -- The body "proper" is a name from the family of idiolects. It is, further, the referent of sentences obeying diverse regimes. Insofar as a "toothache is a pain, its lived," but "How do you verify that it's lived? You are the sole addressee of that pain. It is like the voice of God: "You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed" (Zettel, no. 717). Wittgenstein adds: "That is a grammatical remark." It circumscribes what an idiolect is: "I" am alone in hearing it. This idiolect falls

> easily under the dilemma (8): if your lived experience is not communicable, you cannot bear witness to its existence; if it is, you cannot say you are the only one who can bear witness to its existence. (83)

Lyotard's statement thus brings us back to the relation between the "speaking" body (as a system of idiolects) and its specific mode of traumatic address. Testifying from the inside of death and its otherness means that it becomes impossible to bear witness to the experience of pain and loss without first addressing that which can bear witness to its existence, in this case, the Quilt and its spectators, who can only verify the status of this "inside" through the enigmatic expressions of a prior scene of seduction that makes the current scene intelligible only in view of that absent cause. Following this logic, Akase's body is *real* and is *realized* through the force of mourning derived precisely through his own inscription of a "family of idiolects." Bearing witness to this "speaking" body means that there is a disjunction or rupture between the enigmatic reference of the "sentences" inscribed as a form of proleptic mourning, insofar as these "sentences" or idiolects refer both to the past of the individual and to the pasts of cultures to which he belongs. The traumatic address of the speaking body, then, invokes another kind of

history in which different forms of desire might emerge as very coordinates of the historical Real.

This returns us to the question of whether style is able to negotiate the loss of singularity that occurs when its structures are encoded as a form of traumatic address, that is, when such structures are foregrounded as the very limits of symbolic representation through the *performance* of noncodifiable or nonmimetic acts. The singular effect, which is here also to be conceived as the sublime affect, becomes indissociable from the hallucinatory visions that serve to contain the aesthetic expression from the mundane realities of social existence. By re-enacting different forms of silencing, the sublime anti-bodies of the AIDS Memorial Quilt frame a question of the Other, the Other, in this instance, being those same evolving idiolects and expressions encoded within a larger production, in itself an "exquisite corpse" that functions as a silent marker of the very limits of style and of the human body.

Prominent Japanese artist and calligrapher
Noriyasu Akase (1936-1991)
created his own panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt of Japan.

Fig 1 Kippen

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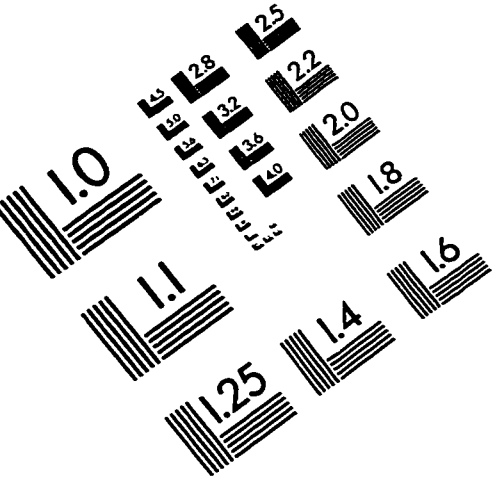

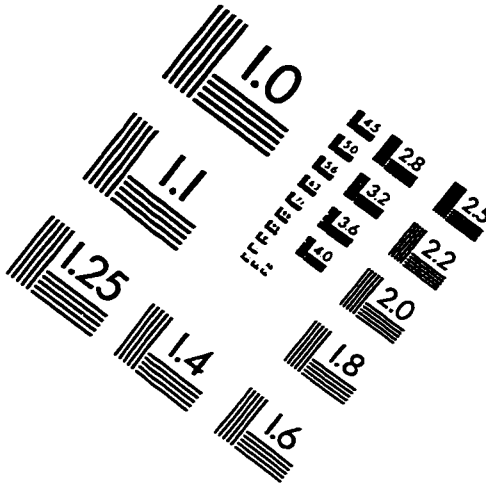

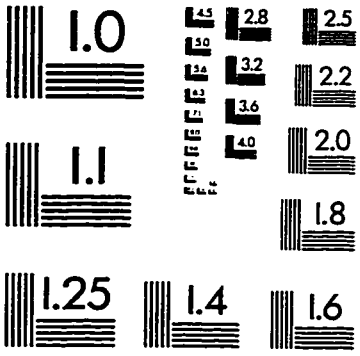

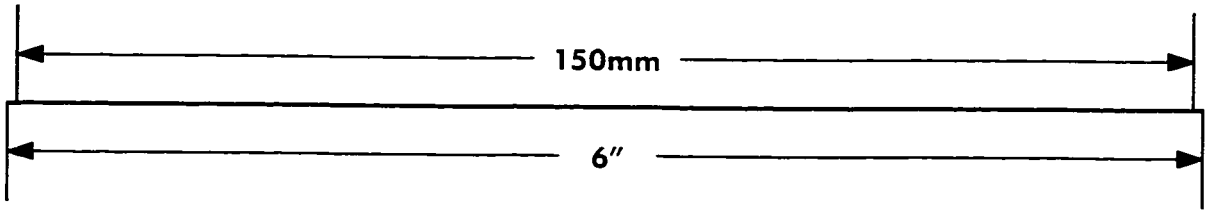

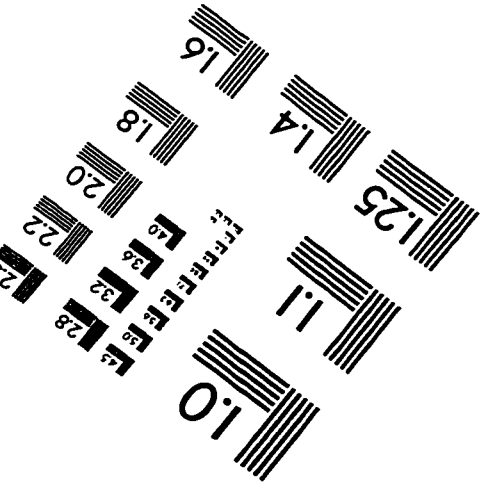

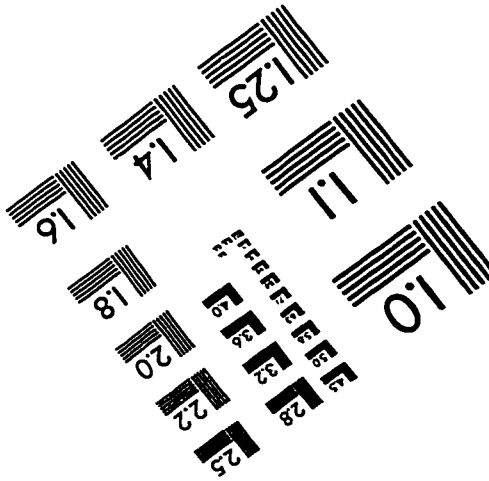

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