

Pursuit of the Situationist Subject

Frances Stracey

University College London

PhD Thesis

September 2001



Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge a three year full time research grant from The Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB). Many thanks are due to Dr Briony Fer for all her help and advice as my supervisor. I am indebted to the time, information and free catalogues given to me by Michèle Bernstein and to Jacqueline de Jong for our e-mail correspondence. The International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam provided access and copies of many rare documents. Special thanks to Stewart Martin for his always productive and insightful comments and his round the clock help and support throughout the writing of this thesis.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the aesthetic and political formation of the subject within the Situationist International (1957-1972) through the demonstration of its constitutive role in certain exemplary Situationist works. This is complemented by a critical elaboration of the Situationist subject, with particular attention to the construction of its sexuality. The thesis therefore counters the general neglect of the Situationist subject in recent scholarship and its corresponding misrepresentation of the work of the Situationist International.

The Introduction analyses the Situationists' concept of the subject through their definitions of 'situationist', 'constructed situation', 'phenomeno-praxis' and 'theory-in-practice'. Chapter 1, 'The Cavern of Anti-Matter', focuses on the social and psychic conditions of the subject as it emerges through Pinot Gallizio's installation. Chapter 2, 'The Situationist Image: Exchange, Excess and the Traffic in Waste', analyses the Situationists' critique of the economy of the image in the 'society of the Spectacle' through the model of a potlatch economy, which is developed in terms of certain feminist critiques. Chapter 3, 'Graffiti and the Trace of Subversion', investigates the emergence of the subject on the streets of Paris during the events of May 1968, providing a detailed exegesis of Raoul Vaneigem's concept of 'radical subjectivity' in relation to certain images of graffiti. Chapter 4, 'Surviving History: Remembrance and the Situationist Archive', analyses the historical construction of the subject through the Situationists' alternative model of the archive, developed in order to avoid conventional forms of monumentalization.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	p. 4
Introduction	p. 10
Chapter 1: The Cavern of Anti-Matter	p. 29
Chapter 2: The Situationist Image: Exchange, Excess and the Traffic in Waste	p. 80
Chapter 3: Graffiti and the Trace of Subversion	p. 127
Chapter 4: Surviving History: Remembrance and a Situationist Archive	p. 169
Illustrations	p. 214
Bibliography	p. 295

List of Illustrations

Fig. 1 Photographer Unknown: Guy Debord in Paris, c.1957. Reproduced in Phil Baker's review, 'Culture Vulture' in *The Guardian* (Saturday, August 25, 2001), p. 10.

Fig. 2 Photographer Unknown: Guy Debord, Michèle Bernstein and Asger Jorn, Paris, 1957. Reproduced in Guy Debord, *Panegyrique: Vol. II* (Librairie Arthème Fayard: Paris, 1997), not paginated.

Fig. 3 Giuseppe Pinot Gallizio: *The Cavern of Anti-Matter*, installation at the Galerie René Drouin, Paris, 1959. Reproduced in *Situationists, Art, Politics, Urbanism*, edited by Libero Andreotti and Xavier Costa (MAC: Barcelona, 1996), frontispiece.

Fig. 4 Ludwig II of Bavaria: 'The Grotto of Venus' at the Linderhof Palace, Bavaria, Germany, 1876-1877. Reproduced in Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1998), p. 112.

Fig. 5 Yves Klein: *Anthropométries de l'époque bleue*, performance at the Galerie Internationale D'Art Contemporain, Paris, March 9, 1960. Reproduced in exhibition catalogue, *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object: 1949-1979* (Thames & Hudson: London, 1998), p. 32.

Fig. 6 Giuseppe Pinot Gallizio: Length of Industrial Painting (detail), c. 1958. Reproduced in *Pinot Gallizio* (La Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, July 1960), not paginated.

Fig. 7 Giuseppe Pinot Gallizio: *Pinot Gallizio prépare ses couleurs*, c.1959. Reproduced in *Pinot Gallizio* (La Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, July 1960), not paginated.

Fig. 8 Giuseppe Pinot Gallizio: Gallizio, assistant and dog at the Experimental Laboratory, Alba, Italy, c. 1958. Reproduced in *Pinot Gallizio* (La Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, July 1960), not paginated.

Fig. 9 Giuseppe Pinot Gallizio: Auction sale of pieces of Industrial Painting at the Galerie van de Loo, Munich, Germany, April 1959. Reproduced in exhibition catalogue, *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object: 1949-1979* (Thames & Hudson: London, 1998), p. 249.

Fig. 10 Photographer Unknown: Artists working outside the Experimental Laboratory in Alba, 1956 and the 'machine' table used to produce Industrial Painting. Reproduced in *Pinot Gallizio* (La Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, July 1960), not paginated.

Fig. 11 Giuseppe Pinot Gallizio: Gallizio and a roll of Industrial Painting at the Galerie van de Loo, Munich, Germany, 1958. Reproduced in *Pinot Gallizio* (La Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, July 1960), not paginated.

Fig. 12 Photographer Unknown: Gallizio visiting a Gypsy Camp in Alba, c. 1959. Reproduced in *Pinot Gallizio* (La Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, July 1960), not paginated.

Fig. 13 Photographer Unknown: Gallizio at work with the caption: *et la chaleur à laquelle ils sont accoutumés est si excessive que celle qu'il fait ici au fond de l'Afrique les glacerait*. Reproduced in *internationale situationniste* (no. 2, December, 1958), p. 29.

Fig. 14 Photographer Unknown: Model dressed in Industrial Painting with the caption: *la réalité provisoire, in la caverne de l'anti-matière*, Galerie René Drouin, Paris, 1959. Reproduced in *Pinot Gallizio* (La Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, July 1960), not paginated.

Fig. 15 Photographer Unknown: Two 'cover-girls' being prepared for an installation of Industrial Painting at the Galerie Notizie, Turin, 1958. Reproduced in Roberto Ohrt, *Phantom Avantgarde: Eine Geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst* (Edition Nautilus: Hamburg, 1990), p. 192.

Fig. 16 Photographer Unknown: *Critique de l'urbanisme (Supermarket à Los Angeles, août, 1965)*. Reproduced in *internationale situationniste* (no. 10, March, 1966), p. 5.

Fig. 17 Photographer Unknown: *Playing with Rifled Cash Register*, 1965, Los Angeles. Reproduced in *internationale situationniste* (no. 10, March, 1966), p. 6.

Fig. 18 Guy Debord: *L'Univers se retourne à la pointe des seins, détourné* illustration, c. 1955 in *Les Lèvres Nues* (no. 8, May, 1956), p. 8.

Fig. 19 Photographer Unknown: *Détournement* of 'bikini-babe' by Michèle Bernstein, c. 1958 in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p. 5.

Fig. 20 Photographer Unknown: *Détournement* of 'babe' by Michèle Bernstein, c. 1958 in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p. 7.

Fig. 21 Photographer Unknown: *Détournement* of 'bikini-babe' by Michèle Bernstein, c. 1958 in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p. 11.

Fig. 22 Photographer Unknown: *Détournement* of 'bikini-babe' by Michèle Bernstein, c. 1958 in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p. 24.

Fig. 23 Photographer Unknown: *Détournement* of 'bikini-babe' by Michèle Bernstein, c. 1958 in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p. 26.

Fig. 24 Photographer Unknown: *Détournement* of 'Brigitte Bardot, reclining on horseback' by Michèle Bernstein, c. 1958 in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p. 30.

Fig. 25 J.V. Martin: "*je ne connais rien de mieux que coucher avec un mineur Asturien: Voilà des homes!*", *détourné* photo, c. 1963, in *internationale situationniste* (no. 9, August, 1964), p. 21.

Fig. 26 J.V. Martin: "*L'émancipation des travailleurs sera l'oeuvre des travailleurs eux-mêmes*", *détourné* photo, c. 1963, in *internationale situationniste* (no. 9, August, 1964), p. 36.

Fig. 27 Photographer Unknown: Street scene, Paris, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 64.

Fig. 28 Guy Debord: “*Le Proletariat Comme Sujet et Comme Représentation*”, détourné cartoon strip, c. 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), pp. 174-5.

Fig. 29 Comité pour le maintien des occupations (C.M.D.O): Song sheet affiche, June, 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 145.

Fig. 30 Photographer Unknown: Graffiti and Posters, Paris, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), pp. 134-5.

Fig. 31 Guy Debord: ‘*ne travaillez jamais*’, 1953, chalk graffiti, in Guy Debord, *Panegyrique: Vol. II* (Librairie Arthème Fayard: Paris, 1997), not paginated.

Fig. 32 Guy Debord: ‘*Directive: No. 2*’, 1963, oil on canvas, in Guy Debord, *Panegyrique: Vol. II* (Librairie Arthème Fayard: Paris, 1997), not paginated.

Fig. 33 Asger Jorn: *Le canard inquiétant*, 1959, 54 x 46 cm, oil on canvas. Silkeborg Kunstmuseum, Denmark.

Fig. 34 Jacques de la Villeglé and Raymond Hains: *Ach, Alma, Manétero*, February 1949, Affiche/décollage, 58 x 256 cm (detail). Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d’Art Moderne, Paris.

Fig. 35 François Dufrêne: “*Au 136 du Boulevard Saint-Germain, zone bleue*”, 1966. Reproduced in Benjamin Buchloh, ‘From Detail to Fragment: Décollage Affichiste’ in *October* (no. 56, Spring, 1991), pp. 99-110, (p. 109).

Fig. 36 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti ‘*ça saigne*’, Paris, May 1968, in *L’Imagination Au Pouvoir*, edited by Walter Lewino (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), not paginated.

Fig. 37 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti ‘*la société est une fleur carnivore*’, Paris, May 1968 in *L’Imagination Au Pouvoir*, edited by Walter Lewino (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), not paginated.

Fig. 38 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti ‘*vivre sans temps mort*’, Paris, May 1968 in *L’Imagination Au Pouvoir*, edited by Walter Lewino (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), not paginated.

Fig. 39 Photographer Unknown: Street protestors, Paris, may 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 56.

Fig. 40 Photographer Unknown: Line up of riot police outside the Sorbonne, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), pp. 48-9.

Fig. 41 Photographer Unknown: Police fire tear gas, Paris, 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 117.

Fig. 42 Photographer Unknown: Police round up rioters, Paris, 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), pp. 66-7.

Fig. 43 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti 'C.R.S: S.S', Paris, 1968 in *L'Imagination Au Pouvoir*, edited by Walter Lewino (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), not paginated.

Fig. 44 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti 'flics', Paris, 1968 in *L'Imagination Au Pouvoir*, edited by Walter Lewino (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), not paginated.

Fig. 45 Photographer Unknown: Street protestors, Paris, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 120.

Fig. 46 Photographer Unknown: Collection of posters outside the Sorbonne, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 140.

Fig. 47 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti 'volez', Paris, May 1968 in *L'Imagination Au Pouvoir*, edited by Walter Lewino (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), not paginated.

Fig. 48 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti 'soyez cruel' (detail), Sorbonne, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 99.

Fig. 49 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti 'je jouis dans les pavés' (detail), Paris, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 62.

Fig. 50 Situationist International/CMDO: *Détourné* poster 'Aaaahhh!!! L'internationale situationniste!!!', outside the Sorbonne, 14th May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 76.

Fig. 51 Photographer Unknown: Graffiti 'sous les paves, la plage', Paris, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 143.

Fig. 52 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti 'cache-toi objet', Sorbonne, May 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 98.

Fig. 53 Photographer Jo Schanpp: Graffiti '*je prends mes desirs*', Sorbonne, may 1968. Reproduced in *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968, reprinted 1998), p. 100.

Fig. 54 Photographer Jo Schnapp: Graffiti '*guerilla urbaine*', Paris, 1968 in *L'Imagination Au Pouvoir*, edited by Walter Lewino (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), not paginated.

Fig. 55 Designer Unknown: *La récupération vulgaire*, poster for commercial film, c. 1969 in *internationale situationniste* (no. 12, September, 1969), p. 103.

Fig. 56 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 57 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Front cover of *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition).

Fig. 58 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 59 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 60 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 61 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 62 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 63 Asger Jorn and Guy Debord: Page from *Fin de Copenhague* (1957). *Fin de Copenhague* (Editions Allia: Paris, 1985 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 64 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 65 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 66 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 67 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 68 Asger Jorn and Guy Debord: Last page from *Fin de Copenhague* (1957). *Fin de Copenhague* (Editions Allia: Paris, 1985 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 69 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 70 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 71 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 72 Guy Debord and Asger Jorn: Page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993 edition), not paginated.

Fig. 73 Michèle Bernstein: *Victory of the Commune of Paris*, c. 1963, mixed media (destroyed in 1965) in exhibition catalogue *Destruktion AF RSG-6* (Galerie EXI: Odense, Denmark, 1963), p. 8.

Fig. 74 Guy Debord: 'Directive', 1963, oil on canvas. Reproduced in Roberto Ohrt, *Phantom Avantgarde: Eine Geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst* (Edition Nautilus: Hamburg, 1990), p. 270.

Fig. 75 J.V. Martin: *Whoever Won The War-We Lost It*, 1963, mixed media in exhibition catalogue *Destruktion AF RSG-6* (Galerie EXI: Odense, Denmark, 1963), p. 26.

Fig. 76 Photographer Unknown: Michèle Bernstein drinking, c. 1963 in exhibition catalogue *Destruktion AF RSG-6* (Galerie EXI: Odense, Denmark, 1963), p. 7.

Fig. 77 Photographer Unknown: Georges Mathieu, public painting action, Japan, 1957. Reproduced in *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object; 1949-1979* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1998), p. 132.

Fig. 78 Bernstein, Debord and Jorn: Top image: Bernstein, *Victory of the Paris Commune*, c. 1963, mixed media (detail); Bottom image Debord and Jorn, page from *Mémoires*, c. 1958. Both images reproduced in Roberto Ohrt, *Phantom Avantgarde: Eine Geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst* (Edition Nautilus: Hamburg, 1990), p. 274.

Fig. 79 Michèle Bernstein: *Victoire de la bande à Bonnot*, c. 1963, mixed media (detail) in *internationale situationniste* (no. 9, August, 1964), p. 43.

Fig. 80 Gerhard Richter: *Panels I and 2 of Atlas*, 1962-present. Reproduced in Benjamin Buchloh, 'Gerhard Richter's *Atlas*: The Anomic Archive' in *October* (no. 88, Spring, 1999), pp. 117-45, (p. 135).

Fig. 81 Photographer Unknown: *Le Quartier-Général Situationniste Au Dernier Soir* in *internationale situationniste* (no. 10, March, 1966), p. 24. (Photo credited to Quick, 4.4.65).

Introduction

In 1997, the journal *October* published a special issue dedicated to ‘Guy Debord and the Internationale situationniste’.¹ In his introductory essay, ‘Rereading Debord, Rereading the Situationists’, Thomas F. McDonough describes this special issue as a contribution to the project of ‘archival retrieval, reconstruction, and historicization’ of the Situationist legacy, in the face of its increasing ‘mythologizing—engaged in by both sympathetic and hostile commentators’ in the wake of Guy Debord’s suicide on November 30th, 1994.² Together, all the essays and texts gathered in this special issue, provide an opportunity to: ‘reassess Debord and his colleagues in a new context—not as timeless “classics” of a melancholic pessimism, but as figures centrally engaged in the cultural politics of their time’.³

The first essay in this collection of reassessments, entitled ‘Why Art Can’t Kill the Situationist International’ is a contribution by two former members of the Situationist International, namely T.J.Clark and Donald Nicholson-Smith.⁴ The two authors claim that they were compelled to write this corrective essay as a response to two particular misrepresentations of the Situationist movement published in the journal *NewLeft Review*: namely Régis Debray’s ‘Remarks on the Spectacle’ published in 1995, and an earlier commentary by Peter Wollen ‘The Situationist International’ in 1989.⁵ In general, Clark and Nicholson-Smith castigate the *NLR*’s efforts to invent a history of ‘Situationism’ notable for its attempts to ‘avoid dealing with the moment, in the last

¹ *October*, Special Issue (no. 79, Winter, 1997) with guest editor Thomas F. McDonough.

² Thomas F. McDonough, ‘Rereading Debord, Rereading the Situationists’, *ibid*, pp. 3-14, (p. 5).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5. In particular, McDonough singles out Sadie Plant and Greil Marcus for their ‘insensitivity to history’ (p.7). Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: The Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1989); Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (Routledge: London, 1992).

⁴ T.J.Clark and Donald Nicholson-Smith, ‘Why Art Can’t Kill the Situationist International’ in *October*, (no. 79, Winter, 1997), pp. 15-31.

⁵ Régis Debray, ‘Remarks on the Spectacle’ in *NLR* (no. 214, November/December, 1995) and Peter Wollen, ‘The Situationist International’ in *NLR* (no. 174, March/April, 1989).

years of the 1960s, when forms of Situationist-influenced politics actually confronted the journal's own so called "mainstream" or "classical" Marxism'.⁶ A more particular point of contention, however, concerned Peter Wollen's misinformed declaration that after 1962 the works produced by the Situationists could be characterized by the 'total elimination of art except in propagandist and agitational forms';⁷ the consequence of which was that 'theory displaced art as the vanguard activity, and politics...was postponed till the day when it would be placed on the agenda by the spontaneous revolt of those who executed rather than gave orders'.⁸ Wollen's neat bifurcation of the Situationist movement into an early artistic phase, followed by a political vanguardism is (as Thomas McDonough also notes) typical of the histories of the Situationist International.⁹ According to this view, the Situationist movement split into an artistic phase, beginning with the group's formation in 1957 and associated with the Italian painter Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio, the Danish painter Asger Jorn and the Dutch architect Constant, which was then succeeded by a radical faction gathered around the figure of Guy Debord, who allegedly considered the practice of art as a compensatory gesture, insufficient for the task of the total socio-political revolution of the society of the 'spectacle'.¹⁰

It is true that by 1961 most of the artists had left the Situationist International, either voluntarily or by expulsion and at the fifth Situationist conference, in the late summer of 1961, at Göteborg in Sweden, the idea of the creation of a 'situationist' art was dropped. However, this was meant to enable the alternative production of what

⁶ Clark and Nicholson-Smith, 'Why Art Can't Kill the Situationist International', p. 18.

⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹ For example see Miriam-D Maayan, 'From Aesthetic to Political Vanguard: The Situationist International, 1957-1968' in *Arts Magazine* (vol. 65, January, 1989), pp. 49-53.

¹⁰ Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle* (Editions Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1967). This book provides a critique of the imagistic economy of the Spectacle, the Situationists' term for the late phase of capitalism. An analysis of the economy of the Spectacle is given in chapter 2 of this thesis.

Raoul Vaneigem called an 'anti-situationist' art: '*antisituationist* art will be the mark of the best artists, those of the SI, since genuinely situationist conditions have as yet not at all been created. Admitting this is the mark of a situationist'.¹¹ Cultural production was not abandoned, but rather, what constituted an artistic practice was redefined, and this redefined practice continued to be the marker of the radical status of the Situationist International, itself self-consciously understood as a cultural and political movement.

Although in his introduction McDonough credits Peter Wollen as seeing the Situationist International as 'the fruit of two distinct legacies of the interwar years: that of Western Marxism (communicated to Debord via Lefebvre and the *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group) and that of Bretonian Surrealism (communicated via Lettrism and CoBrA),'¹² he agrees with Clark and Nicholson-Smith's observation that Wollen misleadingly perpetuates the model of the demise of art within the Situationist movement by 1962. This end of art scenario flies in the face of the facts; not least that in 1963 the Situationists held a group show of painting and sculpture in Denmark, and that the Situationists' journal, the *internationale situationniste*, published from 1958 to 1969, was a site for an intricate and complex imbrication of images and texts.¹³ The misleading construction of the Situationists in the English speaking world, as 'one of the many anarchist groupuscules formed in the wake of the leftist critique of the Stalinist French Communist Party (1956-58)',¹⁴ has been perpetuated by the selective translation of texts, such as by Ken Knabb,

¹¹ Raoul Vaneigem, 'The Fifth S.I Conference in Göteborg' (excerpts) in *Situationist International Anthology*, edited and translated by Ken Knabb (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1981), p. 88.

¹² McDonough, 'Rereading Debord', p.12.

¹³ The Situationist exhibition was held in Galerie EXI in Odense, Denmark and they published a catalogue with an essay by Debord in English entitled 'The Situationists and the New Action Forms in Politics and Art' which reasserts the productive role of cultural interventions as a political act, see *Destruction RSG-6: En kollektiv manifestation af Situationistisk Internationale* (Galerie EXI: Denmark, 1963), pp. 9-12. The essay also explains the show's title as a homage to the English activist group 'Spies for Peace' and their revelation of the Regional Shelters of the Government (i.e., the secret nuclear bunkers of the British Government), p. 11. The 12 issues of the Situationists' journal have been republished in their original format, with texts and images, in *internationale situationniste* (Librairie Arthème Fayard: Paris, 1997).

¹⁴ McDonough, 'Rereading Debord', p. 7. On the relation of the Situationist International to 'French Leftism' see Richard Gombin, *The Origins of Modern Leftism*, translated by Michael K. Perl (Penguin

whose book *Situationist International Anthology*, not only excises any cultural references in favour of political ones, but also removes all the images which were present in the original texts.¹⁵

However, despite their critique of the false division of the Situationist International into an either art or political camp, Clark and Nicholson-Smith's corrective history does not involve a re-establishing of the centrality of cultural productions (the images as well as the texts) in the critical practices of the Situationists. In fact, Clark and Nicholson-Smith are not concerned with reassessing the Situationists' continual imbrication of art and politics, the public and private etc. What they do retrieve and define is a list of four typical propositions on the Situationists representing 'what now passes for knowledge of the S.I. from 1960 on'.¹⁶ Although the authors admit that the propositions they have selected do point to real problems in the work of the Situationists after 1960, they also represent 'a flimsy half-truth, never properly argued by left opinion-makers, and contradicted by a body of evidence with which these opinion-makers are intimately acquainted with but which they choose not to mention'.¹⁷ That is, each apparently dismissive proposition reveals a barely hidden political corollary that

'this Left wants (and needs) to affirm'.¹⁸ In brief, the four propositions are as follows: one, the Situationist movement was an art organization and judged as art, its politics do not amount to much; two; it was an art-political sect, thriving on expulsions

Books: London, 1975); and Mark Shipway, 'Situationism' in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, edited by Maximilien Rubel and John Crump (Macmillan: England, 1987), pp. 151-72; on the Situationists' relation to Socialisme ou Barbarie and various anarchist factions see Shigenobu Gonzalvez, 'Nouvelles Orientations Politiques' in *Guy Debord; ou la beauté du négatif* (Editions Mille et Une Nuits: Paris, 1998), pp. 31-36.

¹⁵ Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1981). McDonough also criticises Knabb for omitting the earlier avant-garde history of the Situationists and for his strictly chronological definition of the Situationist movement. For examples of the diversity of the art works produced by the groups that amalgamated into the Situationist International in 1957 see *Documents relatifs à la foundation de l'Internationale situationniste, 1948-57*, edited by Gérard Berreby (Editions Allia: Paris, 1985); see also Roberto Ohrt, *Phantom Avantgarde; eine geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst* (Edition Nautilus: Hamburg, 1990).

¹⁶ Clark and Nicholson-Smith, 'Why Art can't Kill the Situationist International', p. 19.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

and ignoring the wider political realm; three, Situationist politics was *subjectivist* and its utopian desires reduced to a handful of slogans graffitied on the walls during the Events of May, 1968; and four, Situationist theory, as represented by Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*, is hopelessly young-Hegelian, resting on a metaphysical hostility to mere appearances or representation in favour of a defence of the notion of authenticity.¹⁹

It is to proposition three that I want to return and elaborate further:

Proposition 3 -Situationist politics was “subjectivist”, post –or hyper-Surrealist, propelled by a utopian notion of a new “politics of everyday life” that can be reduced to a handful of '68 graffiti: “Take your desires for reality”, “Boredom is always counter-revolutionary”, etc.²⁰

The proposition is based on the idea that the ‘grounds of Left theory and practice need not shift’.²¹ To concern themselves with the issue of the social construction of the subject in late capitalism, or with the possible forms of resistance to such constructions, and above all ‘exploring the implications of the invasion and restructuring of whole realms of representation that had once been largely outside the commodity regime’²² (what the Situationists called the ‘colonization of everyday life’), all of this leads in the wrong direction: ‘it leads to “identity politics”, which every good 1960s survivor is supposed to blame for the demise of the Left’.²³

Moving away from Clark and Nicholson-Smith's concern to reveal the hidden agenda of the Left's critiques of the Situationist International, my concern here is with what actually constitutes the critique of the Situationists' practice as ‘subjectivist’.

¹⁹ Clark and Nicholson-Smith, p.19. The corollaries in brief, are as follows: one, therefore the bone-hard philistinism of the Left in the 1960s and after, did and does not matter; two, the failure of the established Left to pose the problem of the purity of revolutionary organization, and to come to terms with the disaster of its Leninist and Trotskyite past likewise does not matter; three (discussed in detail in my thesis); four, the Left's infatuation with the wildest and most dubious forms of anti-Hegelianism –semiotic Maoism, universal structures etc., is entirely valid,(p.20).

²⁰ Ibid., p. 19.

²¹ Ibid., p. 21.

²² Ibid., p. 21.

²³ Ibid., p. 21.

According to Clark and Nicholson-Smith, the problem with the 'subjectivist' proposition is that it focuses on the social construction of subjects and the competing forms and strategies of representing the constructed subject(s). The criticisms of the Situationists as too subjectivist, implies that the subject is too prioritised, too much the central focus of their project. However, on reading the critical accounts of the Situationists that could be labelled 'subjectivist', what is striking is the absence of any substantive concept or representation of the Situationist subject that is under attack. For example, Jean Barrot's essay 'Critique of the Situationist International'²⁴, accuses the Situationist International of putting forward a model of the revolution as 'the extension of the construction of intersubjective situations to the whole of society'²⁵ and of 'putting forward a radical subjectivity against a world of commodity objects and reified relationships,'²⁶ the consequence of which is that if the 'revolution remains at the stage of desire, it is tempting to make desire into the pivot of the revolution'.²⁷ Beyond these platitudes there is no attempt to construct substantively (let alone deconstruct) what constitutes a Situationist subject, nor an attempt to question the modes of its representation or to demand in what sense is it radical. Thomas. F. McDonough has in turn criticized Sadie Plant's more recent return to the model of Raoul Vaneigem's 'radical subject'²⁸ for being too simplistically a continuation of the model of the subject developed within Surrealism and Dadaism, which themselves are reduced by Plant to the 'tritest clichés,' such as the desire to transform the world 'into a reality desired and created by those who live in it'.²⁹ If, for McDonough, Plant's model of the radical subject is ridiculous in its

²⁴ Jean Barrot, 'Critique of the Situationist International' in *What is Situationism? A Reader*, edited by Stewart Home, (AK Press: Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 24-62.

²⁵ Ibid., p.30.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁸ Raoul Vaneigem develops the concept of 'radical subjectivity' (*la subjectivité radicale*) in his *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1967), esp. on pp.255-258.

²⁹ McDonough, 'Rereading Debord', p. 7.

ahistorical recoding, it is my contention that the Situationist subject is also reduced by Plant's constriction of it as generically masculinist, a consequence of what she acknowledges is her book's neglect of its 'passage through feminism'.³⁰ Plant's translation of the Situationist subject into a Post-Modern world neglects that it was the perceived failure of many of the protagonists of 68 (including the Situationists) that opened up the space for the construction of the so-called Post-Modern world. And in particular, it was the increasing dissatisfaction of many women who were involved in the Events of '68 that led to the development of politically informed alliances such as the Women's Liberation Movement, which challenged both conservative and radical conceptions of the structure of society.³¹ Plant's recoding of the Situationist subject exposes an historical blind spot concerning the contribution of post-68 feminism to the deconstruction of the social and sexual constituents of the subject, especially at the level of the sexual politics of its representation. For my purposes, it is significant that both Plant and Barrot's 'subjectivist' critiques neglect the cultural productions of the Situationist International. Both give a strictly text-based account of the Situationists without reproducing any of their images or attempting to give the subject a more instantiated or embodied form and function within the variety of the cultural practices of the Situationist International. It is for this reason that their model of the Situationist subject remains limited, not because it is too theoretical or abstract, but because their understanding fails to take account of the role^{of} the image as a force within its construction. Such one sided accounts restore a hierarchy of text over image, which the

³⁰ Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture; The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (Routledge: London, 1992), p.183.

³¹ For examples of the variety of post-68 French feminisms see *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Schocken Books: N.Y, c.1981); in relation to the Events of 68 see Françoise Picq, *Libération des Femmes: les années mouvement* (Editions du Seuil: Paris, 1993). For an English response to the perceived failure of the mainly male based movements of 68, but also the possibilities opened up by them (including the Situationists) see Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate*, reprinted with afterward (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1986).

original cultural productions of the Situationist International intentionally rendered problematic.³²

Rereading the Definitions of a Situationist subject

It is the absence of any substantive and historically contingent model of the Situationist subject (especially marked in the so-called subjectivist accounts) that is the trigger for my rereading of the Situationist International. My rereading focuses on the following question: is it possible to reconstruct a theoretical as well as an embodied model of the Situationist subject, and if so, how might this be done? In an attempt both to locate its historical formation and to reconstruct the strategic forms of its representations, it is necessary to start with the Situationists' own conception of the subject. What follows is a general introduction to the Situationist International's concept of the Situationist subject. First, though, we need to clarify the meaning of the term *situationniste*. For the moment this will be translated as 'situationist', keeping it in lower case as it is in the original French. But the word 'situationist' is semantically precarious. This is evident from its definition published in the first issue of the Situationists' journal *internationale situationniste* in 1958, where it took on a tripartite significance:

situationist- That which relates to the theory or to the practical activity of a construction of situations. Those engaged in constructing situations. Member of the Situationist International.³³

It is only the third part of this definition, concerning membership to the group, which seems to make sense on its own. The first two parts are intimately connected with, or

³² This neglect of the Situationists' cultural productions also limits the otherwise excellent account of the theoretical and political influences, such as Marx and Hegel, on the intellectual development of Debord in Anselm Jappe's *Guy Debord* (Edizioni Tracce: Pescara, 1993), also available in English, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999).

³³ 'Définitions' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p.13. My translations, unless indicated otherwise.

rather dependent on, another crucial Situationist concept, the *situation construite* (constructed situation). This in turn had a separate definition:

constructed situation- moment of life, concretely and deliberately constructed by a collective organization of a unitary ambiance and a game of events.³⁴

This expansion and enrichment of the concept of construction is crucial for the definition of *situationist*. To talk of a 'constructed situation' implies that the situation at stake is not already 'given' and therefore not permanently fixed. On the contrary, a 'moment of life, concretely and deliberately constructed' involves a fabrication or generation, which in turn implies that it can be re-constructed in a potentially endless 'game of events'.

The Situationists' concept of a situation as constructed and not 'given' has been interpreted by various commentators as a direct attack on Jean-Paul Sartre's recognition of 'the situation' as 'facticity' or as 'the given'.³⁵ Although not naming Sartre directly, the following passage (a response to the question, 'What does the word situationist mean?'), does allude to existentialism in its critique of the situation as passively recognized:

It defines an activity which intends to make (*faire*) situations, not to recognize (*reconnaître*) them... We replace existential passivity with the construction of moments of life, and doubt with playful affirmation. So far philosophers and artists have only interpreted situations; the point now is to transform them.³⁶

³⁴ The importance of this concept is indicated by its being placed at the top of the Situationists' series of 'Définitions' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, 1958), p.13. The order of the list is as follows: situation construite; situationsite; situationnisme; psychogéographie; psychogéographique; psychogéographe; dérive; urbanisme unitaire; détournement; culture; décomposition.

³⁵ Len Bracken, *Guy Debord; Revolutionary* (Feral House: California, 1997) p.14. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Freedom and Facticity: The Situation', in *Being and Nothingness*, translated. Hazel E. Barnes (Routledge: London, 1986) p.481 -first published in 1943 as *L'Etre et le Néant* (Gallimard: Paris).

³⁶ 'Le Questionnaire' in *internationale situationniste* (no.9, August, 1964) p.24.

Debord directly attacked Sartre in other contexts³⁷ and with these in mind the reference to 'existential passivity' is read by Sadie Plant as an explicit critique of the limited freedom of Sartre's existential subject: 'The freedom of the existentialist subject is not the unlimited ability to choose anything, but the ability to act in and against the world in which it finds itself'.³⁸ Indeed, Sartre confirms that the existential subject that acts 'for itself' is understood as thrown into the given world (in-itself), and is only able to choose and act in relation to it: 'There can be a free for-itself only as engaged in a resisting world. Outside of this engagement the notions of freedom, of determinism, of necessity lose all meaning'.³⁹ Anselm Jappe also remarks that the Situationists criticized existentialism, 'for taking lived experience as it presents itself today and identifying this with the entire possible range of reality'.⁴⁰

Debord drew on Marx and Hegel to oppose the passive recognition and interpretation of a given situation, with an affirmation of the possibility of its active transformation and reconstruction.⁴¹ Contrary to Sartre's definition of freedom as 'the escape from the given, from fact', the Situationists offer a radical critique of that which exists or is given 'in-itself'.⁴² That is, they desire to transform, rather than escape or

³⁷ Debord's various written attacks on Sartre include 'Props d'un imbécile' in *internationale situationniste* (no.10, March, 1966) pp76-76; 'Le Commencement d'une Epoque' in *internationale situationniste* (no.12, September, 1969) p.4, where Sartre is called a Stalinist; and criticisms of Sartre's pro-Chinese stance appear in 'Domination de la Nature, Ideologies et Classes' in *internationale situationniste* (no.8, January, 1963) p.5.

³⁸ Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture; The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (Routledge: London, 1992) pp.20-21.

³⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translated Hazel E.Barnes, reprinted edition, (Routledge: London, 1991) p.483.

⁴⁰ Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, translated Donald Nicholson-Smith, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999) p.127.

⁴¹ Détournements of Hegel and Marx are scattered throughout Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Zone Books: NY, 1995), e.g. theses 76; 95; 144; 177; 206; 215. On the direct and indirect influences of Marx and Hegel on Debord see Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999); also Peter Wollen 'Bitter Victory' *On a Passage of a few People through a Brief Moment in Time*, edited by Elizabeth Sussman et al., (The MIT Press/ICA: Boston/London, 1989). For a broader history see Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in post-war France: from Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton University Press: N.J., 1975); and George Lichtheim, *Marxism* (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1961).

⁴² Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p.485.

transcend 'facticity', which in turn offers a transformed concept of the subject. In so doing they clarify the idea of the subject:

Since man is the product of the situations he goes through, it is essential to create human situations. Since the individual is defined by his situation, he wants the power to create situations worthy of his desires.⁴³

The importance of this passage lies in its introduction of a creative subject into the concept of constructing or transforming the situation. It suggests a concept of the subject that is both produced by and productive of its environment. Debord reiterates this in 1967 in thesis 74 of *The Society of the Spectacle*: 'As for the *subject* of history, it can only be the self-production of the living'.⁴⁴ This implies that the self-producing subject is creative not only of other things such as its situation, but also of itself.

The Situationists' name for this practical creation of situations through the subject's activity is a *phénoméno-praxis* (phenomeno-praxis), a term that reveals further awareness of phenomenology.⁴⁵ 'Phenomeno-praxis' crucially engages with an

⁴³ *internationale situationniste* (no.9, August, 1964) p.24. The Situationists' desire to actively transform the given situation is in some respects closer to Simone de Beauvoir's model of the situation as it concerns the need for Women to revolt: 'she can exercise it [liberty] only in revolt, which is the only road open to those who have no opportunity of doing anything constructive. They must reject the limitations of their situation and seek to open the road to the future. Resignedness is only abdication and flight, there is no other way out for women than to work for her liberation', in 'Woman's Situation and Character', *The Second Sex* (1949), translated and edited by H.M Parshley (Picador: London, 1988), pp. 608-639, (p. 637). The difference however is that the Situationists regarded all acts of revolt in a constructive light, and the oppressive effects of the Spectacle were not only a women's issue, but concerned all those marginalized by society, whatever their race, age, sex etc. The heterogeneous identity of the ideal Situationist subject is explored in chapter 2.

⁴⁴ Ironically this is similar to Sartre. Indeed, as Jappe notes it echoes Sartre's view of the individual as able to shape its own fate within history see Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, p.127. Len Bracken also points to Debord's agreement with Sartre that 'freedom is only possible in the world' in *Guy Debord; Revolutionary*, p.13. Regarding the importance of the subject it is significant to note that the longest section of Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* is titled 'The proletariat as Subject and Representation' (section IV), pp. 47-90.

⁴⁵ The Situationists write that 'nous voulons une phénoméno-praxis' in 'Le Questionnaire', *internationale situationniste* (no. 9, August, 1964), pp. 24-27, (p.24). This allusion to phenomenology contradicts their critique of existentialism, in so far as existentialism is already a form of phenomenology, for example, Sartre's subtitle to *Being and Nothingness* is *An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. However, the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty is directly criticized by Debord in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch (1954-1957)* (Gallimard: Paris, 1996): "pour s'en laisser imposer par un vide qui ne cherche même pas à se dissimuler (comme disons, le néant dialectique de Merleau-Ponty), mais qui s'avoue et se

embodied subject, one whose body matters to how a situation is constructed. This embodied subject, like the constructed situation, is also understood as not given. That is, it exists through the processes of its becoming or the modes of its construction.⁴⁶ This suggests a subject that experiences itself as conditioned, but also experiences these conditions as something to be transformed. This is implicit in the concept of the constructed situation already defined as a practical activity; how is the situation constructed or practiced if not by a subject? Moreover, this is not an ideal or dislocated subject, but concretely produced by and productive of its situation.

Theory-in-Practice

If a self-producing or creating subject is central to the Situationists' concept of a 'theory-in-practice', it is also a key to the movement's self-understanding. As Debord and Sanguinetti claim, 'the theory of the S.I. is clear at least on one point: *one must make use of it.*'⁴⁷ It is the practical activity and the practical translation of their theory that must be affirmed and communicated. Furthermore, they claim that the 'mode of being together of the situationists' is to be understood as the making use of their 'multiple (theoretical and practical) activity'.⁴⁸ That is to say, all theoretical analyses must be followed, or rather worked through, in practical interventions or direct actions.

souligne ingenuement", p.220 -extract from *Potlatch* (no.25, January, 1956), which was the journal of the Lettrist International.

⁴⁶ This presents a problem regarding the temporality of this process of transformation. For example, can the subject change it-self prior to changing its situation, or is this process mutually constitutive? In which case, rather than a sequential process of one thing after the other, isn't a more punctual paradigm at stake, whereby the change of the subject and its situation happens simultaneously in an explosive eruption? The concept of a disjunctive temporality and an ecstatic subject is analysed in chapter 3.

⁴⁷ Guy Debord and Gianfranco Sanguinetti, *The Veritable Split*, trans. Lucy Forsyth, (B.M. Chronos: London, 1985) pp.115-116 and also p.119: "situationist discourse *comes from practical life*...But this is in no way sufficient. It is necessary that these theoretical formulae *come back into practical life*..." And in theses 90 of Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*: "the theory of praxis verified by virtue of its transformation into theory-in-practice".

⁴⁸ Debord and Sanguinetti, *The Veritable Split*, p. 118.

When this theory-in-practice is allied with the concept of the constructed situation a somewhat complex, but integrated, model of the subject emerges. Theory-in-practice is implicit in the concept of the constructed situation as a 'moment of life, concretely and deliberately constructed'.⁴⁹ The agent and vehicle of this 'life' is the subject. Without the subject, the relation of the theory-in-practice and the constructed situation is dislocated. The pivotal role of the subject in the Situationist's 'theory-in-practice' and in their concept of the constructed situation (specifically as a construction both producing and produced by a subject) offers a productive model of the subject. Still, beyond this level of abstraction many questions remain about its specific instantiations or elaborations. We therefore need to ask just how 'radical' is the Situationist subject that theoretically defines itself as representing the 'reappearance of a revolutionary modern movement', in actual practice, once its point of mediation, the subject, takes embodied form?⁵⁰

This requires a critical investigation of the various constructions or instantiations of the Situationist subject, revealing its often problematic and ambivalent form. If the concrete role of the subject is not fully recognized, the nature of the Situationists' proposed transformation of situations is also necessarily misunderstood. In order to understand this we need therefore to look closely at the Situationists' activities, with particular attention to the constitutive function of the emergent subject at stake. This will elaborate the subject, not as ideal or dislocated from practice, but as it emerges in specific constructed situations.

⁴⁹ 'Définitions', p. 13.

⁵⁰ Debord and Sanguinetti, *The Veritable Split* (as above) p. 12.

A Process of Reconstruction

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the various ways in which the Situationist subject is constructed, through a reconstruction and investigation of how it emerges and is formed in specific Situationist practices.⁵¹ The practices focused on here, have been selected on account of their contribution to a radical expansion of the sites of production, namely from gallery, into a magazine, then into the public space of the street and finally into the archive. But also as strategies that complicate both the division of the group into either an aesthetic or political movement, and the vision of their abandonment of art after 1962. Through an investigation of a series of exemplary moments, I want to reveal the subject as an integral dimension of the Situationists' critical practice of the construction of situations. Moreover, I contend that the Situationist subject is misconceived if it is understood as a discrete object of analysis. On the contrary, the subject as it is understood here, must be actively pursued through the cultural practices of the Situationist International. The absence of a substantive model of the subject from the literature on 'Situationism' is partly symptomatic of its submerged status within the theory and practice of the Situationist International. The subject is not simply waiting to be identified, but rather, requires a process of reconstruction, which can only be achieved by questioning what was at stake in the specific Situationist practice under investigation. To foreground problems of subjectivity might suggest a subjectivist focus quite out of kilter with the historical and materialist grounding of the Situationists' theory-in-practice, also referred to as '*the theory of the very moment*.'⁵² But, on the

⁵¹ Therefore contrary to Régis Debray's criticism that Debord essentializes the 'generic nature' of man and by implication the situationist subject, I claim that there is no such thing as a generic situationist subject, but rather particular instantiations of it. See Régis Debray, 'Remarks on the spectacle' in *motifs* 1995 (p.136).

⁵² Debord and Sanguinetti, *The Veritable Split*, p. 110. They also write that each epoch rediscovers its own 'works and precise acts that the present revolutionary struggle must appropriate and verify; and that it will supersede', p. 47. Thomas McDonough also draws attention to the historical contingency of the SI, quoting Debord: 'avant-gardes have only one time, and the best thing that can happen to them is, in the

contrary, the mode of reconstruction I mobilise here is wholly consistent with the Situationists' concept of the subject: namely, that it only emerges within construction.

The reconstruction of the Situationist subject through the temporal lens of the now through which it is re-viewed, undoubtedly risks distorting the perspective of the subject. Yet this distorting lens may also reveal something that was hidden or neglected in the past practice of the Situationists that, once revealed, can now be recovered. The past, in turn, is understood as haunting the present, so the distortion that occurs involves the disjunctive encounter of two different temporalities. This active process of reconstruction and recovery, or what Amelia Jones refers to as a 'performative interpretation', is necessary to fulfil the strategies of both returning the submerged figure of the Situationist subject (as the mediator of their practice) and of expanding it beyond its limiting conceptual boundaries.⁵³ It is precisely the delayed temporality of the process of reconstruction that enables the identification of a new or transformed Situationist subject. Transformed, that is, with hindsight. For example, drawing on more recent sexual and political models of subjectivity, which were historically unavailable to the Situationists, it is possible to rethink the role of sexuality and difference as constituents of the Situationist subject.⁵⁴ However, my point is not merely to expose Situationist blind spots and inadequacies, but rather, to use the delayed temporality of each reconstructed situation to open up the subject that emerges from it. That is, I use the critical analysis to expand, rather than reduce, the constitutive parameters of the Situationist subject.

full sense of the term, to have *had their day*...A historical project certainly cannot claim to preserve an eternal youth protected from blows!' in 'Rereading Debord', p. 9.

⁵³ Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1998), p. 14.

⁵⁴ This is not to suggest that models of the subject that were historically available to the Situationists are ignored. The Situationist subject is analysed in relation to then contemporary models, as well as in relation to previous historical models.

Exemplary Moments

The focus of this thesis is on what is often referred to as the Debordist faction of the Situationist International, formed in 1957 and dissolved in 1972. Rather than confirm the recent cult of Debord, as if he was the Situationist movement, I aim to reveal the work of many other essential members of this faction, including Asger Jorn, Michèle Bernstein and Raoul Vaneigem.⁵⁵ Figures that are continually excised from the historical picture of the group, as for example in [fig.1] where the original participants of the photograph (namely Debord, Bernstein and Jorn) see [fig.2] have been conveniently cropped in order to magnify the focus on Debord. And whilst this thesis is not a history of the Situationist International, nor is it a history of the subject, I do attempt to reconstruct a model of the subject that is adequate to its historical formation as well as to the critical demands of the present.⁵⁶ Although the ordering of the historical situations that I reconstruct is by and large chronological, the most consistent feature of all the chapters is the importance of the image in the formation of the subject, or what T.J. Clark has more recently called the ‘representational regimes’ used by the Situationists.⁵⁷ This means articulating the subject through particular texts and images, as well as through the complex and often disjunctive interactions of both. It is to counter the reductive effect of more recent accounts, which excise the dynamic relation of image to text from the Situationists’ modes of cultural production, that I concur with Amelia Jones’ concept of

⁵⁵ In 1962 the Situationist International split. Those excluded from the original group set up a Second Situationist International in Sweden in March 1962. For a brief history of the Second Situationist International see Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War* (AK Press: Edinburgh, 1991). On Jørgen Nash, one of the founders of this second group see Carl Magnus et al, *Situationister i konsten* (Bauhaus situationiste: Orkelljunga, 1966). For Jacqueline de Jong’s reasons on the split see *Jacqueline de Jong; nieuw werk* (Editions Vincent Steinmetz: Amsterdam, 1987) –de Jong edited *The Situationist Times*. See also Debord and Sanguinetti, *The Veritable Split*, for the original Situationists’ response and reasons for the secession in 1962.

⁵⁶ For a chronological history of the Situationist International (of which they approved) see Jean-Jacques Raspaud and Jean-Pierre Voyer, *L’Internationale situationniste: chronologie, bibliographie, protagonistes (avec un index des noms insultés)* (Editions Champ Libre: Paris, 1972); for an insider view see Elaine Brau, *Le Situationnisme ou la nouvelle internationale* (Debresse: Paris, 1968) –Brau had been a member of the Lettrist International.

⁵⁷ T.J. Clark’s ‘Foreword’ to Anselm Jappe’s *Guy Debord*, pp. vii-x, (p.ix).

the 'performative document.'⁵⁸ This stresses the role of the document (be it image or text) as part of the process of enacting subjectivity, and not merely depicting it.

Each of the four chapters focuses on an exemplary moment, where the emerging subject is revealed as an essential aspect of the specific situation being reconstructed. The diverse and layered structure of the Situationist subject recovered in each chapter is connected by an overriding cohesive factor, namely the revolutionary ambitions of the Situationist International project itself. All constructed situations (no matter how diverse in form and content) have one single or unifying aim: the total revolutionary transformation of what Debord diagnosed as the society of the Spectacle. It is total in the sense of operating on all levels, including the social, the political, the psychic, the economic and the cultural. The reconstruction of the broader social revolutionary situations is not the aim of this thesis. My focus, on the other hand, on the local instantiations of the Situationist subject can be seen as a microcosm for the Situationists' wider project.⁵⁹

My pursuit of the elusive or neglected presence of the Situationist subject, through a process of reconstruction, presents a somewhat double-edged strategy: on the one hand, it aims to reveal the pivotal role of the subject in the Situationists' model of a phenomeno-praxis; and on the other, it puts pressure on this subject, by exposing its limitations, its sexual blind spots etc. especially at the level of representation. For example, chapter two analyses the Situationists' critique of the economy of the image in the society of the Spectacle by appropriating the model of a Potlatch economy. More

⁵⁸ Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, p. 6.

⁵⁹ It is important to point out the reference of the 'Internationale' (as in L'Internationale situationniste) to the Marxist formations of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Internationals. The Situationists saw their project as a continuation, by other means, of a proletarian (also redefined see chapter 2 of thesis) revolution as Debord and Sanguinetti insist: 'Finally, it is not therefore a question of a theory of the S.I., but of the theory of the proletariat' in *The Veritable Split*, p. 13 and: 'Pollution and the proletariat are today the concrete sides of the critique of the political economy', *ibid.*, p. 30. For a brief history of the Leftist groups in France (including the Situationists) see Richard Gombin, *Les Origines de Gauchisme* (Editions du Seuil: Paris, 1971).

recent feminist critiques that both support and deride a Potlatch economy are used in turn to put pressure on Peter Wollen's remarks that the Situationists risked reproducing 'women as spectacle' at the level of the consumption of the image.⁶⁰ This is contested at the level of production, by analysing those images and objects produced by women Situationists. This thesis does not, however, offer a full recovery of all the women involved in the Situationist International at any one time. Rather it focuses on specific situations where the intervention of a female producer makes a difference to the sexual constituents of the idea of the emerging subject.⁶¹ This stress on the importance of the sexual politics of the image in the formation of the Situationist subject is intended to redress the misleading history of the Situationists as split into an either artistic camp or a political faction. Rather, I insist on the intertwining of culture and politics as constitutive of the Situationist movement as such. To affirm the Situationists' sustained commitment to cultural interventions, chapter one focuses on the social and psychic conditions of the emergence of the subject through a specific gallery installation of 1959, whilst chapter three reveals the continuation of cultural tactics by other means in the context of the street (not a gallery) during the May Events in Paris in 1968 –yet another supposed death-knoll or final end of the Situationists' aesthetic phase. Here, snapshots of graffiti are also used to give a more substantive form to Raoul Vaneigem's concept of 'radical subjectivity'. My extended exegesis of Vaneigem's model of the radical subject is intended to put pressure on its so far rather reductive reception and reading by critics such as Jean Barrot. The fourth and concluding chapter returns to the problem of

⁶⁰ Peter Wollen, 'Bitter Victory: The Art and Politics of the Situationist International' in *On the passage of a rather few people through a brief moment in time*, edited by Elizabeth Sussman et al (The MIT Press/ICA: Boston/London, 1989): 'the Situationists, like other avant-garde groups, marginalized, undervalued and overlooked women both in their circle and in society at large. Indeed the SI journal blatantly reproduces images of women as "spectacle", (fn.68), p. 61. I contest Wollen's final remarks here, in chapter 2 and 4, by looking at the more complex structure of the representations produced by a female Situationist member.

⁶¹ For a list of the members of the S.I from 1957-1972 see Christopher Grey, *Leaving the 20th Century* (Free Fall Publications: London, 1974), pp. 162-3. Out of the 70 individuals listed only 7 were women.

reconstructing the Situationist International as an historical subject, through a book of *Mémoires* and a series of alternative monuments. It focuses on the difficult task of archival retrieval, that is, of capturing a past historical subject without freezing it as a dead correlate of the present. Together, all the chapters should be understood as a contribution to a rereading of the Situationist subject, not as some theoretical, abstract or generic figure, but as an historically contingent formation, that is as multiple, but also as particular, as the forms of its representation, and the shifting terrains of its distribution and reception: from art gallery, through the pages of a journal, out into the public forum of the street and finally into the archive.

Chapter 1: The Cavern of Anti-Matter

On the 13th May 1959, the Parisian public was invited to the opening of the Italian Situationist Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio's conversion of the René Drouin gallery, into what he called the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* (*caverne de l'anti-matière*). From photographic records of this gallery conversion [fig. 3] we can see that the walls, ceiling and floor of the gallery were enveloped in a shiny and encrusted fabric. This same material was also fashioned into an article of clothing worn by a female model, caught by the camera as she strikes a pose for the onlookers. Standing amongst the watching crowd was the artist Gallizio himself: the moustached man, hemmed into a corner of the gallery, soberly dressed in a black suit.

The reflective sheen of the material was in part due to fragments of glass and mirror that had been embedded into its resin and paint encrusted surfaces. The shimmering effect of light gives the gallery space the appearance of some underground, or even some underwater, grotto. This enclosed chamber even had an acoustic dimension, as well as an odorous one, provided by Gallizio's additional use of staged sound and smell effects. The total sensory affect of this converted gallery is indicated in Peter Wollen's description of it as 'a labyrinth filled with violent colours, perfumes and music'.¹ The musical accompaniment to the show was actually provided by a sound machine called a *tereminofono*. This was a musical device that emitted sounds, the pitch of which varied in accordance with the movements and proximity of orbiting bodies. In this instance the pitch got higher as the body of the spectator approached the device and

¹ My description of *The Cavern of Anti-Matter* is a collation of various accounts provided by the following: Peter Wollen, 'Bitter Victory; the Art and Politics of the Situationist International' in the exhibition catalogue edited by Elizabeth Sussman *On a passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time: the Situationist international 1957-1972* (M.I.T. Press/ICA: Boston, Mass., 1989), pp. 20-61, (p.50); Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture* (AK Press: Stirling, 1991) p.33 and Giuseppe Bonini in the exhibition catalogue *Pinot Gallizio: le situationnisme et la peinture: du 13 février au 4 mars 1989, Galerie 1900-2000* (Marcel Fleiss: Paris, 1989) p.12.

lower as they receded from it.² This sound device was placed discretely out of sight, concealed behind the sheets of material that shrouded the walls of the gallery. Added to these pitch-altering sounds was the random squirting of perfumed smells. The *Cavern of Anti-Matter* was a sensory and synesthetic environment that provided an ideal setting for a mobile and sensate spectator. Ideally, this spectator's (or rather participant's) contribution to Gallizio's staged event was not in the form of a static prop, as seems to be the case with the model posed in the photograph [fig. 3] but rather, in the form of a catalyst, whose movements brought the space to life by triggering its hidden tones and odours.

Unitary Urbanism

In the Situationists' own review of this gallery performance it was described as 'an experiment in the construction of an ambiance' (*cet essai de construction d'une ambiance*).³ The use of the word 'ambiance', meaning environment or atmosphere, is key here, in that it helps to establish Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter* as an instantiation of the Situationists' concept of a 'constructed situation', in part defined as 'a collective organization of a unitary ambiance'.⁴ The Situationists were not alone however in describing their experiments with dynamic conceptions of space as 'ambient'. This adjective had a certain currency in the late 1950s amongst other artists bent on

² According to Stewart Home the inventors of this musical devise were Walter Olmo and Cocito de Torino. Walter Olmo had presented a text called 'For a Concept of Experimental Music' to the Situationist International in September 1957. Debord criticized this text for its 'idealistic attitude' of 'right-wing thought'. Olmo refused to retract the text and was formally expelled from the SI at its second conference held in Paris on the 25/26 January in 1958. For details see Home, *Assault on Culture*, pp.32-32.

³ 'Dans les Galeries de Paris' in *Potlatch* (no.30, 1959) reproduced in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch (1954-1957)* (Gallimard: Paris, 1996) p. 286. Issues number one to number twenty-nine of the journal *Potlatch* were published by the Lettrist International (LI) from 1954-1957. The LI dissolved to become part of the Situationist International in 1957, which published their own journal *internationale situationniste* from 1958 to 1959. However, in 1959 the Situationists published a final edition of the journal *Potlatch* (no. 30, July, 1959) as part of a 'new series' (nouvelle série, no. 1). The economy of 'potlatch' (a gift economy) will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

⁴ 'Définitions' in *internationale situationniste* (no.1, 1958) p.13. My translations unless stated otherwise. See Introduction of thesis for a more detailed elaboration of this concept.

expanding the conventional categories of art and its spaces of display. For example, as early as 1949, Lucio Fontana constructed his *Ambiente spaziale a luce near*, which consisted of an illuminated paper maché shape hanging from the ceiling. This strange type of art object contributed to Fontana's attempt to renew the exhausted forms of painting and sculpture as expressed in his 'White Manifesto' (*Manifesto Blanco*) of 1946.⁵ Sidra Stich also points out that in 1957 Yves Klein referred to his monochrome series not as the production of paintings but as the creation of 'ambiances', in the form of: 'climates of sensibility, phenomenal states, and unusual natures that are perceptible but not tangible, simultaneously mobile and static, cast outside of the phenomenology of time'.⁶ Stich makes the case that both Fontana's visions of innovative spatial art and Klein's pursuit of a transcendent or immaterial materiality, were indebted to new advances in the scientific field of atomic or particle physics. Despite the horrific threat to life posed by the atomic bomb, atomic energy was also the source of extreme awe: 'on a very basic level the atomic bomb and nuclear physics placed emphasis on the enigmatic conception of matter as diffused particle form. Matter was seen to be nearly invisible yet rife with power'.⁷ This new approach to understanding matter (not as inert stuff, but as invisible particles in constant oscillation) opened up a way for artists to rethink their

⁵ Reprinted in Germano Celant, *L'Inferno dell'arte italiana*, translated by Liz Heron (Costa & Nolan: Genoa, 1990), pp. 75-82. Fontana's expansion of pictorial space also took the form of cuts and holes in his series of paintings called *Concetto spaziale* (Spatial Concept) c. 1949. For a brief discussion of these works as a contribution to developments in performance and installation art see Paul Schimmel, 'Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object' in the exhibition catalogue *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object 1949-1979* (Thames & Hudson: London, 1998), pp. 17-119.

⁶ Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein* (Hayward Gallery/Cantz: London, 1995), p. 85.

⁷ Stich, p. 83. A clear indication for Stich of how strongly atomic energy was being promoted as a symbol of a new era came in 1958, when the Brussels World's Fair adopted the 'atomium' – a 100 metre-diameter construction of an atom- as its icon, (p. 83). As a further sign of the interest in the new atomic age, the November 1956 issue of the French art magazine *Aujourd'hui* published an inquiry titled 'Art, science et techniques' in (no. 10, November, 1956), pp. 50-55.

relation to space, time and matter, as well as provide the impetus to conceive of a new kind of art suitable for the atomic age.⁸

Gallizio's interest in the new physics was also expressed in his 1959 manifesto on 'Industrial Painting and on a unitary applicable art' where he describes his experiments in momentary 'emotional atmospheres' (*l'atmosphère émotionnelle*) in terms of an 'atomic creation' (*creation atomique*).⁹ However, unlike Klein's search for a way of seeing that went beyond the material presence of the object, which in turn required the viewer to arrive at a state of 'instantaneous contemplation,'¹⁰ Gallizio's project was firmly materialist, and as the staging of his *Cavern of Anti-Matter* makes clear, he demanded an inter-active not passive participant. The materiality of Gallizio's gallery installation went beyond its tactile and sensory qualities, to include a socio-political dimension. That is, the Situationists' model of the constructed situation, as applied to the environment, was understood as a means to transform the banality of existence under the (then present) reified conditions of a late capitalist society. This

⁸ Fontana acknowledges that his conception of dynamic space stems from the Baroque period and 'the new physics of that period' that revealed for 'the first time the nature of dynamics' in his 1951 'Technical Manifesto' published in English in *Fontana* (McRoberts & Tunnard Ltd: London, 1960), not paginated. Mirella Bandini writes in her essay 'An Enormous and Unknown Chemical Reaction: the Experimental Laboratory in Alba' that Lucio Fontana did visit Gallizio's studio in Alba, in the exhibition catalogue edited by Elizabeth Sussman et al, *on the passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time* (ICA: Boston/London, 1989), pp. 68-71, (p. 71). Klein also speaks of the need for the artist to become 'a sort of atomic pile, a sort of generator of constant radiation who impregnates the atmosphere with his whole pictorial presence,' a 1957 diary entry in Stich, p. 104. Klein was acquainted with Guy Debord in the early 1950s. In Guy Debord's, *Considérations sur l'assassinat de Gérard Lebovici* (Editions Gérard Lebovici: Paris, 1985) he describes how Klein: 'whom I knew at the time and who was present at the very tumultuous projection of this film was overwhelmed by a convincing black sequence lasting 24 minutes', p. 45. The film in question was Debord's 1952 *Hurlements en faveur de Sade*, more details of which appear in chapter 4.

⁹ Pinot-Gallizio, 'Discours sur la peinture Industrielle et sur un art unitaire applicable' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 3, December, 1959), pp. 31-35, (p. 35). Gallizio also had direct contact with a group called Arte Nucleare (Nuclear Art), formed in Milan in 1951. In their 'Manifeste de la peinture nucléaire' (1952) written by Enrico Baj and Sergio Dangelo they speak of how old academic forms will disintegrate in the new atomic universe whereby 'the forms are electrical charges', reprinted in the exhibition catalogue *Arte Nucleare, 1951-1957* (Galleria San Fedele: Milan, 1980), p. 37. Among other exhibitors at this exhibition were Klein, Manzoni, Fontana, Arman and Asger Jorn. Baj and Dangelo joined the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus (IMBI- set up by Jorn in 1953) in 1954, one year before Gallizio joined. For a brief history of the Nuclearists in relation to Gallizio and the IMBI see Home, *Assault on Culture* (AK Press, Stirling, 1991), pp. 26-30.

¹⁰ For an elaboration of Klein's search for the immaterial through the material see Stich, p. 86.

project was given the name 'unitary urbanism' (*urbanisme unitaire*), which was defined as follows: 'the theory of the combined use of arts and technologies (*techniques*) working towards the integral construction of an environment in dynamic relation with experiments (*expériences*) in behaviour'.¹¹

The Situationists' positive embrace of the use of new technology to transform the dynamics of space echoes Fontana's desire to use 'available new technical means and new substances' to construct a synthetic environment where 'colour, sound, movement, space...integrate an ideal and material unity'.¹² More specifically however the term 'unitary urbanism' had been developed by the Lettrist International, certain members of which, such as Guy Debord, Gil Wolman and Michèle Bernstein, were central to the setting up of the Situationist International.¹³ The Lettrist International had also been interested in a restructuring of the social environment, as reflected in the fact that essays on architectural transformations littered the pages of their journal called *Potlatch*.¹⁴

¹¹ 'Définitions,' p.13.

¹² 'Technical Manifesto' (1951), no pagination. In this manifesto Fontana also named the Futurists' fascination with movement and time as an exemplary model. Gallizio and Jorn helped organize a retrospective exhibition of 'Futurist Ceramics 1925-33' to run simultaneously with 'The First Congress of Liberated Artists' that took place in the town hall of Alba from the 2nd-8th of September, 1956. Jorn and Gallizio had established friendships with a number of old futurists, in particular Farfa (born Trieste 1881). Alongside the Futurist ceramic show, a second exhibition of work from the Experimental Laboratory was held in a local cinema. The participants to the show were Constant, Gallizio, Garelli, Jorn, Kotik, Rada, Simondo and Wolman. For more details on the early years of Gallizio and the Situationists see Mirella Bandini, *L'estetico il politico: da Cobra all'Internazionale Situazionista, 1948-57* (Officini Edizioni: Roma, 1977). On the Situationists' view of various artistic avant-gardes including Dadaism, Futurism and Surrealism see Guy Debord's 1957 'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of organization and Action' reprinted in Ken Knabb, *Situationist International: Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1981), pp. 17-25.

¹³ The Lettrist International (LI) (1952-1957) was the first breakaway group from Isidore Isou's Lettrist Movement (LM) set up in Paris in 1946 (a third breakaway group called itself the Ultra-Lettrists). Key LI members were Debord, Bernstein, Wolman, Mohamed Dahou, Andre-Frank Conord and Jacques Fillon. The LI joined the IMBI in 1956 and in 1957 the SI was formed. Whereas the LM were interested in creating culture works often displayed in a gallery, the Lettrist International intended to 'live' the cultural revolution. Their direct actions in the street were to be experimental and ephemeral. For a brief history of the LI and the LM see Stewart Home, *Assault on Culture*. On Lettrism also see Stephen C. Foster, *Lettrisme: Into the Present* (University of Iowa Museum: Iowa, 1983). For a Situationist critique of Lettrism, especially of Isou and Maurice Lemaitre see Asger Jorn, 'Originalité et Grandeur (sur le système d'isou) in *internationale situationniste* (no. 4, June, 1960), pp. 26-30. For a Lettrist perspective see Maurice Lemaitre, 'What is Lettrism?' in *Ur* (no. 3, second series, 1952).

¹⁴ Guy Debord, *Guy Debord présente Potlatch (1954-1957)* (Gallimard: Paris, 1996). The final edition of *Potlatch* (no. 30, 1959), published by the Situationist International, contained the review of Gallizio's 1959 exhibition at the Galerie Drouin, as well as Asger Jorn's series of modified paintings at the Galerie

Consider for example the following titles: 'Architecture for Life'; 'Preliminary models for a new urbanism', and 'Skyscrapers by the roots.'¹⁵ One of the Lettrist International's most influential texts was Ivan Chtcheglov's 'Formula for a New City', which although written in 1953, remained unpublished until 1958, when it was featured in the first issue of the Situationists' journal *internationale situationniste*.¹⁶ This essay proposed the building of fantastic environments, envisaged in the form of 'an arbitrary assemblage of castles, grottos, lakes'.¹⁷ Such fantastically modulated spaces would ideally expand the imaginative realm of its inhabitants, which in turn would enable them to challenge the mental disease of 'banalization' whereby 'everyone is hypnotized by production and conveniences –sewage system, elevator, bathroom, washing machine'.¹⁸ The socio-political purchase behind the Situationists' continued use of the program of 'unitary urbanism' lay not in the merely distracting or escapist aspects of such fantastic cities, but in their ability to ideally liberate authentic emotional sensibilities repressed by the process of everyday banalization –the Situationists' term for the expansion of the

Rive Gauche (6th May, 1959) and Constant's project for a new urbanism at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (4th May, 1959), pp. 286-287. It is this architectural aspect of the Situationist movement that has been the focus of much of the secondary literature on the group, for example see Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1998) and Peter Wollen, 'Situationists and Architecture' in *New Left Review* (no. 8, March/April, 2001), pp. 123-139.

¹⁵ These essays are reprinted in *Theory of the Dérive and Other Situationist Writings on the City*, edited by Libero Andreotti and Xavier Costa (Museu d'Art Contemporani: Barcelona, 1996).

¹⁶ Published under the name Gilles Ivain, 'Formulaire pour un Urbanisme Nouveau' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), pp. 15-20.

¹⁷ 'Formulary for a New Urbanism' reprinted in Knabb, *Situationist International*, pp. 1-4, (p. 4).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 2. The idea of a fantastic, synthetic environment was also a focus of the Cobra art movement set up by the former Belgian Surrealist Christian Dotremont and Asger Jorn in 1948-1951 (members of which, such as Appel, Corneille and Constant were to join Jorn's International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus). In the first issue of the journal *Cobra*, Michel Colle writes: 'buildings must not be squalid or anonymous...they must commune with each other, integrate with the environment to create synthesised cities for a new socialist world'. Both Jorn and Dotremont were committed socialists. At the Revolutionary Surrealist Groups' first meeting in October 1947 Dotremont made use of Henri Lefebvre's recently published *Critique de la vie quotidienne, I: Introduction* (Grasset: Paris, 1947), to emphasize the need to experiment in the context of everyday life. Debord also knew Lefebvre and attended his sociology course during the academic year of 1957-8 at the university of Nanterre. (Jean Baudrillard also helped in the presentation of this course) see Home, *Assault on Culture*, p. 31. On the relationship of Lefebvre and Debord see 'Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview' by Kristin Ross in *October* (no. 79, Winter, 1997), pp. 69-83. See also Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, translated by Sacha Rabinovitch (Transaction Publishers: London, 1990). For a brief account of the Situationists' use of theories by Lefebvre see 'The Situationists' critique of moments' in Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (Routledge: London, 1999), pp. 103-108.

commodity form to all spheres of social life.¹⁹ Rather naively perhaps, the Situationists' believed that their construction of ambient situations, such as the modification of the particularities of a localized social space, could provide a model for the transformation of the complex of social relations in their totality. Much was expected then from Gallizio's ambient construction.

Embodied Space

The importance of the concept of unitary urbanism is indicated by the fact that it provided the unifying principle in the formation of the Situationist International. It was during the 'First World Congress of Liberated Artists' put on by Asger Jorn and Gallizio (as members of the International Movement for an Imaginative Bauhaus) in 1956, in the Italian town of Alba, that Gil Wolman (as a then participating member of the Lettrist International) discovered a shared interest in urbanism, as a synthetic strategy aiming at 'an integral construction of an atmosphere, of a style of life'.²⁰ A further gloss on the concept of unitary urbanism was provided by Guy Debord in his 'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's, Conditions of Organization and Action', which was his preparatory text for the July 1957 conference at Cosio d'Arroscia, Italy, at which the Situationist International was founded.²¹ In this text, Debord sets up the dynamic construction of the situation as the opposite to the principle of the passive 'Spectacle.'²² Moreover, in opposition to the

¹⁹ For a detailed account of Debord's expansion of Marx's concept of commodity fetishism through Lukács' concept of generalized reification see his *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Zone Books: N.Y., 1995). An elaboration of the economy of the Spectacle is given in chapter two. See also Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999).

²⁰ Gil Wolman's 'La Plate-Forme d'Alba' in *Potlatch* (no.27, 1956) republished in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch*, p. 247. The following year in the Italian mountain village of Cosio d'Arroscia the unification conference of the IMBI and the LI took place on the 27th July 1957.

²¹ A translated version of Debord's 'Report' is published in Ken Knabb's *Situationist International*, pp17-25.

²² A more detailed explanation of Debord's theory of the spectacle is presented in chapter two.

Spectacle, where 'all that once was directly lived had become mere representation,'²³ the 'constructed situation' was intended to be *lived* by its constructors in such a way that:

The role played by a passive or merely bit-part playing "public" must constantly diminish, while that played by those who cannot be called actors but rather, in a new sense of the term, "livers", must steadily increase.²⁴

But what does this new sense of the term 'livers' actually mean? Debord elaborates it in rather abstract terms as the new 'poetic subject' that must be multiplied through the organization of games of these poetic subjects in relation to 'poetic objects.'²⁵ This abstract definition has remained in place, due in part to the insistent way in which chroniclers of the Situationist International continue to evade this term of 'livers' and, against Debord, reassert the role of the 'actor' in the constructed situation. Thus for example, Peter Wollen describes the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* in terms of 'a drama to transform visitors into actors'.²⁶ Simon Sadler, in his book *The Situationist City*,²⁷ has also interpreted the concept of the constructed situation in terms of baroque theatre, by suggesting that Ludwig II of Bavaria's 'Grotto of Venus' [fig. 4] at the Linderhof Palace in Bavaria 'was an appropriate prototype for the décor of the constructed situation'.²⁸ Sadler draws on Guy Debord's own analysis of Ludwig's architecture as having 'a baroque character, that one always finds so marked in essays on integral art,' and his remarks that 'it is significant to note the relations between Ludwig of Bavaria and Wagner, who would himself research an aesthetic synthesis'.²⁹ But it is from Debord's

²³ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, thesis one, p. 12.

²⁴ Debord, 'Report', p.25.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 25.

²⁶ Peter Wollen, 'Bitter Victory', p.50.

²⁷ Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (M.I.T Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1998). This slippage of Debord's theory of the spectacle, from its relation to a political economy of commodity fetishism, to theatre more simply, is due in part to the more obvious translation of the French word 'spectacle' as a show or a review.

²⁸ Simon Sadler, 'A Technological Baroque' in *The Situationist City*, p.111.

²⁹ Guy Debord, 'L'Architecture et le Jeu' in *Potlatch* (no.20, 1955) reprinted in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch*, p.157. Essays on architecture litter the pages of the LI's journal and influenced the Situationists'

comment in the 'Report on the Constructions of Situations': 'integral art, which has been talked about so much, can only be realized at the level of urbanism,'³⁰ that Sadler interprets unitary urbanism as a general form of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or the total work of art. In these terms Ludwig's Grotto, furnished with its concrete stalactites, an artificially waved lake, changing light effects and a backdrop painting of Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*, can be seen as a prototype for the theatrical playfulness of Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter*.

Importantly, the total theatre, with its integration of painting, sculpture, singing, dancing and acting, also aimed to challenge the usual relationship of the spectator to the spectacle or show by challenging the nineteenth century model of the staged peepshow. As Michael Petzet notes, the total theatre 'did not separate the onlooker from the stage by the dark abyss of the empty auditorium'.³¹ To a certain extent Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter* does mirror this model of a total theatre, in that its mode of construction attempts to integrate painting, the sculpted space created by the folds of fabric, the use of music, lights, perfume etc. It also challenges the traditional relation of the passive spectator to the theatrical performance by doing away with both the stage and the seated auditorium, and allowing the visitors to mingle with the crowd and the wandering show girls – a mobility of action distorted by the static poses captured by the photographic shots of the all over performance. It is this fully interactive aspect of Gallizio's show that marks out its difference from the artistic performances like Klein's, where the audience either remained seated, or those that gave the spectator instructions proscribing what they could or couldn't do. For example, Yves Klein's 'Anthropometry' performance at

subsequent theories on playful space. For a brief account of the Situationists concept of play see Libero Andreotti, 'Play-tactics of the *Internationale Situationniste*' in *October* (no. 91, Winter, 2000), pp. 37-58.

³⁰ Debord, 'Report,' p.23.

³¹ Sadler, *The Situationist City*, p.111. On Wagner's concept of the total work of art see Richard Wagner, 'The Art-Work of the Future' extract published in *Art in Theory: 1815-1900*, Edited by Charles Harrison et al., (Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, 1998), pp.471-478.

the Galerie Internationale d'art Contemporain in Paris, March 1960 [fig. 5] maintains and even parodies the separation between the seated and very formally dressed public and the spectacle staged for them.³² Though the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* was staged by Gallizio he was never in full control of its surprises, such as the musical vibrations triggered by the initially unsuspecting, then perhaps actively sensation seeking, passers-bys.³³

The *Cavern of Anti-Matter* provides an all over spatial and perceptual experience and it is precisely at the level of perception that Debord's concept of the 'liver' can be more fully developed. Gallizio's construction of a continuously changing environment, produced by the continuously altering and altered perspectives of the roaming spectator, anticipates the Situationists' later description of the practice of the constructed situation as 'a phenomeno-praxis'³⁴ with its implication of a phenomenological, that is, an embodied and sensate subject. As early as 1953 the future Situationist member Gilles Ivain, in his essay 'Formula for a New Urbanism,'³⁵ describes how 'certain *shifting* angles, certain *receding* perspectives, allow us to glimpse original conceptions of space,

³² On Klein's performances see Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein* (Cantz: Hayward Gallery, London, 1995). On Klein's performance as a spectacle see Benjamin Buchloh, 'The Primary Colors for the Second Time: A Paradigm of Repetition of the Neo-Avant-Garde' in *October* (37, Summer, 1986), pp.41-52: 'neither was the integration of art into social practice, but rather the opposite: the association of art with spectacle. It is in the spectacle that the neo-avant-garde finds its place as the provider of the mythical semblance of radicality...' (p.51). I'll return later to the issue of the power relations between the male artist Gallizio orchestrating the female models.

³³ Although Allan Kaprow was explicitly anti a passive concept of an audience in his own writings, the critic Paul Schimmel notes that the so-called New York 'Happenings', such as Allan Kaprow's '18 Happenings in 6 Parts' (that took place at the Reuben gallery in 1959) often provided the audience with a list of instructions that proscribed their interaction with the visual, sculptural and theatrically staged elements thus limiting their interactive possibilities, in 'Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object' in the exhibition catalogue *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1998). The Situationists explicitly distanced themselves from the New York Happenings of 1962 in their essay 'L'Avant-Garde de la Presence' which describes them as a mere distractions, with no transformatory socio-political agenda, but were merely a 'spectacle dissous a l'extrême' (a spectacle dissolved to an extreme) in *internationale situationniste* (no.8, 1963) p.20.

³⁴ In 'Le Questionnaire' the Situationists state that 'nous voulons une phenomeno-praxis' in *internationale situationniste* (no.9, 1964) p.24. Also see Introduction of thesis.

³⁵ Gilles Ivain was the pen name for Ivan Chtcheglov. 'Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveau' was first published in *international situationniste* (no.1, 1958) pp.15-20.

but this vision remains fragmentary'.³⁶ It is this model of the perceptive ambiguities of space, determined by the multiplicity of the mobile subject's fragmented viewpoints, which suggests points of convergence between the Situationists' 'phenomeno' subject and the subject of phenomenology, as it had been elaborated by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre (despite the Situationists' direct and indirect attacks on their respective philosophical positions).³⁷ It is possible to interpret the influence of phenomenology in phrases such as 'against the spectacle, the realized situationist culture introduces total participation', or 'against reserved art, it is the organization of the directly lived moment'.³⁸ And references to the experiential aspect of the Situationists' cultural practice were made by artists visiting Gallizio's studio in Alba. For example, Mario Merz comments: 'he [Gallizio] showed how the idea behind painting was more important than painting...what was important for him was the practice of life'.³⁹ However, in order to investigate more fully the phenomenological aspect of the perceptual experiences triggered by the synesthetic space of Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter*, it is necessary to turn to the writings of a then contemporary non-Situationist member, namely the Italian intellectual Umberto Eco. Eco is useful here, as he makes explicit the dynamic concept of perception within the phenomenological philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. In his 1962 essay 'The Open Work',⁴⁰ Eco describes Sartre's concept (taken from the 1943

³⁶ Ivain, 'Formula for a New Urbanism' in Knabb, *Situationist International; Anthology*, p.1.

³⁷ A direct attack on Merleau-Ponty appears in 'Au Vestiaire' in *Potlatch* (no.25, 1956) republished in Guy Debord *présente Potlatch*, op. cit. p.220. There are too many attacks on Sartre through out the Situationists' writings to itemise them individually here. For some see Introduction of thesis.

³⁸ Both phrases are from the Situationists' 1960 'Manifeste' (17th May) in *internationale situationniste* (no. 4, June, 1960), pp. 36-38.

³⁹ Mario Merz in an interview with Mirella Bandini, *Pinot Gallizio e il laboratorio sperimentale d'Alba* (Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna: Turin, 1974), p. 27. For a general account of the relation of certain Arte Povera artists with Gallizio in Italy see *Arte Povera*, edited by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (Phaidon: London, 1999). On the relation of the works of Merz to Debord and the concept of the nomadic see Maria Teresa Roberto, 'From Giuseppe Pinot Gallizio's *Caverna dell'Antimateria* to Mario Merz's *Igloo*', paper delivered at 'Arte Povera Symposium' at University College London, Saturday, May 6, 2000.

⁴⁰ Umberto Eco, 'The Open Work' reprinted in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev *Arte Povera* (Phaidon: London, 1999) p. 212. Christov-Bakargiev suggests that the principles of phenomenology developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, first published in France in 1945 and translated for the first time into Italian in 1965, underlay many Arte Povera artists' focus on 'perception as

Gallimard edition of *L'être et néant*) of the continuously altering subject, whose different point of views are in a dynamic relationship with the different profiles of the existent object. This sort of 'openness' is at the heart of every act of perception. Eco accentuates the position of 'perceptive ambiguities' further through Merleau-Ponty's concept of the incompleteness of any view on the world. A completion made impossible by the fact 'that none of the views of the perceptions I have of it (the world) can exhaust it and the horizons remain forever open'.⁴¹ But it is Eco's use of Husserl to emphasize the physical and temporal mobility of perception that is more productive when considering Debord's model of the 'liver'. Husserl describes the process of perception as similar to:

...a continuous projection which takes on a new meaning with each phase of the perceptive process...such as a person might experience by changing deliberately the direction of his perception, by turning his eyes one way instead of another, or by taking a step forward or sideways, and so forth...⁴²

It is precisely this experience of perceptive ambiguities, such as the flashing lights, the random smells and sounds, all triggered by the changing perspectives of the mobile spectator, which dramatizes the subject of Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter* as phenomenological. This phenomeno-subject, like the temporary performance, is not fixed but fluid, negotiating the arbitrary assemblage not only in terms of Ivain's 'baroque stage of urbanism' but as the potentially multiple and disorientated 'liver' constituted by Debord's model of a constructed situation. Through the combined use of art and technology, unitary urbanism is a strategy that playfully challenges the viewers'

the moment where the self and the world connect', *ibid.*, p.26. A relation can be seen to exist between Asger Jorn's concept of 'open creation' and Eco's concept of the open work as ambiguous and indeterminate see Asger Jorn's 'La Création Ouverte et ses Ennemis' (Open Creation and its Enemies) in *internationale situationniste* (no.5, 1960) pp.29-50.

⁴¹ Excerpt from Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Gallimard: Paris, 1945) pp.381-83.

⁴² Umberto Eco, 'The Open Work', p.212. Extract from Edmund Husserl, *Méditations cartésiennes*, no.2 paragraph 19 (Paris, 1953) p.39.

perceptual apparatus. This not only challenges the way the gallery space is perceived, but ideally the way the society of the Spectacle is perceived, namely as having the capacity to be transformed. The intentionally interactive environment of Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter* anticipates the declaration in the Situationists' 1960 'Manifesto' that 'against the Spectacle, the realized Situationist culture introduces total participation'.⁴³ If the sensory aspect of the subject is clearly dramatized in the *Cavern*, the political dimensions of this space are not, however, so clear-cut. There is a tension between the ideals of the constructed situation and its actual instantiation, especially concerning the sexual politics of the posing female 'mannequins,' shrouded in the same material stuff as the walls, and the sort of subject conjured up as suited to such an enclosed, enveloping space (I will discuss these points in detail later on).

Industrial Painting

'On the 13th May, at the Galerie Drouin, the walls, the ceiling and the floor have been entirely covered by 145 metres of Gallizio's Industrial Painting (*peinture Industrielle*)'.⁴⁴ From this description it is clear that the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* show was also understood as an exhibition of Gallizio's new invention of 'Industrial Painting.' In fact, the Parisian show was the last in a line of exhibitions dedicated to exposing this new type of painting: the tour of Industrial Painting began in Turin, in May 1958, at the Galerie Notizie, then travelled to Milan in November 1958, at the Galerie Monténapoleone, then on to Munich in April 1959, and finally to Paris in May 1959, at the Galerie René Drouin. Industrial Painting was envisaged as a combination of art and

⁴³ 'Manifeste' in *international situationniste* (no.4, 1960) p.37. Lefebvre also expressed the importance of the body to a re-grounding of theory: "The body, at the very heart of space and of the discourse of power is irreducible and subversive. It is the body which is the point of return" (this was in 1976), quoted in Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*, p. 76.

⁴⁴ 'Dans les Galeries de Paris' in *Potlatch* (no.30, 1959) republished in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch*, p.286.

technology, in the form of new chemical processes and experimental resins, drying agents etc., in combination with the use of machines to produce the art, or rather rolls of Industrial Painting [fig. 6].

To be more specific, Industrial Painting was the result of Gallizio's first artistic experiments, which were developed after he gave up his previous work as a Chemist and pharmacist.⁴⁵ He put his chemical skills to creative use by inventing new types of resins, and it is in fact this persona of 'scientist' that is played up in portraits of him dressed-up in a white lab coat, mixing up his strange concoctions such as in [fig. 7]. This image was reproduced in a 1960 catalogue on Gallizio with the caption *Pinot-Gallizio prépare ses couleurs*.⁴⁶ The art critic Giuseppe Bonini, notes that 1955 was a key year for Gallizio when he began experimenting with different application techniques and a diverse range of typically non-art materials: 'he experimented on the canvas, mixing resins, sand, carbon and vinegar and as well as painting with oil he used iron filings and cigarette ash,'⁴⁷ as well as using mud, earth and clay daubed with sticks and sponges onto rough sacking to create his pictures. It was during an exhibition of some of his experimental works in the Italian seaside town of Albisola, in 1955, alongside the ceramic work of his friend, the philosopher turned artist Piero Simondo, that Gallizio met up with Asger Jorn for the second time. Jorn had settled in Albisola in June 1954 and had during that summer formed The Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus. This was set up after Jorn's encounter with the Swiss architect Max Bill, who was head of the New Bauhaus in Ulm, Sweden. Jorn was so opposed to what he called Bill's rationalism that he decided to set up a rival Bauhaus:

⁴⁵ In the 'Notice Biographique' a list of Gallizio's jobs include: 'chimiste, pharmacien, acteur, archéologue' in *Pinot Gallizio* (Bibliothèque D'Alexandrie: Paris, 1960), back page, no pagination. Gallizio's varied careers are also acknowledged by Giuseppe Bonini in *Pinot Gallizio; le situationnisme et la peinture*, p.4. For a detailed history of Gallizio in an Italian context see Mirella Bandini, *L'estetico il politico: da Cobra all'Internazionale Situazionists 1948-1957* (Officini Edizioni: Rome, 1977).

⁴⁶ *Pinot-Gallizio* (1960), not paginated.

⁴⁷ Translated from Giuseppe Bonini, *Pinot-Gallizio* (1989), p.4.

...a Swiss architect, Max Bill, has undertaken to restructure the Bauhaus where Klee and Kandinsky taught. He wishes to make an academy without painting, without research into the imagination, fantasy, signs, symbols –all he wants is technical instruction. In the name of experimental artists I intend to create an International Movement for An Imaginist Bauhaus....⁴⁸

The art critic Bonini comments that Gallizio had been so impressed by Jorn, and the experimental ambitions of the Imaginist Bauhaus project, that he wrote in his diary: '1955, meeting with Jorn and a decisive turning point in the freedom of research'.⁴⁹ By the following year Gallizio had not only joined the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus (IMBI), but his own studio in Alba, located in an old convent, became the 'Experimental Laboratory' of the IMBI.⁵⁰ This was set up as a truly experimental and open studio: Gallizio prepared new chemical resins, Baj continued his research into atomism, Sottsass investigated architectural designs, Walter Olmo pursued his musical experiments, such as the use of the tereminofono, later used in the *Cavern of Anti-Matter*.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Home, *Assault on Culture*, p. 24. For a more detailed description see Asger Jorn's 'Notes on the Formation of An Imaginist Bauhaus' (1957) reprinted in Knabb, pp. 16-17. Members of the IMBI included former Cobra (an art movement also dedicated to imaginative experiments) artists such as Appel, Corneille and the former Nuclear Art members, Baj and Dangelo. On Cobra art see *Cobra 1948-1951* (Van Gennep: Amsterdam, 1980) and on Jorn and Cobra see Graham Birtwhistle, *Living art: Asger Jorn's Comprehensive Theory of Art between Helhesten and Cobra(1946-1949)* (Reflex: Utrecht, 1986). On Gallizio and the IMBI see Mirella Bandini 'Pinot-Gallizio: il 'Primo Laboratorio di Esperienze Immaginiste del Movimento per una Bauhaus Immaginist' (Alba 1955-57) and 'Laboratorio Sperimentale d'Alba dell'Internazionale Situazionista' (1957-1960) in *Data* (Italy). 3(9), Autumn 1973. pp. 16-29, 82-85, 94-95, ill.

⁴⁹ Bonini, *Pinot-Gallizio* (1989), p.4.

⁵⁰ Bonini refers to the 'premier Atelier d' Expérience', maintaining the artistic as opposed to scientific overtones of the 'laboratory' title, *ibid.*, p.5. But this is an exception most accounts (including the Situationists') recall the Experimental Laboratory of Alba.

⁵¹ According to Mirella Bandini the Experimental Laboratory attracted many artists including Lucio Fontana, Michael Tapiés, Mario Merz, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Giulio Paolini in 'An Enormous and Unknown Chemical Reaction: the Experimental Laboratory in Alba' in Sussman ed. *On the Passage...*, p.71. The last three Italian artists were all involved with Arte Povera suggesting a connection with the IMBI and later the SI. On Arte Povera see Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev *Arte Povera* (Phaidon: London, 1999).

After the unification of the IMBI with the Lettrist International to form the Situationist International in 1957, Gallizio's Alba Laboratory became the experimental centre for the Situationist International. According to Bonini, this is when Gallizio began his first tentative attempts at what was to become labelled Industrial Painting. This included the development of using dry colours mixed with synthetic resins and quick drying watery varnishes to produce crystalline and ultra reflective surfaces that changed colour under different lighting conditions. By 1958, Gallizio was also experimenting with odorous painting (*peinture odorante*) and using more dangerous solvents and chemical formulas; the most extreme example was the sticking of colours mixed with gunpowder to produce explosive collages. To avoid getting too close to these dangerous materials Gallizio even experimented with using whips to lash on the colour and trigger the explosions at a safer distance. The risk of accidents, such as experienced by Gallizio's unfortunate dog who turned blue from the chemical solvents in the air [fig. 8], meant that gas masks were often used or, to avoid inhaling the poisonous fumes the paintings had to be prepared out in the open air. It was precisely the unpredictability, even danger, of these chemical experiments that Gallizio sought. Often left out-side in the open air to dry, Gallizio was also enraptured by the unpredictable interaction of the wet sticky surfaces of the painting, which acted as a trap for all the floating debris, as well as being at the mercy of the vagaries of the weather:

...abandoned in the open air and subordinated to atmospheric conditions; the sun, the rain, the wind, left their accidental traces on the canvases and left their memory there.⁵²

Accident and contingency were the constituents of Gallizio's experimental painting, which not only sought to expand the category of painting by taking it off the stretcher

⁵² Bonini, *Pinot-Gallizio* (1989), p.10.

and producing it by the roll, but even risked the destruction of the art work itself. This embrace of error and accident was also an affront to the utilitarian rhetoric of Max Bill's New Bauhaus. On the contrary, the Imaginist Bauhaus sought the excesses of the non-utilitarian in their acts of creative destruction. In addition to such accidental collaborations with nature were added the unpredictable results of collective production. Such collaborative and collective techniques involved the erasure of the autographic trace of the individual artist, an erasure exacerbated by the use of machines in the manufacturing process. It is at this point that the meaning of 'Industrial' (as attached to Painting) comes into its own, not only in terms of the production process but also as indicating a different concept of the creative or artistic subject.

Mechanized Authorship

Michèle Bernstein's 'Eulogy to Pinot-Gallizio' (*Eloge de Pinot-Gallizio*) appeared in the catalogue to the first exhibition of Industrial Painting, at the Galerie Notzie in Turin, in May 1958. Here, Bernstein praises Gallizio for 'abandoning painting, 'good painting' (*la bonne peinture*) be it figurative or abstract, or tachiste or the modernist style of the 1930s'.⁵³ This abandonment was recognized in the use of new chemicals and experimental practices such as 'odorous painting'. But the biggest break that Industrial Painting posed was its rejection of the 'small glories of the easel painting' represented by Gallizio's use of machines, which enabled a production of art by the metre. Bernstein enthuses that in one fell swoop:

... no more problems about format, the canvas is cut under the eyes of the satisfied customer; no more bad periods, the inspiration of industrial painting, made from a combination of know how, accident, and mechanization, will never

⁵³ Michèle Bernstein, 'Eloge de Pinot-Gallizio' in *Pinot Gallizio* (Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie: Paris, 1960) front two pages, no pagination.

be lacking; no more metaphysical themes, industrial painting doesn't require any;
no more dubious reproductions of eternal master pieces; no more openings
(*vernissage*)... no more painters, even in Italy.⁵⁴

In this intentionally parodic 'eulogy' Bernstein sends up the ideals of mass production. Here, the mechanized production of Industrial Painting signalled the end of the specialist artist, the end of the 'genius artist'.⁵⁵ The machine would never dry up (inspirationally speaking) and, moreover, it would never get tired. Industrial Painting not only 'surpassed and destroyed the pictorial object', with its auto-destructive materials, but it also pushed the production of art to its extreme limits with its unlimited production processes. Rather than surpassing the art of the past with reductive acts of 'neo-dadaist refusals', Bernstein suggests the tactical use of abundance in the form of a surfeit of production, by announcing 'that all values, be they ideological, artistic or even financial must be violently unleashed everywhere by inflation'.⁵⁶

Gallizio's discussion of the desire to 'create an inflationist industrial art' was couched in terms of the model of 'a system of potlatch'.⁵⁷ That is, the over-production of Industrial Painting (up to 145 metres in length) was seen as a sort of gift through excess. Moreover, these rolls of paintings were not just for decorating homes or galleries, but ideally envisaged as fantastic coverings for whole cities, for motorways etc.⁵⁸ Giors Melanotto, Gallizio's son and artistic collaborator, acknowledges both Bernstein's and Gallizio's understanding of the term 'industrial' as a surplus of production, in the Situationists' report on 'The activity of the Italian Section,' where he states that the word

⁵⁴ Bernstein, 'Eulogy', no pagination.

⁵⁵ The Situationists' concept of the 'amateur-professional situationist' was developed in opposition to the specialist artist in 'Manifeste' *internationale situationniste* (no.4, 1960) p.38.

⁵⁶ Bernstein, 'Eulogy', no pagination.

⁵⁷ Gallizio, 'Discours sur la peinture industrielle,' p.32. The Situationists' turn to a potlatch or gift economy, along with its limitations as well as excesses, is the subject of chapter 2.

⁵⁸ Stewart Home claims that: "in October 1958 IP received its Parisian premier during a 'night exercise' by the SI; a long roll of canvas, following the lines of ambiance, was pinned up in a street" in *Assault on Culture*, p.34.

industrial 'establishes an idea of *quantitative* production'.⁵⁹ As part of this series of already parodic adjustments (where the quantitative is seemingly valued above the qualitative) Gallizio acts out to the camera a sequence of parodic manoeuvres intended to demonstrate the values of mass produced art [fig. 9]. This photo was taken during the Munich installation of Gallizio's exhibition of Industrial Painting (at the Galerie van de Loo, in April 1959). Gallizio takes on the persona of some sort of haberdasher, exaggerating his cutting-up of a desired piece of painted fabric according to the specifications of the watching prospective buyer. Ideally, the overproduction of painting would also mean that it was inexpensive and thus a contribution to the democratisation of the buying of art. Gallizio admits as much in his 1959 manifesto entitled '*Discours sur la Peinture Industrielle et Sur un art Unitaire Applicable*', where he writes that his painting game with machines would 'immediately result in the de-valorization of the work of art'.⁶⁰ Offered at cost price (*prix courant*), these rolls of Industrial Painting (produced by the kilometres) would maximize their amount of pleasure due to their affordable availability to a more general buying public (instead of only being available to an art collecting elite). Gallizio's parodic stress on the pleasure of the quantitative over the qualitative tends to recast the economy of aesthetic pleasure as absurd.⁶¹

Giors Melanotto's further glossing of the definition of 'industrial' is also revealing:

⁵⁹ 'L'Activité de la Section Italienne' in *internationale situationniste* (no.2, December, 1958), p.28.

⁶⁰ Gallizio, 'Discours sur la peinture Industrielle et sur un art unitaire applicable' in *internationale situationniste* (no.3, December, 1959) pp.31-35, (p.34).

⁶¹ On the relation of the absurd and art, Asger Jorn had been a member of the 'College of Pataphysics', other members allegedly were Marcel Duchamp, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Dubuffet, Max Ernst, Joan Miro. Pataphysics was the science of imaginary solutions, which the French utopian Alfred Jarry (1873-1907) apparently invented. The spirit of this 'new science' was incarnated in Jarry's famous plays *Ubu Roi*; *Ubu coco*; *Ubu Enchained*. See Simon Watson's review of the College of Pataphysics, 'Apodeitic Outline' in *Evergreen Review* (May/June, 1960). Coincidentally the Galerie Iris Clert, which exhibited the works of Fontana and Klein, was situated opposite Minotaure (a surrealist bookstore) and the offices of the Pataphysics Society, in Stich, p. 89.

...with this word we do not want to affirm the relationship of artistic production according to the criteria of industrial production (work time, production costs) or with the qualities intrinsic to the machine....⁶²

So, although produced en mass, the principles of Industrial painting were set against a rationalist or Taylorist model of production.⁶³ In fact, looking at photos of the actual 'machines' used to make Industrial Painting [fig. 10] it is clear that a non-industrialized mode of production is at stake. The painting 'machine' is in fact a print table with assorted rollers attached to it. We are confronted with an image of a rickety 'machine' that perverts Gallizio's rhetoric of assembly line production. These rollers, in a parody of automatization, were in fact manually raised and lowered; one might have resins on it, the other paint, the other varnish etc. The randomness of such haphazard production methods is increased by the happy accidents of open air manufacture, such as the layers of everyday dust and debris that gather on the sticky lengths of canvas that are pulled through the sequence of randomly adjusted rollers. The result of this manual process was certainly a series of rolls of painting, but a series not of the same, in the sense of industrially replicable products, but rather a series of constantly variable (because haphazardly constructed) semi handcrafted strips of Industrial Painting.⁶⁴ The collective production process and the use of sticks and rollers may have erased the touch of the individual artist, but as Bonini comments, 'each metre of painting represents a unique experience and a unique result'.⁶⁵ Gallizio may not have been precious about his art, in the sense of not being afraid of dirtying or of damaging the painted canvases, but

⁶² Giors Melanotto, 'L'Activité de la section Italienne', p.28.

⁶³ For a direct Situationist attack on the reduction of the factory worker to a machine see Raoul Vaneigem 'Commentaries contre l'Urbanisme' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 6, August, 1961), pp. 33-37.

⁶⁴ Sidra Stich draws attention to Klein's monochromes as both capturing the spirit of mass production, using rollers and erasing the autographic trace of the artist's hand, but also retaining the actuality of being handmade works of art, p. 88. The exposure of the irrational side to machine production is also a Surrealist trait see Hal Foster, 'Exquisite Corpses' in *Compulsive Beauty* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995), pp. 125-153.

⁶⁵ Bonini, *Pinot-Gallizio* (1989), p.12.

uniqueness was still a sought after quality. Such unpredictable variations stresses the distance between the aesthetics of excess belonging to Industrial Painting and the productivist and rational aesthetic associated with the design orientated scientism of Max Bill's new Bauhaus in Ulm (that Jorn and the IMBI had so objected to). A parodic rejection of this role is further demonstrated by Mirella Bandini's observation that Gallizio, and the other participants in the Experimental Laboratory at Alba, thought of themselves as imaginative innovators and as such were 'utterly opposed to the role of designer in the service of industry'.⁶⁶

Although not in the service of industry, Industrial Painting was intended to have a social not just decorative function. It was a prototype of what Gallizio called a 'unitary applicable art', a sort of urbanist painting, which was intended to engulf whole cities, as part of an experiment in dynamic forms of social interaction. In his manifesto on Industrial Painting, Gallizio fantasizes about transforming the whole planet into a 'Luna-Park without borders, arousing new emotions and passions'.⁶⁷ Put to everyday use, Industrial Painting techniques could totally transform the environment:

...we could use machines to paint the freeways; to make the most shocking, the most unique fabrics to dress up the joyous crowds ...houses of painted leather, repulsive, laquered; using metal or wood, resins, vibrant chemicals to form on the ground an unequal and incessant moment of shock....⁶⁸

From such descriptions the light, smell and sound surprises installed in Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter* can be understood as devices to shock the unsuspecting visitor out of their inertia and the Spectacle's principle of non-intervention. Though the affect of these moments of shocks on the participating subject is not traumatic, but rather

⁶⁶ Mirella Bandini, *L'estetico*, p.71.

⁶⁷ Gallizio, 'Discours sur la peinture industrielle', p.32.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.33.



registered as a more ludic experience.⁶⁹ Indeed, Gallizio's *Cavern* stages a fantasy of experiential control, where in the safety of an enclosed space the participating subject has time to repeatedly play with (and thus have time to experience and re-experience) the perceptual shocks that are encountered. However, Gallizio's reference to the model of a Luna park may present a playful antidote to an administered society, but it also risks reducing the experience of the *Cavern* to the level of distraction (as opposed to that of a social revolution) thus capitulating to Raoul Vaneigem's fear of 'elaborating the spectacle of refusal' rather than actually 'refusing the spectacle'.⁷⁰ The Parisian installation of the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* was successful in expanding the conventional form and function of painting, in the sense of using it to drape the gallery walls and be fashioned into a garment. For example, in an earlier exhibition of Industrial Painting (at the Galerie van de Loos in Munich) some of the paintings, in the back left hand corner of the photo, remained on stretchers [fig. 11]. Yet a tension remains, in that on the one hand the Parisian installation was understood as providing a narrowly confined moment of shock or what Gallizio defined as 'a contribution to the emotional atmosphere of a moment,'⁷¹ whilst simultaneously, providing a microcosmic model for a larger project of unitary urbanism aimed at transforming the totality of the social spaces of everyday life, but ideally not in the form of distraction or theatre.

⁶⁹ According to the diagnosis of capitalist society by Walter Benjamin, it is the shocking -in the sense of traumatic- speed of events (as well as the speed of their representation) in the industrialized world that prevents them from being registered as an experience. See 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire' in *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn (Fontana Press: London, 1992), pp. 152-196, (esp. p. 155). Debord also diagnosed the speed of the turnover of events in the society of the Spectacle as contributing to a petrification of experience, as for example when he writes 'that which the spectacle ceases to speak of for three days no longer exists,' in Guy Debord, *Commentaires sur la société du spectacle* (Editions Gérard Lebovici: Paris), p. 29. The problems of representing past events without freezing or petrifying them is taken up in chapter 4.

⁷⁰ "It is a question not of elaborating the spectacle of refusal, but rather of refusing the spectacle," Raoul Vaneigem, in 'The Fifth S.I. Conference in Göteborg (excerpts)' in *Situationist International Anthology*, edited by Knabb, p. 88.

⁷¹ Gallizio, 'Discours sur la peinture industrielle', p.35.

A Psycho-Geographic Approach

The definition of the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* according to the principles of unitary urbanism is useful in giving a general account of the way a spectator's perceptions can be both mobilized and transformed. But the term has limitations as well. For in generalizing or subsuming the experience of the *Cavern* within this larger strategy (of unitary urbanism) it is easy to gloss over the specificities of the type of experiences and of the type of subject that emerges from it. In some respects a different Situationist concept, namely that of 'psycho-geography' (*psychogeographie*),⁷² offers a more productive way to reconstruct the specificities of the subject at stake in Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter*. The Situationists' definition of psychogeography is as follows: 'the study of precise effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, directly agitating the emotional behaviour of individuals'.⁷³ In theory at least, psycho-geography enables a topological analysis of the psychic and social experience of the subject, in relation to specific environmental conditions or specific geographies of space.⁷⁴

The interest in psychic space litters early Situationist texts, such as Gilles Ivain's 'Formula for a new Urbanism', first published in issue one of *internationale situationniste* in 1958. Here, Ivain claims that a rational extension 'of psychoanalysis into architectural expression, becomes more and more urgent as all the reasons for

⁷² Mark Francis and Peter Wollen have also looked at Gallizio's 'Cavern' in terms of psychogeography and the *dérive* in Sussman edited, *On the passage*, p.18.

⁷³ From 'Définitions' in *internationale situationniste* (no.1, 1958), p.13.

⁷⁴ The concept of psychogeography was inherited from the Lettrist International, but also has links with Surrealism. Guy Debord's essay 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,' which discusses the invention and use of psychogeography, was first published in the Belgian Revolutionary Surrealist journal *Les Lèvres Nues* (no. 6, September, 1955). This journal was edited by Marcel Mariën and Paul Nougé with the collaboration of Louis Scutenaire. Raoul Vaneigem wrote a book on the Belgian Surrealist Louis Scutenaire called *Histoire désinvolte du surréalisme* under the pseudonym Jules-François Dupuis (Editions Paul Vermont: Nonville, 1977). For a general account of the various Surrealist connections amongst different members of the Situationists see Shigenobu Gonzalvez, *Guy Debord ou la beauté du négatif* (Editions Mille et Une Nuits: Paris, 1998).

becoming impassioned disappear.’⁷⁵ The transformation of architecture was for Ivain one of the means by which reality could be modulated, a modulation which in turn would engender new dreams, new imaginative ways of living because ‘dreams spring from reality and are realized in it’.⁷⁶ In the same first issue of the journal, Debord, in his text ‘Preliminary problems in the Construction of a Situation,’ envisages ‘a sort of situationist orientated psychoanalysis where each one that participates in this adventure must discover some precise desires from their surroundings *in order to realize them*.’⁷⁷ Psychogeography is the Situationists’ name for this strategic practice of attempting to locate the type of desires, consciously organized or not, that a specific geography triggers. For Ivain, such psycho-geographic discoveries could be used to build cities that would correspond to ‘the whole spectrum of diverse feelings that one encounters by chance in everyday life’.⁷⁸

It is my contention that by applying the model of psychogeography to Gallizio’s *Cavern of Anti-Matter* it is possible to speculate on the conscious and unconscious constituents of the emerging subject, as it interacts with the particular geography of the constructed space. This is a complex space indicated by the show’s title, the *Cavern of*

⁷⁵ ‘Formula for a New Urbanism’, p.3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.2. Chtcheglov turns to the remarkable architectural space constructed in the paintings of de Chirico as a model for his ‘new vision of time and space’ with ‘their buildings charged with evocative power, symbolic edifices representing desires, forces, events past, present and to come’ (p. 3). This relates to what Hal Foster describes as the ‘uncanny’ aspect of de Chirico’s pictorial world as ‘an immense museum of strangeness’ where the ‘mystery of insignificant things is revealed’ in *Compulsive Beauty* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995), p.62.

⁷⁷ Guy Debord, ‘Preliminary Problems in the Construction of a Situation’ in Knabb, *Situationist International*, p.11. Debord also gives a positive description of Surrealism: ‘the surrealist program, asserting the sovereignty of desire and surprise, proposing a new use of life, is much richer in constructive possibilities than is generally thought’ in ‘Report on the Construction of Situations,’ p. 19.

⁷⁸ Ivain, ‘Formula for a New Urbanism,’ p.4. The danger is to avoid habitualizing such discoveries. The Situationists were aware that the study of desire is never a precise science. In fact their grievances with Freud were not about the discovery of the unconscious and its distorted relation to the social or the symbolic, but were related to how this discovery was misused by the institutionalised and specialized practices of psychoanalysis. For Debord, institutional psychoanalysis focused too much on the subject and their symptoms and not enough on the social relations that produced them. This risked turning psychoanalysis into ‘the guardian of sleep’ as opposed to an awakening potentiality as expressed in *internationale situationniste* (no 10, 1966), pp.63 & 79. This appears similar to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s later assertions that the seeds of society’s sickness were already sewn in the institutionalised practices of psychoanalysis –especially the dogmatism surrounding the powerful myth of Oedipus, in *L’Anti-Oedipe* (Editions de Minuit: Paris, 1972).

Anti-Matter, which seems to both point backwards in time, with its associations of an archaic, cavernous dwelling, but also points forward to the new science of particle physics and the discovery of the other to matter, its dark shadow called anti-matter. What type of subject is staged by Gallizio's fantastic scene constructed out of the combination of the old and the new, the cavernous and deep and the material and the atomistic? Dark underground spaces always held a fascination for the Situationists, for example they document their wanderings in the catacombs of Paris, where they appear as some mole-like species existing in a parallel world below ground.⁷⁹ Yet, Gallizio constructs an artificial underground space situated at ground level. The windows of the gallery are blacked out and the outside world made invisible. The spectator enters into this strange, dimly lit world in the company of other strangers. This temporary assembled imaginary-place-apart has its own specific psycho-geography. By investigating what this might be, I aim to open up and extend the Situationists' project of unitary urbanism, by focusing on the contradictory psycho-sexual constitution of the subject that emerges in a dynamic relationship with the material specificities of Gallizio's constructed situation. An ambivalent sexuality is caught in the photographic shots of the show where, for example, it seems that the female figure functions as a performative prop in this male directed event [fig. 3]. If Klein had orchestrated the female nude figures in an omnipotent fantasy, then what sort of fantasy might Gallizio be staging in relation to his clothed mannequins?

Ritual Spaces

Gallizio's interest in the affects of his artificially constructed underground space might have been triggered by the writings on space by Gaston Bachelard, for, as Mirella

⁷⁹ 'The Bad Days Will End' in Knabb, *Situationist International*, pp. 82-87, (p.82). Penetrating dark, secret spaces was also a typical Surrealist trope see Briony Fer, 'Surrealism, Myth and Psychoanalysis' in *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism*, edited by Fer et al (Yale University Press: London, 1993), pp. 171-249.

Bandini notes, Gallizio was a friend and avid reader of his works.⁸⁰ In 1958, one year before the *Cavern of Anti-Matter*, Bachelard published his book *The Poetics of Space*.⁸¹ In this study of how our perceptions of houses and other shelters shape our thoughts, memories and dreams, Bachelard opposes the 'rationality of the roof to the irrationality of the cellar'.⁸² Up high, our thoughts are clear but going down into the cellar, into the cave, this is where we dream, where 'one partakes of the subterranean forces' or where 'we are in a harmony with the irrationality of the depths'.⁸³ To go underground symbolizes a return to a more irrational space, suggesting that to enter Gallizio's cave is like encountering a strange, subterranean dream-like world, which is filled with surprises and where nothing is therefore certain.⁸⁴ Indeed, the subject entering Gallizio's cave could be said to perform an inversion of the Platonic myth of enlightenment: instead of emerging out the cave of illusion into the light of day, signalling the Platonic transformation from irrational to rational subject, Gallizio's subjects are submerged, dazed and confused into a world of illusion.⁸⁵ Though, aware of the artifice, the subject is not so duped. More specifically however, in mimicking a low shelter (metaphorically in harmony with the irrationality of the depths) Gallizio's construction can be read as a direct assault on what the Situationists understood as the oppressive high-rise architecture associated with a rationalist construction of the modern city. For the Situationists the high-rise apartment, especially those designed by 'the modular

⁸⁰ Mirella Bandini in *Situationist, Art, Politics, Urbanism*, p.50. Asger Jorn was also a friend of Bachelard, for a detailed account of Jorn's diverse range of acquaintances see *Asger Jorn, 1914-1973* an exhibition catalogue with essays by Troels Andersen, Graham Birtwistle and Johannes Gachnang (Stedelijk Museum: Amsterdam, 1994).

⁸¹ Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (Presses Universitaires de France: Paris, 1958). *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas, (Beacon Press: Boston, 1969).

⁸² Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p.18.

⁸³ Ibid., p.18.

⁸⁴ Bachelard describes such uncanny experiences in terms of 'a phenomenology of the imagination', *ibid.*, p.17.

⁸⁵ Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave' in *The Republic*, translated by Desmond Lee (Penguin Books: London, 1987), pp.255-264.

protestant’⁸⁶ Le Corbusier, represented the functionalist ideal of the perfect ‘machine for living in’.⁸⁷ As perfect living machines, the subject that they moulded was in the guise of a perfect mechanical unit. That is, the rationalist living spaces designed by Le Corbusier, looking like a cross between a prison cell and a glass fronted rabbit hutch were, according to the Situationists’ principles of psycho-geography, producing alienated and modulated subjects that were constantly under the surveillance of their neighbours and of themselves:

Le Corbusier is trying to *do away with streets*...His program? To divide life into closed, isolated units, into societies under perpetual surveillance; no more opportunities for uprisings or meaningful encounters; to enforce an automatic resignation....⁸⁸

In 1957 Asger Jorn went further by claiming that all ‘functionalists ignore the psychological function of the imagination’.⁸⁹ In this light, Gallizio’s cave can be understood as turning away from the cold and transparent subject, surveyed until it has no secrets (as associated by the Situationists with rationalist architecture) and instead, understood as an embrace of a dimly lit underworld and its creation of an obscure, non-

⁸⁶ ‘Les Gratte-Ciel par la Racine’ in *Potlatch* (no.5, 1954) republished in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch*, pp.37-39. This is a Lettrist International text but attacks on Le Corbusier litter too many Situationist texts to list here but for a general flavour see ‘L’Urbanisme Unitaire à la Fin des Années 50’ in *internationale situationniste* (no.3, 1959) pp.11-16.

⁸⁷ A more general critique of rationalism and functional architecture was also the impetus behind the formation of the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, in opposition to the New Bauhaus of Max Bill. Asger Jorn had studied with Fernand Léger in Paris between 1936-37, and it was Léger who introduced Jorn to Le Corbusier in 1936, when preparations for the world exhibition of 1937 were under way see Troels Andersen, ‘A biography’ in *Asger Jorn, 1914-1973*, pp. 27-28.

⁸⁸ ‘Skyscrapers by the Roots’, *Potlatch* (no.5, 1954) reprinted in *Theory of the Dérive and Other Situationist Writings on the City*, Edited by Libero Andreotti et al. (MAC: Barcelona, 1996), p.44. Jonathan Crary makes an interesting connection between Foucault’s concept of surveillance and the Situationist spectacle, for both provide: ‘a set of techniques for the management of bodies, the management of attention...“for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities...its object is to fix, it is an anti-nomadic technique,”’ in *Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory*’ in *October* (no. 50, Fall, 1989), pp. 97-107, (p. 105). See also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, translated by Alan Sheridan (Pantheon: N.Y., 1976), p. 217. The Situationists’ interest in the nomadic is best represented by the architectural plans of Constant’s ‘New Babylon’ project see Constant ‘The Principle of Disorientation’ reprinted in *Situationists, Art, Politics, Urbanism*, pp. 86-87 and Jean-Clarence Lambert, ‘Constant and the Labyrinth’ in *ibid*, pp. 95-109. On the model of the city in the form of a nomadic ship see Constant, ‘Une Autre Ville Pour Une Autre Vie’ in *internationale situationniste* (no. 3, December, 1959), pp. 37-40, (p.39).

⁸⁹ Asger Jorn ‘Notes on the formation of the Imaginist Bauhaus’ (1957), p.35.

transparent subject, who is full of hidden secrets and desires. Or rather, Gallizio's undisciplined space produces a more open and imaginative, if not unhinged, subject.

If to enter an underground space suggests a symbolic walk back into the unconscious depths of the imagination, it is also to go symbolically back in time. The conversion of the modern gallery space into the outmoded habitat of a darkened cave-like dwelling also suggests a return, or even a regression, to a more primitive time and a more primitive subject. Gallizio was an amateur archaeologist and Giuseppe Bonini notes that he had spent a lot of time investigating the Neolithic ruins around his hometown of Alba.⁹⁰ His interest more generally in archaic peoples and nomadic tribes also led him to work on an experimental nomadic campsite project for the Gypsies of Alba with the help of the Situationist member, Constant [fig. 12]. As a temporary installation, the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* suggests a form of nomadic architecture that mirrors the transient and perceptually mobile (and in this sense nomadic) spectator. Gallizio's interest in nomadic cultures, combined with his use of archaic machines and his references to an economy of potlatch also suggests a more romantic quest to reconstruct a pre-capitalist arcadia, fantasized as a space-time where the relation of man to nature was more direct, innocent and unsophisticated.⁹¹ However, in this interest in what was seen as the 'primitive,' Gallizio continues to draw on a familiar avant-garde rhetoric that links the child-like, and the unsophisticated with some authentic, primitive other.⁹² As a member of the IMBI, Gallizio would have been aware of Asger Jorn's interest in child-like imagery stemming from his Cobra art past. Jorn had also met Jean

⁹⁰ Bonini, *Pinot-Gallizio* (1989), p.4.

⁹¹ The concern with man's relation to nature, to poor propositions etc was also that of many so-called Arte Povera artists, see Germano Celant, *Arte Povera* (Electa: Milano, 1985).

⁹² On the place of the trope of the primitive within modernist art practices see Hal Foster, 'The "Primitive" Unconscious of Modern Art, or White Skin Black Masks' in *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Bay Press: Washington, 1985), pp. 181-208.

Dubuffet for the first time in 1957; the same year that Dubuffet created a series of 'topographies' and 'texturalogies,' which the critic Stich describes as suggesting 'the character of terrestrial surfaces without using lines or forms and without representing a specific site'.⁹³ Jorn shared Dubuffet's pronounced concern with materials (especially non-art stuff), as a means to defy 'rational systems of thinking and reconnect to the experience of real life'.⁹⁴ This interest in the brute materiality of the artwork was important in that it helped to avoid what Jorn saw as a descent into a spectacle of irrationalism, as had been the case with late Bretonian Surrealism. In his text '*Le Discours Aux Pingonins*' (published in *Cobra 1*) Jorn critiqued Breton's definition of Surrealism as 'pure psychic automatism' using materialist dialectics. For Jorn, from his materialist position, no individual creative act can be explained purely in terms of psychic phenomena. To use Stewart Home's paraphrasing of this essay, here Jorn demonstrates that 'explication is itself a physical act which materializes thought, and so psychic automatism is joined organically to physical automatism'.⁹⁵

A focus on the material production of Gallizio's cave does not however obviate his interest in a more primitive space-time, where, if not authentic man, then at least a less rational subject could thrive. Moreover, such a desire for some pre-historic stage also reflects a desire for a subject that exists outside of time, outside of (in the sense of 'pre') history. In one sense this perhaps relates more intimately to the modern gallery than it does to a 'primitive' space. As Brian O' Doherty suggests, the condition of

⁹³ Stich, *Yves Klein*, p. 165.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 165. See also Jean Dubuffet, 'Anticultural Positions' (1957) reprinted in *Jean Dubuffet: Retrospective* (Dallas Museum of Art: Dallas, 1966), esp. pp. 3-6. During the 1960s Jorn added works on paper by Dubuffet to his art collection in Silkeborg see Troels Andersen, *Asger Jorn 1914-1973*, p. 48. A connection between Jorn and Dubuffet's interest in wall graffiti is analysed in chapter three. In 1956 during a visit to London Jorn had also met the Africanist and modern art collector Guy Atkins, who in 1961 began to compile a complete oeuvre catalogue of Jorn's early paintings.

⁹⁵ Home, *Assault on Culture*, p. 10.

appearing outside of time is precisely the constitutive condition of the modern art gallery and its ideal gallery goer:

Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is “period” (late modern), there is no time. This eternity gives the gallery a limbo-like status; one has to have died already to be there. Indeed in the presence of that odd piece of furniture, your own body, seems superfluous, an intrusion.⁹⁶

Here, the ideal subject of the eternal and reified space of 'Art' is the living dead, or some disembodied eye that has sloughed of its fleshy and sensate body. However, O'Doherty's model of this non-place or out-of-time space is structured around a specific type of space, namely, the modernist white cube gallery that 'unshadowed, white, clean, artificial space' devoted to the 'technology of esthetics'.⁹⁷ The complete opposite, it would seem, of Gallizio's cavernous, non-geometric, shadowy, sticky, unclean, but equally artificial space. Also different, is its acoustic, sensory and tactile appeal to a decidedly fleshy subject, considered as essential for the successful realization of a situation constructed for 'livers'. Nonetheless, even if recast in the guise of a cave, the ideological and ritualistic function of the gallery is not thereby negated.

Indeed, as Thomas McEvelley suggests the roots of the art space or what he calls 'this chamber of eternal display'⁹⁸ can be traced back to the religious and sacred ceremonies staged in the caves of the Paleolithic era.⁹⁹ These sacred and ritual spaces were deliberately cut off from the outside world. Gallizio's cave also shut out the everyday world, blacking out the gallery's windows, shutting out the street noises. Perhaps entering his space was also like entering some sacred world separated off from the profane conditions of everyday life? Rather than imagining Gallizio in his white lab

⁹⁶ Brian O' Doherty, *Inside the White Cube* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999), p.15.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.15.

⁹⁸ Thomas McEvelley, 'Introduction' to Brian O'Doherty, op. cit., p.8.

⁹⁹ The primitive paintings in the caves of Lascaux, France, were only discovered in 1940.

coat [fig. 13] as some industrial chemist, perhaps a more suitable model would be that of alchemist or shamen, here caught in the process of conjuring up some magic potion for a secret ritual accessible to selected initiates –as suggested by the addition of a new caption which reads: ‘and the heat to which they are accustomed is so excessive, that that which he makes here in the depths of Africa would freeze them’. Or, rather than opposing the persona of scientist to shamen, perhaps what is at stake in this representation is an intersection of the two roles, whereby the modern scientist is represented as a kind of alchemist.¹⁰⁰

According to Johan Huizinga’s book *Homo Ludens* (Man the Player); which the Situationists freely appropriated from, what ritual and play share is their staging in a special place set aside, even if only imaginatively, from the normal routines of everyday living: ‘just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the “consecrated spot” can not be distinguished from the play-ground’.¹⁰¹ So, is Gallizio’s installation a site of ritual or a site of play? How this question is answered is important in relation to the role of the female model posing in a garment made from Industrial Painting [fig.14]. Is she the obliging assistant to the magician Gallizio’s stage act? Or, is she some female totem or perhaps even an imaginary sacrifice, around which the primitive horde, the gallery goer, gathers expectedly? What is made explicit is the model’s role as a conduit, as stated on the invitation card to the exhibition:

The wall to the right, the wall to the left, and the background of the gallery all represent the reactions which occur between the anti-matter of the ceiling and the

¹⁰⁰ Asger Jorn was particularly interested in the origins of shamanism and its link to ice age cave paintings and the ‘secret topologies of knotwork’ see ‘La creation ouverte et ses ennemis’ in *internationale situationniste* (no. 5, December, 1960), pp. 29-50, (p. 41).

¹⁰¹ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (The Beacon Press: Boston, 1955), p.10.

matter on the ground. These forces meet and produce a “provisional reality”, represented by the model dressed in painting.¹⁰²

As the conduit between the immateriality of the ceiling and the materiality of the ground, Gallizio's role for the female model is analogous to Thomas McEvilley's description of ancient ritual spaces, which are ‘symbolic reestablishments of the ancient umbilicus which, in myths worldwide, once connected heaven and earth’.¹⁰³ However, McEvilley also states that these symbolic and ritual meetings of heaven and earth were intended to access the eternal cosmos and thus belie the changing of time in the non-ritual or profane world of the everyday. Yet, Debord makes explicit that from a Situationist perspective ‘eternity is the grossest idea a person can conceive of in connection with his acts’.¹⁰⁴ In fact, the photograph of the model in Gallizio's space [fig.14] is underlined with the caption: *Provisional Reality, dressed like the walls, figure in the Cavern of Anti-Matter*. It is not eternity that is sought, but a provisional reality, like the temporary installation itself. The shocks and surprises staged in the gallery presuppose a subject that can be shocked in the temporal frame of the passing moment. This is the ideal subject constituted by the constructed situation defined as ‘a unitary ensemble of behaviour *in time*’.¹⁰⁵

The Uterus of the World

Entering Gallizio's cave is not only to go symbolically back in time, it is also to enter a cavity, an interior and hollow space. The sexual connotations of this cavity are made explicit by Gallizio's naming it ‘the uterus of the world’.¹⁰⁶ But what is the significance of this inter-uterine space for the subject cocooned within it? In Gallizio's case I suggest

¹⁰² Bondini, *Pinot-Gallizio* (1989), p.14.

¹⁰³ McEvilley, *The White Cube*, p.8.

¹⁰⁴ Guy Debord, ‘Report on the Construction of Situations’ in Knabb, *Situationist International*, p.25.

¹⁰⁵ Guy Debord, ‘Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation’, p.43.

¹⁰⁶ Libero Andreotti, ‘Introduction’ in *Situationists, Art, Politics, Urbanism*, p.30.

that this artificial womb space is double edged: it is both a space for the birth of a new subject but also its chamber of death. Concerning the fecund nature of this womb-space, consider the following fragment (taken from Gallizio's 1959, 'Manifesto on Industrial Painting and on a Unitary Applicable Art') as an indication of the magnitude of his creative ambitions:

Now at last begins the long days of atomic creation. It is now up to us alone, the artists and the scientists...to create in another way the earth, the oceans, the animals; the sun and other stars; the air, the water and all existent things. And it is up to us to breathe on the clay and give birth to a new man, uniquely made for resting on the seventh day.¹⁰⁷

In this last paragraph of the 'Manifesto' Gallizio reveals his desire to not only change ways of behaviour (through the transformations of architectural or environmental space) but also to create a new species-being. The biblical reference to the seven-day creation time required for this new atomic species-being, reveals Gallizio's generative ambitions to be of a God-like proportion. Not only does the language reveal his fantasy of omnipotence, but it also reveals a desire to create a human life outside the body of a woman, or rather without the need for a female body. The responsibility for the birth of this new man is transferred from woman to the figure of the scientist/artist (obviously a reference to Gallizio himself and thus a male figure). From this perspective Gallizio's white lab coat is no longer the sign of the persona of experimental chemist, but rather that of a modern day Dr Frankenstein, whose fictive legacy of going against the laws of procreative Nature resulted in an unnatural monster.¹⁰⁸

The fact that Gallizio's so-called uterine space of the *Cavern* was created in part by 'machines', it is possible to speculate that the desire to displace or transfer the

¹⁰⁷ Gallizio, 'Discours sur la peinture industrielle', p.35.

¹⁰⁸ On the relation of the gothic novel to modernization see Joan Copjec, 'Vampires, Breast-Feeding, and Anxiety' in *October* (no, 58, Fall, 1991), pp. 25-43.

responsibility of creation from women to the male scientist/artist creator exposes a particular masculine anxiety; one symptomatic of post-war France's increasing mechanization and industrialization of the spheres of work and leisure, in other words, the increasing colonization of the everyday world by what the Situationists labelled a process of 'banalization.'¹⁰⁹ In his discussion of certain Surrealist images dramatising the fantasy of autogenesis (created as a response to an earlier 'machine' age), for example, Picabia's *Girl Born without a Mother* (1916-1917), Hal Foster suggests that such images: 'evoke a peculiar family romance in which ...a patriarchal fantasy of technological self-creation outside the mother is expressed –but expressed to be mocked, not embraced'.¹¹⁰ Gallizio's pose of creative omnipotence is also couched in absurd and mocking terms. But if, as Hal Foster claims, the Surrealists' ironic images of mechanical automatons were used to reveal 'that the capitalist *development* of the mechanical-commodified body can promote an uncanny *regression* to a quasi autistic state,'¹¹¹ then what does Gallizio's semi-handcrafted, undisciplined and more erratic womb-space express?

I suggest that it reveals both a desire and dread of a maternal space. That is, Gallizio's cave represents an aggressive fantasy of a womb space, in that it is a dangerous as well as seductive place. Gallizio's uterus of the world, with its musical hums (provided by the concealed tereminofono) is not representative of what Kaja

¹⁰⁹ Other changing social patterns of post war France include the rise in mass produced goods, the birth of a consumerist society, the expansion of university education, the rise in technical or white collar work etc. For a Situationist response see Guy Debord, 'Perspectives de modification conscientes dans la vie quotidienne' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 6, August, 1961), pp. 20-27; Raoul Vaneigem, 'Banalités de base' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 7, April, 1962), pp. 32-41. On the question of colonization and the effect of the Algerian war on everyday practices in post-war France see Kristen Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995). For a general history of the social, political and economic transformation of post war France see *France and Modernization* edited by John Gaffney (Avebury: Aldershot, 1988); on the relation of mass production to cultural production see *French Culture since 1945*, edited by Malcolm Cook (Longman: London, 1993) and *France and the Mass Media*, edited by Brian Rigby et al (Macmillan: London, 1991).

¹¹⁰ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p. 153.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 153. Debord draws attention to the 'generalized autism' produced by the Spectacle in thesis 218 of *The Society of the Spectacle*, p. 153.

Silverman has called the maternal 'sonorous envelope'¹¹² with its intimations of a 'soothing and protective blanket'.¹¹³ On the contrary, the *Cavern* represents a more dissonant, and potentially lethal space as noted by reviews of the show at the time that picked up on its suffocating atmosphere. For example, a review in *Les Lettres Nouvelles* described the space as 'too excessive...this suffocating shelter that was liable to catch fire at any moment (it was forbidden to smoke)'.¹¹⁴ The *Cavern* is not so much a protective shelter but a death trap. And the parading models are not so much wrapped in a security blanket of Industrial Painting, but shrouded and embalmed like some lurid chrysalis captured by the mechanism of photography in a state of suspended animation.

The fantasy of returning to the womb is tinged with a deathly aspect. Guy Rosolato explains that an adult subject's retroactive desire to no longer be separated from the mother (such as expressed in a desire to return to a maternal or womb-like space) reveals a desire to be subjectless, that is, to return to a pre-symbolic stage before the infant was separated and differentiated from the mother; in other words, a stage that is 'on the other side of subjectivity and symbolic castration'.¹¹⁵ This longing for fusion is however joined with a simultaneous fear of dispersal, of the destructive implications for the self that such a merger entails. Gallizio's suffocating shelter represents the other side of a fantasy of a maternal space as a sonorous plenitude, namely that of an entombment of the self. At stake is an imaginary destruction of the self, and it is to the destructive impulses played out in Gallizio's *Cavern* that I now want to turn to.

¹¹² Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1988), p. 85. The sonorous envelope here refers to the role of the mothers' voice as a sort of 'umbilical net' that 'wraps the child in a soothing and protective blanket.'

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 85.

¹¹⁴ From the biography of Gallizio published by the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam, May 1960, on the occasion of an exhibition of Industrial Painting, republished in *Pinot-Gallizio*, inside back cover, not paginated.

¹¹⁵ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, p. 85.

Provisional Reality and Annihilation

The destructive impulse was as much a part of Gallizio's show as its constructive drive. The risk of obliteration was built into the very fabric of Industrial Painting, with its make-up of unstable chemical solvents and even gunpowder, which could literally dematerialise the painting. A fascination with auto-destructive techniques was characteristic of the European art world of the late 1950s and early 1960s: for example, Jean Tinguely's kinetic sculptures included the self destructive *méta-matics*, or drawing machines, which, according to Paul Schimmel, became 'increasingly violent, vigorous and spectacular, until they turned into monstrous and foreboding sculptures that exploded, destroying themselves'.¹¹⁶ But more than a physical annihilation of the artwork is at stake in Gallizio's highly flammable shelter.¹¹⁷ On the invitation card to the show the model dressed in Industrial Painting was described as representing the result of the encounter 'between the anti-matter of the ceiling and the matter of the ground'.¹¹⁸ As someone not only interested in chemistry but also in the new science of particle physics (as indicated by his choice of the word 'anti-matter' in the show's title), Gallizio would have been aware that the scientific term given to the outcome of the process of the collision of matter and anti-matter is 'annihilation'. As matter collides with its other,

¹¹⁶ Paul Schimmel, 'Leap into the Void' in *out of Actions*, op. cit., p.38. Tinguely exhibited a series of *méta-matics* at the Galerie Iris Clert, Paris, July 1959. Another example of auto-destructive art would be Gustav Metzger whose 'Auto-Destructive Art' manifesto was also published in 1959. His site specific works combining science and art include the 1961 South Bank demonstration of using acid on nylon canvas, complete with gas mask, see *Out of Actions* p.88 for illus. The Arte Povera artist Gilberto Zorio's chemical transformations of matter are also relevant with regards to Gallizio. See *Arte Povera* catalogue (Phaidon: London, 1999).

¹¹⁷ The Situationists openly supported acts of artistic iconoclasm, as for example Nunzio Van Guglielmi's covering of Raphael's painting 'Le couronnement de la Vierge' with propaganda stickers with inscriptions such as 'Vive la revolution italienn'. Guglielmi was arrested in Milan at the same time as Gallizio's exhibition of Industrial Painting at the Galerie Notzie. The Italian Situationists produced a tract in defence of Guglielmi's act called 'Difendete la libertà ovunque'. For more details see 'L'Activité de la section italienne' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 2, December, 1958), pp. 27-30, (p.29). For a general discussion of art and iconoclasm see Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (Reaktion Books: London, 1997).

¹¹⁸ Bonini, *Pinot-Gallizio* (1989), p.14.

anti-matter, the result is a burst of electromagnetic energy or annihilation radiation.¹¹⁹ On the invitation card Gallizio translates this resulting blast of atomic radiation into the term 'provisional reality'. He also transposes the process of annihilation out of the realm of particle physics and into the artistic realm. By analogy, the eradiated meltdown of matter is mimicked in the melted and formless iconography of the abstract daubs of paint and liquid resins running down the walls of the Industrially Painted gallery. The female model in turn is supposedly the representative of the fallout process of an atomic annihilation. This is symbolically portrayed by the collapse of the distinct boundaries between herself and the surrounding space: dressed in the same material stuff as the cavernous space, she seems to be on the point of merging or disappearing into the painted backdrop [fig.14]. Ultimately, woman is the sign here not of totality but of annihilation.

To fuse with space through acts of camouflage or mimicry has ^{been} linked to a deathly state by Roger Caillois in his essay '*Mimétisme et psychasthénie légendaire*' published in the Surrealist journal *Minotaure* (no. 7, June, 1935). Focusing on the assimilation of insects with space through mimicry, Caillois speaks of a drive to indistinction in terms of visuality, whereby the distinction between insect and environment dissolves or is blurred. A human parallel is defined as a loss of self, as for example exhibited by patients diagnosed as schizophrenic, where Caillois notes that 'to these dispossessed souls, space seems to be a devouring force' of which 'he is the convulsive possession'.¹²⁰ However, in the case of the photograph of the female model

¹¹⁹ Information from Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council at: <http://www.pparc.ac.uk>. The Nuclear Art Movement had amalgamated with the IMBI, so Gallizio would have been aware of Enrico Baj's manifestoes on atomic art. See Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein*, pp. 83-85. For the Situationists' critique of nuclear power see 'Geopolitique de L'Hibernation' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 7, 1962), pp. 3-10. Asger Jorn and Guy Debord produced a tract in 1963 announcing the arrival of a journal opposing the nuclear threat, to be called *Mutant* –this was never produced.

¹²⁰ Roger Caillois, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia' in *October* (no. 31, Winter, 1984). Denis Hollier glosses the term 'psychasthenia' as follows: "a drop in the level of psychic energy, a kind of subjective detumescence, a loss of ego substance, a depressive exhaustion close to what a monk called *acedia*" in 'Mimesis and Castration in 1937' in *October* *ibid.*, p. 11. Hal Foster develops a model of the drive to indistinction at the level of visuality, in terms of more recent art practices in 'The Return of the

camouflaged in Gallizio's 'industrially' painted garment [fig.14] the act of mimicry is constructed as a sort of game, where there is visibly no risk of the model merging with the background. Rather than disappearing, the female model stands out from the surrounding space, just as her limbs and high heel shoes visibly protrude from the boundaries of her costume. But I propose that another annihilation is at stake, this time in the form of the corpsing of the viewer who is not only lured, but also entrapped by the seductive smile of the female model and by the sheen of her glittering attire.

To enter the commercial space of the Galerie Drouin and be distracted and enticed by the rather lurid appeal of the dazzling commodity called Industrial Painting, puts the spectator at risk: not only do they risk entrapment but also a form of mortification. Posed in this commercial art environment, the female model appears as a mute shop dummy, displaying and advertising the 'industrially' painted garment/art commodity that was for sale.¹²¹ Although writing about the fetishism of commodities during the nineteenth century, Walter Benjamin made the pertinent observation that to be lured by the glitter of commodities is to succumb to the sex appeal of the inorganic in the sense that 'fashion stands in opposition to the organic. It couples the living body to the inorganic world'¹²² and the living body most at risk is the female body: 'fashion has opened the business of the dialectal exchange between woman and ware –between carnal pleasure and the corpse.'¹²³ Or to hammer home this point, 'fashion was never anything

Real' in *The Return of the Real* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1996), pp. 128-168, esp, (pp. 164-5). Cailliois' study on mimicry was used by Jaques Lacan in his discussion of the 'gaze' and the 'picture' see 'Line and light' in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, translated by Alan Sheridan (Vintage: London, 1994), pp. 91-104. My discussion has been informed by Lacan's theory of the dynamics of mimicry and camouflage in terms of a lure and a trap, *ibid*, p. 99.

¹²¹ Gallizio's exhibition of Industrial Painting was also for sale. The René Drouin gallery was also a commercial space selling art-commodities. In fact, as the show moved from one city to another the price of the rolls of art increased, as confirmed in the Situationists' report on 'The Activity of the Italian Section', where it is noted that 'the increase in price occurred abruptly at the end of August, from 10.000 to 40.000 liras per metre,' in *internationale situationniste* (no.2, 1958), pp.27-30, (p.28).

¹²² Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p.8.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.62.

other than the parody of the motley cadaver, provocation of death through the woman'.¹²⁴ Moreover, from the perspective of the political economy of capitalism, to be lured by the lustre of any commodity is a sign of the subject's domination by the logic of commodity fetishism. According to Marx, the fetishism of commodities has its origins in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them: 'It is only a definite relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the phantasmagorical form of a relation between things'.¹²⁵ Guy Debord expands the logic of commodity fetishism to the working of the image-object (in relation to the spectacle) in his 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle*: 'here we have the principle of commodity fetishism, the domination of society by things... This principle is absolutely fulfilled in the spectacle, where the perceptible world is replaced by a set of images'.¹²⁶ Commodity fetishism is the dominant structure of subjective experience in capitalist societies, including its later spectacular form as diagnosed by the Situationists. In effect, as Hal Foster notes, 'the commodity becomes our uncanny double, evermore vital as we are evermore inert'.¹²⁷ It is the uncanny effect of reification, of 'the ghostly doubling of the human by... *the thing*,' which Foster uses to explain the Surrealists' fascination, or rather obsession with the 'strange (non)human character of the mannequin, the automaton, the wax figure the doll,'¹²⁸ all examples of figures blurring the boundaries between the animate and the inanimate, between life and death. In particular, in high capitalist epochs, it is the female shop dummy (mannequin) that 'evokes the remaking of the body (especially the female body) as commodity'.¹²⁹ Gallizio's use of the female body as some sort of mute prop (or

¹²⁴ Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p.63.

¹²⁵ Quote taken from Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1995), p.22.

¹²⁶ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Zone Books: NY, 1995) thesis 36, p.26. See chapter 2 of thesis for a detailed analysis of the economy of the Spectacle.

¹²⁷ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p. 129.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

mannequin) presents a somewhat double-edged strategy, whereby the subject that is distracted by the lure and brilliance of commodities is both mimicked and transformed in the *Cavern*. That is, to be distracted by the shiny, crystalline surfaces of the Industrially Painted art-commodity makes explicit the fetishism of the commodity on display, whilst simultaneously petrifying those who succumb to its shiny and lurid appeal. So, although the situation may expose the mechanism by which social relations become reified through the process of commodity fetishism, it also perpetuates that mechanism by transforming the dazzled spectator into a petrified state. A state of suspended animation mimicked by the freeze-frame mechanism of the photograph.

Outmoded Spaces

Gallizio's transformation of the commercial space of a modern Parisian gallery into the outmoded habitat of a subterranean cave, brings to mind Walter Benjamin's earlier project of revealing the revolutionary forces pertaining to the equally outmoded commercial spaces of the 'arcades' in nineteenth century Paris.¹³⁰ In Benjamin's *Arcades Project*¹³¹ he describes how 'the arcades radiated through the Paris of the Empire like grottoes'¹³² whose soon to be obsolete condition became emblematic of capitalism's obsession with the new and with novelty for its own sake. Coincidentally, Benjamin's descriptions of some of these arcades are themselves uncanny in their closeness to descriptions of Gallizio's exhibition as a dimly lit and softly humming subterranean world. For example, consider Benjamin's description of the arcade called

¹³⁰ The Situationists' interest in outmoded sites continues in Asger Jorn's series of 'Modified' paintings, which were made by painting over canvases purchased from the marginal economies of flea-markets, also a favourite Surrealist haunt see André Breton *Nadja*, translated by Richard Howard (Grove Press: N.Y., 1960). See also Hal Foster, 'Outmoded Spaces' in *Compulsive Beauty*, pp. 157-191 and Walter Benjamin, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia' (1929) in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (Verso: London, 1979), pp. 225-239.

¹³¹ Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Harvard, 1999).

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.874.

‘Passage des Panoramas’: ‘it was in the first moment, as though you had entered an aquarium. Along the wall of the great, darkened hall...it stretched like a ribbon of illuminated water behind glass’,¹³³ and at its edges ‘the sirens of gaslight would be singing’.¹³⁴ For Benjamin, however, the most distinguishing feature of the arcade was its appearance as a windowless interior. Yet, this shutting out of daylight was not in order to illuminate the interior space, so much as to dampen out and turn a blind eye to the exterior space, much like the effects of the blackened out windows of the René Drouin gallery in 1959. It is this windowless and interior-like space that for Benjamin leads to the idea that all ‘arcades are houses or passages having no outside –like the dream’.¹³⁵

If for Benjamin the gradual decline of the arcade in the Paris of Empire signalled the persistence of the archaic in the modern, then Gallizio’s cave can be seen as an almost literal instantiation of this project, with the establishment of an archaic or embryonic looking arcade persisting in 20th Century Paris. But, how does Gallizio’s interior relate to Benjamin’s model of the arcade as a dreamscape? And what would this dream-space reveal about the subject strolling through it? Surely a dreamscape can only produce sleepwalkers, in which case, Gallizio would again be in danger of re-establishing the figure of the somnambulist, so much at home in the reified conditions of the Spectacle. Yet, for Benjamin at least, a utopian potential resided in the dream image: ‘In the dream in which each epoch entertains images of its successor, the latter appears wedded to elements of primal history –that is to elements of a classless society’.¹³⁶ It is worth noting that for Benjamin, these relations were discernible in the communal housing project conceived by the utopian socialist Charles Fourier, namely in his model of the ‘Phalanstery.’ The ‘Phalanstery’ or ‘societal palace dedicated to humanity’ was

¹³³ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, p. 533.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.874.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 406.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.894.

Fourier's name for his version of a unitary architecture, which on the front cover of the Fourierist newspaper *L'Avenir*, is pictured as a massive building 'employing rue-galleries (street galleries), long covered arcades uniting the building's facilities and spaces and, it was hoped, the society that inhabited the building'.¹³⁷ Benjamin wrote that: 'in the arcades, Fourier saw the architectural canon of the phalanstery...whereas they originally serve commercial ends, they became for him, places of habitation'.¹³⁸ The Situationists also looked to Fourier's 'Phalanstery' as a model for unitary urbanism, only their task was to 'radicalize the Fourierist project...to equip individual desires, to furnish whatever is necessary for experiments and adventures, to harmonise playful possibilities...'.¹³⁹

This model of the arcade as an ideal home for harmonized citizens is relevant to Gallizio's alternative communal housing project, as represented by the open planned cave. But the utopian potential of the dream image also proposed a different type of subject. For Benjamin, each epoch not only dreams the next, but also, in dreaming strives toward the moment of waking. However, Margaret Cohen insists that this awakened state should not be understood in terms of 'the binary opposition between waking and sleeping that Enlightenment rhetoric of dream assumes'.¹⁴⁰ Rather, Benjamin turns to the Freudian model of dream interpretation and in 'Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century' he suggests 'that awakening is not waking but rather a moment that, in its access to repressed processes, must be conceived of as close to the

¹³⁷ Description from Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City*, p. 119. On Charles Fourier see *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love and passionate Attraction*, translated and edited by Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvu (Beacon Press: Boston, 1971). See also 'Le retour de Charles Fourier' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 12, September, 1969), p. 97, an article on the replacement of a replica statue of Fourier on a pedestal at place Clichy during the events of May 1968. The original statue of Fourier had been removed during the Nazi occupation of Paris.

¹³⁸ Benjamin, "Arcades Project", p.5.

¹³⁹ Raoul Vaneigem, 'Notice to the Civilized Concerning Generalized Self-Management' in Knabb, *Situationist International*, pp283-289, (p.288).

¹⁴⁰ Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illuminations*, p.53.

form of experience that reigns in the world of dreams'.¹⁴¹ The dream image returns what had been socially and psychically repressed. The dreamscape therefore has the potential to demystify the veil of sleep, that is, to de-sublimate the repressed social and subjective experiences constituted by the reified conditions of a capitalist society. Perhaps Gallizio's cave, recast in terms of an underworld partaking of subterranean forces, can be pictured as a three-dimensional image of a dream space, with the potential to liberate Debord's ideal figure of the 'liver', repressed by the alienating conditions of the Spectacle.¹⁴² For example, the *Cavern*'s hidden sensory shocks help to establish a subject constructed according to the principles of active participation and lived perceptual experience, in opposition to the Spectacle's construction of a passive, non-interventionist subject. Asger Jorn's model of the ideal Situationist subject is also relevant here when he states that: 'the sleeping creator must be awakened, and his waking state can be termed "situationist"'.¹⁴³ And this awakened state could perhaps be triggered by Gallizio's dream-like interior, with its glimmer of the return of a repressed unitary urbanism.

Ornament and Excess

From the few images of Gallizio's exhibition it is clear that it is not a destitute or impoverished environment, but a rather lavish place where the resined and highly reflective surfaces of the walls glisten. Overdressed in its centre, posed like some nymph in an absurd parody of a classical underworld, is the rather ostentatious model, whose smile, mimicking the girls in adverts, adds to the kitsch appeal. However, the Situationists are not repelled by the collapse of art into kitsch, unlike the former

¹⁴¹ Cohen, *Profane illuminations*, p.54.

¹⁴² Debord states that: 'the spectacle's function in society is the concrete manufacture of alienation' in Thesis 32, *The Society of the Spectacle*, p. 23.

¹⁴³ Asger Jorn, 'The Situationists and Automation', in Knabb, *Situationist International*, pp46-47, (p.47).

Situationist T.J. Clark, whose fear of such a collapse is expressed in the terms of the 'bad dream of modernism'.¹⁴⁴ On the contrary, the Situationists embraced the low and the derelict, and in terms of art, this took the form of an embrace of the decorative and the ornamental in opposition to high art, especially associated with the classical tradition. For example, Asger Jorn's critique of the *Laocoön* is couched in the terms of a battle between the ornamental and the classical. For Jorn, Laocoön represents the repressive form of all classical art –and moreover a form of art tied up to the repressive regime of the ruling class. As Peter Wollen suggests, Jorn identified the snakes, the serpentine, oriental line, etc., 'with the natural, the materialist, the revolutionary classes' and the representation of Laocoön, the classical form, 'with the ideal, with repression and sublimation'.¹⁴⁵ Against the classical was placed kitsch, but rather than maintain the division between the high and the low, Jorn wanted to unite them and form a new type of art. As early as 1941, his essay 'Intimate Banalities' was written in praise of all things kitsch, from plastic flutes sold in Denmark to the work of the tattoo artist, understood as an ornamental supplement to the body that was both mutilating and creative. Against utility and functionalism in art (such as represented by the Situationists' bug-bear, 'the modular protestant' Le Corbusier) was posited excess, luxury, enjoyment and 'the social forms of creative, playful ornament'.¹⁴⁶ In these terms, Gallizio's glittering cave and costumes could be seen as a return to ornament and excess. In art historical terms, ornament has tended to be elided with the decadent and with the feminine. For example, Adolf Loos in his essay 'Ornament and Crime'¹⁴⁷, associates all forms of excessive

¹⁴⁴ T.J. Clark uses this term to discuss the reductive use of Jackson Pollock's paintings as a backdrop to a model shoot by Cecil Beaton for *Vogue* (March 1, 1951) in 'Jackson Pollock's Abstraction' in *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal 1945-1964*, edited by Serge Guilbaut (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1992 edition), pp. 172-238, (p. 179). The Situationists' pro-kitsch stance in general means that the image of the posing model in Gallizio's show does not represent the bad dream of modernism as diagnosed by T.J. Clark concerning Beaton and Pollock.

¹⁴⁵ Peter Wollen, 'Bitter Victory', p.47.

¹⁴⁶ Wollen, 'Bitter Victory', p.48.

¹⁴⁷ Adolf Loos, 'Ornament and Crime', p. 19-25.

decoration, either on the body or in art, with degeneracy, criminality and with the erotic, with woman, juveniles and with the primitive, and as a result, claims that 'no ornament can any longer be made today by anyone who lives on our cultural level'.¹⁴⁸ Repression of the ornamental is synonymous with a certain type of utilitarian aesthetic. In fact, Peter Wollen charts the development of modernism in the arts through a series of aesthetic renunciations starting with the aesthetic of the engineer, 'obsessed by machine forms and directed against the lure of the ornamental and superfluous', which filtered into the scientism of the early Bauhaus, the De Stijl group, Purism, Soviet Constructivism etc.¹⁴⁹ It is precisely this separation of the scientist from the excessive artist that Gallizio tries to overcome in his model of overlapping 'personae', namely the lab technician with alchemical magician. Moreover, if the anti-ornamental aesthetic is extended to the modernist subject, then it too would be constructed on the condition that all things erotic, bodily, excessive and impure would have to be repressed. Following the logic of this argument, it could be claimed that the subject staged by Gallizio is decidedly anti-modernist, in terms of the insistence on the bodily, the tactile, the dangerous and perhaps the feminine -if the feminine is coded as the decorative other to what Wollen refers to as the 'great masculine renunciation.' In fact, this latter term had been developed by J.C. Flugel to describe the change in men's clothing customs around the late 18th Century.¹⁵⁰ He describes how male clothing underwent a sort of visual purification as it became more reserved and subdued and this was to have consequences in how the male subject behaved: 'man abandoned his claim to be considered beautiful. He henceforth aimed at being useful...woman was to enjoy the privilege of being the only possessor of beauty and magnificence....'¹⁵¹ Kaja Silverman's recent analysis and expansion of Flugel's

¹⁴⁸ Loos, *ibid.*, p.23.

¹⁴⁹ Peter Wollen, 'Fashion/Orientalism/The Body' in *New Formations* (1987).

¹⁵⁰ J.C. Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (Hogarth Press: London, 1930).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp117-119.

arguments suggests that the consequence of this masculine renunciation was 'the hyperspecularization of the female subject'.¹⁵² That is, for Silverman, what was at stake in the 'Great Masculine Renunciation' was more than the renunciation of male finery. It also involved the 'collapse of a whole system of social and class distinctions which both differentiated and separated men from each other. Male clothing underwent a process of democratisation, becoming simpler and more uniform'.¹⁵³ A principle of chastening, it could be said, that Gallizio, in his sober black suit, perpetuated [fig. 3]. In Silverman's terms, Gallizio's black suit is indicative of a modern male sexuality 'defined less by the body than by the negation of the body'.¹⁵⁴

The reduction of the woman to the trope of the decorative is thus a double-edged strategy. Although in theory Gallizio may want to identify with an excessive subjectivity as represented by the lavishly costumed model, he is, by his very mode of sober dress, already distinct from her. For Wollen, the problem concerns the construction of the 'other' from the place of the 'other'. That is, as a male subject, Gallizio's presentation of the female as other or distinct can only ever be symptomatic. As a man, he can only reproduce the other in negative and oppositional terms, as that which he is not. One particular photo of the show also compounds the distance of the spectators more generally from the spectacularly dressed model [fig.3]. By standing out as visibly distinct from the Industrially Painted model, the formally dressed onlookers seem secured in a position of fantasized control and wholeness. Unlike the model's blurred boundaries, the gallery-goers, by maintaining their discrete distance, reveals a refusal to tip over into the surrounding space. In this light, those standing apart from the model (the sign of annihilation) could be said to be reasserting a masculine position, which in a society

¹⁵² Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, p.24.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.25.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.25.

where the phallus reigns as the signifier of wholeness, is a sign of non-lack or the sign of the subject who refuses to be annihilated.

Gallizio's use of the female model was intended to be positive, in that she was the sign for his annihilating ambitions: in the form of a new 'provisional reality', emerging from the metaphoric atomic fallout of the collision of matter and anti-matter and as the sign of lack, the annihilated subject. This demonstrates that although the female body is merely ^aprop in Gallizio's phantasmatic space it doesn't prevent her from taking on mythic proportions. However, the use of the female body as the site to enact artistic subversions is, as Susan Rubin Suleiman has pointed out in her book *Subversive Intent*,¹⁵⁵ a typical device used by mainly men-only avant-garde groups. Whether as Surrealist muse, or Situationist catalyst for an imaginary unitary world, it is typically the female body that provides both the figure and ground for registering the subversive intent of the male artists. Or, as Alice Jardine has argued, 'we might say that what is generally referred to as modernity is precisely...the perhaps historically unprecedented exploration of the female, differently maternal body'.¹⁵⁶ Though the positive or the negative connotations of the particular use of the female body need to be argued in relation to the specific images deployed by the avant-garde group under scrutiny.

A Failure of Presentation

In the photographic representations of Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter*, the female body does indeed seem to play a pivotal role, as reflected in her being placed as the central focus in the published images. Yet, this female figure also represents a point of crisis. In a review of the Turin exhibition of Industrial Painting, Debord comments that the

¹⁵⁵ Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

¹⁵⁶ Alice Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1985), pp. 33-34.

imbecilic commentaries of the journalists covering the event revealed how they were especially knocked-out (*frappés*) by the ‘two cover-girls’ (*deux cover-girls*) dressed in Industrial Painting [fig. 15]. Debord’s derogatory tone (and slippage into the English language) indicates an anxiety as to whether or not the theatrical staging could be misread as a spectacular event, rather than as a contribution to a refusal of the Spectacle.¹⁵⁷ In a later review of Gallizio’s exhibitions, the *Cavern of Anti-Matter* is selected as an example of a ‘bad presentation’ (*la mauvaise présentation*) of a constructed situation, when considered in relation to what is described as the more successful and effective (*efficace*) applications of Industrial Painting in Germany and Italy.¹⁵⁸ Although ambiguous, the phrase ‘bad presentation’ does suggest a somewhat negative appreciation of the *Cavern* exhibition, as if it had failed in some way.

A sense of failing was not however only directed at the particularity of Gallizio’s installation. By 1959 the Situationists were already expressing their dissatisfaction with conventional gallery based forms of artistic display. This culminated in the attempt to physically break-down the barriers separating the realm of art from that of the everyday world, as revealed in the plans for an exhibition to be held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam the following year. The text ‘Die Welt als Labyrinth’ describes their plan to make a hole in the external wall of the gallery and literally blur the boundaries between the inside space of art and the outside space of the street. In turn, the dividing wall separating specialist art spectators from the general public (or any curious passer-by) would also be metaphorically breached. Unfortunately, the exhibition had to be aborted due to planning restrictions and fire regulations (amongst other reservations aired by its

¹⁵⁷ ‘L’Activité de la section italienne’ in *internationale situationniste* (no. 2, December, 1958), pp. 27-30, (p. 29).

¹⁵⁸ ‘Dans les galeries de Paris’ in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch*, pp. 286-7.

would-be sponsors).¹⁵⁹ A sense of failure and inadequacy concerning the conventions of the gallery system was also extended to individual members of the group, including Gallizio and his son, Giors Melanotte, who were both expelled from the Situationist International in 1960. The reasons given for their expulsion was their artistic involvement with certain individuals that the Situationist group had already denounced as ideologically unacceptable, namely Michel Tapié and Lorenzo Guasco.¹⁶⁰ However, for the Situationists the acknowledgement of failure (such as expressed in the turn-over in membership, or the shift in the spaces as well as forms of cultural interventions) was not considered a negative act. Rather, it was a positive sign that proves that nothing is fixed; that is, if things fail then change is always possible. In addition, the impermanence of Situationist practices was also intended to reflect the historical contingency of the social and economic form of the Spectacle -as its form altered so it was necessary to adjust the practices that opposed it. The temporary status of Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter*, can therefore be interpreted not just as a sign of failure, but as an instantiation of the Situationists' definition of the constructed situations as a fleeting experience, as clarified in 1957 by Debord in his 'Report on the Construction of Situations': 'this is our entire programme, which is essentially transitory. Our situations will be ephemeral, without future, passageways'.¹⁶¹ It is also possible to witness the concept of the transience of a constructed situation mirrored in the mobile subject that emerges from it,

¹⁵⁹ 'Das Welt als labyrinth' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 4, June, 1960), pp. 5-7. The then director of the museum, W.J.H.B Sandberg, approved of the plans in principle. But later withdrew his full approval on account of environmental regulations. Other considerations for the aborting of this show include the Situationists' refusal to bow to other restrictions laid down by its various would-be sponsors, see, p. 6.

¹⁶⁰ The announcement of the expulsion was published in 'Renseignements situationnistes' in *internationale situationniste* (no.5, 1960), p.10. Constant resigned in the summer of 1960 and Jörn in April 1961. For a table of the members of the S.I. see *Leaving the 20th century: The Incomplete Work of the Situationist International* edited and translated by Christopher Gray (Free Fall Publications: London, 1974), pp. 162-3. In total there were 70 members; 19 resignations; 2 scissionists; 45 exclusions between 1957-1972.

¹⁶¹ Debord, in Knabb, *Situationist International*, p.25. Gallizio's 'Cavern' was indeed temporary, not only was the exhibition tour over by the end of 1959, but as Mark Francis points out in his introduction to the catalogue for the 1989 touring exhibition of Situationist art, it has hardly ever been seen since then: 'it has not been shown in public for fifteen years, the last time being the retrospective of Pinot-Gallizio in Turin in 1974,' in *On a passage of a rather few people...*, p.17.

as demonstrated hopefully by this speculation on the diverse and fluid types of subjectivities produced by Gallizio's *Cavern of Anti-Matter*. However, although the fluidity of the subject reveals that it has no fixed essence, I do not mean to infer that any or every type of subjectivity is fitting. It is not a question of multiple subjectivities that can be put on or swapped like articles of clothing, as if independent of the situation itself. The complexities of the Situationist subject are dependent on the material and psychic (geographic) particularity of the historically contingent situation out of which the subject is generated.

It is crucial to point out here, that the Situationists' challenge to the conventional spaces of art, as well as to ideas about its appropriate forms, does not signal an end to a Situationist use of art as a cultural weapon in their war against the Spectacle. Rather, it marks the beginning of an expansion of Situationist tactics into new terrains. It was precisely out of the perceived failure of the gallery for example, that other paths were chosen. Mirroring the changing socio-political terrain of the 1960s, the Situationists also sought-out and discovered new tactics and new terrains for direct interventions: such as the appropriation of the street with Situationist graffiti and posters, or the violent take over of the street as demonstrated to the Situationists by others, such as the rioters in Watts, Los Angeles in 1965 (the focus of chapter 2). Such forms of violent and non-violent protest were to emerge in the Events in Paris in May 1968 in which the Situationists took part, but which Debord had already anticipated in 1957: 'That which changes our way of seeing streets is more important than what changes our way of seeing painting',¹⁶² A statement of direct action that was to have repercussions on the formation of the Situationist subject as discussed in chapter 3. Yet, the street was not the

¹⁶² Guy Debord, 'Report on the Construction of Situations' in Knabb, *Situationist International*, p.25.

only new battleground. The Situationists' journal, the *internationale situationniste* (twelve issues of which were published between 1958-1969) provided and still provides an important source for any analysis of the circulation of Situationist images. The intertwining of the journal's images with particular texts played an important role in the formation of the Situationist subject. The following chapter will attempt to show that the role of the image in the journal was still as persistent (if not more so) and as effective, when considering the problems that emerged from the representations of the subject in the *Cavern of Anti-Matter*.

Chapter 2: The Situationist Image: Exchange, Excess and the Traffic in Waste

Amongst the images that were scattered through the tenth issue of the Situationist journal, *internationale situationniste* (March, 1966), there were two photographs: one had a caption in French, *Critique de L'Urbanisme (Critique of Urbanism)* [fig.16] and the other, a caption in English, *Playing with rifled cash register* [fig. 17]. The title of the article that these two images illustrate is '*Le Déclin et la Chute de L'Économie Spectaculaire-Marchande*' (The Decline and the Fall of the Spectacular-Commodity Economy). The subject of this text was the Watts riots that took place in Los Angeles in 1965. These riots were theorized as a revolt against the commodity form of the Spectacular economy, by means of excessive and ludic expenditures, which the Situationists named as a '*potlatch of destruction*' (*potlatch de destruction*).¹ Since [figs. 16& 17] were photographs of the Watts riots, they appear to illustrate the text fairly conventionally. This raises a question concerning the critical potential of such images, as indicated by the title *Critique of Urbanism*, given Guy Debord's claim that the economy of the Spectacle is itself an image based economy: 'the Spectacle is *capital* accumulated to the point where it becomes image'.² In other words, how is it possible for the Situationists to deploy images as a means to critique an economy, which is itself constituted by the circulation of images? It is my contention that the two images [figs. 16& 17] illustrating the Situationists' analysis of the Watts riots, also perform in the light of a critique of the Spectacular economy. However, before demonstrating the

¹ '*Le Déclin et la Chute de L'Économie Spectaculaire-Marchande*' in *internationale situationniste* (no.10, March, 1966) p.5. The Situationists published twelve issues of their journal *internationale situationniste* from 1958-1969.

² Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Zone Books: NY, 1997), Thesis 34, p.24. This book provides the most explicit theorization of the economic form of the Spectacle and its particular historical formation.

critical potential of these Situationist images, I shall first elaborate the relation of the Spectacle and its particular image-form to a commodity economy more generally.

The most explicit theorization of the image-form of the economy of the Spectacle (understood as the new form of capitalism) is provided by Guy Debord's 1967 book, *La Société du Spectacle (The Society of the Spectacle)*.³ This collection of numbered theses opens with a subtle retranslation of Marx's opening paragraph in his chapter on 'Commodities' in *Capital; Volume One*:

The Whole life of those societies in which modern (capitalist) conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles* (commodities).⁴

The words in the brackets are those in Marx's original text. The pertinent question here is why does Debord substitute the word 'spectacles' for Marx's 'commodities'? Or rather, in what way is the 'spectacle' interchangeable with the term commodity? According to Marx, the commodity is defined as the form a product takes when production is organized through exchange.⁵ Debord develops this further by claiming that under modern conditions of Spectacular production (his updating of Capitalist production), the exchange of commodities (or spectacles) has been transformed. The process of exchange now requires the necessary use of packaging and advertising or what he calls the 'manufacture of an ever-growing mass of image-objects'.⁶ And it is this accumulation of image-objects, also called spectacles, which has not only become

³ Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle* (Editions Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1967).

⁴ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 1, p.12.

⁵ Karl Marx, 'Commodities and Money' in *Capital: a Critique of Political Economy; Volume One*, translated from the third German edition by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling and edited by Frederick Engels (Lawrence & Wishart: London, 1983).

⁶ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 15, p.16. References to the economic theories of Karl Marx and Georg Lukács litter the pages of Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*. Concerning the influences of Marx and Lukács on Debord's analysis of the economy of the Spectacle see Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999).

the ‘*chief product* of present-day society,’⁷ but the ‘image-object’ has also supplanted Marx’s ‘money form’ as the general abstract equivalent for Spectacular exchange. For Marx, through the process of exchange, a definite quantity of one product changes places with a definite quantity of another. This requires that qualitatively different goods, for example, a car or a toaster, can be equalized through exchange. For this to happen exchange value must be measured and homogenized according to a standard that is independent of the heterogeneous nature of the goods that are exchanged. For Marx, this independent standard is provided by the money form, which reduces an economy of difference to one of the selfsame. For Debord, it is the image-object or spectacle, understood as ‘detached from every aspect of life’⁸ that replaces money as the general abstract equivalent of all exchange, hence the phrase ‘the Spectacle is *capital* accumulated to the point where it becomes image’.⁹

The Spectacle is also theorized as more than a collection of images, it is crucially, ‘a social relationship between people that is mediated by images’.¹⁰ The relation of people to things and image-objects is developed by Debord from Marx’s model of commodity fetishism, but refined through the lens of Georg Lukács’ concept of generalized fetishism as reification.¹¹ For Debord, the fetishized form of commodity relations, understood as the process by which products of human labour come to appear as an independent and uncontrolled reality apart from the people who created them, was now the ubiquitous social relation. It colonized all spheres of everyday life, not just the economic base but also the social and cultural superstructure. The principle of

⁷ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 15, p.16.

⁸ Ibid., Thesis 2, p.16.

⁹ Ibid., Thesis 34, p.24.

¹⁰ Ibid., Thesis 4, p.12.

¹¹ Debord’s chapter ‘The Commodity as Spectacle’ opens with a quote from Georg Lukács *History and Class Consciousness* in *The Society of the Spectacle*, p.25. For Lukács’ theory on reification see ‘Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat’ in his *History and Class Consciousness*, translated by Rodney Livingstone (Merlin Press: London, 1971).

generalized commodity fetishism is described by Debord as ‘the domination of society by things’¹² including image-objects or spectacles. In the society of the Spectacle it is the ubiquity of the image-object that accentuates its fetishized form. Like some supernatural phenomenon, the image appears to circulate in a world apart, as if it were not dependent on its material and social conditions of production. Debord describes this expansion of the commodity form (understood as peculiar to the conditions of the Spectacular economy) as a form of generalized separation (*séparation généralisée*) where ‘all that once was directly lived has become mere representation’.¹³ It is this alienating form of representation that replaces Marx’s model of commodity fetishism as the form that determines the distorted relations between producers and their products and between subjects and their world:

In these signs we recognize our old enemy the commodity, which appears at first sight a very trivial thing, and easily understood, yet which is in reality a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties.¹⁴

Debord’s diagnosis, however, also suggests that a different economy of the image maybe deployed to disrupt, short circuit and transform the fetishized exchange mechanism of the Spectacular economy. And a transformed economy of the image in turn leads to transformed social relations. This chapter proposes that such an alternative economy of the image can be reconstructed from the Situationists’ analysis of the Watts riots. I call this alternative economy the Situationists’ traffic in images of waste or wasting. By recasting the two images of a conflagration [fig.16] and of a looting [fig.17] as images of wasteful or excessive expenditure, I suggest they can be seen to both symbolically represent and enact an economy of *potlatch* (understood as an alternative to a

¹² Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 36, p.26.

¹³ Ibid., Thesis 1, p. 12.

¹⁴ Ibid., Thesis 35, p.26. This is a reiteration of Karl Marx’s definition of the commodity form in ‘The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof’ in *Capital*, p. 76.

Spectacular economy) that is expounded in the Situationists' text. In turn, I suggest that this potlatch of the image also produces a potlatch subject. The vicissitudes of this potlatch subject will be elaborated through a reconstruction and analysis of its emergence within the Situationists' written descriptions of the ideal and actual subjects taking part in the Watts riots, and in relation to an analysis of the subject that emerges from the accompanying images. This analysis will question the limitations of the Situationists' model of the potlatch subject, especially regarding the issue of its sexual economy, as well as elaborate its more radical potentialities. For this purpose the circulation of the images is not considered as incidental to the text, but rather, images are seen as performing a structural role within the Situationists' critique of the Spectacle, as well as a constitutive role in the formation of the potlatch subject.

The 'Ideal' Potlatch Economy.

According to the anthropological writings of Marcel Mauss 'the word potlatch essentially means to consume'.¹⁵ To consume is also to destroy and it is this destructive aspect of the potlatch that is represented in these two images of wasting: the one capturing the burning of a supermarket [fig.16] and the other the smashing up of a stolen cash register [fig.17]. Yet, these acts are not just seen as aggressive, but as the caption *Playing with Rifled Cash Register* suggests, they are also conceived as playful gestures. This playful aspect is also borne out in the description of the Watts riots as not only the site for a battle (*bataille*), but also for a festival (*fête*). This festive setting and these simultaneously destructive and playful aspects reveal the Situationists' use and adaptation of a particular model of a potlatch economy; one where the excessive acts of cultural or symbolic exchange are governed by the combined forces of violence and

¹⁵ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: the Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, translated by W.D.Halls (Routledge: London, 1990), p.6.

celebration. These two forces suggest that the subject performing the potlatch is not just aggressive, but also jubilant, and that its destructive acts are motivated by the desire to play.

The Situationists' concept of potlatch is generally well recognized but only in the most schematic and underdeveloped terms.¹⁶ The acknowledged source for the Situationists' model of a potlatch economy is the Dutch anthropologist Johan Huizinga. An extract from the 1951 edition of his book *Homo Ludens*¹⁷ appears in the Lettrist International's journal, appropriately entitled *Potlatch*.¹⁸ The extract from Huizinga appears under the heading 'The Journal of Counterfeiters' ('*Le Journal Des Faux-Monnayeurs*'). It opens with a reference to 'potlatch' as 'a great solar ceremony' (*une grande cérémonie solennelle*), where the presiding tribes indulge in a ritual giving away of goods (*Potlatch*, 21, 1955). And in the last edition of *Potlatch* (1959) under the heading 'The Role of Potlatch In the Past and Now' ('*Le Rôle de Potlatch Autrefois et Maintenant*') a reference is made to the archaic potlatch festival of North American Indians, which is described as a pre-commercial circulation of goods (*une forme pré-commerciale de la circulation des biens*) based on the reciprocal exchange of

¹⁶ For instance see John Roberts, 'Eleven Theses on the Situationist International' in *Selected Errors: Writings on Art and Politics, 1981-90* (Pluto Press: London, 1992), pp. 114-125, and Peter Wollen, 'Bitter Victory: the Art and Politics of the Situationist International' in *On the passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time: the Situationist International 1957-1972*, edited by Elizabeth Sussman (The MIT Press/I.C.A.: Boston, 1989), pp. 20-61, (p. 46).

¹⁷ *Homo Ludens* was published in Haarlem in 1938, then translated into German and published in Switzerland in 1944. An English version was first published in London in 1949 and a French translation, in Paris (Gallimard) in 1951. For a more recent American edition, with an introduction by George Steiner, see Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Harper & Row: N.Y., 1970). Peter Wollen notes how Huizinga's theory of play converged in France with that of Roger Caillois, in Wollen, 'Bitter Victory', p. 47. See Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (The Free Press: Glencoe, Ill.: 1961).

¹⁸ The Lettrist International published *Potlatch* from 1954-1957. However, the last issue no.30 was published in 1959 by The Situationist International, one year after the first issue of *internationale situationniste* (1958). For details of the crossover and the changing role of *Potlatch* see Guy Debord *présente Potlatch (1954-1957)* (Gallimard: Paris, 1996). For examples of the original format of *Potlatch* see *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'Internationale situationniste: 1948-1957*, edited by Gérard Berreby (Editons Allia: Paris, 1985) and for a selection of English translations see *Theory of the Dérive and Other Situationist Writings on the City*, edited by Libero Andreotti and Xavier Costa (Museu d'Art Contemporani: Barcelona, 1996), pp. 42-63.

‘sumptuous gifts’ (*cadeaux somptuaires*).¹⁹ The circulation of gifts is essential to the model of potlatch that the Situationists’ appropriate and it accounts for the anthropological translation of potlatch as a gift economy.²⁰ The archaic and pre-commercial aspect of the potlatch or gift economy is important because it represents a form of exchange that is both prior to and staged outside of an economy of commodities and indeed a Spectacular economy. The importance accorded to the principle of giving is reflected in the distribution of the *Potlatch* journal, which was not for sale but freely given away; for example, either by sending it to randomly selected individuals or leaving it in public places such as shops, cafés, libraries, bus stops etc. To a certain extent even the contents of the journal were free, in the sense that The Lettrist International ignored copyright laws. They not only freely appropriated texts and images from many uncited sources, but also encouraged the reader freely to make use of their work. This logic of the free circulation of image and text was carried over into the publication of *internationale situationniste*, which was also published without copyright protection.²¹

Although the Situationists do not cite Marcel Mauss’ now famous text on gift economies, namely his *Essai sur le Don*, Johan Huizinga does make a direct reference to it in his *Homo Ludens*.²² Certainly, the Situationist Raoul Vaneigem’s particular take on the gift economy is analogous to what Mauss described as ‘the ideal’ potlatch: namely, where gifts are given, even destroyed, in order to experience the pure pleasure of giving.

¹⁹ *Potlatch*, Nouvelle série, no.1 (no.30, 1959), not paginated.

²⁰ The translation of potlatch as a gift economy occurs in Marcel Mauss, *The Gift; The Form and Reason For Exchange in Archaic Societies*: ‘the word potlatch signifies gift,’ p.43.

²¹ At the end of *Potlatch* (no 24, November, 1955) is the following statement: ‘tous les textes publiés dans Potlatch peuvent être reproduits, imités ou partiellement cités sans la moindre indication d’origine,’ non-paginated. On the inside of the covers to *internationale situationniste* the following appears: ‘tous les textes publiés dans internationale situationniste peuvent être librement reproduits, traduits ou adaptés, même sans indication d’origine’. On the changes in copyright law and its effect on authorship more generally in post-war France see Molly Nesbit, ‘What is an Author’ in *Yale French Studies*, ‘Everyday Life’ issue, edited by Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross (no. 73, 1987), pp. 229-257.

²² J.Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (The Beacon Press: Boston, 1955), p.58. The reference is to Mauss’ ‘Essai sur le Don, Forme archaïque de l’échange’ published in the journal *L’Année Sociologique* (1923-4). Peter Wollen remarks that Claude Lefort, a member of the group *Socialisme ou Barbarie* with whom Debord liased with in the early 1960s, reviewed Mauss’s book *The Gift* in *Les temps modernes* when it was reissued after the war. So there is a possible link here, see Wollen, ‘Bitter Victory’, p. 46.

No reciprocal return gift is required or obligated.²³ Vaneigem's concept of the 'pure gift' (*le don pur*) is developed in his 1967 book *Traité de Savoir-Vivre à l'usage des Jeunes Générations* (*The Revolution of Everyday Life*).²⁴ In the chapter 'Exchange and Gift' (*Echange et don*) he sets up the pleasure of pure giving as an economy that threatens all forms of calculated and measured exchange. For Vaneigem, all forms of equivalent exchange were forms of sacrifice, especially the commodity form where 'the extreme quantification of exchange reduces man to an object',²⁵ that is, to an inert thing. The principle of giving, in its excessive form of expecting no return gift, marks the frontier of pleasure between festivity and calculation or between excess and order. Ideally, Vaneigem claims that the potential of the pure gift and its festive setting was its perceived threat to a consumer-based society:

what beautiful potlatches the affluent society will see –whether it likes it or no –

when the exuberance of the younger generation discovers the pure gift.²⁶

It is just such beautiful potlatches, carried out by the exuberant actions of the young 'insurgents' (*insurgés*) and '*pétroleurs de Watts*',²⁷ which are captured by the two images of waste circulated in the Situationists' analysis of the Watts riots.

The Potlatch Subject

In *Critique de L'Urbansime* [fig.16] we are confronted by the image of a burning supermarket. But more than the levelling of bricks and mortar is at stake in this image of

²³ Georges Bataille quotes Mauss as follows: "“The Ideal”, indicates Mauss “would be to give a *potlatch* and not have it returned”" in 'The Notion of Expenditure' in *Visions of Excess; Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, edited by Allan Stoekl (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1985), p.122. This model of the ideal potlatch is the exception to the rule. In general Potlatch is understood as obligating a return, a model I'll be coming back to later on in this chapter.

²⁴ Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Rebel Press/Left bank Books: London, 1983). Though written between 1962-1965 it was first published as *Traité de Savoir-Vivre à l'usage des Jeunes Générations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1967).

²⁵ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p.75.

²⁶ Ibid., p.81.

²⁷ 'Le Déclin et la Chute' in *internationale situationniste* (no.10, 1966), p.3.

wasting. The destruction of this icon of consumerism, this house of commodities, becomes the symbol for the destruction of the 'world of the commodity in which worker-consumers are hierarchically subordinated to commodity values'.²⁸ Destruction here presents a confrontation with commodification: what is destroyed can no longer be exchanged or purchased and no longer owned. And those that destroy commodities are theorized as demonstrating 'their human superiority (*supériorité humaine*) over commodities'.²⁹ For the Situationists this destructive act, this conflagration (which was understood to have been carried out by all those disenfranchised from the hierarchical value system of the Spectacular economy) represents the 'passage from consumption to consummation' (*le passage de la consommation à la consummation*).³⁰ The original French enacts this substitution or slippage (from consumption to consummation) at the level of language, as a linguistic operation, not captured in the English translation. To consummate means to bring to the desired conclusion, and what more fitting end for the icon of consumerism than its own consumption: literally consumed and swallowed by fire.

In the image *Playing with Rifled Cash Register* [fig. 17] the Situationists see the critique of the commodity form through the principles of 'theft and gift' (*le vol and le cadeau*). To steal goods is to refuse the logic of monetary exchange and instead to seize the object directly and without delay. For the Situationists it is only when goods are exchanged for money that they retain their status as admirable fetishes. Therefore, to steal goods with no apparent use value, such as the example in Watts where 'large refrigerators were stolen by people who had no electricity, or whose electricity supply had been cut off', provided the Situationists with the 'best image of the lie of abundance

²⁸ 'Le Déclin et la Chute', p.7.

²⁹ Ibid., p.5.

³⁰ Ibid., p.6.

become truth in play'.³¹ For the poor and alienated of Watts the truth of the refrigerator was not its functionalism but its utter uselessness. In [fig.17] the cash register (a symbol of monetary exchange) is also turned into a functionally redundant object and its uselessness exaggerated through its being played with. As well as capturing the play aspect of the potlatch subject, this image of looting also pictures an act that de-fetishizes the commodity by transforming it into a mere thing, a 'blind, passive, insensible thing'³² (*chose aveugle, passive, insensible*) in submission to and dependant upon the subject who determines its social value either through play or through excessive consumption.

In comparing the written descriptions and images of wasting, a somewhat ambivalent potlatch subject emerges from these acts of sabotage. In [fig.16] the burning down of the supermarket is interpreted by the Situationists as a sign of the 'superiority' of the human subject over its object world. In [fig.17], the cash register is also reduced to a brute object through intentional acts of play, destruction and theft. Yet, such wasteful and destructive expenditures are not anti-materialist as such, but directed at producing a new dialectical relation between the object and the subject by using the object in a new way. In this instance, the potlatch subject reconfigures the object according to the rules of a game, which gives the object its new ludic character. So, in this dialectical model not only is a categorical distinction maintained between the subject and the object, but also a hierarchical one, with the subject occupying the superior and controlling position; with control now taking the form of play and destruction.

To talk of a superior subject who is in control of its objective world, presents a model of the subject at odds with the critic Jean Barrot's claim, that the Situationists produced an un-dialectical subject that had no interrelation with its objective

³¹ 'Le Déclin et la Chute', p.6.

³² Ibid., p.6.

conditions.³³ Yet, this seemingly autonomous potlatch subject is not, I suggest, represented as anything like a return to a model of the Cartesian subject and its Humanist tradition.³⁴ On the contrary, the potlatch subject is represented as in crisis, out of control and also explicitly anti-humanist. As the Watts text makes clear the so-called rational world of the commodity economy operates according to a hidden and irrational logic, where people are reduced to objects and things acquire human qualities. This is the Humanism of the parasitical commodity (*l'humanisme de la marchandise*) and as such it represents the negation of human activity and desires.³⁵ It is the task of the ideal potlatch subject to negate this negation. But in acting according to its desires, the potlatch subject also becomes unravelled. I suggest that what emerges out of this reconstruction of the Situationists' text and images is a different type of agency and subjectivity, one always at risk and falling apart, as opposed to one that is unified and in full control. The potlatch subject is constitutively unstable. Not only in the sense of being given over to excessive outbursts, but also in the sense that it is not constituted in advance of its actual emergence in violent and playful acts. Like the mythical Phoenix that rises from the flames, the ideal potlatch subject also arises from the ashes or residues of the wreckage it has wrought, but not in any predetermined form. The nature

³³ Barrot accuses the Situationists of reducing the real conditions of existence to purely intersubjective relations: 'this is a point of view of the subject trying to rediscover itself, not a view which encompasses both subject and object' in Jean Barrot, 'Critique of the Situationist International' in *What is Situationism? A Reader*, edited by Stewart Home (AK Press: Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 24-62, (p. 37). I disagree by suggesting that the Situationist subject does exist in a dialectical relationship with its material surroundings. But the subject is not only produced by its material condition it is also generative of them, that is, the relationship of subject to object is not determinate or fixed, but in flux.

³⁴ The challenge to the Cartesian subject or rather a crisis concerning the subject more generally is dramatically described in Foucault's phrase that the concept of Man, understood as a unitary, transcendent and controlling figure, 'would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea'. Michel Foucault's *Les Mots et Les Choses* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1966) was published the same year as the Situationists' analysis of the Watts riots. For a general discussion of the development of the concept of a decentred subject in France see Carolyn Dean, *The Self and its Pleasures; Bataille, Lacan, and the History of the Decentered Subject* (Ithaca: London, 1992).

³⁵ This concurs with an earlier Situationist critique of Humanism put forward by Raoul Vaneigem in 1962, where it is denounced as bound to the notion of sacrifice, which is a model of exchange contrary to that of the pure gift. See Raoul Vaneigem, 'Banalités de Base' in *internationale situationniste* (no.7, April, 1962): 'Lié à la notion de sacrifice, ce qui définit l'humanisme appartient à la peur des maîtres et à la peur des esclaves, il n'est que solidarité dans une humanité foireuse,' p.40.

of the subject depends on, or is rather produced by, these processes of ruination. The precariousness of the potlatch subject is compounded by its seeming desire for impermanence, what might be called its death wish. The desire for change, not stasis, is evident from the potlatch subject's violent overturning of the normative patterns of acceptable social behaviour. But such violent confrontations not only register the subject's dissatisfaction and desire for change, but also perversely provoke its own collapse or imminent ruin by the forces of law and order sent out to quell it; the extent of the affront to the system can be registered by the extent of the violence exerted against it. Yet, the potlatch subject risks its own death. It is prepared to put its life on the line, with no guarantee of any satisfactory return on such a valuable investment. To give without return fulfils the requirement of Vaneigem's model of the ideal potlatch in the form of the pure gift.

The Heterogeneous

In the Situationists' written analysis of the Watts riots the actual identity, sexual or otherwise, of the potlatch subject appears to be deliberately indeterminate. At different moments in the text the subject appears in the guise of adults, children, women, criminals, juvenile delinquents and even as a female sociologist.³⁶ That is, the potlatch subject is not anatomically determined, neither is it of a particular age or race. At times 'the Blacks' (*Les Noirs*) rioting in the streets of Watts are also the metaphor for all the apartheid of the dominant system, which in the Situationists' particular analysis of it includes the protesting students in Berkeley, the anti-Vietnam protestors, the Civil Rights Movement and all those involved with the battle of Algiers.³⁷ What brings

³⁶ The sociologist taking part was a woman named Bobbi Hollon. The Watts essay reprints an extract of an interview she gave to the *Herald Tribune* in *internationale situationniste* (no.10, 1966) p.6.

³⁷ The un-authored essay following the Watts text in the same edition of the journal was appropriately called 'Les Luites de Classes en Algérie,' pp.12-21. The Situations supported the Algerian battle of

together such a seemingly differentiated mass of figures is their violent resistance to the Spectacle. This refusal to be assimilated by the Spectacle is in some ways analogous to Georges Bataille's concept of the *heterogeneous*. When applied to social groups Bataille's concept gathers together the 'numerous elements or social forms that *homogenous* society is powerless to assimilate'³⁸ and his list of possible candidates includes: 'mobs, the warrior... different types of violent individuals' and 'those that refuse the rule (madmen, poets etc.).'³⁹ Furthermore, what characterizes the heterogeneous subject's acts of refusal is its '*violence, excess, delirium, madness*.'⁴⁰ Despite its otherwise indeterminate character, the potlatch subject does share such a heterogeneous propensity for violence in the form of ludic and wasteful expenditures. The burning and looting of the district of Watts can also be interpreted according to Bataille's definition of a '*heterogeneous* reality' understood as a violent force, shock or charge that collapses the normative (or homogeneous) categories of everyday life.⁴¹

At the level of identity politics the potlatch subject does appear genuinely heterogeneous, in the sense of being able to encompass within its consequently flexible boundaries, all those who feel excluded from the Spectacular economy, whatever their race, age or sex. Yet, there is another cohesive factor shared by this otherwise heterogeneous subject, namely the issue of class war. Class remains the key term for the relations of power in the Situationists' analysis. They make this explicit when they

independence. On September 29, 1960, Debord and Bernstein signed the 'Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie'-now more famously referred to as 'Manifeste des 121'. All the signatories were interviewed by the police, for more details on the Manifesto 121 see *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives, tome II: 1940-1969* (Eric Lorscheid: Paris, 1982). For a discussion of the Algerian war in terms of a symptom of the collapse of France's post war colonial powers see Kristin Ross, *Fast cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

³⁸ George Bataille, 'The Psychological Structure of Fascism' in *Visions of Excess*, p.142. A more detailed analysis of the fascist subject is taken up in chapter 3. Bataille was also interested in Mauss' writings on potlatch economies, but recast in terms of unproductive expenditures, see Bataille, 'The Notion of Expenditure' (1933) in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, edited and translated by Allan Stoekl (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1985), pp. 116-129.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.142.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.142. Italicized in the original text.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

declare their solidarity with Martin Luther King's definition of the Watts riots not in terms of a race riot, but of a class riot.⁴² Engaged in a class war, the heterogeneous potlatch subject is the symbol for all those that are neglected and repressed, not just economically, but also socially, by the Spectacular economy. As the Situationists point out, social inferiority is imposed in every area of daily life, by customs and prejudices as much as by money. It is in this light that, contrary to Michel Tatu's idyllic portrait of the new assimilated Black middle class, living in posh districts, in large houses with fancy lawns to tend (as intimated in the last sentence of the extract from *Le Monde* –3.11.65– underpinning [fig.16]), the Situationists claim that from the perspective of the hierarchical society of the Spectacle, this new Black middle class will only ever be 'rich niggers' (*riche nègre*).⁴³ The invective of the phrase is deliberate to highlight the issue that all hierarchical societies demand 'others' to be marginalized or rather demonized, such as the 'Blacks' of Watts. This 'other' will always represent what the dominant must exclude or appropriate in order to maintain its hegemonic position. Nevertheless, this excluded 'other' still has the capacity to fight back, though its available forms of protest often remain undisciplined and unpredictable.

The New Proletariat

At one point in their analysis the Situationists do try to pin down the potlatch subject by describing those rioting in Watts as the embodiment of a 'new proletarian consciousness' (*nouvelle conscience prolétarienne*). The Situationists' concept of the 'new proletariat' was however no longer only economically defined, as had been its Marxist informed predecessor. In the growing consumer culture of the late 1950s and

⁴² 'Luther King...admettre...que "ce n'étaient pas des émeutes de race, mais de classe"' in *internationale situationniste* (no.10, 1966), p.4.

⁴³ Race does seem to make a difference here, in the implication that a 'White' society is the hegemonic order of the Spectacle. Though the disenfranchised or 'poor whites' are in solidarity with the 'poor blacks' for the Situationists.

early 1960s, where a larger proportion of the population had access to more material abundance, the issues of scarcity and survival were no longer the main contested terrains. For the Situationists, the new category of social distinction to contest was defined by the gap and difference between all those not in control of their lives and those that were, or rather between the 'order takers' as opposed to the 'order givers'.⁴⁴ This allowed a more expansive, but still heterogeneous model of the potlatch subject. For in these terms anyone dissenting in Watts (no matter their age, race or sex) was automatically cast on the side of the 'order takers' and therefore a representative of the expanded model of the new proletariat. Still heterogeneous, the new proletarian subject was distinguished by its predisposition to self-determination. That is, this subject is credited with a certain amount of autonomy and agency, in the sense of being able to challenge and transform its everyday life. To be credited with some autonomy does not suggest the return of a fully self-controlled and ordered subject. This is true of the Situationists' presentation of the potlatch subject where the outcome of its violent and excessive acts, no matter how intentioned, remain contingent and unpredictable.

Defining the potlatch subject as the 'new proletariat' engaged in class war does perhaps risk homogenizing it. That is, there is the danger of eliding or glossing over the differences between the groups of individuals taking part in the revolt, and the disparate issues being contested during the heat of the moment, e.g. the demand for better social

⁴⁴ For an extended portrait of the changing form and function of the proletarian subject see Guy Debord, 'The Proletariat as Subject and Representation' in *The Society of the Spectacle*, pp. 47-90, this is the largest section in the whole book. This model of the new proletariat as the 'order takers' derives from the group *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, a small group of militants who broke with mainstream Trotskyism shortly after World War II. Its leading theoretician was Cornelius Castoriadis (writing under the pseudonyms first of Pierre Chaulieu and later of Paul Cardan). Debord was involved with this group and published a co-authored essay with Pierre Canjuers (a member of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*) entitled 'Preliminaries Toward Defining a Unitary Revolutionary Program' (1960). This is republished in Ken Knabb, *The Situationist International Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1981). In *internationale situationniste* (no.5, 1960) this essay is described as: 'a platform for discussion within the I.S. for its relations with the revolutionary militants of the workers movement,' p.11. For a more detailed account of *S ou B* see Philippe Gottraux, *Socialisme ou Barbarie, un engagement politiques et intellectuel dans le France de l'après-guerre* (Payot: Lausanne, 1997), and in relation to the Situationists see Shigenobu Gonzalvez, 'Nouvelles Operations Politiques' in *Guy Debord ou la beauté du négatif* (Editions Mille et une Nuits: Paris, 1998), pp. 31-36; also Richard Gombin, *Les Origines du Gauchisme* (Seuil: Paris, 1971).

housing or the end to racial and/or sexual discriminations etc. There is also an advantage, however, in no longer tying the subject to its economic determinations, in that its protests can also be seen as extending beyond the economic or monetary realm. This is true of the potlatch subject where its street vandalism was read by the Situationists as jamming more than the circuits of economic exchange. For example, the burning of cars was seen as both a destruction of status symbols, but also as an exchange of power, where pedestrians replace the car, that is, people replace machines, as the proper inhabitants of the city centre. By transforming the social and architectural fabric of its everyday life the potlatch subject was also transforming the material conditions of its everyday existence and experience. For the Situationists, this was the ultimate task of all urban revolutionaries: to critique the fetishized social conditions of the Spectacle through de-fetishizing acts that aim to create new forms of non-alienated living. In this light the potlatch subject can be seen to both recognize and complete the task of the urban revolutionary as laid out in Guy Debord's 1959 'Situationist Theses on Traffic':

Revolutionary urbanists will not limit their concern to the circulation of things and of human beings trapped in a world of things. They will try to break these topological chains, paving the way with their experiments for a human journey through authentic life.⁴⁵

The translation of the potlatch as a revolutionary act carried out by the new proletariat also links the festival and battle of Watts, and its principles of play and destruction, with the Situationists' concept that all 'proletarian revolutions will be *festivals* or nothing'.⁴⁶

Festivity becomes the keynote for a form of authentic life, with play as its ultimate

⁴⁵ Guy Debord, 'Positions Situationnistes sur la Circulation' in *internationale situationniste* (no.3, 1959) pp.36-37, (p.37, thesis 9). This tract attacks modern urban planning, and in particular the city designs of Le Corbusier, for the priority given to cars over people. Also published in English by Knabb, 'Situationist Theses on Traffic', *Situationist International Anthology*, p.56.

⁴⁶ From 'On the Poverty of Student Life' 1966 reprinted in Knabb, *Situationist Anthology*, pp.319-337 (p.337).

principle. The following declaration of such principles would not be out of place as an alternative caption for the image of *Playing with Rifled Cash Register* [fig.17] circulated in the Watts text:

Play is the ultimate principle of this festival and the only rules it can recognize are to live without dead time and to enjoy without restraints.⁴⁷

Potlatch As Festival

Recasting the potlatch subject as a revolutionary urbanist provides the Situationists with the crucial link to what they perceived as ‘biggest festival of the nineteenth century’,⁴⁸ namely the Paris Commune of 1871. The terms used by the Situationists to describe this great festival in their 1962 ‘Theses on the Paris Commune’ are striking in their similarity to those used to describe the festival of Watts in 1966. For example, just as the insurgents of Watts were presented as subverting their everyday existence (*leur vie quotidienne*), the insurgents of 1871 are described as ‘feeling that they had become masters of their own history, not so much on the level of governmental politics as on the level of their everyday life’.⁴⁹ So too were The Commune’s acts of violence and destruction understood as *games*: ‘consider, for example, the *games* everyone played with their weapons’.⁵⁰ Though the most explicit connection of the festival of 1871 and *la*

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.337. This was also a slogan graffitied on the walls during the Events of May ’68 in Paris and will be discussed in chapter 3. See the collection of photographs collated in Walter Lewino, *L’imagination au pouvoir* (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), inside cover. The photos are by Jo Schnapp. See also Marc Rohan, *Paris ’68: Graffiti, Posters, Newspapers and Poems of Events of may 1968* (Impact Books: London, 1988).

⁴⁸ From ‘Theses on the Paris Commune’ written in 1962 by Guy Debord, Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem reprinted in English in Knabb, *Situationist International*, p.314 (thesis 2). Henri Lefebvre was also involved in discussions on certain aspects of this theses, but when he published his own version called ‘La Signification de la Commune’ in the journal *Arguments* (no.27-28, 1962) without acknowledging its debt to the Situationists, they responded by publishing both versions side by side in the last issue of *internationale situationniste* (no.12, 1969) p.109 under the heading ‘Aux Poubelles de L’Histoire’. This exposé and accompanying accusations of plagiarism caused a permanent rift between Lefebvre and Debord. For Lefebvre’s account of his relationship with Debord see ‘Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview,’ with Kristin Ross in *October* (no 79, Winter, 1997), pp. 69-83.

⁴⁹ ‘Theses on the Paris Commune’, p.314

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.314, thesis 2.

fête of Watts is suggested by the following extract from the 'Theses on the Paris Commune' where a common goal to critique or rather negate the whole of the social urban edifice is indicated:

The Commune represents the only realization of a revolutionary urbanism to date –attacking on the spot the petrified signs of the dominant organization of life, understanding social space in political terms.⁵¹

Just as it was possible to substitute the caption *Playing with Rifled Cash Register* with a statement declaring the revolutionary principles of play, so too this passage, declaring the revolutionary principles of urbanism, would not be out of place as an alternative caption for the *Critique de L'Urbanisme* image [fig.16] circulated in the Watts text, where the burning supermarket represents the collapse or rather the consummation of the petrified and fetishized conditions of the Spectacular economy.

In a potlatch festival, destructive acts are also linked to jubilation and play. That is, somewhat counter-intuitively, the Situationists cast the waves of vandalism (*vague de vandalisme*) targeted at the 'machines of consumption' (*machines de la consommation*) in a positive and pleasurable light, and moreover, as a means to bring a marginalized community together.⁵² This factor of social connection enables the festival setting of the archaic potlatch to join up with the festival of 1871 and that of Watts in 1966, through their supposedly shared conditions of celebratory communality. For the Situationists 'community... is the true social nature of man' (*la vraie nature sociale de l'homme*)⁵³ and this is expressed in the desire to participate in a shared event or festival. The festival

⁵¹ Ibid., p.315, thesis 7.

⁵² 'Les Mauvais Jours Finiront' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 7, April, 1962), pp. 10-17, (p.10). The Situationists' preferred use of the term vandalism instead of iconoclasm is interesting in relation to Dario Gamboni's argument that the word vandalism tends to be used pejoratively, to give the destructive acts a barbaric even criminal association; whereas the word iconoclasm signals a more highly critical and thought-over act of reappropriation and transformation, see Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (Reaktion Books: London, 1997). The Situationists therefore side with the low not the proper.

⁵³ *internationale situationniste* (no.10, 1966), p.11.

has a utopian significance within the Situationists' writings, as the ideal sign of the end or rather the supersession (*dépassement*) of the alienated conditions and inhuman life constitutive of the Spectacle. The Situationists were not of course the only group in the 1960s using the concept of 'festival' as a means to express a desire for a social revolution. For example, Henri Lefebvre (a one time close friend of Debord), in defining his notion of cultural revolution as a form of direct experience aiming at 'the transfiguration of everyday life'⁵⁴, described it in terms of a rediscovered festival: 'the festival rediscovered and magnified by overcoming the conflict between everyday life and festivity and enabling these terms to harmonize in and through urban society, such is the final clause of the revolutionary plan'.⁵⁵

Festival was a keyword then, signalling the end to the regulated and banal existence associated with a late capitalist society. In the Watts article the ludic destructions carried out during the 'potlatch of destruction', symbolized the end of Spectacular time, which not only fetishized things and reified people, but also divided life into units of alienated work and instrumentalized leisure. Andrew Ross discusses this division, or rather gap, between work and play in terms of the new battleground for would be revolutionaries in post-war France. More generally, however, in an era of relative prosperity, abundance (not scarcity) and leisure time become the key issues to be debated and contested: 'increasingly, as new labor-saving technology proves to be

⁵⁴ Henri Lefebvre, 'Towards a Permanent Cultural Revolution' (1967) in *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, translated by Sacha Rabinovitch (Transaction Publishers: London, 1990), pp.194-206, (p. 204).

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 206. The Situationists were anti the intellectual turn towards Mao and the Cultural Revolution for they viewed Maoism (much like they viewed Stalinism) as a bureaucratic state dictatorship, see 'Le point d'explosion de l'idéologie en chine' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 11, October, 1967), pp. 3-12. Herbert Marcuse also understood culture (especially in its image form) as a means to transform a repressive society through cultural acts of desublimation, see *Eros and Civilization* (Sphere Books: London, 1969). Carol Becker writes that for Marcuse 'within the creative process is resistance. In the process of making images, they can be transformed, utilized, co-opted, inverted, diverted, subverted' in 'Herbert Marcuse and the Subversive Potential of Art' in *The Subversive Imagination: Art, Society and Social Responsibility* (Routledge: London, 1994), pp. 113-129, (p. 113). Norman O' Brown in his *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical meaning of History* (Wesleyan University Press: New England, 1959), also writes of a Dionysian and festive consciousness, this will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3 in relation to Raoul Vaneigem's concept of a 'radical subjectivity'.

capital's only way of regaining control over the labor process, the struggle over defining "free time" has come and will continue, to be the major area of contestation of our age'.⁵⁶ For the Situationists too, the potlatch festival concerned a redefinition of what constituted 'free time'. That is, during a festival, time was no longer measured or regulated by the clock, rather time was now free to be wasted, to be literally spent in the fulfilment of pleasurable games.

The Situationists' posing of the festival against instrumentalized leisure also reveals a connection with Roger Caillois' definition of the festival as the opposite of the vacation. For Caillois, festivals 'constitute a break in the obligation to work, a deliverance from the limitations and constraints of the human condition...one's only obligation is to use things up and spend oneself'.⁵⁷ In other words, against work and thrift, the festival represents 'expenditure and paroxysm'.⁵⁸ Not only is work time opposed to the time of festival however, so is the vacation. For Caillois, as well as for the Situationists, in capitalist societies, the vacation (or what the Situationists called instrumentalized leisure) was the poor substitute for the festival: 'rather than communication with the group in its moment of exuberance and jubilation, it is further isolation. Consequently vacation, unlike festival, constitutes not the flood stage of collective experience, but rather its low-water mark'.⁵⁹ Although this successor of the festival, namely the vacation, was still a time of expenditure and free activity, when the regular time of work was interrupted, it was 'a phase of *relaxation* and not of *paroxysm*'.⁶⁰ The values are completely reversed because the festival signals the coming together of the group in the same place, whilst the vacation is an instance where each

⁵⁶ Andrew Ross, 'The Rock 'n' Roll Ghost' in *October* (no. 50, Fall, 1989), pp. 108-117, (p. 116).

⁵⁷ Roger Caillois, 'Festival' (1939) in *The College of Sociology (1937-39)*, edited by Denis Hollier and translated by Betsy Wing (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1988), pp. 279-303, (p. 301).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

goes off to a separate place. Rather than a moment of excessive prodigality and frenzy the vacation seems 'to be an empty space, at least a slowing down of social activity'.⁶¹ For Caillois, the vacation was the modern day travesty of the festival, it merely provided a false sense of well being that masked the death throes from the dying: for a society without festivals is a society condemned to death. For the Situationists too, any luxurious expenditures of life were strictly unavailable to the society of the Spectacle where neither community nor luxury exists: 'mass pseudo-festivals, with their travesty of dialogue and their parody of the gift, may incite people to excessive spending, but they produce only disillusion'.⁶² What also connects the Situationists' concept of festival with Caillois' model was their shared belief that, as a representative of a moment of exuberance, the festival possessed the means to rejuvenate and revitalize society: excess was fertile. However, whereas Caillois interpreted the festival as a form of the sacred, where the mythic collided with the real world, the Situationists, as debunkers of mysticism and religion, supported a profoundly profane model of the festival: any transformations would take place on Earth, in the here and now. Moreover, for Caillois, the festival may well rejuvenate society, by momentarily allowing all social rules and taboos to be transgressed, but this moment of chaos was short lived, followed as it was by a return to law and order. The Situationists' name for this process was recuperation, where the turbulent aspects of the festival are co-opted by the forces of order and turned into a spectacle of protest, a type of carnival parade. As Mikhail Bakhtin had already demonstrated, what he called the 'carnavalesque' (where for a moment the world is literally turned on its head and the fool becomes a king for the day) can also perform as a sort of social safety valve, which merely bridges the gap between change and

⁶¹ Caillois, 'Festival', p. 302.

⁶² Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, thesis 154, p. 113.

conservation.⁶³ The everyday frustrations of those taking part in the carnival may well be momentarily released, but by the end of its allotted time, homogeneous life is reinstated, albeit in a revitalized form.

Inevitably perhaps, the Watts festival was suppressed by the forces of law and order, and 'normal' or homogeneous life was restored. But it was also an exemplary model of a potlatch, expanding the social and imaginative horizons of those taking part in it in it. It was a decidedly non-State-sanctioned carnival, but rather an illegal and dysfunctional game, where for a moment the repressed confronted the violence of their repressors with more violence. Unlike Bakhtin's model of a topsy turvey world, where hierarchical relations are momentarily inverted, i.e., the fool is recognized as a king for a day, in the Situationists' ideal festival the Spectacular economy would not just be inverted, but ruined.⁶⁴ And the potlatch subject emerging from it would not be hierarchically constructed (no kings, no leaders etc.), but on the contrary would ideally embrace the heterogeneous world of the low, the vandals and the criminal.

Wasting or Conservation?

In the Watts article, the economic model of 'potlatch' was also defined according to the principles of theft (*le vol*) and gift (*le don*). It is possible to expand on these principles, and to suggest that theft and gift are also the overarching mechanisms by which the images [figs.16& 17] operate in the Watts text. In this instance, pillaging and destruction constitute the aesthetic economy of the Situationist image in two ways: firstly, in the form of the images' actual depiction of acts of burning and looting; and secondly, in the

⁶³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Hélène Iswolsky (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1984).

⁶⁴ Debord wrote: 'the construction of situations begins on the ruins of the modern spectacle', demonstrating that the Situationist project was as much one of building and reconstruction as it was of negation and destruction, see 'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action' reprinted in Knabb, pp.17-25, (p.25). The differences between Situationist negation and nihilism will be discussed in chapter 3.

poor quality of the images that were pillaged from low cultural sources such as newspapers. The newspaper is itself a sign of perishable consumption and waste matter, in the sense that it is made obsolete daily. In fact, it could be said that theft is the structuring principle of the journal *internationale situationniste*. More generally, all its images are rifled from a variety of un-cited popular sources and the Situationists openly disregarded copyright laws. It is also worth remarking how the journal itself was ephemeral and a limited edition object –limited due to printing costs. Therefore, the images of waste and wasting circulated in a perishable site, which in effect tripled the waste factor: firstly, from the content of the images which depict acts of destruction which lay waste to a supermarket etc.; secondly, to the stolen images, pillaged from low sources; and thirdly, to the ephemeral site of the images' limited edition distribution. Of course, these journals are now highly sought after and collectable items and any intended Situationist waste factor is now undone by their being conserved rather than lost or wasted.⁶⁵

The issue of waste is made problematic however by the image form itself, in the sense that the image is also a means and a site of preservation. This aspect is exacerbated by the fact that the images circulated in the Situationists' journal are conserved, in the sense of recycled and redistributed, rather than wasted. To recycle rather than to waste is dangerously close to the Situationists' definition of the re-constitutive and recuperative character of the Spectacular economy, where productive excesses are recycled by the system in order to conserve and perpetuate its economy of the selfsame. The complete opposite, it would seem, of the potlatch economy expounded in the text, and represented in the images, where waste is expended not conserved. And it is certainly the latter economic model that Debord openly favours: 'People who denounce incitements to

⁶⁵ The problems concerning the archiving of the Situationists' intentionally ephemeral works is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

wastefulness as absurd or dangerous in a society of economic abundance do not understand the purpose of waste'.⁶⁶ With this conviction the Situationists' model of an economy of *waste* is reminiscent of Bataille's concept of a 'general economy.'⁶⁷ Bataille described how all societies aim to produce more than can be consumed, that is, more than is required for the mere survival of the species. It is 'how' this leftover or economic residue is used that determines the type of society. For the Situationists, if waste is stored or conserved this suggests a Spectacular economy, as opposed to the wasting of waste, which determines a potlatch economy in its ideal form.⁶⁸ At the level of the image then, a pertinent question to ask is how do the Situationists' recycled images both constitute and represent a proper economy or *dépense* of waste? For the Situationists one area of waste consists of the field of culture itself, which is defined as 'the organization of everything over and beyond the immediate necessities of the society's reproduction'.⁶⁹ That is, the realm of culture is defined as the site where a society decides on all aspects of the use of its available surplus value, such as the use of its waste matter. If, for the Situationists, the image sphere is understood as part of the general field of culture, this indicates that all images are already circulating in a realm of excess. The issue of what constitutes the Situationists' economy of waste, at the level of the image, can thus be reformulated in the following question: how can the image of

⁶⁶ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 198, p.140.

⁶⁷ Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share; An Essay on General Economy: Volume I, Consumption* (Zone Books: N.Y, 1988); first published as *La Part Maudite* (Les Editions de Minuit, 1967). See also Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: Volumes II and III* (Zone Books: N.Y, 1991) and Georges Bataille, 'The Notion of Expenditure' in *Visions of Excess; selected Writings, 1927-1939*, edited and translated by Allan Stoekl (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1996).

⁶⁸ The difference between the Situationists and Bataille is that Bataille suggests that a conservative economy is represented by the U.S.S.R., with the USA representing a model of 'expenditure without return, *dépense*' in Allan Stoekl, 'Bataille, Gift Giving, and the Cold War' in *The Logic of the Gift*, edited by Alan D. Schrift (Routledge: London, 1997), pp. 245-255. The Situationists were dismissive of both the American and Soviet socio-political economies as forms of hierarchical and bureaucratic capitalism, respectively.

⁶⁹ Debord and Canjuers, 'Preliminaries Toward Defining a Unitary Revolutionary Program' (1960) in Knabb, *Situationist International*, p.305.

waste be properly put to use? The answer, for the Situationists, lies in the process of *détournement*.

An Economy of *Détournement*

A definition of the process of *détournement* appears in issue no.1 of *internationale situationniste* (1958). Here it is defined as the process of 'reusing pre-existing or readymade (*préfabriqué*) aesthetic elements' as part of 'a method of propaganda'⁷⁰ aimed at the collapse or ruin (*la peurte*) of the existing cultural realm. At the level of the image, it is a destructive form of immanent cultural critique carried out by a process of appropriation or pillage: for instance, the removal of an image from its original or designated space of circulation and its placement in a new or strange context. The French word *détournement* can be translated as a hi-jacking or pillaging of the readymade image or text, which is then held hostage to the Situationists' process of critical revaluation. This process can take two forms: either, that of 'minor *détournements*' (*les détournements mineurs*) that are characterized by the simple spatial and contextual shifting of the readymade element; or the form of 'abusive *détournements*' (*les détournements abusifs*), which involves altering or damaging the readymade element in some way, such as the addition of new captions or collaged fragments from elsewhere.⁷¹ In the Watts text, the two images [figs.16& 17] are both re-contextualized and given new captions, so are examples of both *minor* and *abusive détournements*. However, the traffic between the images of waste or wasting in the

⁷⁰ 'Définitions' in *internationale situationniste* (no.1, June, 1958), p.13. The readymade aspect of the *détourné* fragment reveals the Situationists' connection to both a Dadaist (Duchampian) aesthetic and the more contemporary Pop Art aesthetic.

⁷¹ Guy-Ernest Debord and Gil. J. Wolman, 'Mode d'emploi du *détournement*' in the Belgian Revolutionary Surrealist journal *Les Lèvres Nues* (no.8, 1956) p.4. This was a Lettrist text but the basic principles of the process of *détournement* was continued by the Situationist International as evident in the essay 'Le *Détournement* Comme Negation Et Comme Prelude' in *internationale situationniste* (no.3, 1959), pp.10-11. See also the definition of *détournement* and other Lettrist concepts in 'Définitions' in *internationale situationniste* (no.1, 1958) pp.13-14.

Watts article and its written expounding of a potlatch economy seems to be rather conventional, as the one acts as an illustration for the other. Indeed, the printing process itself, which smoothes out the rough and cut edges of the collaged images, accentuates this rather conventional and apparently seamless traffic between the image and the text. That is to say, such a seamless interaction of image and text tends to shore up an analogical or indexical reading of the *détourné* photographic image. The depicted content is un-problematically read as a referent to the events that took place; that is, reading the image for the real. And in turn, the *détourné* image tends to be read as offering a one-to-one correspondence with the written account, as its confirmatory illustration. In both instances this is the structural as well as formal implication of the image as it is used in the Situationists' analysis of Watts.

Such a seamless exchange between image and text is however at odds with the inherently destabilizing mechanism of the *détournement* process and its economy of risk and uncertainty: risky in the sense of performing a gamble with the meaning of the signs that are hi-jacked and recoded. According to Mauss 'gambling is a form of potlatch and of the gift system'.⁷² To gamble is to enter into a game that has no certainty of outcome. As a gamble with the meaning of signs, the Situationists' method of *détournement* can be interpreted as a potlatch of signification, thereby putting any conventional reading of the image into question. The slippage to the word sign here is deliberate and triggered by the method of *détournement* itself. For its value as a critical strategy is determined by the possibility of a slippage or diversion of signification to occur. That is, it is premised on the disarticulation of the material element or signifier and its intended meaning or signified. The fact that the cultural code or message of an image or text can be diverted, points to a non-referential understanding of the image as such. That is, the meaning of

⁷² Mauss, *The Gift*, p.112 (fn 139).

the image, especially a photographic image as circulated in the Watts text, does not lie simply in its content or what it depicts. Its meaning is also tied up with its form, its caption and the place of its circulation. Such a complex interaction suggests that the photograph itself is a sort of readymade combine or assemblage (as opposed to any singular or discrete object) whose meaning(s) has to be reconstructed and not presupposed as already given. In turn, the process of *détournement* makes visible and palpable how meanings and values are caught in a precarious web of signification. That is, the arbitrary character of the sign is established by the Situationists' method of symbolic devaluation and revaluation.⁷³

The flattening out of the referential depth of the photographic image brings its meaning to the surface. That is, if meaning is not located in an indexical relation between the content of the image and the real event or action that has been recorded, then it lies elsewhere. The screen of representation is one such elsewhere from which to reconstruct the meaning of the image. This is to suggest that the Situationists' cultural or symbolic *détournements* take place at the level of appearance or at the level of what Jean Baudrillard names as 'the superficial abyss'.⁷⁴ *Détournement* on the slippery surface of appearance is itself a precarious process. It reveals that the meaning of the image is never fixed but always mobile, in the sense of its susceptibility to change, reversal and *détournement*. So, even the Situationists' symbolic revaluations are susceptible in turn to future reversals and revisions and are therefore also risky and impermanent investments. Or rather than an investment, the dizzying and estranged effects of the *détourné* image should be considered as analogous to a gamble or potlatch, where a sign is emptied of

⁷³ The process of *détournement* seems to correlate here with Roland Barthes' attempt to locate the meaning of a commercial image. Both its denoted and connotated aspects are susceptible to ideological recordings, see 'Rhetoric of the Image' in *Image, Music, Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (Fontana Press: London, 1977), pp. 32-51.

⁷⁴ This is Jean Baudrillard's term for the level of appearances in his book *Seduction* (St. Martin's Press: N.Y., 1990). First published in 1979 by Editions Galilée.

one meaning and either filled with another or even left empty, thus risking the loss of all its meaning.

The flattening out of the referential depth of the image to the surface or screen of representation does not mean that it has no depth at all. Depth can be reconstituted at the level of the viewing subject, at a psychic and social level. Each subject brings to the image different histories, memories and experiences of the world, as well as a sense of self that might be in harmony or conflict with the image of the world presented to them. Unconscious desires and social determinants affect how the image is received and how it might be *détourné*. The subject and image are intertwined, folded into each other, psychically and socially through processes of conscious and unconscious identification, projection and introjection. For the moment however, I want to focus on a different economy of the *détourné* image as it circulates at a surface level; the same level, that is, of the Spectacle, diagnosed by Debord as reducing all that once was directly lived to the level of representation.⁷⁵

Détournement as a Mode of Seduction

In most commentaries focusing on the tactics of the Situationist International, the process of *détournement* is typically discussed in terms of a process of re-appropriation or hi-jacking of readymade elements.⁷⁶ However, according to its definition in a standard French dictionary, the word *détournement* can also be translated as meaning to be lead astray or to be seduced. It may seem far-fetched to suggest a retranslation of the Situationists' essay 'Mode of using Détournement' to 'Mode of using Seduction'.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ 'All that once was directly lived has become mere representation' in *The Society of the Spectacle*, thesis 1, p. 12.

⁷⁶ This is the case with Knabb, Wollen, Foster and Sadler to name a few. They of course stick to the definition of it given in the first issue of the Situationists' journal.

⁷⁷ Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, 'Mode d'emploi de détournement' published in the Belgian Surrealist journal *Les Lèvres Nues* (no.8, May, 1956).

However, the Situationists did at various moments self-consciously deploy a strategy of seduction. For example, in 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography', Guy Debord suggests that certain forms of urban *détournement*, such as the alteration of advertising posters, require 'a sufficient degree of serious seduction' (*séduction sérieuse*) in order to secure that their 'delirious proposals' are seen as a serious critique.⁷⁸ And in Michèle Bernstein's hard-line text 'No Useless Leniency', a demand is made for the Situationist project to be 'more seductive' (*plus séduisants*).⁷⁹ The issue here is not a sexual seduction of a person. Rather, seduction is a strategy to divert the meaning of an image (or readymade element) with tactics that are both subtle and deceitful, both alluring and sexual. In terms of potlatch, seduction, as a force, is on the side of the ludic and the playful, as opposed to the violent and aggressive. This connection between a strategy of seduction and a potlatch economy is made more explicit in Jean Baudrillard's book called *Seduction*,⁸⁰ which elaborates a model of seduction as a ludic and risky strategy to subvert the symbolic order of things. At the level of appearance all symbolic systems are exposed as fragile and vulnerable to seduction, or, as Baudrillard suggests, all meanings are vulnerable to enchantment. As an intentional critique of the mode of production, understood as an economy of calculative and quantitative exchange, Baudrillard's description of his model of seduction echoes that of a potlatch economy, as for example where he writes: 'the ludic and sumptuary practices generated the essential forms and structures of exchange,' and where, yearning for more risky and adventurous social relations 'one plays with value more recklessly'.⁸¹ The concept of seduction here occupies the space not of desire, or unconscious depths,

⁷⁸ Guy Debord, 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography' republished in Knabb, *Situationist International*. This essay was first published in 1955 in *LesLèvres Nues* (no.6).

⁷⁹ M. Bernstein, 'Pas D'Indulgences Inutiles' in *internationale situationniste* (no.1, 1958) p.26.

⁸⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, translated by Brian Singer (St. Martin's Press: N.Y., 1990). First published as *De la Séduction* (Editions Galilée: Paris, 1979).

⁸¹ Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p.153.

but functions as a form of play, as a challenge, even as duel with appearances. A certain recklessness characterizes the subject engaged in such seductive gambits. The subject cannot predict the outcome of such risky ventures or *détournements*. Consequently, success is no more guaranteed than loss. This suggests that the potlatch subject is not afraid of loss (the sexual implications of embracing loss will be discussed later on.)

It is fair to say that the Situationists' model of the ideal potlatch is mirrored in Baudrillard's model of seduction, understood as a non-profit making gamble that risks vertiginous loss. Yet, if the Situationists' mode of *détournement* is read according to the terms and conditions of Baudrillard's model of seduction, then it would be recast in terms of sexually divided process, deployed specifically to collapse the sexual politics of a phallic or masculinist economy. Since Baudrillard's model presupposes a productivist economy defined in the masculine, which is to be subverted by an economy of seduction that is structured in the feminine.⁸² However, this model presupposes a binary sexual difference between the one doing the seducing and the one being seduced. Instead, I want to suggest that the images *détourné* by the Situationists expose more complex relations of power, relations that are perhaps less binary and more ambiguous when it comes to the sexual politics at stake.

The Sexual Politics of a Potlatch Economy

Conceptualized in the form of a game or duel, the mode of *détournement*, in the guise of a mode of seduction, appears as a somewhat combative model. Its violent and improper character registered in the description of one of its procedures as abusive (*abusif*).

Relations of power are of course at stake in any game or duel, in the sense that someone

⁸² The problems of the sexing of the act of seduction, and questions of violence versus complicity are addressed in Stephen Forrester's book *The Seduction of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan and Derrida* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1992); see also Jane Gallop, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction* (Macmillan Press: London, 1982).

does or is expected to win or seize power, even if momentarily. Yet the concept of a game-for-gain contradicts the model of the Situationists' ideal potlatch founded on the act of giving without expecting a return or gain. Yet, in falling short of the 'ideal' potlatch (*le don pur*) this combative model is in fact typical of a more generalized (or non-ideal) concept of a potlatch economy, as a game of gifts tied to 'the three obligations: to give, to receive, to reciprocate'.⁸³ The typical potlatch festival is not just about giving, but also about obligating the recipient of the gift to make a return potlatch. To refuse to return the potlatch in a more sumptuous fashion is to risk losing respect and social standing. As Mauss puts it 'the gift is received with a burden attached'.⁸⁴ The Situationists were aware of the obligation to reciprocate attached to a potlatch economy, as evident in their use of Huizinga's reference in *Potlatch* to the 'reciprocal exchange of sumptuous gifts'.⁸⁵ Although, as Mauss writes, 'the word potlatch signifies gift'⁸⁶, the non-ideal model of potlatch reveals the gift to be poisonous: the gift is not free but loaded, demanding a return gift or potlatch.⁸⁷ Rather than an excessive of selfless act, the typical potlatch concerns the securing of prestige and power. Or, as Habermas aptly states, the potlatch in fact places value in the 'negation of the utilitarian use of goods, but at the same time makes a utilitarian use of negation' and, furthermore, the 'sovereign disdain for use value is overtaken at this level by calculative acquisition of power'.⁸⁸

In 1959, two years after the formation of the Situationist International, the group published the last edition of *Potlatch*, formerly the journal of the Lettrist International.

In this issue the Situationists solicit their readers with their own version of a poisoned

⁸³ Mauss, *The Gift*, p.39.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.41.

⁸⁵ *Potlatch* (no. 30, 1959: Nouvelle série, no.1) reprinted in Guy Debord, *Guy Debord Présente Potlatch (1954-1957)*, p.283.

⁸⁶ Mauss, *The Gift*, p.43.

⁸⁷ Mauss draws attention to the two meanings of gift in many different languages: as gift and as poison. Ibid., p.63.

⁸⁸ Jürgen Habermas, 'Between Eroticism and General Economics: Georges Bataille' in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, translated by Frederick Lawrence (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1987), pp.211-237, (p.229).

gift, by demanding that those who receive their free journal are obliged in turn to make 'a return gift' (*un cadeau en retour*).⁸⁹ Although they do not make clear what would constitute an adequate or acceptable return gift, the demand for it is spelt out. But what of the sexual politics of these two versions of a potlatch economy: one that gives without a return and the other demanding reciprocity? To answer this question it is necessary to look beyond the Situationists' ambivalent use of potlatch and turn to more recent, explicitly sexually informed accounts of a gift economy. For example, in the feminist writer Hélène Cixous' analysis of the logic of a gift economy, in her essay 'Sorties: Out and out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays'⁹⁰, the pure gift is described as an example of a feminine economy. Cixous suggests that to give, be it an object or oneself, with no expectation or obligation of a return is the sign of an 'economy of femininity' in which 'the gift doesn't calculate its influence'.⁹¹ This feminine economy is constituted against a masculine economy predicated on the model of a *gift-that-takes*, that is, a gift is given in the expectation of a return, especially a profit to the one that gives. Moreover, from the perspective of a masculine economy, to give without reserve is seen as risking the loss of the attribute of power, be it the phallus or its substitute, money. Cixous develops this model of sexually differentiated economies from a Lacanian psychoanalytical account of sexual difference, where possession of the phallus (or its substitutes), which is understood as the signifier of *having* power, is the token of the masculine and whereby the *lack* of the phallus (or its substitutes) is the token of the feminine. In these terms, the masculine subject is afraid of loss, which translates, psychoanalytically, into a fear of castration. By contrast the feminine subject is already constituted by lack and

⁸⁹ Guy Debord *Présente Potlatch*, p.283.

⁹⁰ Hélène Cixous, 'Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays' in *The Logic of the Gift; Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, edited by Alan. D. Schrift (Routledge: London, 1997), pp. 148-173.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.164. Simone de Beauvoir also associates the generosity of giving with women in her book *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Gallimard: Paris, 1949): 'she ceases to think of herself, she is pure gift, pure offering' in *The Second Sex*, translated by H.M. Parshley (Picador: London, 1988), p.637. For Cixous however the structural position of the 'feminine' is not tied to actual woman, men too can occupy it, as I will illustrate.

consequently (for Cixous) has no need to fear loss as such. To give without return suggests a desire for, rather than fear of, loss or castration. It is this feminine lack that the masculine economy fears, as the marker of what it is not, but also of the danger of what it could become. This anxiety and fear of becoming what it is defined against, means that the masculine is further inscribed by the desire to reappropriate for himself that which seems able to escape him. For Cixous, this escapee is the feminine. It should be noted that the positions of the feminine and the masculine deployed here are understood as structural differences and not as anatomically determined. This is to say, for Cixous a male or female subject can adopt the structural position of the feminine or the masculine. For example, by refusing an economy of the self-same and profit (defined as masculine) and instead accepting an economy of difference and loss, the subject is structurally occupying the position of the feminine. Or to put it differently, a feminine Imaginary is constituted by 'a subjectivity that splits apart'⁹² and is not afraid of loss.

According to Cixous' account of a gift economy as feminine, to give in the expectation or obligation of a return (as a means to bring profit if not a higher status to the one giving) corresponds to what Cixous described as a masculine economy; one that fears loss, castration and non-productive expenditures. This sets up a sexual division between the two forms of potlatch: the ideal or pure gift as feminine, and reciprocal giving as masculine. But what are we then to make of the Situationists adoption of both these forms of potlatch simultaneously? This in turn complicates the sexual economy of their use of images of waste. *Détournement* as a strategy expends or wastes the image and empties it of meaning, but it also salvages the image, recycles and makes use of it. It too, as a process of giving and returning, seems to display elements of both a feminine and a masculine economy. Does this dual sexuality suggest a bisexual economy? Is the

⁹² Cixous, 'Sorties', p.162.

potlatch subject structured in the feminine, the masculine or both? Such sexual ambivalence is in fact at the heart of the *détournement* process itself. From its beginnings a sexual political economy was already at stake. For example, consider the montaged image [fig. 18] used to illustrate the first essay on '*Mode d'emploi du détournement*'.⁹³ The female nude collaged to Lenin's frontal lobe can perhaps be interpreted metaphorically as revealing the repressed erotic or libidinal economy of a productivist drive or desire. Yet, the image as a whole is framed by, indeed is stated as turning on a caption that not only marks out sexuality but sexual difference, in the form of female breasts: *L'Universe Retourne à la Pointe des Seins* (The Universe Returns to the Point of Breasts). Repressed by the work ethic, but also supporting and framing it, is this 'female' other. Although obviously somewhat tongue-in-cheek, it is unclear whether or not this image presents a masculinist fantasy of the female muse, or represents a transgression of the assumptions about what the political or sexual might mean. Indeed, this image complicates the issue of the sexual politics of the Situationists' traffic in waste and the subject that such images construct. Such sexual ambivalence is exacerbated when the images of waste take the form of *détourné* images of women. An exemplary problem arises here in the form of the following questions: does the Situationists' traffic in cheap and disposable images of women expose a complicity with the dominant and masculinist symbolic order of the Spectacle? Or, against any binary logic, sexual or otherwise, does the economy of potlatch (as one constituted by excess) not already presuppose a model of dispersal, of the already disintegrated binary?

⁹³ Debord and Wolman, *Les Lèvres Nues*, p.8

The Traffic in Women

Contrary to the analysis of potlatch by both Cixous and Baudrillard (as an economy of femininity) the anthropologist Gayle Rubin describes the potlatch economy as predicated on what she calls the traffic or circulation of women, by and for the profit of men only.⁹⁴

Anthropological studies have demonstrated that most models of potlatch are based on sexually unequal power relations. The men on top, the leaders of the society, have the power to exchange women and this privilege to traffic (as opposed to being exchanged or trafficked) both exposes and reinforces women's oppression as the objects and not the subjects of exchange. Like Cixous however, Rubin develops her analysis of the potlatch economy further through the use of psychoanalytical concepts of sexual difference but to very different ends. Rubin concludes that, as the 'object' of exchange, women become the manifestation of the power of the phallus (the signifier of hegemonic power relations, which is associated with the male subject), which circulates through the women without conferring power to her (the woman is therefore negatively constituted through this lack of power/phallus).⁹⁵ Rubin concludes that the potlatch system is a form of exchange or transaction that takes place between men and for men only. Ironically, this reading concurs with Luce Irigaray's theorization of capitalist economies which, for the Situationists at least, the potlatch economy was supposed to counter and subvert. In her essay 'Women on the Market,' Irigaray describes capitalist exchange as a man-to-man economy or what she names as a *hom(m)o-sexual* exchange system.⁹⁶ A *hom(m)o-sexual* economy is predicated on shoring up the selfsame and excluding difference and as such resembles the Situationists' model of the Spectacular commodity economy. The

⁹⁴ Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex' in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, edited by Rayna Reiter (Monthly Review Press: N.Y., 1975).

⁹⁵ Rubin's model of potlatch exchange is anatomically differentiated, with actual men trafficking in actual women. This is in opposition to Cixous structural model of a gift.

⁹⁶ Luce Irigaray, 'Women on the Market' in *The Logic of the Gift*, pp. 174-189, (p.175). Irigaray's neologism plays on the French '*homo*' ('same') and '*homme*' ('man'), which draws attention to the tendency in psychoanalysis and elsewhere to frame 'homosexuality' in terms of male desire for the same.

difference is that in Irigaray's account, the abstract general equivalent of exchange is neither Marx's money form nor the Situationists' image-object, but the phallus. In this self-same economy the phallus is the standard of and for all exchange. These two analyses of capitalism and potlatch as either masculinist or *hom(m)o-sexual* serve to put pressure on the Situationists over the question as to what sort of sexual politics is at stake in their critique of the Spectacular commodity economy at the level of the image of woman?

The Traffic in Women from Popular Culture

Peter Wollen has remarked that the Situationists' use of images of women tended to reproduce the sign 'woman' as Spectacle.⁹⁷ Looking at the first issue of *internationale situationniste* such a remark would seem to be true. Circulating and scattered throughout the text is a seemingly arbitrary selection of images, [Figs. 19- 24] which display an ad hoc mixture of bathing beauties, smiling, beguiling, crouching, posing, playing in water, reclining on horseback. As an example of minor *détournements*, that is, spatially shifted but not explicitly recoded by new captions, these images appear as absurd distractions to the text. To be seen as generically absurd adjuncts requires that the *détourné* popular image has been emptied of any particular meaning, reduced that is, to some generic popular image commodity. This reduction of the image seems to confirm Sarah Wilson's point that in the realm of 1960s popular culture 'woman herself functioned as the impotent sign'.⁹⁸ Impotent may seem an inappropriate adjective to describe the Situationists' cut-out collection of *détourné* sexy sirens. But impotent also suggests a

⁹⁷ Peter Wollen, footnote in essay 'Bitter Victory' in *On a Passage of a Few People through a rather brief moment in time*, exhibition catalogue, edited by Elisabeth Sussman et al (ICA: Boston/London, 1989), fn.68, p. 61. Wollen's comment refers to the level of the consumption of the image, not to its production, which I suggest makes a difference to how the image is interpreted.

⁹⁸ Sarah Wilson, 'Greer, Sex and the Sixties' in *The Sixties*, edited by David Alan Mellor and Laurent Gervereau, (Philip Wilson: London, 1997) p.78.

draining of power, in this instance registered through a draining of the specific to a generic content of the images. As generic pop images, as absurd asides, these images function as empty signifiers that have been drained of substantial content.

As empty signifiers these images are also deadly. As image-objects or spectacles, circulating in their reified world apart, the woman-as-image is reduced to a thing, no different from the commodity, be it fashion or food, that these *détourné* magazine images were designed to sell. In using these spectacles against themselves, as a form of immanent critique, the Situationists inevitably risked reproducing the image of woman not only as impotent sign but also as a glamorous corpse or commodity fetish. This suggests a shift from a trafficking in images of waste to a trading in death.⁹⁹ Yet, rather than being merely a symptom of their times, I suggest that the Situationists' traffic in images of women was also diagnostic. It exposed rather than apologised for the Spectacular economy's reduction of the sign woman to fetish or as the image of the desire to be the object of exchange. So, rather than servicing the Spectacle's masculine economy, perhaps a more ambivalent and parodic economy is at stake in these pop fragments.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, this was the Situationist Michèle Bernstein's own understanding of these ludicrously *détourné* images, as expressed to me during an interview conducted at her home in 1999.¹⁰¹ No longer circulating in their intended home of the fashion magazine or commercial press, these bikini-clad babes no longer served as the appropriate props to the goods they were intended to sell, e.g. holidays in the sun, beach wear, aspirational life styles etc. The vacuousness of their posing is exaggerated by the absence of a suitable or expected context in which to bump and grind against.

⁹⁹ On the relation of death and photography see Roland Barthes, 'Flat Death' in *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (Vintage: London, 1993), especially pp. 92-102.

¹⁰⁰ On the relation of Pop Art to gay identity see Kenneth E. Silver, 'Modes of disclosure: The Construction of Gay Identity and the rise of Pop Art' in *Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition, 1955-62* (Rizzoli: N.Y., 1993), pp. 178-203.

¹⁰¹ Details from an unpublished interview I had with Bernstein at her home in July 1999.

Juxtaposed to absurd effect they expose the gendered fiction that conflates the body or image of woman with desire, seduction, glamour and death or the commodity form in general.

If this use of the *détourné* images of women tends to reproduce the image as an empty signifier in order to use it to absurd effect, what is to be made of the actual or historical content of these images? What is the significance of these bikini babes as a challenge to the image economy of the society of the Spectacle? And what about the producer of these images, does their sex make a difference to the reproduction of the image of woman as Spectacle or as its critique? The ambivalent sexual politics surrounding these particular images of women is symptomatic of the problematic conjunction of images of women, sex and popular culture in the early 1960s.¹⁰² An ambivalence deepened by the fact that these images of women [figs. 19-24], were produced by a woman Situationist, namely Michèle Bernstein. This complicates Wollen's remark about the reproduction of woman as spectacle at the level of production, in the sense that Bernstein's sex might make a difference to how these images function and to why these particular types of images were selected and *détourné*. Since it is a woman selecting images of other woman, that is, images of the same sex, a different model of a homosexual or self-same economy also emerges, one that puts pressure on Irigaray's man-to-man economy. Furthermore, as a female Situationist producer of art, Bernstein also puts pressure on the assumptions that the Situationist International was made up of men only. For example, Susan Rubin Suleiman wrote that unlike the Surrealists 'the Situationists seem to have ignored women altogether –except

¹⁰² The conflation of woman and sex or woman and death is a commonplace not only typical of 1960s Pop Art, but is an historical trope in place within modernism from its very inception, see Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life' in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne (Phaidon: London, 1995) reprint of the 1964 edition, pp.1-41.

perhaps as sex objects in the most banal sense'.¹⁰³ Bernstein had been a member of the Lettrist International, producing articles for their journal *Potlatch*, as well as being a member of its editorial board, but more importantly, she also came up with the idea of 'potlatch' as an alternative economy to pursue in the first place.¹⁰⁴ As a member of the Situationist International she wrote articles for their journal *internationale situationniste* and was a member of its editorial board (usually with three or four others). She produced a series of artworks called 'Alternative Victories' for a Situationist exhibition in Denmark in 1963 and published two *détourné* novels in the early 1960s.¹⁰⁵ During my interview with her, Bernstein also claims to have been responsible for putting images into the Situationists' journal. Her reason for using images was prompted by a quote from Lewis Carroll, who apparently said 'what is the use of a story without pictures.'

Bernstein's bikini-babe images were *détourné* from the world of popular culture, often directed at women consumers, such as in magazines like *Elle* and *Marie-Claire*.¹⁰⁶ But how are images of woman used in such magazines? This question is important

¹⁰³ Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics and the Avant-Garde* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1990), p. 214, note 44. From a list of all one time Situationist members, seven appear to be women (there are some surnames only, and some with ambiguous initials or first names): Elena Verrone; Renée Nele; Gretel Stadler; Jacqueline de Jong; Katja Lindell; Edith Frey; Michèle Bernstein, see *Leaving the 20th Century*, edited by Christopher Gray, pp. 162-3.

¹⁰⁴ This information was confirmed by another female Situationist member the Dutch artist Jacqueline de Jong - from email correspondences conducted with her between 1999-2000. De Jong was a painter and the editor of *The Situationist Times*, six issues of which were published between 1962 and 1967. In an interview with Dieter Schrage, de Jong stressed that Debord had no problems with a woman being in charge of the journal. See the exhibition catalogue *Situationistische Internationale: 1957-1972* (Museum of Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien: Vienna, 1998), pp. 68-71, (p. 69) my translation of the German text. De Jong was also a good friend of Asger Jorn and when the SI split in 1962 she sided with the Second Situationist Bauhaus, led by Jorn's brother, Jorgen Nash. Both de Jong and Bernstein confirmed that they were the most active and participatory female members of the SI.

¹⁰⁵ Bernstein was a joint editor for issues 8-10 of *internationale situationniste* (from 1963-1966). She resigned in 1967, not only because of the break up of her marriage with Debord but also due to differences of opinions about the direction of the group more generally. The exhibition was called *Destruction: RSG-6* (Odense, Denmark, 1963) a more detailed discussion of her alternative monuments is undertaken in chapter 4. Her two novels were: *Tous les chevaux de roi* (Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1960) and *La Nuit* (Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1961), it was through Bernstein's publishing contacts that Debord was able to publish *La société du spectacle* (Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1967). Greil Marcus interviewed Bernstein 1983 for further discussion of her involvement with the LI and the SI, see *Lipstick Traces* (Picador: London, 1989).

¹⁰⁶ On the relation of commercialisation to woman's everyday lives in France in the 1950s and 1960s see Claire Duchon, *Women's Rights and Women's lives in France, 1944-1968* (Routledge: London, 1994).

because the original context of an image is just as important to the act of *détournement* as its final use in the Situationists' journal. For example, if the readymade image had a subversive appeal in its original setting then Bernstein may have been drawing on this when she selected it, in order to infuse its subversive use in the Situationists' journal. This describes a second process of *détournement* that aimed to redirect the subversive energy attached to the original use of the image and invest it in the Situationists' new or transformed use of the same image. Two examples of this process of redirection are evident in two particular types of images of women trafficked by Bernstein: namely, the bikini babes [figs. 19- 23] and the *détourné* image of Brigitte Bardot [fig. 24].

In response to the question of 'why use the images of bikini posing women?' [figs. 19-24] Bernstein replied that the images were '*charmant*' and moreover, that they were 'splendid demonstrations of the natural look', that is, bearing none of what she called 'secondary sexual attractions,' such as make-up, high-heels, lacquered hairdos, etc.¹⁰⁷ As such, the 'natural look' symbolized liberation from an artificially concealed body. Part of the significance of this 'natural look' must be understood in terms of the sexually provocative dimension of the bikini itself. Its naming after the USA's atomic weapons testing in the Pacific Ocean near Bikini Island, sought to register the shocking effect it was meant to have. However, there are problems with Bernstein's construction of the 'natural look' as the ideal *détournement*. On the one hand the interpretation of these bathing beauties as the sign of the 'natural' tends to reinforce a rather essentialist reading of the images, as signs that is, of Woman at home in her essential element of water, or with animals etc. On the other hand, the bikini-clad body is not natural, but a body disciplined by a regime of sexualization. The peep show garment is structured to draw attention to the very parts of the body it barely covers, that is, the bikini fragments

¹⁰⁷ Quotes from unpublished interview with I had with Bernstein in 1999.

and eroticises the sexual difference of the female body. In these terms the bikini-clad body is as artificial a construction as the cosmetically enhanced bodies that Bernstein's *détournements* were meant to subvert.

In [fig. 24] the woman reclining on horseback is Brigitte Bardot. Does 'her' specific selection make a difference to its place in the Situationists' journal? In terms of what the image of Bardot stood for in the cultural climate of 1958 the answer is I suggest yes. Claire Laubier remarks that for the younger cinema going generation the 1956 release of Roger Vadim's film *Et Dieu créa la femme* (And God Created Woman - starring Bardot as the adolescent heroine Juliette), represented a transformed portrayal of women: instead of the dominant cinematic portrayal of romantic, vulnerable woman, here was a female character that defied all traditional morality. Laubier remarks that Bardot came to represent a sexually emancipated 'femme-enfant' a sort of female James Dean, with a 'masculine aura of independence and rebelliousness', whose sexual encounters or rebellious actions were undertaken without guilt or remorse.¹⁰⁸ Bardot represented a different sort of 'natural' woman, not so much as watery essence, but as acting on her instincts and desires, where the man now became 'l'homme objet'.¹⁰⁹ A reversal of the sex roles was staged with Bardot as the figure of female revolt, as the no longer passive but instead active agent pursuing her own intense experiences. This is perhaps what Bernstein was trying to circulate: the return of the repressed, at the level of the image of the subversive female.

Pop-Porn and Male Producers of Images of Waste

The question of how Bernstein's sex, as a female producer, makes a difference to the sexual political economy of the *détourné* images of women is best answered by

¹⁰⁸ Claire Laubier, 'The 1950s', in her book *The Condition of Women in France 1945 to the Present* (Routledge: London, 1990), pp30-31.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.31.

comparing Bernstein's female *détournements* with those produced by a male Situationist. To illustrate such a consideration I have chosen the pop-porn *détournements* produced by the Danish Situationist J.V.Martin [figs. 25& 26] both of which appeared in issue 9 of *internationale situationniste* in 1964 (one year before the Watts issue). An immediate difference is the source of these images and the sex of their targeted audience: Bernstein's images were *détourné* from women's magazines, while for Martin the images were pillaged from male consumed soft porn magazines. These pop-porn images are examples of 'abusive' as opposed to 'minor' *détournements*, in that they are not just relocated but also altered or damaged, in this instance with the superimposed addition of speech bubbles; although, as with Bernstein's 'babes' the integrity of the body of the woman is kept in tact. As more or less whole images they do not suggest a sadistic mode of production, in the sense of the male producer exerting his creative power by cutting up the female passive object/image. Rather, a more empowering strategy seems to be operating, where the usually silent porn star of the magazine tableau is permitted a metaphoric voice, in the form of the speech bubble. But what is she allowed to speak, what is the content of this voice over? In [fig.25] the bubble voice reads: 'I can't think of anything better than sleeping with an Asturien Miner. Now there's a man'. Putting aside the joke element of these images, the pertinent question 'whose desire is being spoken here?' still remains. The reduction of woman's desire to the task of pleasing a man re-inscribes the fantasmatic presupposition of conventional heterosexist soft-porn images. But, is this a conservative strategy, that is, is it complicit with the dominant paradigm or offering a critique of it through this parodic *détournement*? The ambivalence of these images emerges out of Martin's oscillating use of them; on the one hand, like Bernstein's homeless babes, these pop-porn images appear as generic image commodities, which serve to exacerbate their absurd appeal. On

the other, as with Bernstein's Bardot images, Martin also draws on the historically specific content of what the bubble speech addresses. For example, in [fig.26], the appeal for the emancipation of the proletariat: 'the emancipation of the workers will be the task of the workers themselves', corresponds to the solicitations to the 'Asturien Miner' in [fig. 25]. The general call to workers liberation is tied to the specific protest of the Spanish miners strike in Asturia, which the Situationists supported on the strength of its having been 'virtually continuous since 1962'.¹¹⁰ As with Bernstein's use of the Bardot images, Martin draws on the subversive potential of a general and a specific workers revolt to infuse the radicality of his *détourné* images.

However, the apparent proletarianization of the pop-porn image does not necessarily challenge the erotics of the image. It is still the female body that acts as the ground for such subversions or transgressions, that is, it is the sexual allure of the female body that gets conflated with the sign for emancipation as such. Sexual difference still drives this economy of the image and it is the figure of woman that provides the impetus to exchange, in the form of the metonymic substitution of social for sexual revolution. The female image is also mute, her voice nothing more than the superimposition of a man's words. Perhaps what is the issue here is not the female body at all, but rather the male artist's fantasies, expressed in his choice to enact his parodic diversion across the silent image of a female body. It is possible to speculate that there is an element of cross-gender identification, in that J.V.Martin, a male subject, has chosen to identify with the image of a woman, as the site of resistance. That is, rather than reinforcing normative heterosexual image identifications, the Situationists' traffic in 'female' popular detritus reveals forms of sexual and political identifications that are more polymorphous: from Bernstein's same-sex *détournements* to Martin's cross-gender ones. The ambiguity

¹¹⁰ In 'Address to Revolutionaries of Algeria and of All Countries' reprinted in Knabb, *Situationist Anthology*, pp.148-152 (p.152). Published in *internationale situationniste* (no.10, 1966) as 'Adresse Aux révolutionnaires D'Algerie et de Tous les Pays,' pp.43-49.

surrounding the meaning of these images of woman does reveal that the sexual political economy of the practice of *détournement* is not strictly gendered, at least not in terms of the straight opposition between male and female, that seems to be implied at first glance; though the mobility of ascriptions of gender is limited in Martin's case by the ventriloquism on show, it is after all the man that speaks on the mute woman's behalf.

A Potlatch Construction

The Situationists' traffic in images of waste is a strategy that demonstrates how the fetishized form of the Spectacular image can be de-fetishized, diverted, recoded and profaned. This challenge at the level of representations also reveals the historical formation of the image, in so far as it is not fixed but transformable. Contrary to Baudrillard, who Debord accuses of being an apologist for the Spectacle, in so far as he merely describes its 'hyper-real' state without consideration of its historical transformation, the Situationists insist on its historical and contingent form: 'the spectacle corresponds to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life.'¹¹ It is the universal dictatorship of the commodity that enforces its alienated relationships in all spheres of life. Therefore, the Situationists used images from contemporary culture, that presupposed a history of modernization. But, precisely as the economic form of a particular historical moment, (the Spectacle), its forms of representation are not fixed or permanent, but on the contrary open to potential disruption and transformation from within the conditions of the Spectacle itself. Without stepping outside of the Spectacle into some transcendent

¹¹ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 42, p.29. On critiques of various so-called apologists for the Spectacle see Guy Debord, *Comments of the Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Malcolm Imrie (Pirate Press: Sheffield, 1989). Debord's critiques of structuralism were precisely levelled at its trans-historical presuppositions: 'the perspective adopted by the anti-historical thought of structuralism is that of the eternal presence of a system that was never created and that will never disappear', *The Society of the Spectacle*, thesis 201, p. 141. See also theses 202-204, pp. 142-3.

realm, the Situationists insinuate themselves into its cultural fabric and thereby perform an immanent critique by attacking the imagistic form of the Spectacle from within its own boundaries and by so doing exposes its limitations and blind spots. In particular, by mimicking the Spectacle's most virulent forms: the movie-star, the bikini babe, the pop-porn, icons of consumerism, the supermarket etc. Yet, the Situationists' choice of 'potlatch' as an alternative economy has in turn been exposed by more recent feminist interventions as having limitations especially regarding its sexual politics. On the one hand the ideal potlatch, as a gift with no return, is positively embraced by Cixous as an economy of femininity; on the other Rubin rejects potlatch as a masculinist economy, where the privileged male traffics in female chattels or gifts. This oscillation between a feminine or masculine economy, of give or take, is reflected in the Situationists' use of the image in their analysis of the Watts riots, which represents wasteful expenditures, but in the form of an image that is returned or recycled. But it is precisely the sexual ambiguity of the potlatch that is productive. For example, it reveals that at the level of practice, such as the *détournement* of images of woman, the Situationist subject is not determined by its anatomy and that the sexual delimitations of the dominant economy are never fixed, but in turn susceptible to change through the deployment of a counter-hegemonic economy of the image, which in turn challenges the sexual politics at stake in different strategies of representation.

The emergence of the potlatch subject out of the Situationists' written and imaged analysis of the Watts riots exposes this subject's contingent formation. At times the subject is in harmony with the text or image and at other moments antagonistic. It is this moment of contradiction that the practice of *détournement* both exposes and exaggerates. The subject, like the images of waste, is a mobile construction both excessive and historically contingent. The historical reading of the subject, like the

images, diminishes over time, in the sense that the Situationists' *détournements* become outmoded. But it is perhaps possible to reconstruct the potlatch subject as analogous to certain aspects of the diverted photographic images used in the Watts essay. For example, the subject, like the image, can be emptied of conventional meanings and filled up with alternative significations. It is of its time, captured like the events frozen in the chemical image, but also in excess of its representations, in the sense that its meaning and image of itself are not fixed. Like the fractured montaged image, the potlatch subject is also a construction internally and socially fissured by contradictions.

What is important about the Situationists' immanent critique of the Spectacle at the level of representation is not any anathematizing of representation in general, but rather as T.J. Clark suggests, for its testing of the 'truth and falsity in representational regimes', whereby representations are revealed as:

So many fields or terrains of activity, subject to leakage and interference between modes and technologies, and constantly crossed and dispersed by other kinds of activity altogether: subject, as a result, to retrieval and cancellation –to continual reversals of direction between object and image, and image and receiver.¹¹²

The above description can stand as an endorsement of the Situationists' strategy of the *détournement* of images. It is a process that reveals that images are not merely a form of capital to be exchanged, but that they can be transformed. They are expendable, susceptible to a potlatch, but also 'utterly material and contingent',¹¹³ meaning that a change in the social construction of images is refracted in the internal construction of the subject. Therefore 'how' the Situationists analysis of the Watts riot is represented makes a difference to the type of subject that it constructs. For example, Ken Knabb, in his

¹¹² T.J. Clark, 'Foreword' to Anselm Jappe's *Guy Debord*, pp. vii-x, (p. ix).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. x.

Situationist Anthology, reproduces the Situationists' essay 'The Decline and the Fall of the Spectacular Commodity Economy' but excises all its images.¹¹⁴ This presents a very different picture of the potlatch subject, which pays no attention to its complex and unstable form, which is as mobile and precarious as the conjunctions of the images to the text in which they circulate. Nevertheless, in this particular instance, the circulation and reception of the Situationists' counter-hegemonic strategies were limited to a public that had access to the *internationale situationniste* journal. The following chapter will focus on the expansion of the role of image and text in the construction of the subject through an analysis of photographs of street graffiti, which erupted in Paris during the Events of May '68. In particular I will look at the difference this wider public terrain has on the construction of Raoul Vaneigem's model of a radical subjectivity.

¹¹⁴ Knabb, *Situationist International*, pp. 153-160.

Chapter 3: Graffiti and the Trace of Subversion

The Situationists' particular take on the Events of May 1968 in Paris were published in July of that year, in a book entitled *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations*.¹ Although the Situationist René Viénet is listed as the author, this book was actually a collaborative compilation of various eyewitness accounts from various members of the Situationist International, including Guy Debord, Mustapha Khayati and Raoul Vaneigem, as well as from former members of the Enragés group, such as René Riesel.² Published alongside the written testimonies are photos of the violent clashes of various groups of protestors with the armed riot police, the CRS [fig. 27], as well as examples of *détourné* comics [fig.28], subversive tracts and posters, various telegrams sent by the Occupation Committee of the Sorbonne, and even political song-sheets [fig. 29].³ The most striking images however, are the series of photos capturing the graffitied slogans that erupted over the walls of Paris during that heated time [fig. 30].⁴ The Situationists had regularly championed cheap and direct forms of

¹ René Viénet, *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Editions Gallimards: Paris, 1968), republished in its original format by Gallimard in 1998. Translated edition is *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (Autonomedia/Rebel Press: N.Y./London, 1992).

² This list of compilers is given on the back of the 1998 Gallimard re-edition, *ibid*. From January to March 1968, the anti-student revolutionary Enragés group based at the University of Nanterre undertook the sabotage of various classes at the University, later to be joined with the actions of the March 22nd Movement, an amalgamation of anarchists, Maoists and Stalinists –the latter affiliation caused the Enragés members to dissociate with it. The spokesman for the March 22nd Movement was Daniel Cohn-Bendit, although as a member of the anarchist faction associated with the magazine *Noir et Rouge*, he was more radical than a lot of its members. For details see 'Origin of the Agitation in France' in Viénet, *Enragés and Situationists*, pp.19-38. It was the arrests of Cohn-Bendit and the Enragés member René Riesel, along with six other student agitators from Nanterre, followed by the heavy handed police break up of a rally on their behalf held at the Sorbonne on Friday May 3rd, that triggered the unplanned riots in the Latin Quarter and the beginning of a week of street fighting that was to be joined by striking workers. For the Situationists' account see 'Le Commencement d'une Epoque' in *internationale situationniste* (no 12, 1969), pp. 3-34.

³ A more detailed cultural analysis of the Situationists' *détournement* of revolutionary and popular songs still remains to be done. Adrian Rifkin examines the role of popular songs and Opera in relation to the experiences of modernity at the beginning of the 20th Century in *Street Noises: Parisian Pleasure, 1900-40* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1993).

⁴ Photo credits are given on the inside back cover of the 1998 Gallimard re-edition and include: Jo Schnapp, Eliane Barrault, Snark International, France-Soir-Scoop, Magnum. Jo Schnapp provided the photos for Walter Lewino's book (published in June one month before the Situationists' testimony),

protest, and graffiti in particular was a favoured form of direct critical expression. For example, in 1953 Guy Debord inscribed on the wall of the La rue de Seine the graffito 'never work' (*ne travaillez jamais*) [fig. 31];⁵ he also produced a series of paintings called 'Directives' [fig. 32], whose propositions graffitied across what Debord called empty paintings, were 'to be considered as slogans which it is possible to see written on walls'.⁶

In contrast to the wall space of a gallery, the text scribbled on the walls of public buildings or across the everyday spaces of the street was accessible to a different sort of producer and available to a broader range of non-specialist observers. More generally however, the subversive potential of public graffiti lies in its associations with the low, the juvenile and with the criminal. Public graffiti was, and still is, a criminal offence, therefore its presence is evidence of a criminal act of graphic vandalism: usually associated with deviant individuals or street gangs (or all those social outcasts) whose presence is registered through their illegal tags. Or rather, the graffiti signatures represent an attempt to re-territorialize public space on behalf of the outlawed. For the Situationists however, the value of graphic vandalism 'did not lie in the destruction itself, but in the subordination which can eventually transform itself into a positive act'.⁷ That is, graffiti was not understood negatively, as an empty, nihilistic gesture, but rather

L'Imagination au Pouvoir (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968), which recorded the graffiti that erupted over the walls of Paris between the 3rd and the 13th May '68. Many of Schnapps photos appear in the Situationist/Viénet's book, although they are not credited to him.

⁵ This call to 'never work' should be understood in relation to the unique conditions of modern labour in the 1960s, where the call to shorter working hours and a decent living wage to ensure free time, had been replaced by higher wages and increased productivity. On the role of labour and abundance and the transfer of revolution from the place of work to the place of leisure in the Situationist International see Andrew Ross, 'The Great Rock 'n' Roll Ghost', *October* (no.50, Fall, 1989), pp.108-117. The slogan 'never work' was also one of the most popular expressions to appear in 1968 according to Walter Lewino's account in his *L'Imagination au Pouvoir*, not paginated.

⁶ Guy Debord, 'The Situationists and New Action Forms in Politics and Art', in the exhibition catalogue, *Destruction AF RSG-6* (Galerie EXI: Odense, Denmark, 1963), pp.9-12 (p.12). See also 'du rôle de l'écriture' in *Potlatch* (no.23, October, 1955) reprinted in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch* (Gallimard: Paris, 1996), pp. 202-3: this gives examples of appropriate site-specific graffiti.

⁷ 'The Bad Days Will End' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 7, April, 1962) republished in Ken Knabb *Situationist International; Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1982), pp.82-87, (p.82).

as a positive counter-hegemonic strategy. Graffiti provided an immanent form of social critique, a sort of liquid *détournement*, which allowed its producer to appropriate and insinuate themselves into the architectural fabric of the Spectacle's social edifice, by means of liquid words that seeped into and dirtied its surfaces. Beyond painted words however, the word graffiti also means to scratch and is applicable to all those carved-out gestures that literally cut into and disfigure the wall or surface that is attacked. In other words, graffiti is also a violent and violating gesture.

Asger Jorn was particularly interested in the long history of carved graffiti, especially its use as a technique of profanation carried out by Viking invaders on Normandy churches, examples of which were captured in his photographic survey book *Signes Gravés sur les Eglises de l'Eure et du Calvados*.⁸ Jorn's interest in the destructive and somewhat sadistic dimension of incised graffiti marks was carried over into his series of paintings called 'Modifications' [fig. 33]. Jorn created this series of works by over-painting ready-made canvases picked up at junk stores with impasto, child-like scrawls and doodles. But these child-like gestures were not valued as some expressive residue of the primitive, the sign that is, of a work somehow more genuine than 'art' in its conventional forms. As noted in chapter one, for Jorn no creative image could represent a state of pure expression or psychic phenomena, because for Jorn 'explication is itself a physical act which materializes thought',⁹ therefore all expression had a somatic and material dimension. Jorn's interest in the brute materiality of the gesture began in his Cobra art days (1948-51) and was perhaps refuelled by his friendship with Jean Dubuffet, whom he had met in 1957, around the time of the formation of the

⁸ Asger Jorn, *Signes Gravés sur les Eglises de L'Eure et du Calvados*, (Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie: Copenhagen/Paris, 1964).

⁹ Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture* (AK Press: Stirling, 1991), p. 10.

Situationist International.¹⁰ Jorn's own interpretation of the graffiti-like modifications however, focused not on its materiality, but on its violence. His painted gestures represented the choice between 'being sacrificed or being the one that sacrifices' and even described his process of modification in terms of 'letting the blood of his victims flow'.¹¹ The resulting canvas, like graffitied walls in any city, was a palimpsest of erasure and re-inscription, where the original painting was partially scraped away in order to make way for the new disfigurements. The scarification of the canvas surface by Jorn's gestural cuts was similar to the art of tattooing that he so admired for its being both mutilating and creative. Keeping in step with Jorn's somewhat sadistic rhetoric, Jean Dubuffet also described how 'his paintings took shape out of violent disorder and incoherence'.¹² But this act of violation was also creative, as confirmed by Dubuffet when he commented on how Jorn 'excelled at making meaning during the course of creation –being careful not to intervene too much, so as not to lose anything of the spontaneous vital flow'.¹³ It was just such a spontaneity and vitality of gesture that the Situationists' interpreted as flowing from the spray can or penknife of the graffiti vandal or artist.

The Situationists also embraced graffiti because it was a cheap and widely accessible means of expression. Anybody could cause some damage with a piece of chalk or a spray can. Ideally then, graffiti represented a means of protest for anyone who

¹⁰ For details of Jorn's acquaintance with Jean Dubuffet, see Guy Atkins *Asger Jorn: The Crucial Years, 1954-1964*, with the help of Troels Andersen (Wittenborn Art Books, Inc.; N.Y., 1977) and his *Asger Jorn; Supplement to the Oeuvre catalogue of his paintings from 1930-1973* (Lund Humphries: London, 1986). Dubuffet and Jorn did some collaborative work including the production of four double-sided records of musical 'duets' in 1964 with titles like *Broken Nose* and *Mosquito Blood*, consisting of cacophonous bursts of anti-music. Dubuffet had also experimented with a form of graffiti painting in 1945 see *Dubuffet's Walls: Lithographs for Les Murs* (Hayward Gallery: London, 1999). Both artists shared an interest in child art, art-brut and primitive forms of expression in general. Jorn bought works by Dubuffet for his art collection now housed in the Silkeborg Kunstmuseum, Denmark.

¹¹ Asger Jorn, *Nouvelle Défigurations de Asger Jorn* (Galerie Rive Gauche: Paris, 1962) on fold out sheet 'Peinture Détournée' by Asger Jorn, pp.1-4, (p.4).

¹² Guy Atkins, *Asger Jorn; Supplement to the Oeuvre catalogue of his paintings from 1930-1973*, p. 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.15.

wanted to illegally takeover the public spaces of the Spectacle. The importance the Situationists gave to the participation of the anonymous wall writer corresponds to what Benjamin Buchloh called the 'décollagiste's recordings of gestures of the anonymous lacerators of billboards'.¹⁴ In fact, Buchloh claims that Louis Aragon's demand for an aesthetics of collective participation was realized when Raymond Hains and Jacques de la Villeglé's announced in 1949 that a readymade frieze of lacerated posters (found in the street) was a work of art. It was titled *Ach Alma Manétro* [fig. 34], after the three word fragments that were still visible amidst the layers of torn paper. Buchloh suggests that such a pact with the 'anonymous vandalists of urban product propaganda'¹⁵ anticipated the procedures that the Lettrists and the Situationists would call the process of *détournement*. In fact, the *décollage* artist François Dufrêne [fig. 35] was a poet and member of the Lettrist group, along with Isidore Isou, Maurice Lemaitre, Guy Debord and Gil Wolman until 1952. And in a recent interview Raymond Hains also spoke of his friendship with Guy Debord.¹⁶

The *détournement* of posters had been a critical strategy recommended by the Lettrist International in the 1956 essay '*Mode d'emploi du détournement*'.¹⁷ This same strategy was later reaffirmed and directly promoted as a Situationist guerrilla tactic (alongside Situationist comics and films) in René Viénet's programmatic text 'The Situationists and New Forms of Action Against Politics and Art' published in *internationale situationniste* (no.11, October, 1967). The main difference between the

¹⁴ Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 'From Detail to fragment: Décollage Affichiste' in *October* (no.56, Spring 1991), pp.99-110, (p.101).

¹⁵ Ibid., p.106.

¹⁶ Alison M. Gingeras and Bernard Blistene, 'Palissades 1976' in *Premises: Invested Spaces in Visual Arts, Architecture & Design from France: 1958-1998* (Guuggenheim Museum: NY., 1998), p.146; see also Roberto Ohrt, 'Raymond Hains, Un Visiteur de Passage' in *Raymond Hains* (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wein: Germany, 1995), pp.26-31. François Dufrêne was also a friend of Yves Klein and this led to the publication of Klein's essay 'Des bases (fausses), principes, etc. –et condamnation de l'évolution' in the first issue (June 1952) of the *lettriste* journal, *Le Soulèvement de la Jeunesse* (Youth Uprising), see Sidra Stich *Yves Klein* (Hayward Gallery/Cantz: London, 1995), p. 31.

¹⁷ Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, in *Les Lèvres Nues* (no. 8, mai, 1956), pp. 2-9. In a *détournement* of authorship, on the front cover of the journal only, this essay was attributed to Aragon and Breton.

Situationists' graffiti and *détourné* posters and the torn affiches of the *décollage* artists was the preferred location for display. The *décollagistes* chose to display the readymade posters in a gallery context and under the selecting artist's name. The individual signature tends to erase further the value of the work's collective production by the anonymous lacerators. The potentially infinite serial process, of ripping away at the superimposed layers of advertising posters, was also brought to a dead end with the 'do not touch' policy of gallery display. It was precisely the limiting factors of the gallery space (already diagnosed as a problem after Gallizio's 1959 *Cavern of Anti-Matter* exhibition) that determined the expansion of Situationist art into the more open and unpredictable location of the street. Graffiti, performed in the street, offered the opportunity to create a genuinely open work or work in continuous process. For example, alterations could be made and remade by anyone, the work could be white washed out, altered, written over, weathered away, etc. In this way, the reclaiming of the street through graffitied inscriptions represented a potentially never-ending subversive tactic within the greater Situationist project of unitary urbanism.¹⁸

Liquidating Language

Six months before the May Events of '68, the Belgian Situationist Raoul Vaneigem published a book called *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations*.¹⁹ This book presents a slightly different explication of the critical potential of graffiti. For Vaneigem, all forms of subversive writing represented a particular form of writing that he called 'poetry'. Poetry was understood as a form of writing linked to a creative subjectivity. But this creative subject was not reductively subjectivist, in the sense of

¹⁸ See chapter 1 on the Situationists' desire to change the environment and the subject through the practices of unitary urbanism and psychogeography.

¹⁹ Raoul Vaneigem, *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1967). According to Vaneigem this was written between 1963-65. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith as *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (Rebel Press/Left bank Books: London, 1994).

having no dialectical relation with its objective surroundings, as the critic Jean Barrot has claimed.²⁰ On the contrary, for Vaneigem the creative subject's acts of subversion were directed outwards, to a transformation of the social world. As a friend of Henri Lefebvre (the latter in fact introduced Vaneigem to Debord in the early 1960s), Vaneigem was also interested in an emancipatory project constituted at the level of a critique of everyday life.²¹ And in the case of poetry, this was understood as a form of expression capable of transforming everyday speech acts through a process he called the 'liquidation of language'.²² As well as meaning to get rid of or wipe out, to liquidate also means to liquefy, melt or dissipate. There is a sense in which a Situationist poetry could be defined by its ability to both liquefy and expend language. In the form of graffiti, poetry literally liquidates words in the fluidity of their painted form. The words seep into the walls, spread out, and analogously to the graffiti 'that bleeds' (*ça saigne*) [fig. 36] the inky words bleed out beyond the boundaries of the letter. The location of such poetry was also significant. Taken off the pages of a book and put out into the street, onto the living architectural surface of the city, the site itself also represented graffiti's subversive potential. A defiant potential exacerbated by the crudity of the words or the violence of their injunctions. Moreover, poetry was capable of melting the rigid borders of everyday language by making it strange through the juxtapositions of words that challenged the ordinary perception of the world. For example, consider the surreal affects of the following graffiti: 'society is a carnivorous flower (*la société est une fleur carnivore*) [fig. 37]. For the Situationists more generally, the form and type of words deployed

²⁰ For an account of the undialectical model of the Situationist subject see Jean Barrot, 'Critique of the Situationist International' in *What is Situationism? A Reader*, edited by Stewart Home (AK Press: Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 24-62.

²¹ 'Lefebvre lui présente Raoul Vaneigem qui va devenir l'un des piliers de l'I.S.' in Shigenobu Gonzalvez, *Guy Debord ou la beauté du négatif* (Editions Mille et une Nuits: Paris, 1998), p. 31. For more details of the relation of Lefebvre with the Situationists see Rémi Hess, *Henri Lefebvre et l'aventure du siècle* (A.-M. Métailié: Paris, 1988). See also Karl Kate, 'The Critique of Everyday Life, Marxism and the New Left' in *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* (vol. 16, 1971-72).

²² Vaneigem, *Revolution of Everyday Life*, p.104.

signified the frontier between the will to live and its repression: 'the way they are employed determines their meaning; history controls the ways in which they are employed. The historical crisis of language indicates the possibility of transcending it towards the poetry of action, towards a great game with signs'.²³

During the crisis of May '68, the poetry on the walls was part of a *détournement* of language itself, where the agitators reinvested words with the power of a lived reality in revolt. Repressed by the inertia of newspeak and information, poetry returns with a vengeance: 'brutally put down, it is reborn in violence. It plays muse to rioters, informs revolt and animates all great revolutionary carnivals'.²⁴ Poetry was not, however, just a destructive force it was also creative. The Situationists understood poetry in terms of what the Greeks called *poiein*, meaning 'making', but not in the sense of the making of an object, but making as a creative process, a form of action. From a Situationist perspective, poetry indicated a very particular form of action: 'poetry is also radical theory completely embodied in action'.²⁵ As embodied action, poetry was also a form of sensual speech, what Vaneigem referred to as the language of the senses and of lived experience. Therefore, the tacky residue of the painted graffito 'that bleeds' [fig. 36] could be re-described as the trace of a fleshy and palpable body, a tactile being leaving its imprint on the surface texture of the wall. Like the seeping paint, the embodied action is also excessive, in the sense of not bounded or contained. Such a model of the graffiti gesture as an excess of action is dramatized in Roland Barthes definition of Cy Twombly's graffiti as 'a surplus of action'.²⁶ For Barthes, an action is presented as transitive, as seeking to provoke an object or a result. By contrast, the gesture is defined

²³ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p. 94.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 202.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 200.

²⁶ Roland Barthes, 'Cy Twombly: Works on Paper' in *The Responsibility of Forms*, translated by Richard Howard, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1991), pp.157-176, (p. 160). This essay was written in 1979, and can be read as developing out of the interpretative spaces opened up by the events of 1968 and the flow of graffitied forms of protest.

as 'the indeterminate and inexhaustible ^{totality} of reasons, pulsions, indolences, which surround the action with an atmosphere'.²⁷ It is the ambiance of the gesture that is significant, since it is not concerned with relaying a singular message or information.²⁸ What the gestural action transmits or produces is a surplus, in its refusal to seek to produce any one thing. At times aberrant and ridiculous, the gesture playfully blurs fixed meaning. Graffiti may start out from writing but it ends in an explosion. That is, graffiti is a form of writing that no longer abides anywhere because as Barthes says it is 'absolutely in *excess*'.²⁹

It is at such extreme limits that 'art', or what Barthes calls the 'text' and what the Situationists call 'poetry', begins. All these forms of excessive labour, making or gesture are defined by their making legible 'the trace of pulsion and its expenditure'.³⁰ But, the trace, or what Vaneigem refers to as poetry's *savoir-vivre* is still full of constructive possibilities: 'the triumph of *savoir-vivre* and of the construction of authentically lived situations exists everywhere as a potentiality,'³¹ but a potentiality that is repressed and distorted by the mortifying socio-economic conditions of the Spectacle. However, once this poetic potentiality was tapped into and unleashed by the subversive actions of the creative subject, there would no longer be any limits to creativity and thus ideally no end to subversion.³² Moreover, for Vaneigem, it is precisely at the point where resistance begins that 'the look-out post of subjectivity'³³ is established. That is to say, what he calls 'radical subjectivity' (*la subjectivité radicale*) appears in a moment of crisis, as that which creatively resists the rigid hegemonic social structures. Graffiti is then an

²⁷ Ibid., p. 160.

²⁸ The Situationists' critique of the language of the Spectacle as a form of information or 'newspeak' is analysed in chapter 4.

²⁹ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p. 161.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 170.

³¹ Ibid., p. 116.

³² 'There are no limits to creativity. There is no end to subversion' in Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p. 266.

³³ Ibid., p. 94.

expression of this so-called radical subject. But beyond its creative capabilities what else can graffiti reveal about its structure? I want to suggest that it is possible to construct a more substantive model of the radical subject through an analysis of the images of graffiti deployed by the Situationists in their account of the May Events of '68 (given that Vaneigem's written treatise on the radical subject is not illustrated). In order to do this however, it is first of all necessary to go beyond its expressive capacity and attempt to give the radical subject a structure. That is, we need to look at how the radical subject is constructed by determining what it is structured against. I suggest that it is possible to do this by returning to the two opposing figures that consistently appear throughout the Situationists' account of 1968: namely the figures of the cop and the rebel.

The Cop and the Rebel

In the first image of graffiti appearing in the Situationists' book on the Events of May '68 [fig. 38], the phrases scrawled across a gateway, namely 'live without dead time' and 'play without restraints' were in fact taken from the last line of the Situationists' 1966 tract 'On the Poverty of Student Life'.³⁴ The written demands to 'live without dead time' and 'to enjoy without restraints' are picked up by the accompanying photos of the unrestrained actions of the heterogeneous mix of student and worker protestors as they fight against the repressive forces of the riot police or *les flics* [fig. 39]. In general these two figures, the cop and the rebel, appear as the respective stand-ins for the forces on the side of the law of the Spectacle and its resistant others. Drawing on these two oppositional figures and the images of graffiti circulated in this book more generally, it is possible to give a more substantive body to the theoretical construct of 'radical

³⁴ This was written by Mustapha Khayati as part of the student protest at Strasbourg University in November 1966. Republished in Knabb, *Situationist Anthology*, pp.319-337. The last line reads: 'Play is the ultimate principle of this festival, and the only rules it can recognize are to live without dead time and enjoy without restraints', (p.337).

subjectivity' (*la subjectivité radicale*), proposed six months before May '68, by the Situationist Raoul Vaneigem (in his 1967 book *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations*).³⁵ In the preface to the first French paperback edition (1992)

Vaneigem describes its general aim as follows: 'to rescue subjectivity from the general opprobrium which then covered it and to propose, as the basis of a projected society, *an enjoyment of self that proclaimed itself one with enjoyment of the world*'.³⁶ Using the Situationists' selected images of rebellion and graffiti, my aim is to reconstruct a more detailed picture of the Situationists' so-called radical subject, considered as the constitutive other to the Spectacular subject, as represented by the figure of the armoured cop. That is, on the side of the dead time of the Spectacle is the shielded cop and on the side of resistance and unrestrained play is the figure of the radical subject, as represented by the rebel brigades of students and workers. In reconstructing the radical subject I want to scrutinize just how radical and different it is from its supposed nemesis, namely the Spectacular subject. The comparison of the opposing subjectivities pertaining to the cop and the rebel allows for an analysis of the complex relation between an armoured or shielded subject and its disarmoured or unbound other. This analysis also pursues the types of sexuality conferred on these two seemingly opposed models of subjectivity.

The Armoured Cop

The selection of a photo of a line of armed police [fig. 40] presents them as a uniform frieze, a defensive wall or barricade of identically dressed modular units. Their protective uniform, including hardhats and batons, appears to bind and conceal their bodies behind a protective carapace. Looking alike, all differences are homogenized by

³⁵ I will refer to the English translation of Raoul Vaneigem's book by Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (Rebel press/left bank Books: London, 1994), unless stated otherwise. Vaneigem's book can be considered as an accompaniment to Debord's book *The Society of the Spectacle*, also published in 1967.

³⁶ Vaneigem, *Revolution of Everyday Life*, p.9.

being concealed behind their prosthetic armour. The armouring of the body gives it a certain look of muscularity that suggests a particular type of masculine or rather macho subjectivity. Yet, the visible insistence on the need for such prosthetic shielding (like the armoured van they flank) also points to a certain anxiety. The level of anxiety and fear is revealed perhaps by the level of violence used to suppress anything that is considered as a threat to this disciplined order. A violence captured for example in the photos of the police firing tear gas rounds at the out of control activists [fig. 41], or in the image of the armoured wall of police corralling their quarry [fig. 42]. This combination of fear and armouring suggests a particular type of subjectivity, which was in fact picked up in the graffiti targeted at the cops [figs. 43 & 44]. The graffitied slogans equate the French CRS riot police with fascist SS soldiers. This analogy points to a relationship between an armoured subject and fascism, or rather a fascist subjectivity. But in what sense is the armoured subject fascistic and what does this reveal about its sexuality?

In his essay 'The Psychological Structure of Fascism' Georges Bataille notes that fascism 'etymologically signifies uniting, concentration'.³⁷ The geometric and regimented patterns of military and police displays can be considered as symptomatic of this desire to unify and homogenize the body mass and to transform 'formlessness into aggressive rigidity'.³⁸ As for example in the image of the CRS police depicted as identical units concentrated into a rigid line of defence [fig. 40]. Klaus Theweleit, in his book *Male Fantasies*, expands Bataille's model of the fascist subject as aggressively rigid, by gendering it in the masculine. In their foreword to Theweleit's book, Jessica Benjamin and Anson Rabinbach claim that it is this privileged focus on the gendered

³⁷ Georges Bataille, 'The Psychological Structure of Fascism' in *Visions of Excess, selected writings, 1927-1939*, Translated by Allan Stockl, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1985), pp. 137-169, (p.149).

³⁸ Ibid., p.151. It should be noted that for Bataille fascism is an exalted form of the heterogeneous; others heterogeneous forms include the impoverished and the subversive. The exalted or fascist form comes to power in moments of socio-economic crisis when a sovereign and imperative form of power is desired.

aspect of fascist discourse that distinguishes Theweleit's model of the fascistic subject from that of both Bataille and Walter Benjamin. Though the latter 'both allude to the body as the site of the political *ethos* of fascism and warfare –for example, when Benjamin refers to "the dreamt-of metalization of the human body" (Marinetti)',³⁹ it is Theweleit who insists on the primacy of violence that originates in the fascist subject's fear and hatred of the feminine.

For Theweleit, the soldiering male body represents the ideal model of the fascist subject.⁴⁰ The man of steel is a man that has undergone both a psychological and a physical process of mechanization. His 'instinctual life is controlled and transformed into a dynamic of regularized functions,'⁴¹ the result of which is the subsequent dehumanisation of his flesh. The body of the soldier is further mechanized through the adjuncts of technological prosthetics, such as its armoured vehicles and automatic weapons, a dehumanisation mirrored in the image of the cops in Paris, May 1968 [fig.40]. For Theweleit the physical fitness and the hard muscular body of the male soldier also form part of its protective armour. But what is the fascist subject armouring itself against? Theweleit's answer is that the soldiering male defends itself against the image of a 'body-in-pieces', as represented by everything and everyone that is uncontrolled, disordered or in psychological terms, castrated. As a defensive strategy the fascist subject attempts 'to distance [himself] from castration by moulding [himself] into monstrous blocs'.⁴² These regimented blocs perform as a sort of 'substitute skin'⁴³ which guards against the fear of dispersal. It is the fear of becoming what he shields himself

³⁹ Jessica Benjamin and Anson Rabinbach, 'Foreword' in Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies II: Male Bodies: Psychoanalysing the White Terror*, translated by Chris Turner and Erica Carter et al. (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1989), pp. ix-xxv, (p. xii). See Walter Benjamin, 'Theories of German Fascism' in *New German Critique* (no. 17, Spring, 1979), pp. 120-128.

⁴⁰ See the chapter 'The Soldierly Body, the Technological Machine and the Fascist Aesthetic' in *Male Fantasies; Volume II*, pp.197-205. Hal Foster draws on Theweleit's model of the male fascist body in his discussion of the work of Hans Bellmer in *Compulsive Beauty* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

⁴¹ Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, p.198.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.200.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.207.

against, which compels the fascist male to perceive forced domination as an essential means of protection. In his bid to remain undisturbed or rather to maintain the fantasy image of a coherent body 'not-in -pieces', the armoured subject 'subjugates peoples – Jews, little people, arbitrary victims'.⁴⁴ That is, in order to keep his bodily boundaries secured the armoured subject will destroy anything that tries to penetrate him. Therefore, in his 'lethal penetration of other human beings, the soldier male distances himself, differentiates himself in opposition to them, and thus once again escapes death by apportioning it to others'.⁴⁵

Theweleit also points out however, that what is armoured can also be damaged and penetrated. That is, the soldiering male's armour is extremely fragile and since armour has 'chinks and unevenness' it is 'prone to rapid fragmentation in situations of intense emotional pressure'.⁴⁶ The armouring process of the body and of the psyche (deemed necessary for the fascist subject's self-defence and self-definition) is forever threatened by what Hal Foster has also described in terms of dispersal, as 'the fantasmatic dissolution of his body image'.⁴⁷ It is this fear of dissolution, not only from pressures external to the armoured subject, but also from within, which compels the fascist male to attack his social others 'in part because all appear as guises of this feared dissolution'.⁴⁸ Theweleit goes further in arguing that 'for the male it is the woman within that constitutes the most radical threat to his own integrity'⁴⁹, that is, it is the figure of woman or rather of a particular model of femininity that represents the terrifying deluge that the male subject must dam himself against:

⁴⁴ Theweleit, *Male Fantasies II*, p.201.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.208.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.207.

⁴⁷ Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995), p.119. Foster's model of the armoured subject is explicitly developed through Theweleit's model of the male soldier in *Male Fantasies: Vol II*.

⁴⁸ Theweleit, *Male fantasies II*, p.119.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. xix.

On the one side there is the soft, fluid, and ultimately liquid female body which is quintessentially negative "Other" lurking inside the male body. It is the subversive source of pleasure or pain which must be expurgated or sealed off. On the other, there is the hard, organized, phallic body devoid of all internal viscera which finds its apotheosis in the machine.⁵⁰

Extending this to the fascist subject's exclusion of others, Foster suggests that 'what he targets is his own unconscious and sexuality, his own drives and desires coded, like social others, as fragmentary, fluid, feminine'.⁵¹ This coding of the other as feminine reasserts the masculinist presuppositions of the fascist subject, as Foster notes: 'it is only in violence against its feminine others that the fascist male can be confirmed'.⁵² The violence directed against its others reveals the fascist subject's sadistic side, but for Foster, it also reveals a masochistic side in the sense that the other that is attacked is also 'the female self within'.⁵³ That is, the fear of the feminine within, is a fear of the diffuse, shattering and destructive drive within. This fear of a collapse into the feminine is represented by all those moments when the armoured, masculine subject feels himself about to shatter.

What Vaneigem portrays is very much this model of a rigid, homogenized, armoured subject. But there is a difference, namely his addition of a vampiric dimension. That is, in Vaneigem's discourse the uniform and mechanized body of the fascist subject is translated into an image of the living dead. For Vaneigem, all those who sacrifice themselves to a single leader or Führer, or more importantly to the singular law of the commodity form of the Spectacle, have given into passivity and inertia, in other words to

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. xix.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 119.

⁵² Ibid., p. 120.

⁵³ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p. 120.

‘the fascist slogan *Viva la muerte!*’ (long live death).⁵⁴ Vaneigem’s model of the living dead subject both expands on Bataille’s model of ‘the negated humanity’⁵⁵ imposed by fascism and Theweleit’s model of the fascist who organizes the world to ‘appear absolutely uniform -which is to say dead’.⁵⁶ Vaneigem’s fascist subject is however not sexually differentiated, and rather than being formed out of the historical fascism of the 1930s (as in the case of Bataille and Theweleit) it is a product of the Spectacle. Indeed, Debord’s general description of the Spectacular subject was as the ‘autonomous movement of the non-living’.⁵⁷ Vaneigem even describes the Spectacle as a museum of images peopled with shadow puppets (*d’ombres chinoises*),⁵⁸ subjects whose authentic life has been drained out of them. That is, the Spectacle is presented in the guise of a vampire, sucking out the subject’s life-blood.

It is the reified conditions of capitalism and not the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini that provide Vaneigem with his model of the vampiric subject. The Spectacle, as a form of late capitalist production, resembles Marx’s model of ~~early~~ capital, whereby ‘capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking up living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks’.⁵⁹ The Surrealists of course had also focused on the deathly and petrified by-products of reified labour, namely in the form of the automaton or waxwork figure, both images of a human become thing like. As Hal Foster has noted, both Freud and Surrealism depended ‘on the historical development of reification, of the ghostly doubling of the human by the mechanical-commodified, by *the thing*’.⁶⁰ From the mutilated soldier of World War I, to the robot worker of Taylorist

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 109.

⁵⁵ Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, p. 150.

⁵⁶ Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, p.206.

⁵⁷ Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle* (Gallimard: Paris, 1992). Thesis no.2, p.16.

⁵⁸ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p.128.

⁵⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital: Vol I*, translated by Ben Fowkes (New York, 1977), p. 342.

⁶⁰ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p. 129. The figure of dead labour also pervades gothic literature, for an account of Frankenstein as an image of dismembered labour, and Dracula as the symptom of vampiric capital see Franco Moretti, ‘Dialectic of Fear’ in *Signs Taken for Wonders* (London, 1983).

industrial production, through to the banalized and petrified subject of the Spectacle, it is the human hybrid, either as man-machine, or man-weapon, or as the living dead, which are the grotesque bodies that are attacked respectively by Dada, then Surrealism and finally by the Situationists in the technocratic climate of the 1960s. Furthermore, those that submit to the regulated and homogenized conditions of the Spectacle also reveal their desire to be dominated by the 'authoritarian personality of fascist structures, the paranoid figure who compels singular speech and forbids promiscuous signification'.⁶¹ By the 1960s however, the figure of the fascist subject metamorphosed into the more generalized figure of the modern subject, equally anxious and paranoid, haunted as it is by its contemporary history of which fascism is the extreme symptom: a history of world war, industrial and mechanistic fragmentation, or mercenary and political terror. It is certainly in relation to the shock of these events that, Foster claims, the modern subject becomes armoured against: 'otherness within (sexuality, the unconscious) and otherness without (for the fascist this can mean the Jews, Communists, gays, women), all figures of this fear of the body in pieces come again, of the body given over to the fragmentary and the fluid'.⁶²

For Vaneigem however, the 'gaping wound left by the vampirization of the self and real life'⁶³ by the blood-sucking Spectacle, is never healed. And for Theweleit too the source of the impulse toward fusion (his description of the key dynamic of fascist organisation and formation) is this having 'to live with open wounds'.⁶⁴ Theweleit

⁶¹ Hal Foster, *Return of the Real* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1996), p.211.

⁶² Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p.210. Michel Foucault also generalizes the fascist subject as one that is constituted by the desire to be dominated: 'the major enemy, the strategic adversary is fascism...and not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini –which was able to mobilize and use the desire of the masses so effectively- but also the fascism in all of us, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates us.' Michel Foucault, 'Introduction' to Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, *Anti-Oedipus*, translated by Robert Hurley et al (Viking: N.Y, 1977), p. xiii. Of course Foucault is writing out of the experiences and intellectual changes that emerged from the Events of 1968.

⁶³ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p.139.

⁶⁴ Theweleit, *Male fantasies: Vol II*, p.213.

diagnosed the fascist male's sadistic character, his desire to dominate, as a symptom not only of the fear of fragmentation, but also of the fear of never covering over the open wound. The fascist male's shield or protective armour works as a fetish, in the Freudian sense, by appearing to cover over what is perceived as missing, but in so doing draws attention to that incomplete site, that in turn is both attractive and repulsive.⁶⁵ In general, the attempt to secure an outline of the self, to set up defences, only succeeds in drawing attention to what cannot be controlled. The need to sublimate or to bind these chaotic forces is a symptom of the desire to reconcile any contradictions of the body and its boundaries, and the desire to delimit the self in relation to others. This suggests that all subjects that attempt to define themselves as a coherent 'I', whether male or female, are, to some extent involved in an operation of armouring (the self) and exclusion (the non-self and others).

In fact, Vaneigem made no sexual distinctions in his description of the Spectacular subject as petrified. And the defences it tries to put up against its wounds also function as a fetish. That is, the vampiric wound can only be disavowed by the use of prosthetic and defensive shields. Furthermore, in this model, the enactment of acceptable social roles is itself interpreted as a form of symbolic armouring. All social roles are culturally mediated, if not constitutive of the subject and their effect is to 'absorb vital energies, to reduce erotic energy by ensuring its permanent sublimation'.⁶⁶ Indeed, for Vaneigem, the uniformed and sublimated subject, exemplified by the role of the cop is as blank and inert as the empty faced figures in a de Chirico painting: 'his deserted squares and petrified backgrounds display man dehumanised by the things he has made –things which, frozen in an urban space crystallising the oppressive power of

⁶⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'Fetishism' (1927) in *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, The Pelican Freud Library, Volume 7, translated and edited by James Strachey (Penguin Books: London, 1977), pp. 345-357.

⁶⁶ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p.138.

ideologies, rob him of his substance and suck his blood'.⁶⁷ Mirroring the Spectacle's vampiric landscape, the figure of the spectacularized subject is mortified and inert. The freeze-frame mechanism of the photograph itself becomes the ideal means to represent the barricade of the living dead cops [fig. 40], recast in terms of a line up of necrophilic statues. But, just as Theweleit revealed that what is armoured can also be damaged and penetrated, so too, what is frozen can also melt. And if, as Vaneigem suggests, the shield is an ineffective plug against the vampiric Spectacle outside, it might also be an ineffective dam against the internalised gaping wound; perhaps it too can bleed out and shatter the fragile bindings trying to contain it. Its most pertinent representation is as that which is dispersed and fluid, all that is unbound or what I refer to as disarmoured.

The Disarmoured Rebel

Scattered throughout the Situationists' book *Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* are photographs of the protestors. They appear as a motley crowd of students, factory workers and even high school kids [fig. 45], a truly heterogeneous mixture of different age groups, sexes, and political affiliations. Viénet lists the involvement of anarchists, Maoists, young Communists (JCR), non-aligned leftist groups, such as the March 22nd Group, and, of course, the Situationists.⁶⁸ The heterogeneity of the activists was symbolized by the red (communist) and black (anarchist) flags flying together on the barricades, as well as reflected in the sheer variety of the posters and propaganda slogans that appeared on the walls [fig. 46], with

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.146.

⁶⁸ The cop, as the representative of the Spectacle, was also a stand-in for a more heterogeneous mix. That is, not just actual policemen, but also the army, parliamentary representatives of de Gaulle's State and for the Situationists also the Communist based Trade Unions (CGT), any reformist Unions as well as all Stalinists and Maoists: considered by the SI as bureaucratic dictators. This puts the Situationists at a distance from other French intellectuals c.1960s who looked to the Cultural Revolution in China. For the Situationists critique of Mao and China see 'Le point d'explosion de l'idéologie en chine' in *internationale situationniste* (no.11, October, 1967), pp.3-12.

each bill sticking representing the diverse range of the factions involved in the upheavals. Not one single agenda or programme stood out however, indicating there was no one leader as such, despite the media's efforts to establish one in the figure of Daniel Cohn-Bendit.⁶⁹ The protestors, made up of an amalgamation of different groups and agendas could be called acephalic, understood as headless or leaderless. But headless, also, in the sense of putting bodily actions and desires before dogmatic theories and prescriptive routines. Analogously to the potlatch subject of the Watts riots of 1965, the protesting subject of the Events of '68 was also heterogeneous in the Bataillian sense of the term as 'elements that are impossible to assimilate'.⁷⁰ This includes mobs, the low, impoverished classes and 'different types of violent individuals or at least those who refuse the rule', including madmen and poets.⁷¹ This heterogeneous mix of the non-assimilated is revealed in the variety of the graffiti: including endorsements of criminal activities in the imperative to 'steal' '*volez*' [fig. 47]; the revelations of the surreal poets of the street, 'society is a carnivorous flower' (*la société est une fleur carnivore*) [fig.37]; to the sadistic invectives written at the top of stairs in the Sorbonne University 'be cruel' (*soyons cruels*) [fig. 48].

I suggest however, that a more revealing image of the fluid and oppositional character of the disarmed subject (in relation to its rigid and armoured other) is snapped in the photograph of the graffiti slogan translated as 'I cum all over the paving stones' (*je jouis dans les pavés*) [fig. 49]. Here, disarming can be seen as a desublimatory gesture. The liquid words are like bodily fluids seeping into the nooks and crannies of the wall's surface. The oozing words spell out the liquid escape of sexual fluids, an act of expulsion that breaks down the security of bodily boundaries. To

⁶⁹ Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism, the Left Wing Alternative*, translated by Arnold Pomerans (André Deutsch: London, 1968).

⁷⁰ Bataille, 'The Psychological Structure of Fascism', p. 140.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 142.

ejaculate or secrete internal fluids is to contaminate the outline of the self, by disturbing the borders between inside and outside. Such a desublimatory act, tinged with eroticism, sexuality and profanity, loosens the bindings of the armoured body, by shattering its sublimatory idealisms: namely, all those processes that try to redirect and purify the low and the filthy to more refined ends. In this instance the disarmoured subject appears to be partly constituted by the release of what the armoured subject has tried to repress. Or rather, the attack against the armoured body is made with the very forces that this subject most fears: 'sexuality and the unconscious, desires and drives, the *jouissance*...that shatters the subject, that surrenders it to the fragmentary and the fluid'.⁷²

For Theweleit such fluidity was also coded in the feminine. It is true that the Situationists did reproduce an image of ecstasy as decidedly connected with the female body. For example, the first *détourné* poster that they put up opposite the Sorbonne on the 14th May, comprised of a semi-reclining female nude, eyes closed with a bubble collaged to her lips reading "aaaahhhh!!! l'internationale situationniste" [fig. 50]. On the bottom right hand corner was an additional text translated as follows: 'Can the pleasure we are permitted compare with those spicier attractions, those inappreciable pleasures which are connected to the rupture of social restraints and the throwing out of all laws?' As with J.V. Martin's pop porn images, there is an element of ventriloquism here, with the mute image used as a cipher to speak a desire for the Situationist group itself. And the supposedly transgressive potentials of an image of the supine female in the throes of ecstasy was of course a common Surrealist trope, as for example in the case of Salvador Dali's 1933 photo montage *The Phenomenon of Ecstasy*. The Situationists' poster was also typical of the 1960s, where images of sexual liberation were conflated with images of a social revolution. Though this is of course a double edged strategy: one that codes

⁷² Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p. 211.

the sign woman as subversive within the confines of a patriarchal culture, but at the same allows the protesting male to both identify with the transgressive as feminine, without actually putting his own male body at risk or on display. The image of the graffiti slogan 'I cum all over the paving stones' however [fig. 50], is more ambiguous on the question of the type of sexuality it displays. The desire to expel bodily fluids is not explicitly sexed. Moreover, what is important here is not just the act of release itself, but also the location that is cited, namely the street. Social taboos are displaced by the declaration of carrying out in public such sexual or even masturbatory pleasures, which the dominant social mores would rather keep behind closed doors.

In identifying this trope of fluid discharge as potentially revolutionary, Vaneigem had drawn on the psychoanalytical theories of Wilhelm Reich. Bruce Brown has commented on the importance of the rediscovery and revival of Reich in France in the late 1960s, when a number of French translations from Reich's so-called 'Marxist Period' were produced for the first time. From this there developed a broad enthusiasm for his ideas, and Brown even claims that 'the inclusion of courses on Reich in the curriculum at Nanterre was one of the basic demands of the 22nd March Movement in the days leading up to the May events'.⁷³ Vaneigem's model of dispersal was in fact modelled on Wilhelm Reich's concept of the orgasmic impotence. Therefore potency and virility, with their masculine associations of violence and domination, become key terms in Vaneigem's vocabulary to express not only the release of individual tension, but also the type of force required to critique the petrified conditions of the Spectacle: 'true pleasure, *joie de vivre* and orgasmic potency shatter body armour'.⁷⁴ Moreover, for Vaneigem 'the problems of tensions and their liquidation does not exist solely on the

⁷³ Bruce Brown, *Marx, Freud, and the Critique of Everyday Life: Toward a Permanent Cultural Revolution* (Monthly Review Press: N.Y., 1973), p. 10.

⁷⁴ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p. 138.

level of sexuality. It characterises all human relationships'.⁷⁵ That is, the social order itself is neurotic in structure, and one potential cure lies in the release and expenditure of all its pent up and accumulated energies. Though the form of this release tends to remain overtly sexual in kind, with social blockages aligned with orgasmic impotence.

The connection between sexual liberation and social revolution was a common currency in French intellectual life by the 1950s. Both Lefebvre and ^{Herbert} ~~Henri~~ Marcuse turned to Freud's concept of 'Eros' as a libidinal drive that, once desublimated, had the potential to transform the repressive regimes associated with modern, industrial, technocratic and capitalist societies.⁷⁶ Yet the model of Eros is itself an ambivalent one: on the one hand it represents a life principle against Thanatos, a death principle, but Eros also concerns the binding of the body, rather than its shattering. For example, in 1955, Marcuse stated that 'Eros strives for eternalising itself in a permanent *order*'⁷⁷ that is, Eros concerns constancy, unity and sublimation, qualities that also structure a fascist or armoured subject. Also drawing on Freud's models of the drives, Hal Foster pits Eros against Thanatos, the life drive against the death drive, where 'the aim of (the first) is to establish even ^e greater unities and to preserve them thus – in short to bind them together; the aim of (the second) is, on the contrary, to undo connections and so to destroy things'.⁷⁸ Although, as Foster notes the opposition is never pure, the one drive is both combined with and contaminated by the other, Eros is placed on the side of reconciling contradictions, of ordering and binding, with Thanatos, or the death drive, on the side of splitting and dispersal. So where does the Situationists' disarmoured subject fit in, located as it is on the side of love and life or Eros, but also in the service of unbinding, of desublimatory gestures and of the disintegration of fixed bodily and social

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 253.

⁷⁶ On desublimation see Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Sphere Books: London, 1969). First published by Beacon Press in 1955.

⁷⁷ Marcuse, *Eros*, p. 179.

⁷⁸ Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p.10.

boundaries? The answer lies somewhere in-between, in the form of what Vaneigem calls the radical subject's 'Dionysian consciousness' (admitting to its appropriation from Norman O. Brown).⁷⁹ A Dionysian consciousness is defined as one 'that dances and kills',⁸⁰ it is both celebratory and violent, loving and dangerous. The Dionysian subject, like the potlatch subject, is dedicated to pleasure, but not of a constant or uniform type. In Freudian terms it goes beyond the pleasure principle, when the latter is defined by its affects of equilibrium and constancy.⁸¹ On the contrary, what the Dionysian subject desired is excess, disunity and rupture. In this sense, it is closer in kind to Freud's model of the death drive, tinged not only with eroticism but also with violent destruction. If, as Vaneigem claims, life is Dionysian in its essence, that is, both revelling and damaging, then it makes sense that the type of space it opens out on-to, once unleashed, would be littered with the residues of its excessive passage. Just the kind of space captured in the foreground of [fig. 49], a space of burnt-out wreckage, the residues perhaps of unrestrained play. Always already tinged with violence, the return of the repressed Dionysian drive will inevitably be volatile (with violence itself a marker of repression). As Vaneigem suggests, 'the will to live retains a potential for violence, always capable of carrying the individual away from the path laid down for him'.⁸²

However, the subject carried away by the release of their libidinal instincts may also be in danger. Released from its bindings, the subject risks its own annihilation in the form of the dissolution of the bounded or armoured self. It is clear that Vaneigem was aware of this danger when he acknowledged that without some sort of instituted boundary the subject becomes a sort of pure pulsion, a being in-itself, or what he refers

⁷⁹ Vaneigem, p. 269. See also Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death* (Wesleyan University Press: New England, 1959).

⁸⁰ Vaneigem, p.269.

⁸¹ Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920) in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, The Penguin Freud Library, Vol.11, translated by James Strachey (Penguin Books: London, 1984), pp. 269-338.

⁸² Vaneigem, p. 138.

to as an *en-soi*. And one representative model of this *en-soi* is the not so positive one of Jack the Ripper. This *en-soi* is portrayed as sadistic and out of control, or rather, as a sort of destructive force that confronts the violence of the Law in its most pure and stark form, and the result is a double annihilation: 'a kind of *en-soi*! He gravitates round that zero point where destruction, instead of reinforcing the destruction wrought by power, beats power at its own game, excites it to such violence that the machine at the *Penal Colony*, stabbing wildly, shatters into pieces and falls apart'.⁸³ The violence of the *en-soi* might cause the Law to self-destruct, as in Kafka's story, but it risks its own destruction in the process. It is for similar reasons that the Situationists rejected nihilism, in the form of a destructive act carried out for its own sake. This does not contradict Vaneigem's claim that 'in the last reckoning, the nihilists are our only allies',⁸⁴ because the Situationists do not reject destruction as such, but its misuse, such as in forms of action that are mindless or directionless. Against directionless nihilism is pitted the constructed situation, which may involve acts of violence, but only as a force of arms taken up in the cause of the transformation of daily life and of the world of the Spectacle in particular, hence the phrase: 'Nihilists, as de Sade would have said, one more effort if you want to be revolutionaries!'⁸⁵ On the other hand, the Situationists were also against the rigid structure of the armoured subject, living out its life according to the petrifying rules and interdictions of the repressive regime of the Spectacle. Although in favor of desublimatory gestures, the extremes of violence for its own sake, as represented by the figure of the *en-soi*, was potentially as counter-revolutionary as the figure of the cop. Both figures are too one-sided, too singular and un-dialectical; one is too rigid and

⁸³ Vaneigem, p. 179.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 182.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 182. For similar reasons of aimlessness the Situationists were also against voluntarism as much as against rigid dogma: 'Against voluntarism on the one hand, and against the mystique of revolution's historical inevitability on the other, we must promote the idea of a strategy of access to revolution, of a construction at once rational and passionate which dialectically unites immediate subjective demands and the objective conditions of our time'. Vaneigem, p. 272.

constricted, the other too fluid and potentially annihilating of the self. What the Situationists seem to want is a dialectical subject, that is, a subject that has some sort of social frame in which to act (or act against), but a frame that is not homogenizing and repressive, that is, does not exclude the model of a heterogeneous or radical subjectivity.

There is a tendency however for Vaneigem to align this Dionysian subjectivity not only with the violent or ecstatic misfit, but also with the youthful. Though 'youth' in the rhetoric of this moment stands for the release of forces that are capable of disfiguring the armoured (or symbolic) subject, by destabilizing its boundaries, but without offering a substitute skin to secure or reconcile the body. In other words, the disarmoured subject remains an incoherent body. However, the graffitied expressions of the disarmoured subject were not understood as a mark of pure pulsion, but as the sign of a strategic cultural intervention, which provocatively played with and knowingly transgressed acceptable patterns of behaviour. And the ideal setting for this juvenile delinquent was of course the festival. May 1968 was for the Situationists a 'potlatch of destruction', in the same way that they so named the Watts riots in Los Angeles in 1965. It was the site of a Dionysian festival, a festival that for Vaneigem heralds: 'the energy of the will to live, of desire unleashed, of the passion of love, the power of fear and anxiety, the hurricane of hatred and the wild impetus of the urge for destruction'.⁸⁶ Here, the disarmoured subject would emerge like some beautiful new creature after having shed the armour of its 'cultural chrysalis'.⁸⁷ In a language that crosses science with alchemy (much like that used by Gallizio in describing his *Cavern of Anti-Matter*) Vaneigem describes how: 'the laboratory of individual creativity transmutes the basest metals of daily life into gold through a revolutionary alchemy'.⁸⁸ This suggests that those

⁸⁶ Vaneigem, p. 200.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 201.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 193.

incapable of successfully performing this alchemical experiment are the petrified dross of the Spectacle, like the armoured and frozen soldiers of the State.

There is another ambivalence concerning the model of the disarmoured subject as fluid however. Although it may be anti-fascistic in terms of seeking dispersal and not rigidity, to what extent is this figure anti-Spectacular? As a form of capitalist relations, the Spectacle might also be understood as an accomplice to melting all solid social relations into air.⁸⁹ That is to say, dispersal is also an affect, even a symptom of capitalism itself. As Hal Foster has pointed out: 'if the fascist subject is threatened by schizophrenic fragments and flows, the capitalist subject may thrive on such disruptions'.⁹⁰ Indeed, what is more radical than capital when it comes to breaking down old structures or rigid subjects that stand in its way. Does this mean that the revolutionary uprisings of the 1960s, from Civil-Right protests, to Anti Vietnam rallies to the Events of May 1968 in Paris, were symptoms of capitalism or revolutionary forces released by capital? And what about Vaneigem's Dionysian subject, is it in the service of the Spectacle or its nemesis? This complicates the relation between the cop and the rebel, for it is possible that both figures are a symptomatic expression of the vampiric ideology of the Spectacle; the one ineffectively armoured against it, and the other embracing its flows. This suggests that rather than oppositional figures, the cop and the rebel are in fact mutually dependent.

The Inter-World

A possible articulation of this inter-dependent relationship of the cop and the rebel is provided by the graffiti slogan 'under the cobblestones, the beach' (*sous les pavés, la*

⁸⁹ Marx's uses the phrase 'all that solid melts into to air' to exemplify the inherently destabilizing affect of social relations under capitalism. Marshall Berman traces the dizzying social changes as reflected in the literature of modernity, see Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (Verso: London, 1983)

⁹⁰ Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p.211.

plage) [fig. 51]. This suggests a topology of above and below or outside and inside, where next to the armoured surface lies a more diffuse and formless terrain. Given that the armoured cop internalizes the vampiric Spectacle as a gaping wound (that is, the diffuse is already inscribed within the armoured subject) a more recent model of the subject proposed by Joan Copjec provides a useful and explanatory compliment here. In her essay, appropriately called 'Vampires, Breast-feeding and Anxiety',⁹¹ Copjec draws on Lacanian theory in order to reconstruct a model of the 'gaping wound' (recast here as a psychic wound) that is at the heart of all subjects, and which reveals itself as 'an aura of anxiety'.⁹² To do this, Copjec analyses the literature on vampires, in all its Gothic forms (emerging in the eighteenth century) in terms of a projection, not only of a crisis in the social sphere, but more importantly as a sign of a crisis located within the subject. But this inner crisis, in the form of a psychic wound, is itself constitutive of the subject. In this model of the subject the role of the symbolic is not only to shield the subject from its inner lack, or gaping wound, it also has to positively negate this lack in order to constitute itself as a subject. As Copjec explains 'the symbolic, in other words, must include the negation of what is it not'.⁹³ This means that the symbolic realm is not only filled with itself, but also with what it must negate in order to establish itself. In other words, the negation of what it is not, is contained or rather concealed within the symbolic itself. From my point of view in this chapter, this might be described as follows: the armoured subject (obeying the laws of the symbolic) constitutes itself through the negation of its other, in this instance all that is diffuse or disarmoured. However, this formless fluidity inside is projected outward and returns in the guise of the vampiric Spectacle. The limits of this model is its tendency to be too subjectivist, by failing to account for the actual or objective oppressive conditions of the social and its

⁹¹ Joan Copjec, 'Vampires, Breast-Feeding and Anxiety' in *October* (no. 58, Fall, 1991), pp. 25-43.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

institutions beyond any imaginary or projected construction. Nevertheless, what it sets up is a model of a subject that is constituted at once through the ejection and the incorporation of what it is not.

Vaneigem presented the shared ground of the cop and the rebel however, in different terms. What they (and all subjects) have in common is what he called an inter-world space, or in-between world space (*l'intermonde*): 'Nobody, no matter how alienated, is without (or unaware of) an irreducible core of creativity'.⁹⁴ But this interior creative core, or inter-world zone is not represented as a room or inner kernel, but rather as a threshold space. Or in other words, it is a border or limit region that is contiguous with the armoured figure of the cop and the disarmoured rebel. Elsewhere Vaneigem refers to this inter-world as the wasteland (*le terrain vague*) of subjectivity, conjuring up an image of a bleak frontier space, which has not yet been determinedly shaped or formed. But, as a wild zone, the inter-world is also a brutal and violent space, or in Vaneigem's words it is a: 'turbulent frontier of subjectivity gnawed at by the sickness of power. This zone is rife with undying hatreds, inhabited by the gods of vengeance, the tyranny of evil, the snarls of frustrated desire...an inter-world'.⁹⁵ It is the violent character of this waste ground that is shared by the cop and the rebel: 'it contains cruelty in its starkest form – the cruelty of the cop and the cruelty of the rebel, the cruelty of oppression and the cruelty of the poetry of revolt'.⁹⁶ It would seem here, that the violence perpetrated by the cop and the rebel stem from the same energy source. What distinguishes the cruelty of the one from the other is how this turbulence is used or directed: the cop uses violence for oppressive ends, and the rebel to instigate a revolt, or what Vaneigem often refers to as a reversal of the perspective of the Spectacle. This

⁹⁴ Vaneigem, p. 191.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 267.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 267.

suggests that what marks the difference between the cop and the rebel or radical subject is the way in which this violence is deployed, that is, whether or not it is contained and stifled or unleashed and expended: 'with its phantoms, its obsessions, its outbursts of hate, its sadism, the interworld is like a cage of wild animals driven mad by their imprisonment'.⁹⁷ It is how this cage is unbolted that would seem to make a difference between the cop and the rebel. What Vaneigem forgets to mention here is the violence of the *en-soi*, represented by the figure of Jack the Ripper. This figure is also cruel and sadistic, and the destructive pleasure it gains from the release of its violence separates it off from the figure of the pent up cop. But how does the *en-soi* differ from the radical subject? The difference again lies in the directed use of violence: whereas the *en-soi* is anarchically nihilistic, the radical subject is constructively negating, that is it uses violence to change the social world rather than to annihilate it.

The importance of this representation of the armoured subject as already constituted through the negation of its disarmed other, or as sharing a common source of creativity and violence, is that it enables the possibility of an immanent form of critique –the Situationists' preferred critical method. That is, it is possible to confront the petrified subject with the living dimension that it denies or disavows and thus perhaps transform it. This can be done because the non-petrified is already inscribed within the armoured subject, as the condition of its formation under capitalism or the Spectacle. That is, the bound and the unbound, the petrified and diffuse, Eros and Thanatos, are the products of the society of the Spectacle. The difference is that the rebel, unlike the cop refuses to accede to or assume the reified and necrophilic conditions of the Spectacle. To draw an analogy with Surrealism here (who also immanently critiqued the mechanized

⁹⁷ Vaneigem, p. 268.

subject of capital) the Situationists acknowledged, as did Caillois that 'in every [rational] object' there is 'an irrational residue'.⁹⁸ Translated to the Situationists' model, this can be articulated as inside every rational and petrified subject there is a residue or trace of the living body. In the 1960s it became the task of the Situationists (much like that of the Surrealists in the 1930s) to liberate this living radical subjectivity, and by so doing also put in motion an attack and resistance to the social relations (namely the commodity form) of the Spectacle. Rather than deny its gaping wound or psychic damage the radical subject exposes its creative and violent frontier in acts of vandalism and expulsions of graffitied expression. The radical subject confronts the Spectacle with what it tries to repress, that is, it returns in acts of violence, the violence of the Spectacle's prohibitions. In other words, the radical subject reproduces the psychic and subjective unrest produced by the Spectacle's processes of banalization, by its elimination of excess and the non-utilitarian, of its exclusion of error and the irregular. The job of the radical subject is therefore to return error, to celebrate excess, to engage in a Dionysian festival of creative vandalism. To embrace all that the Spectacle outlaws (but also what it produces and contains) is to go through its process of rationalization and make use of its strange affects, make use of its by-products, represented for the Situationists by the figures of the juvenile delinquents, the misfits, and the criminals etc. To critique the Spectacle and its armoured subjects from within exposes the errors, accidents and excessive expenditures that are constitutive of the Spectacle in spite of its denials. The radical subject is the non-identity that is already inscribed within the identity of the Spectacular subject. In other words the radical subject represents all that the Spectacular subject must negate in order to establish itself. So by returning the radical subject, the Situationists construct the possibility of negating the negation.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p. 148.

A Bridge of Imagination

What is problematic is how this inter-word is accessed, that is how to unbolt the door to this cage of wild animals and not be un-redeemably damaged. Too close an encounter with this turbulent frontier surely puts the subject beyond risk (which is after all redeemable) and on the point of oblivion. In discussing access, Vaneigem commented that anyone is free to go down there (note here the topography of going underground), but by means of 'dreams, drugs, alcohol or the disordering of the sense'.⁹⁹ Access to this wasteland is available only through a distorted or disturbed pathway. Though not any distorted access is acceptable. For example, Artaud's method of reaching his inter-world through the use of an hallucinogenic (peyote) is criticized for its solipsism and the tendency to make of this inner sanctum some holy and mystic refuge. In other words, he made a spectacle out of this creative zone: 'instead of externalizing what lies within, he sought to make it holy, to discover a permanent reality in the rigid world of symbols'.¹⁰⁰ And as a result, those who hesitate to cast out or externalise the flames that devour them within, 'can only burn, can only be themselves consumed in accordance with the laws of consumption'.¹⁰¹

It was vital however for the radical subject to encounter this cruel yet creative source. The Situationists did after all imagine that the externalisation of these turbulent energies would enable the transformation of the realms of the social and the psychic, because by putting the objective world into crisis, the construction of the subject was also undone: 'the reconstruction of society will necessarily entail the simultaneous reconstruction of everyone's unconscious'.¹⁰² To change the subject required a change in

⁹⁹ Vaneigem, p. 268.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 268.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 268.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 269.

the organization of society itself, which in turn would trigger a change in the subject. The social, somatic and psychic aspects of the subject are interconnected, so therefore the change in one area triggers a change in another, though not necessarily in a reciprocal or symmetrical fashion. Change itself may be turbulent and unbalanced. In turn, how these changes are embodied and instituted makes a difference to how subjectivity itself is lived out. Transformations in subjectivity are registered through violence and social crisis, as Vaneigem indicated: 'subjectivity cannot construct itself without destroying whatever stands in its way'.¹⁰³ The violence of revolt is itself a mark of a crisis within the social, which suggests that the radical subject marks the point of an internal crisis, of symbolic authority, itself in a state of emergency. The question remains however whether the acts of protest are a conscious redirection of the energy of the inter-world into the outer-world, or whether the repetitive gestures of the graffiti are the symptomatic, that is unconscious, signs of an internalised crisis or anxiety.

Vaneigem's way around the problem of the too close an encounter with the sadistic forces of the inter-world, is indicated when he states that the imagination is 'a force destined to bridge the gap between internal and external'.¹⁰⁴ That is, imagination acts as the point of mediation between the inter-world and the outside world of rules and interdictions. Perhaps imagination can be understood as a bridge or interface between the threshold of the inter-world and the world outside. The question is does this bridge touch or access the inter-world in its pure state, or does it come at it from another, more indirect angle, an angle that distorts the brutal appearance of the inter-world? If this is the case, then it is possible for the interworld to remain what Vaneigem called that irreducible core, in that a mediated encounter with it would always involve some filtering and dilution, and therefore never actually access or contaminate its pure core.

¹⁰³ Vaneigem, p. 269.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 268.

More recently, Slavoj Žižek, in his strategic resuscitation of the Cartesian subject (in an attempt to build a political alliance in the name of a universal human subject), develops a useful model of the subject that is helpful at this point, in that it elaborates on the role of the imagination in its function as a bridge.¹⁰⁵ Instead of the inter-world, Žižek places on one side of the subject what Hegel referred to as the ‘night of the world’, a wild zone or ‘something that resists its full inclusion into its life world context and this something...is the unconscious as the psychic machine which disregards the requirements of the ‘reality principle’.¹⁰⁶ On the other side of the subject is the rule of the Law, the world of institutions and rules. And situated in-between is what he calls the ‘monstrosity of a pre-synthetic imagination run amok, generating spectral apparitions of partial objects’.¹⁰⁷ According to Žižek it is only at this level, through the threshold of the imagination, and in the guise of the partial libido-objects, that we encounter ‘the impossible object correlative to the pure void of the subject’s absolute spontaneity’ (read here Vaneigem’s inter-world).¹⁰⁸ These partial objects (bloody hands, ghostly apparitions, perhaps vampiric landscapes) are the ‘impossible forms in the guise of which the subject *qua* absolute spontaneity encounters itself among objects’.¹⁰⁹ In other words, situated between the noumenal (the unconscious) and the phenomenal (or the Law), in the ‘gap which separates the two and in a way precedes them –is the subject’.¹¹⁰ Relating this to Vaneigem’s model, we could then say that the interworld is that which is not yet fully bound by the Law, but it too can only be encountered from askance, through an imagination run amok.¹¹¹ What the imagination, as a radical subjectivity, bridges is the

¹⁰⁵ Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (Verso: London, 1999).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹¹ Žižek also calls this imagination run amok the death drive since: ‘the death drive is not the pre-subjective noumenal Real itself, but the impossible moment of the birth of subjectivity, of the negative

inherent excess in the armoured subject, what could also be called the interworld or the unconscious, psychic machine. What we seem to be presented with here is a model of a constitutive double agency: a monstrous abyss concealed in an armoured and reasoned subject. However, what remains unclarified in Vaneigem's account is whether the irreducible interworld is that which sustains the subject, or is it a zone harbouring the potential collapse of the subject? Also problematic is the role of the radical subject as a bridge to this interworld. For in attempting to unleash this 'cage of wild animals', is the radical subject on the side of a monstrous collapse of the subject, or is it concerned with the reconstruction of a different type of agency, such as a less restrictive subject. That is, is radical subjectivity constituted through the dissolution of the subject or as a turbulent frontier in-between nihilism and sublimation, between the rebel and the cop? It is the in-between position that seems most appropriate here, considering Vaneigem's description of subjectivity as a threshold position.

Ec-Static Temporality and Delay

I now want to return to the issue of detection, that is, to how the Situationists' radical subject was represented, especially through the use of graffiti. I've already discussed the creative capacity of the radical subject through its liquidation of language. But graffiti also expresses what Vaneigem described as the radical subject's unique 'space-time'. That is, a further indication of the difference between those in possession of radical subjectivity and those lacking it, is of a temporal order. The radical subject's unique space-time involved living in the moment or in 'the immediacy of daily experience.'¹¹² But how does a subject live in the instant present, or what Vaneigem calls the time of

gesture of contraction/withdrawal that replaces reality with *membra disjecta*, with a series of organs as stand-ins for the immortal libido', p.52.

¹¹² Vaneigem, p. 234.

events?¹¹³ Vaneigem's concept of the 'present' is in fact more complex than it might at first appear. Not only is 'the quick of the present' described as multiple, it is also defined as 'a point of incredible density'.¹¹⁴ And his talk of spontaneity does not refer to the temporality of the instant of the moment, but to a moment of reflection and therefore pause. That is, the temporality of spontaneity was understood as 'a conquest not a given',¹¹⁵ as a time that had to be constructed. To help explain this seemingly contradictory model of time, Vaneigem turns to the example of Jazz, but not in its usual Western conception:

The African conception of rhythm differs from the Western in that it is perceived through bodily movement rather than aurally. The technique consists essentially in the introduction of discontinuity into the static balance imposed...by rhythm and metre. This discontinuity, which results from the existence of ecstatic centres of gravity, out of time with the musical rhythm and metre proper, creates a constant tension between the static beat and the ecstatic beat which is superimposed on it.¹¹⁶

Passing over the primitivism of the linking of African rhythms with the beat of a more authentic life, what is of interest here is how consciousness of the present is harmonized with lived experience in a sort of extemporization. The temporality of bodily experience is expressed as an ecstatic pulse. Ec-static means outside of stasis, outside therefore of the dead time of the Spectacle. That is to say, ecstatic time is marked by its discontinuity with the continuous or dead-time of Spectacular experience. As this ec-static and asynchronous rhythm is superimposed over the stasis of the Spectacle it allows for the expansion of the present in the form of a temporal dilation: 'the fact is that in the zone of

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 245.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 234.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 194.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 195.

true creation time dilates. In the realm of inauthenticity, by contrast, it accelerates'.¹¹⁷ In the creative moment, time is both slowed down and expanded. In fact the word dilate means not only to expand, but also to amplify, to disperse and to delay. It suggests a fluid movement of extension, but also a deepening in the sense of an amplification. But at the same time this movement is one of delay and protraction. The dead or arrested time of the Spectacle is mobilized through the infiltration of a different order of time, since the lived moment is filled up with more than one time. Drawing on the Esoteric tradition, Vaneigem insists that 'all time resides in the moment', in the form of an endlessly expanding present.¹¹⁸

I suggest that the graffiti gesture is also capable of representing the radical subject's discontinuous and decelerated temporality. On the one hand, graffiti is a form of writing structured by duration and delay. In Rosalind Krauss' discussion of the paintings of Cy Twombly (painted in the 1960s) she describes graffiti as inhabiting the realm of the clue or trace, indices, that is, of a delayed temporality: 'the operations of form are those of marking an event- by forming it in terms of its remains or its precipitate- and so marking it, cutting the event off from the temporality of its making'.¹¹⁹ The graffitist goes up to the wall, makes a mark on its surface as if to declare his presence, that is, to register in the space of another the fact that 'I am here'. But, for Krauss, this mark is structured by the moment *after* its making, which infects the actual time of its making, the result of which is that it 'makes of its making nothing else than a past, a past that reads "I was here"'.¹²⁰ The temporal disjunction of the act of writing in turn splits and divides the subject. That is, as trace, the graffiti or written mark is not the

¹¹⁷ Vaneigem, p. 234.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 235. Vaneigem sites from the text *Pistis Sophia*: 'one day of light is a thousand years in the history of the world', which Vaneigem translates into Lenin's assertion 'that there are days of revolution that are worth centuries'.

¹¹⁹ Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1993), p. 259.

¹²⁰ Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, p. 260.

imprint of the graffitist's self-presence. Writing becomes an act of inter-subjective violence, by cutting the subject away from its imagined moment of full self-presence. As Krauss explains, the violence of the trace is not just the consequence of 'its being the residue of a crime, but instead a condition of the structure of the marker's having been cut away from himself'.¹²¹ The trace of graffiti registers the voiding of the self-presence of its marker, 'leaving only his mark "Kilroy was here", he writes in a present already invaded by the future'.¹²²

On the other hand however, graffiti is not only a form of writing structured by a temporality of deferral, it is also a transient and discontinuous gesture. Written graffiti is not only marked by a temporality of dilation and delay, it is also an ecstatic and ephemeral trace that can be modified, written over and even made to disappear. This contradictory time, or delay and dissipation, is captured in the Situationists' photos of slogans sprayed in locations that are themselves passageways. For example, scrawled in corridors and hallways and other passageways, are all sorts of poetic injunctions that arrest and halt the glances of the passer-bys and thereby momentarily slows the flow of human traffic [figs. 52& 53]. More generally, the photographic form of the graffiti can also be seen as a way for the Situationists to replicate or at least capture the ec-static temporality of the radical or disarmed subject. The suspension of time in the photograph also marks it out as site for a surplus of time. Its image objects are both captured in time, but also ruptured out of the linear continuum of time. The graffiti, as a photograph, also has an afterlife that belies, by temporal extension, its moment of stasis and suspension. As an image-object it is both corporeal, but filled with ghostly residues. In terms of its temporal register, the snap-shot both encapsulates discontinuity and continuity in that its two time frames, the ecstatic and the static, are superimposed over

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 260.

¹²² Ibid., p. 260.

each other. The temporality of the photograph is analogous to graffiti, in that it is structured by difference, in the form of an image that is represented both in time and out of time, but also subject to decay.

A Commonality in Difference

In concluding this chapter I want to turn to another distinguishing feature of Vaneigem's concept of radical subjectivity, namely its recognition of the other, of difference in the other, as ^ashared point of contact. In the section of his book simply titled 'Radical Subjectivity', Vaneigem begins with the following definition: 'each subjectivity is unique, but all obey the same will to self-realization. The problem is one of setting their variety in a common direction, of creating a united front of subjectivity'.¹²³ Attempting to solve the latter problem (of creating a united front of divergent subjectivity) could be described as the Situationists' project more generally. But how is this problem to be resolved? To begin with, what has to be taken as given, is that subjectivity is a root that all human subjects share. Moreover, this shared but also unique root feeds on the most varied events: 'a riot, a sexual fiasco, a meeting, a memory, a rotten tooth'.¹²⁴ It is the reverberating shock waves of experience that produce subjectivity. But how is subjectivity set in a common direction? Vaneigem attempts to answer this problem by the construction of a radical theory: 'radical theory grasps the individual by the roots – and the roots of the individual lie in his subjectivity, in that soil, which he possesses in common with all other individuals'.¹²⁵ This radical theory is built around the notion that individual subjectivity is unique, but what is shared is an identical desire for complete self-realization: 'this is the sense in which we speak of radical subjectivity. Each individual subjectivity is rooted in the will to realise oneself by transforming the world,

¹²³ Vaneigem, p. 245.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 245.

¹²⁵ Vaneigem, p. 245.

the will to live every sensation, every experience, every possibility to the full'.¹²⁶ This is the collective aspect of the Situationist's project, that by recognizing that part of our selves that already exists in others, we will come together and transform the world in order to accommodate this common desire for full self-realization, or what Vaneigem called poetry (another term also for radical theory). To recognize our radical subjectivity represents the rediscovery of a common front of human identity, which is also different for all of us at the level of individual expression. Each individual cannot represent or stand for another, but they can come together to form a collective alliance dedicated to the self-realization of everyone to their full potential. The radical theory of the Situationists however goes beyond a reflection on individual freedom at the level of the intra-subjective (as reductively claimed by Barrot) because it is simultaneously concerned with the transformation of objective conditions. It is not a question of realizing ourselves within the constraints of a given or fixed situation, but of transforming ourselves by changing the situation itself: 'the ultimate goal of all our activity, it will be open to everyone to *détourner* entire situations by deliberately changing this or that determinant condition of them'.¹²⁷

For the Situationists, the diversity of the radical subject was represented by the variety of slogans produced by the range of individuals taking part in the strikes and protests that began in Paris on the May 3rd 1968, outside the Sorbonne.¹²⁸ This acephalic and heterogeneous group did come together in acts of collective protest, targeted against

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 246.

¹²⁷ Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, 'Methods of Détournement' in Ken Knabb, *Situationist International; Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1982), p. 14.

¹²⁸ A meeting was called by the March 22nd Movement and the UNEF on Friday May 3rd in the courtyard of the Sorbonne to discuss the disciplinary proceedings against René Riesel, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and six other student agitators from Nanterre, due to take place on May 6th. The closing until further notice of Nanterre on May 2nd, coupled with the attempts by police to break up the May 3rd meeting ended in riots in the Latin Quarter. See *Enragés et Situationnistes*, p. 25-42.

the violence of the State (as represented by the armed law enforcers - the CRS), the rationalization of the University system, poor labour conditions and even as a critique of the banality of everyday life under the reified social conditions of postwar capitalism. The tactics used were varied, from violent clashes, to slogans, to strikes etc. One graffiti slogan refers to a tactic of urban guerrilla warfare, '*guerilla urbaine*' [fig. 54]. This is an interesting model, for according to Carl Von Clausewitz, the first Western strategist to discuss guerrilla warfare, what distinguishes it is that it must be employed only in pursuit of a specific plan and moreover, to succeed: 'it must be fought in the interior of the country; it must not be decided by a single blow but be employed with the aim of wearing down the attackers over a period of time' and the theatre of operations must be a terrain that is 'difficult for the invader to penetrate'.¹²⁹ The putting up of near impenetrable barricades, the use of persistent attacks rather than a singular offensive, do point to a guerrilla aspect of the events of 1968. Of course the tactics used were limited and in the end unsuccessful, the forces of law and order won out. For the Situationists however, one of the most dangerous aspects of the failure of '68 was the recuperation by the Spectacle of the specific forms of cultural protest that had been intended as a weapon against the Spectacle. For example, in the last issue of their journal *internationale situationniste* (no. 12, September, 1969) the following photo appears [fig. 55] the caption reads *La récupération vulgaire* (vulgar recuperation). It is a photo of a film poster produced in the autumn of 1968, making use of the graffiti form that had erupted on the walls of Paris as a weapon of propaganda, which was now reduced to an aesthetic style in the service of the culture industry of the Spectacle. Yet the transient aspect of

¹²⁹ Louise Willmot, 'Introduction' in *Carl von Clausewitz: On War*, translated by J.J. Graham (Wordsworth Classics of World Literature: London, 1997), pp. ix-xxiii, (p. xix). Guy Debord often cited Clausewitz in his discussion on strategies of resistance to the Spectacle see Guy Debord, *Panegyric: Vol I*, translated by James Brook (Verso: London, 1991), pp. 61-65. Debord also produced a board game called 'Kriegspiel' (the game of war) four images of which appear in Guy Debord, *Panegyrique: Vol II* (Librairie Artheeme Fayard: Paris, 1997) in section '1977', not paginated.

what counts as the sign of subversion was something that the Situationists embraced. It was important to change tactics to suit the terrain being contested and not to assume that just because something was successful once, it will be good for all times. As Debord said it was important to recognize the passing of time, to acknowledge in other words that: 'avant-gardes have only one time, and the best thing that can happen to them is, in the full sense of the term, to have *had their day*...A historical project certainly cannot claim to preserve an eternal youth protected from blows!'¹³⁰ However, in praising the ephemeral, Debord raised the problem of how to preserve past historical events for prosperity. That is, how can an intentionally impermanent trace be salvaged and preserved without fixing it? An attempt to solve this riddle is the focus of the following chapter, where the problem of memorialization and death is intensified by the production of a Situationist archive.

¹³⁰ A quote from Debord's last film; see Guy Debord, *in girum imus nocte et consumimur igni: A Film*, translated by Lucy Forsyth and Michael Prigent (Pelagian Press: London, 1991), pp. 63-64.

Chapter 4: Surviving History: Remembrance and A Situationist Archive

The Situationists feared their history as if it were their death. They recognized that their historical survival risked contradicting their critique of the petrifying conditions of the Spectacle. Grand monumentalization, offering the promise of immortality, was, for the Situationists, an afterlife not worth living. They were keenly aware that conventional forms of historical memorialization participated in the reification of everyday life, which the Situationists diagnosed as characteristic of the society of the Spectacle. Therefore, in order not to disappear completely from historical memory, they had to develop novel strategies of memorialization. A new concept of the archive was at stake. One that enabled the construction of the Situationist International as an historical 'subject', with enough identity to constitute itself as an historical entity, but not as situated outside of time. The problem was how to construct an archive that remembered the Situationists without making them a dead correlate of the present, but rather, sustained their eruptive potential in the present and for the future. It is my contention that the Situationists did attempt to build such an archive, in the sense of trying to preserve the particular history of the Situationist International, not in the form of a dead or frozen image, but rather as an eruptive or creative potential. The focus of this final chapter is on how the Situationist International tried to construct an image of itself and its past through a process of self-archiving that avoided the reifying effects of monumentalization.

Mémoires,¹ as its title suggests, is a book of remembrance, that is, it is not necessarily a record of how certain events actually happened, but of how they are remembered by its author or rather authors. *Mémoires* was in fact the result of the

¹ Guy Debord (avec Asger Jorn), *Mémoires* (Internationale situationniste: Copenhagen, 1958).

collaboration between Guy Debord and Asger Jorn. Although assembled in 1957, the year the Situationist International was founded (and when Debord was just turning twenty-six) the book wasn't published until late 1958. This book of memoirs occupies the position between the two poles that Guy Debord referred to as the memorable (*mémorable*) on the one side, and on the other, the threat of oblivion through forgetting (*la menace de l'oubli*).² Between the eruptive event and the passing of time is the moment of recollection, or what Debord calls irreversible time (*temps irréversible*), a time that tracks the past in its very transience. To capture this passing of time (without petrifying it) is the impulse behind the Situationists' archival project more generally.

The title page of *Mémoires* announced that it was 'composed entirely of prefabricated elements' and indeed it is a book made up of collaged fragments *détourné* from a variety of sources including newspapers, travel literature, building plans, cartoons, adverts, old etchings and wood cuts etc. For example, [fig. 56] juxtaposes an advert for Guinness with what looks like an architect's plan of a room, with all the architectural features highlighted and labelled: mirror (*glace*), ceiling (*plafond*), chimney (*cheminée*) etc. Somewhat out of place, in the bottom left hand corner, is a drawing of a reclining semi-nude female figure, whose bubbled speech translates as: 'we have plenty of memories from other civilizations...of strange things'. This strange room is reminiscent of the Surrealist Max Ernst's collage *The Masters Bedroom* (1920), an equally bizarre room occupied with out of place creatures. Yet, the Situationist image also depicts a particular landscape of the mind as constructed within early nineteenth century Romanticism, one that Raphael Samuel has described as pictured 'not as a watchtower but as a labyrinth, a subterranean place full of contrived corridors and

² Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle* (Gallimard: Paris, 1992). Thesis 133, p. 132.

hidden passageways'.³ But this model of the mind as an enclosed room is at the same time undone. It is infiltrated and contaminated by a stain of blood orange liquid that seeps out at the top of its insecure ceiling. This fluid leak intimates that perhaps a different model of memory is at stake for the Situationists, one that is not enclosed or secure. The pool or splotch of colour was Asger Jorn's contribution not only to this particular image, but also throughout the pages of this collaborative book project. On the front cover of *Mémoires* Jorn's splashes of coloured ink were described as 'supporting structures' [fig. 57].⁴ This reveals that the drips played a productive role in representing the fragmented history recounted here. For example in [fig. 58], the gaze of the reader is directed to follow the branch like trails of blue ink, only to arrive at strange destinations: Thomas de Quincey, or Barbara, or drink, the reader is even lead to an incurable wound (*l'inguérissable blessure*) that the criss-crossing stitches of ink cannot suture; a suitable metaphor for the openness of the story that the injured form of *Mémoires* reiterates.⁵

In the 'Attestations' that supplements the 1993 re-edition of *Mémoires*, Debord confirms that it was made out of stolen readymade texts and images and that this mode of fabrication was to be considered as 'a mode of *potlatch*', that is to say 'a sumptuous gift' that was freely given away –and indeed in its original form the book was never for sale, but given away to friends.⁶ With hindsight, Debord also adds a quote from the first volume of his autobiography, *Panegyrique* of 1989: 'our only demonstrations, which

³ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, Vol. I: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (Verso: London, 1999), p. ix. For an account of the historically changing structure or models of memory see Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Harmondsworth: London, 1978).

⁴ *Mémoires* was republished in limited edition by (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993). Quotes and illustrations are taken from this re-edition. The difference between the original and the re-edition is that the original book's sandpaper covers have been replaced with textured paper.

⁵ Contrary to Claire Gilman who argues that all the elements, from images, to drips to words, on the pages of *Mémoires* are made equivalent due their reduction 'to the state of the photographic', I insist that there is still a difference in registers: of a temporal order, in the layering affect and a formal one, where a drip (if not the index of an authentic gesture) can still metaphorically seep into and disrupt the word etc. See Claire Gilman, 'Asger Jorn's Avant-Garde Archives' in *October* (no. 79, Winter, 1997), pp. 33–48, (p. 45).

⁶ Affirmation of the free status of the original book appears in Debord's 'Attestations' in *Mémoires* (October 1993), not paginated. This 1993 re-edition reneges on the ideal potlatch form of the original by being for sale. Of course this gift aspect is reminiscent of the Lettrist International's equally free journal *Potlatch*, for more details see chapter 2.

remained rare and brief in the first years, were intended to be completely unacceptable; first of all especially in their form and later, as they acquired depth, especially by their content. They had not been accepted'.⁷ The pertinent question that arises here is in what ways is *Mémoires* an unacceptable archive, and how is its historical subject, the Situationists themselves, presented as equally unacceptable to conventional processes of historicization?

A Scrapbook Diary

Mémoires is divided into three sections: it opens with 'June 1952', the year that Debord's first film *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* (*Scream in Favour of de Sade*) was premiered [fig. 59]. The title of this film appears in the top right hand corner of the page. And in the bottom right hand corner is a quote from Debord concerning the concept of the 'situation': 'the future will be the overturning of situations, or nothing'. This was printed in the first issue of the Lettrist journal *Ion*, (1952), on the occasion of the first publication of a transcript of *Hurlements*.⁸ The cartoon image, with a figure pointing to a blank screen, makes a captioned reference to the film as an example of the first failed or spoilt (*raté*) cinema. In fact, *Hurlements* was a film that contained no images, only a white screen when the sound track contained dialogue and a black screen accompanied by silence, which was more than sixty minutes out of the film's eighty minute running time (the last twenty-four minutes was silence and darkness).⁹ The second section of the

⁷ Debord, 'Attestations' in *Mémoires* (1993), no pagination. Guy Debord, *Panegyrique* (Gérard Lebovici: Paris, 1989). See also Guy Debord, *Panegyric*, translated by James Brook (Verso: London, 1991) p.17.

⁸ The transcript of 'Hurlements' in *Ion* (no. 1, April, 1952) shows that originally the film was to be a collage of sound and images détourné from a variety of sources. When the film was actually produced in 1952 it had no images at all. For a copy of this first transcript see *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'internationale situationniste*, edited by Gerard Berreby (Editions Alia: Paris, 1985), pp. 109-123.

⁹ On Debord's films see Thomas Y Levin 'Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord' in the exhibition catalogue *On the Passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time*, edited by Elizabeth Sussman et al (ICA: London/Boston, 1989), pp. 72-123. The title of this catalogue is the same as Debord's 1959 film. For transcripts of films see Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle and Other Films*

book, 'December 1952' records the formation of the Lettrist International and 'the Paris of the young men and girls who haunt the Left bank' [fig. 60]. The page is scattered with words speaking of dark passages, asphyxiation, night, no sunshine etc., in stark contrast to the backlit burst of orange spreading out and surrounding the white avenues littered with snippets of text. The final section of the book, 'September 1953', a time when the Lettrist International itself was beginning to fall apart, ends with the desire to speak the most beautiful language of the century; a portent perhaps for the project of the future Situationist movement, just being formed at the same moment at which this recollection, of its important pre-history, was also being formed [fig. 61]. This image is full of Lettrist concepts, from the *dérive* (meaning to drift), to urbanism and festival, to games, which in turn were to become key terms in the Situationist lexicon.

The structure of the Situationists' pre-history is formed out of fragments and debris. This gives *Mémoires* the appearance of a scrapbook diary. Cut up photos of members of the group drunk in the café *Chez Moineau*, themselves *détourné* by Debord from the Dutch photographer Ed Van der Elsken's photo-novel *Love on the Left Bank*,¹⁰ are sandwiched between pages of a heterogeneous mix of everyday cultural detritus [fig. 62]. The explosive potential of the floating debris is intimated in the bottom right hand corner of the page by the schematic drawing of a volcano (perhaps taken from a school exercise book), which seems to spew out the flame red bursts of ink, along with the motes of images and texts. The device of collaging low and kitsch elements was deployed earlier in 1957 in another book produced by the collaboration of Debord and

(Rebel Press: London, 1992). Also see Guy Debord, *Oeuvres cinématographiques complètes, 1952-1978* (Champ Libre: Paris, 1978).

¹⁰ Ed van der Elsken, *Love on the Left Bank* (Andre Deutsch: London, 1957) and *Parijs! Fotos 1950-1954* (Bert Bakker: Amsterdam, 1981). Details of Debord's appropriations from de Elsken appear in Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Picador: London, 1990) p.377. For a visual comparison of the photos *détourné* by Debord see Roberto Ohrt, *Phantom AvantGarde; Eine Geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst* (Edition Nautilus: Hamburg, 1990), especially pp. 52-71.

Jorn called *Fin de Copenhagen*.¹¹ Allegedly put together in twenty-four hours from newspapers and magazines bought at a single Danish kiosk [fig. 63] its format mirrors that of *Mémoires*. Even the word, 'air' and 'dust' float mid-centre across the page, drawing attention to the similarity of both books' shared dissipated form.

The producer of these *détournements* of cultural debris appears in the guise of a rag-picker, sifting through the layers of dust, looking for reusable trash. Presented in the guise of a collector of refuse, the Situationist archivist can perhaps be interpreted here as an updated version of the Surrealist 'rag-picker-of-the-outmoded': that avant-garde figure whom Walter Benjamin singled out as able to perceive how 'destitution – can be suddenly transformed into revolutionary nihilism'.¹² I suggest, however, that for the Situationist rag-picker the revolutionary potential of the cut-up and scattered detritus was not its brute materiality, as for example was the case with Louis Aragon's praise for the low and profane elements of collage as the means to challenge the high art of painting as described in his essay '*La peinture au défi*'.¹³ Rather, the revolutionary potential at stake is of a temporal order, in the form of salvaging discarded time. That is, the low and throwaway form of *Mémoires* can be considered as opening out onto the repressed and discarded aspects of a past history, namely, the history of those outlaws and lowlifes excluded by the dominant or official narratives of history. According to Debord's interpretation, conventional historical narratives were the prerogative of the ruling classes, the means by which they shored up and secured the historical legacy of the privileged. Therefore, to reflect upon conventional chronicles, archives and monuments was to reflect upon power, whereby, *détournant* Novalis, Debord asserts:

¹¹ Guy Debord and Asger Jorn, *Fin de Copenhagen*, reprinted (Editions Allia: Paris, 1986). First published in May 1957 (Bauhaus Imaginiste: Copenhagen, 1957).

¹² Walter Benjamin, 'Surrealism' in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, (Verso: London, 1979), pp. 225-239, (p.229).

¹³ Louis Aragon, '*La peinture au défi*' in *Les collages* (Hermann: Paris, 1965), pp. 35-71.

“writings are the thoughts of the state”, said Novalis, and “archives are its memory.”¹⁴

In contrast, the Situationist archive would record the lived experiences of those people forgotten by the Spectacle’s official version of history. For Debord, it was precisely all those people(s) skirting the margins of history whose stories and experiences had become ‘bereft of language or concept,’ with the result that these excluded figures lacked: ‘any critical access to its own antecedents, which are nowhere recorded. It cannot be communicated. And it is misunderstood and forgotten to the benefit of the spectacle’s false memory of the unmemorable’.¹⁵ This challenge to the hierarchy of the official archive is spelled out in the fragment *détourné* from Shakespeare which provides the preface to the ‘Time and History’ section of Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle*: ‘O, gentlemen, the time of life is short!...An if we live, we live to tread on kings’.¹⁶ The Situationists cast their own history in the role of the outcast, relegated to the margins of official narratives, and themselves in the role of misfits and criminals. The low quality of the *détourné* mnemonic traces mirrored the low value attributed to these excluded narratives belonging to ‘the young hoodlum girls’ and ‘the many rebels destined for bad ends’ that Debord described as characteristic of the Situationists’ early social milieu, in volume one of his autobiography *Panegyric*.¹⁷ In turn, the violence of the excision of these voices from the hegemonic version of history is captured in the fragmented and sadistic form of the cut-up images and texts. Here, sublimation is not the goal of the representational strategy of the disjunctive collage, but rather what Georges Bataille calls sadistic: ‘art...proceeds in this way by successive destructions. To the extent that it liberates libidinal instincts, these instincts are sadistic’.¹⁸ The destructive and sadistic

¹⁴ Guy Debord, ‘Time and History’ in *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Zone Books: N.Y., 1995), Thesis 131, p. 96.

¹⁵ Ibid., Thesis 157, p. 114.

¹⁶ Debord, ‘Time and History’, p. 91. The *détournement* is from Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, Part I.

¹⁷ Debord, *Panegyric*, p. 16.

¹⁸ Quoted in Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995), p. 113.

aspect of the techniques of cutting used in the construction of *Mémoires* is captured in [fig. 64]. Reminiscent of Jorn's description of his series of modified paintings, as an act of sacrifice, the cutting up of the female figure also exposes a sexual component to the act of violating images. Yet, these images, probably stolen from soft porn magazines, not only point to the fantasy of sadism, as a masculine one, but, as examples of low or unacceptable images, they can also be read as a metaphor for all those that are marginalized from the official archive. In turn, the sadistic element of cutting up the image highlights the violence of their excision from history.

A Narrative *Dérive*

In the essay 'Détournement as Negation and Prelude' published in *internationale situationniste* (no. 3, December, 1959), *Mémoires* is described as a book in which 'the writing on each page runs in all directions and the reciprocal relations of the phrases are invariably incomplete'.¹⁹ On encountering the labyrinthine structure of *Mémoires* it is clear to the reader that this is no straight story: errant, drifting, looping, this is an enigmatic tale. The Situationists used the term *dérive* to capture a particular movement of aleatory drifting. In *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, 1958) the word *dérive* is defined as follows: 'a mode of experimental behaviour linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances'.²⁰ In *Mémoires*, this transient passage is transformed into the drifting between images and texts caught up in the errant pathways inscribed by the trails of coloured ink provided by Jorn. In the essay

¹⁹ Translated in Ken Knabb, *Situationist International, Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1981), p. 56.

²⁰ 'Définitions' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 1, June, 1958), p. 13. On the spatial connotations of the pedestrian *dérive* and the concept of a concrete and situated urban *dériviste* opposed to the model of the flâneur see Thomas McDonough, 'Situationist Space' in *October* (no. 67, Winter, 1994), pp. 59-77. For a Situationist account of various urban *dérives* see Guy-Ernest Debord, 'Two Accounts of the *Dérive*' in the exhibition catalogue *On a passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time*, edited by Elizabeth Sussman et al, pp. 135-139.

‘*L’urbanisme unitaire à la fin des années 50*’ (*internationale situationniste*, no.3, December, 1959) the Situationists described Thomas de Quincey’s intoxicated wanderings through the streets of London looking for his lost Anne (as recounted in his book *The Confessions of an English Opium Eater*), as a precursor of the *dérive*. An extract of de Quincey’s model for getting lost in the city of London, looking for his lost Ann in Titchfield-street, is pasted onto the pages of *Mémoires* [fig. 65]. This compact island of text situated in the top right-hand corner of the page itself seems as lost and cut adrift as the other isolated groups of text; an appearance of errant drifting supported by Jorn’s wandering blotches and uncertain flotsams of green ink. Intoxicated drifting represented a strategy to find the invisible ‘Northwest Passage’, a metaphoric pathway to a new and better way of life, which was imagined as hidden within the present (rather than external to it). It is through the slippages and gaps in this recollected story that a new and strange land might be found, not as a certainty but as a potentiality. And this is reflected in the form of *Mémoires* as a never-ending story. Forever open and incomplete, its patchwork of words and images can be forever woven together and undone to form constantly shifting stories in the readers’ mind. Also, as a printed book it can be endlessly replicated (at least in theory). But, its repeatable form does not imply a closing down of the narrative being recounted, because its aleatory form is also endlessly reproduced. This parody of mass production, where chance and error replace regularity and sameness, could be seen as emerging a year later in 1959 with Gallizio’s production of ‘Industrial Painting’. As with *Mémoires*, accident rather than competence determined the works construction.

The Insubordination of Words

The unconventionality of the non-linear narrative is exacerbated by Debord's use of readymade citations *détourné* from others, as opposed to the use of the author's own words. In part, this demonstrates, as Greil Marcus notes, a refusal of the 'valorization of original speech'.²¹ Yet, in implying that we all speak a language that is already constituted for us, it also demonstrates that at the level of individual utterances all language codes are susceptible to the process of *détournement*, whereby words can be dissolved and recoded. This also implies that, for the Situationists, the meaning of words is not inherent, but dependant upon context and use. Yet, the context, like the open form of the narrative in *Mémoires*, is also understood as not fixed, allowing for the meaning of its words to be altered: for example, according to the different contexts occupied by spatially and temporally differentiated readers.

In the 1963 essay 'All the King's Men' the Situationists claim 'that we live in language as within polluted air'.²² Words are polluted in the sense that they are made to work on behalf of the dominant organization of life, and the symptomatic form of polluted words in the era of the Spectacle is defined as 'information'. However, words can never be completely automatized because: 'words are not in themselves *informationist*; they embody forces that can upset the most careful calculations'.²³ No matter how exploited and polluted words become they remain in some sense fundamentally strange and foreign, as well as inherently unstable, capable, as Vaneigem demonstrated in the case of graffiti, of immanently subverting, even liquidating,

²¹ Greil Marcus, 'Guy Debord's *Mémoires*; A Situationist Primer' in *On the passage of rather a few people through...*, pp. 125-131, (p. 126).

²² Translated in Ken Knabb, *Situationist International, Anthology*, op. cit, pp. 114-117, (p.114). For original version see 'All the King's Men' *internationale situationniste* (no.8, 1963), pp. 29-33. The title is a reference to the many jobs that words can perform as described by 'Humpty Dumpty' in Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass and what Alice found there* (Macmillan: London, 1995), a facsimile edition of original 1872 publication and its illustrations by Sir John Tenniel.

²³ Knabb, *Situationist International*, p. 114.

conventional language regimes. More generally, it is the Situationist practice of the *détournement* of language that demonstrates: 'the insubordination of words, of the impossibility for power to totally recuperate created meanings, to fix an existing meaning once and for all; in a word, the objective impossibility of Newspeak'.²⁴ A parodic subversion of the militarization of language, its being made to 'fall in step' with the Spectacle, appears in [fig. 66]. Here the regimented and contained phalanxes of soldiers are confronted with its enemy, namely a different economy of language as represented by the formless pale green terrain that hems them in. For the Situationists, a model for the desertion and resistance of words was also manifested in particular forms of modern writing, and here the Situationists include as exemplars, Baudelaire, the Dadaists and Joyce. The practice of the insubordination of words was, for the Situationists, a symptom of the revolutionary crisis of modern society more generally. And in these terms, Debord and Jorn's *détourné* memoirs could also be considered as a symptom of the crisis of the Spectacle. However, as opposed to an unconscious or symptomatic response, for Debord at least, his babble of words was self-consciously understood as part of a counter hegemonic strategy. That is, as a form of errant prose, whereby the logic of information was challenged by non-sense, or specifically by a form of language that the Situationists called 'poetry'. The disorder and incoherency of the language on the page was deliberately staged and productive, indicating that the task of the revolutionary subject was to create a revolutionary form of language: 'every critique of the old world has been made in the language of that world, yet directed against it and therefore automatically in a different language'.²⁵ That is, one of the Situationists tactics was to confront acceptable and ordered forms of language with its constitutive unruly

²⁴ Mustapha Khayati, 'Les Mots Captifs: Préface à un Dictionnaire Situationniste' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 10, March, 1966), pp. 50-55. Translated in Knabb as 'Captive Words: Preface to a Situationist Dictionary' in *Situationist International*, pp. 170-176, (p. 171).

²⁵ Knabb, 'Captive Words', *Situationist International*, p. 170.

other (much like the cop facing the rebel). The form of language itself reveals its revolutionary desire: if the language of power is defined by its quest for 'unambiguous signals and instantaneous binary classification'²⁶ then it make sense to challenge it with its other, whereby the disruptive language presented in *Mémoires* fulfils the latter desire for a liberated and revolutionary language, defined as 'recovering its richness, language which breaks its rigid significations and simultaneously embraces words, music, cries, gestures, painting, mathematics, facts, acts'.²⁷ The slippages of the words on the page become a metaphor for the ability of words to escape the logic of information or Newspeak, and instead to fall by the wayside, to get lost and to lose the sense of conventional meaning. Against the armoured language of information, emerges the radically disarmoured or ecstatic language of resistance, namely Situationist poetry.

The unsettled form of Situationist poetry reveals the other side to the language of the Spectacle's symbolic order [fig.67]. At the bottom of the page the fragment of written language appears to fold back on itself, partly sliced by a gash of purple ink. Above the dissected text is an explosion of colour, the concentrated centre of which fades as the colours disperses to the edges of the page. Like an ignited firework, its outer sprays fall back onto the textual embers below. A precedent for the Situationists' language games of course stemmed from the poetic experiments of the Lettrists. For example, François Dufrêne's poetry involved breaking words down (a process that Isou called 'chiseling') into its component syllables and phonemes. Sidra Stich refers to his poetry as a 'polyphonic verse based on arbitrary improvisations'.²⁸ She also describes his 'scream-rhythms' (*crirhythmes*) as: 'sound compositions constructed from primal, natural shrieks and bellows which call to mind the techniques of the subversive modes of

²⁶ Ibid., p. 117.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

²⁸ Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein* (Hayward Gallery/Cantz: London, 1995), p. 31.

communication acclaimed by Antonin Artaud'.²⁹ The reference to Artaud is significant here, especially his definition of language in terms of 'the possibilities of dynamic expression in space as opposed to the expressive possibilities of dialogue'.³⁰ The dynamic articulation of image, text and coloured drips in *Mémoires* certainly dramatizes the page rather than communicates any clear dialogue. And what Artaud called the 'dissociative and vibratory'³¹ effects of poetry on our sensibilities, caused by its revelation of the material aspect of language, that is, languages' ability to almost physical assault the receiver, is an apt description of the discordant and palpable affect of *Mémoires*' format. Debord's 1952 representation of the 'screams' of de Sade (*Hurlements en favor de Sade*) in terms of an iconoclastic attack on the conventional relation between soundtrack and image in the cinema, is now translated to the 'cry-rhythms' of text and image in this book of irritated memory fragments.³² The almost palpable affect of the poetic language of *Mémoires* (along with Mallarmé and Joyce) could even be said to anticipate what, more recently, Julia Kristeva has called the linguistic *chora*, especially in its following definition: 'the *chora* is a rhythmic pulsion rather than a new language. It constitutes, in other words, the heterogeneous, disruptive dimension of language, that which can never be caught up in the closure of traditional linguistic theory'.³³ The important point here in Situationist terms, is that radical poetry

²⁹ Stich, *Yves Klein*, p.31. In fact, Artaud's lecture at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier on January 13, 1947 was attended by various members of the Lettrist movement and had a great impact on their theories of language. Artaud also read his poems at some Lettrist events, though there is no evidence that he ever joined the movement itself.

³⁰ Antonin Artaud, 'The Theater of Cruelty (First manifesto)' in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, edited by Susan Sontag (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1988), pp. 242-251, (p. 242).

³¹ Ibid., p. 242.

³² There is also a link to Vaneigem's interest in the sensuality of subversive poetry with Artaud's concept of language as physically seductive and tempting.

³³ Toril Moi, 'Marginality and Subversion: Julia Kristeva' in *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (Routledge: London, 1985), pp. 150-173, (p.162). For Kristeva's analysis of the revolutionary potential of modern poetry see her book *La Révolution du langage poétique* (Seuil: Paris, 1974). See also Julia Kristeva, *Desire in language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, edited by Léon Roudiez and translated by Alice Jardine et al (Blackwell: Oxford, 1980). For an historical and political context for Kristeva's analysis of the structure of language and her critique of the stabilizing illusion of the sign see

reveals that residue of language, forever strange and foreign (*radicalement étrangers*), which is already within language and thus, once exposed, has the potential to undo language from the inside out.

Recent feminist analyses of particular language regimes have, of course, also raised the issue of the sexuality of forms of writing, an issue not explicitly addressed by Situationist discourse. But the issue is raised in their pitting one type of language regime against another. For example, on the last page of *Fin de Copenhagen* [fig. 68], a coherent language of instructions sits uneasily on the splatters of yellow ink that seep up through the text from below. It is only on this last page (following the previous pages made up of an ambiguous and heterogeneous mix of texts and images) that a binary classification occurs in the form of a sexual division at the level of language. The written instruction, on the left hand side of the page, requests the presumably male reader, to urgently send in a statement explaining 'why your girl is the sweetest girl in town': a statement to be accompanied by a photograph of the girl who, according to the small print and in parentheses '(must be single, and from sixteen to nineteen, inclusive)'. The return of ordered language is here aligned with the return of sexual discriminations, where the 'male reader' is given orders to send in photos of girls, who are not addressed as readers but as passive images. The return to a language of injunctions could be read as a parodic challenge to the Spectacle's language of power, which the Situationists defined according to its quest for 'unambiguous signals' and 'instantaneous binary classification',³⁴ which in this case [fig. 68] is also a binary logic premised on a sexual hierarchy. From this perspective, it is possible to speculate that Debord and Jorn's

Jacqueline Rose, 'Julia Kristeva –Take Two' in *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (Verso: London, 1991), pp. 141-164.

³⁴ Knabb, 'Captive Words' in *Situationist International*, p. 117.

refusal of any ordered language in *Mémoires* is a refusal of phallogocentrism.³⁵

Considering that the title 'All the King's Men' (used for the Situationists' essay on the subversive potential of language) was stolen from Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty, perhaps like Alice, they go through the looking glass of everyday language to reveal its concealed uncanny side. That is, like Alice, a girl, it is only in the guise of the feminine that this imaginative realm is accessed. However, this is not to suggest that Debord and Jorn positively embrace a distinctly feminine writing, for this would be to maintain (in an inverted form) a binary logic of classification based on sexual opposition, where ordered language remains the masculine other to an irrational poetry now feminized. Indeed, in both *Fin de Copenhagen* and in *Mémoires* the language of sense is represented as oscillating with non-sense. It is on the cusp of language, on that slippery point in-between its crystallization into fixed binaries or its dispersal into total chaos, that what could be called the inter-world (or threshold space) of Situationist poetry is balanced precariously. Again, a more recent feminist attempt to keep the different registers of language in constant tension, rather than attempt to resolve any contradictions that emerge in their confrontation, supplies a useful analogy here. Namely, Hélène Cixous' more recent concept of subversive writing as a form of an 'other bisexuality' which requires one: 'to admit that writing is precisely working (in) the in-between, inspecting the process of the same and of the other...not fixed in sequence of struggle and expulsion or some other form of death but infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another'.³⁶ The sexuality of Situationist poetry is indeed ambivalent, but it certainly succeeds in distorting normative perspectives. In the case of *Mémoires*, this book puts conventional language through a

³⁵ For a feminist analysis of the phallic and patriarchal structure of ordered language see Toril Moi, 'Patriarchal Reflections: Luce Irigaray's Looking-Glass' in *Sexual/Textual Politics*, pp. 127-149.

³⁶ Toril Moi, 'Hélène Cixous: An Imaginary Utopia' in *Sexual/Textual Politics*, pp. 102-126, (p. 109). See also Cixous, 'The laugh of the Medusa' in *New French Feminisms*, edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Harvester: Brighton, 1980).

blender, and the result is a strange cocktail of words and images. This poetry of estranged and corrupted language then becomes the prism through which the Situationists look, filter and recode the world, as opposed to viewing it through the distorting lens of the *informationist* speak of the media and the Spectacle.

An Involuntary Archive

It is the affective potential of this book of memories, produced in part through the shocked and awkward juxtapositions of images and texts, that reveals a different model of the archival subject, namely, that of a storyteller, as defined by Walter Benjamin in his essay 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire'.³⁷ In opposition to the task of relaying information, the storyteller embeds the story in his/her life: 'in order to pass it on as experience to those listening. It thus bears the mark of the storyteller much as the earthen vessel bears the marks of the potter's hand'.³⁸ Transposing this model of the storyteller to Debord (in collaboration with Jorn) I suggest that it is in its form of writing, its particular form of making an archive of the self, that *Mémoires* bears a trace of the lived experience of its producer(s). There would seem to be some contradiction here, in claiming that an archive can preserve the trace or index of the author's affective experience, along with its capacity to shock. As a monument commemorating past events, the archive concerns storing and preserving histories and memories, that is, it freezes them in a time capsule that is to some extent a dead and inert correlate of the present. In contrast, affective experience is not inert but disruptive. As a disruptive potential, affective or lived experience can in fact be aligned with the workings of a particular form of memory. For example, drawing on the writings of Reik, Benjamin makes the following claim: 'the function of remembrance is essentially conservative,

³⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire' in *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn (Fontana Press: London, 1992), pp. 152-190.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

memory is destructive'.³⁹ If the archive is on the side of conservation, then memory is on the side of breakdown. To explain this definition Benjamin turns to a particular form of memory, what he calls involuntary memory (*mémoire involuntaire*), a term borrowed from Marcel Proust. For Benjamin, Proust's eight-volume work, *À la Recherche de Temps Perdus*,⁴⁰ was an attempt to produce experience synthetically, at a time when the natural ability to assimilate the data of the surrounding world, by way of experience, was fast disappearing. As proof of this experiential failure, Benjamin comments that 'newspapers constitute one of the many evidences of such an inability', because as the deliverer of information, its task is 'to isolate what happens from the realm in which it could affect the experience of the reader' and worse still 'the linguistic usage of newspapers paralysed the imagination of the readers'.⁴¹ For the Situationists, the Spectacle and its *informationist* language appears, in fact, as an updated form of such a paralysis of the imagination. At a general level, in the media and information age of the Spectacle the speed of the image and the accelerated turnover of events on the pages of the daily newspapers, on the T.V. screen etc., prevented the modern subject from assimilating the received data by way of lived (*vécu*) experience. The Spectacle also isolates what happens from the affective realm of experience as Debord makes clear in his *The Society of the Spectacle*: 'the pseudo-events that vie for attention in the spectacle's dramatizations have not been lived (*vécus*) by those who are thus informed about them...thanks to the precipitation with which the spectacle's pulsing machinery (*pulsion de la machinerie spectaculaire*) replaces one by the next'.⁴² The problem for the Situationists was how to slow down the Spectacle's precipitous machinery in order to allow the transience of events to be returned to the realm of affective experience.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 157.

⁴⁰ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, republished in three large volumes (Penguin Classics: London, 1987).

⁴¹ Benjamin, 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire', p. 155.

⁴² Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 157, p. 114.

Proust developed the concept of the *mémoire involuntaire* as an index of affective experience. This concept is introduced when Proust recounts how poorly he was able to consciously remember his childhood town of Combray. Then one afternoon the taste of a kind of pastry called a *madeleine* transported him back to the past, but in a manner more vivid and shocking than any 'promptings of the memory which obeyed the call of attentiveness'.⁴³ Rather the opposite was the case, his vivid recollection of the past emerged unconsciously, through a moment of inattentiveness that was registered as a shock. For Proust, this sudden and unexpected eruption of the past, through the screen of an involuntary memory, was proof that the past is located 'somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect, and unmistakably present in the material object (or in the sensation which such an object arouses in us), though we have no idea which one it is'.⁴⁴ That is, access to the past is more vivid by way of involuntary memory (triggered by a material object) because it bears the indexical mark, as trace, of the situation that gave rise to it. In contrast, what Proust calls voluntary memory (*mémoire volontaire*), which is on the side of attentiveness and the intellect, since it is a conscious (as opposed to an unconscious) manifestation, the information that it gives us about the past retains no indexical trace of it. In a world when affective experience was being eroded, the flashes of the past, which were illuminated by the unconscious trace of a *mémoire involuntaire*, provided symptomatic proof that: 'only what has not been experienced explicitly and consciously, what has not happened to the subject as an experience, can become a component of the *mémoire involunatiare*'.⁴⁵ The involuntary memory is the trace of a traumatic moment, in the sense that it was a moment that was never consciously registered by the subject. It is only later, at another moment in time that this repressed

⁴³ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 155.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 157.

memory may come to light, and its presence is revealed by a shock or a strike in the subject.

It is this eruptive potential of the involuntary memory that I suggest is mimicked in the shocking and convulsive format of Debord and Jorn's collage of evocative mnemonic flashes. *Mémoires* is both an archive that preserves the recollected story pasted on its pages, but the manner of the preservation is also disruptive. That is, like the involuntary memory, it is its form that registers the traumatic trace of the Situationists' repressed past [fig. 69]. The sections of the street map of Paris, carefully selected to reveal some of the Situationists' favourite haunts, although well known, are barely visible behind the web-like barriers of turquoise ink. These maps of the past remain obscured, they never return to the surface of the page, a metaphor for the screen of memory, without incurring some damage. Yet, these memory morsels, as signs of their time, continue to bear the mark of the history from which they emerged. As an archive of remembrance, *Mémoires* seeks to preserve the outlawed or forgotten history of the Situationists, but it also seeks to function as a destructive memory within the hierarchal model of history that the Situationists contested. It is in this sense that *Mémoires* performs as an involuntary archive: that is, it stores its data but in a dispersed and proliferating form, registering the fact that within the act of remembrance, is the trace of a traumatic memory. The disruptive potential was also literally embodied in the original covers of *Mémoires*, which were made of sandpaper. The rough covers were protective of the inner material but literally damaging to its external book neighbours. Any material stored next to it would be scarred.⁴⁶ The risk to the actual material stored in the archive was a metaphor for the potential disruption that the Situationists posed to conventional processes of historicization that aimed to petrify the past. In other words, the

⁴⁶ The main library of University College London has attempted to avert the damaging potential of its copy of *Mémoires* by sealing its sandpaper covers in cling film: a veritable form of institutionalization not anticipated by the Situationists.

Situationists' fluid archive was a strategic antidote to the Spectacle understood as: 'the reigning social organization of a paralysed history, of a paralysed memory, of an abandonment of any history founded in historical time'.⁴⁷

There is another model of memory that the structure of *Mémoires* (as that of an involuntary archive) brings to mind, which is invoked in Freud's essay 'A Note Upon the "Mystic Writing Pad"' (c. 1925).⁴⁸ Freud's concern here was with how our mental apparatus appears to accomplish two contradictory processes: 'it has an unlimited receptive capacity for new perceptions and nevertheless lays down permanent—even though not unalterable- memory traces of them'.⁴⁹ That is, our mental apparatus is able to store information, necessary to memory, at the same time as allowing a space for new incoming perceptions. To account for the presence of these two, seemingly contradictory systems {one for storing impressions, the other dealing with immediate perceptions}. Freud used as an analogy a child's toy called the 'Mystic Writing-Pad', which like our perceptual apparatus, seems able to 'provide both an ever-ready receptive surface and permanent traces of the notes made upon it'.⁵⁰ The writing devise consisted of a slab of dark brown resin or wax over which was laid a thin transparent sheet, the top section of which was attached to the slab, the bottom section however was free to be raised and lowered. This transparent sheet was in fact comprised of two layers that can be detached from each other, except at their two ends. 'The upper layer is a transparent piece of celluloid; the lower sheet is made of thin transparent waxed paper'⁵¹ which adheres lightly to the upper surface of the wax slab when not in use. Drawing on the top sheet

⁴⁷ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 158, p. 114.

⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'A Note upon the "Mystic Writing Pad"' (1924/5) in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, The Penguin Freud Library Volume 11, translated by James Strachey (Penguin Books: London, 1984), pp. 427-434.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 430.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 431.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 431.

with a stylus presses the lower sheet onto the tablet beneath, producing a graphic impression that is visible through the thin top sheet. This impression can then be made to disappear by pulling the bottom sheet away from the wax tablet. The top sheet once again appears as a new terrain, and like the perceptual system, ready once more to record fresh data. Yet, the wax tablet beneath, like memory, always retains a permanent, yet hidden, trace of the marks of the recording stylus. What is the connection of Freud's model of memory and perception to *Mémoires*? I suggest that the visually layered structure of the pages, where images and texts alternately recede and surface between the routes and puddles of dripped and splotted coloured ink, or occasionally appear to be folded back on to one another [fig. 70] structurally mirrors the workings of the 'Mystic Writing Pad'. It does so in the form of a series of snap-shots or freeze frames of the top celluloid sheet and its graphic traces, just before it is lifted to reveal the blank pages or virgin fields situated in-between each of the three sections of *Mémoires*.⁵² This image dramatizes a model of memory as a sort of palimpsest, where sense impressions are obscured over time as they are written over with new sensory perceptions. But nothing gets erased, there is always a trace of the past in the present, the old intermingles with the new. In this instance [fig. 70] the text almost makes itself legible, as it seems to rise to the surface of the page, before ^{being} blotted out by Jorn's liquid blue blockages. The layering of the colour and the text also emphasises the temporal layering of the collage effect, where it is unclear which came first, the text or the transparent veils of ink.

⁵² In relation to Freud and his analysis of dream works, *Mémoires* could perhaps be described as dream-like, in the way that the trivial residues of everyday life return to take on strange and bizarre connections and connotations, although in this case this is a conscious strategy. On the complex workings of the dream form see Sigmund Freud, 'The Dream-Work' in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Penguin Freud Library, Volume 4, translated by James Strachey (Penguin Books: London, 1991), pp. 381-651.

The Roar of the Cataract of Time

The cataract forms a cloudy veil over the eye, which fogs clear vision. In a similar way, access to the past is also always veiled, in the sense of made hazy, by the passage of time. But another form of opacity has also marked Debord's entire life, namely the hazy stupor of inebriation. In *Panegyric* (volume one) Debord admits 'that drinking has been the most constant and present' passion in his life.⁵³ Through the eyes of intoxication the recollection of the past is inevitably distorted, whereby even the smallest details may take on exaggerated proportions. It is in part an intoxicated history that is recorded in *Mémoires*. Through the bottom of a glass, as through the prism of insubordinate language, it is possible to reconstruct the world differently, from a new and surprising perspective. The struggle to remember is also indicated by the book's confused format, although this is a conceit of course, in that its representational form is part of an intentional strategy, rather than the product of an actual forgetting of the past. Debord (with Jorn's help) took care to reconstruct a particular history in a particular style (of *détournement*), and the historical subject that emerges from its pages is as fractious and irritable as the story that produced it. The narrative that is presented begs to be deciphered, but it seems to have no appropriate code, as part of the Situationist project to speak and to transform the conventional language of their time. On the last page of *Mémoires* [fig. 71] is a single phrase that translated reads: 'I used to want to speak (*je voulais parler*) the most beautiful language of my century'. In the past that is, there was desire to speak beautifully, meaning perhaps in a refined or literary manner. However, this past wish is brought to an end, not only by a thin wall of paint, but punctuated by a full stop of orange ink that spreads out beneath the text. This inkblot can be read as an error or as a defacement of the white page, but its magnification also enables the blot to

⁵³ Debord, *Panegyric*, p. 33.

take on its own beautiful, enigmatic form. An *informe* sign that perhaps registers the equally unbounded poetry that was to be called Situationist.

In the first volume of Debord's autobiography, *Panegyric*, he calls the passing of time 'the roar of the cataract of time. Never again will we drink so young'.⁵⁴ One meaning of the word cataract is a waterfall or a floodgate that releases a striking torrent of water. If the passing of time is analogous to this cascading rush of water then it raises a question of how *Mémoires* might go about capturing such a cataract of lost time in the silent and relatively immobile form of a book. Visually speaking, the heterogeneous flux of matter, although stilled on the page, gives an impression of movement through the shifts in spatial registers; sometimes the elements appear to swell and surface and at other times to recede and fade away [fig. 72]. Here, the blue ink stain (reading it like part of a Rorschach test) resembles an imprint that might be made from an inked up brain (in the manner of a potato print); between the two hemispheres, an image of a girl sitting at a bar radiates out, only to recede and fade away. Yet, it was precisely the accelerated flow of time perpetuated by the Spectacle, where as Debord aptly remarks 'that which the spectacle ceases to speak of for three days no longer exists', which contributed to the Spectacle's 'permanent preservation of a new historical immobility'.⁵⁵ So how can Debord's acceptance of the claim that 'Time does not wait',⁵⁶ be differentiated from the Spectacle's precipitation of time?

To answer this question it is necessary to clarify further the 'time' of the Spectacle. In the section of *The Society of the Spectacle* called 'Spectacular Time', Debord defines it as a commodified time, where time, mirroring the capitalist system of production, had been broken down into quantifiable 'homogeneous and exchangeable

⁵⁴ Debord, *Panegyric*, p. 28.

⁵⁵ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 143, p. 106.

⁵⁶ Debord, *Panegyric*, p. 71.

units' that suppressed any qualitative dimensions.⁵⁷ In opposition to time-as-commodity, is a qualitative temporal dimension that Debord called 'the irreversible time of the living'.⁵⁸ Historically this dimension of time belonged to the privileged or ruling classes and was recognized through their squandering of time in adventures, wars or lavish festivals: 'the owners of this historical surplus value were the masters of the knowledge and enjoyment of directly experienced events'.⁵⁹ Moreover, the class that ruled and organized social labour appropriated the limited surplus value, including any temporal surplus value, from the workers who followed the repetitive time of production. In other words, the ruling class were responsible for the violent expropriation of time from ordinary workers, that is to say, 'the spectacular restoration of time was only possible on the basis of this initial dispossession of the producers'.⁶⁰ The victory of the bourgeoisie may have been what Debord calls the 'victory of a profoundly historical time', but in the form of an expansion of 'the time corresponding to the economic form of production', rather than as a successful democratisation of the irreversible time of lived experience.⁶¹ Time-as-commodity colonized all social realms signalling the death of the epoch of festivals and excessive adventures and the birth of a truly ubiquitous spectacular time. The Spectacle introduced an epoch without festival, a time when those moments where previously 'the community would participate in a luxurious expenditure of life, are strictly unavailable to a society where neither community nor luxury exists'.⁶² The apotheosis came when Debord acknowledged in Thesis one of his book *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) that 'all that once was directly lived has become mere

⁵⁷ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 149, p. 110.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Thesis 128, p. 94.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Thesis 128, p. 94.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Thesis 159, p. 114.

⁶¹ Ibid., Thesis 141, p. 104.

⁶² Ibid., Thesis 154, p. 113.

representation' and where 'the reality of time has been replaced by its *publicity*'.⁶³ It is from the perspective of the homogeneous and empty time accredited to the Spectacle, that the Situationists' strategic love of festivals and excess makes sense. In the introduction to the 1993 reprinted edition of *Mémoires*, Debord reasserts the spirit of potlatch in which its original version was made. Perhaps the sumptuous and excessive form of this book can be interpreted as a potlatch of language and of the conventional forms of historical narratives. A temporal potlatch is figured here as a form of wasting time. The point is a kind of aimlessness, to wander through the pages of *Mémoires*, which had no detectible goal, such as a completed narrative, to pursue. It is a useless artefact as far as conventional forms of historiography are concerned. Greil Marcus notes that '*Mémoires* is playful before it is anything else, a celebration of what Asger Jorn once called "experiences without purpose, devoid of meaning."'”⁶⁴ An indecipherability represented by Jorn's dense yet elusive 'supporting' liquid structures. By its very uselessness (coupled with its heterogeneous form) *Mémoires* is able to return the reader to a time of play. Moreover, picking your way through the multiplicity of possible conjunctions serves to slow the act of reading down. This temporality of meandering subverts the Spectacle's precipitous time of production. Or rather, against the homogeneous and exchangeable units of productivist time is placed this gift of time-as-waste.

The Time of Dying

The ultimate metaphor for the expenditure of time is the last breath exhaled before dying. The anticipation of death, the embrace of one's mortality gives a sense of urgency to any desire to leave a trace, to be remembered. Mortality, the subject's finite being,

⁶³ Ibid., Thesis 154, p. 113.

⁶⁴ Greil Marcus, 'Guy Debord's *Mémoires*: A Situationist Primer', p. 127.

was another facet of time that for Debord was covered over by the Spectacle. It is this being towards death that the Spectacle, with its insistence on the value of the 'capital of youth', denies.⁶⁵ The pressure to hold back time, never to appear to age, situates the successfully spectacularized subject as stranded on the shores of a perpetual present (or rather the conditions of the Spectacle fulfil this delusional fantasy): 'immobilized at the distorted centre of the movement of the world, the consciousness of the spectator can have no sense of an individual life moving toward self-realization, or toward death'.⁶⁶ From this perspective Vaneigem's celebration of youth is in danger of being complicit with the Spectacle. However, it is youth's lust for life, their optimism and exuberance that Vaneigem idealizes, rather than a particular age. For the Situationists, it is the successfully spectacularized subject that displays a refusal to live life to the full, at every moment. This refusal is itself a symptom of the failure to acknowledge death, and manifests as a failure to live in the full or proper sense as clarified by Debord: 'the social absence of death is one with the social absence of life'.⁶⁷ It is possible to trace such a being toward death (and thus a celebration of life in its very transience) from the fragile and destructive form of *Mémoires*: on the outside its sandpaper covers can potentially reduce the shelf life of its book neighbours; on the inside, its contents appear fragile due to their disintegrating form; and as a limited edition book, its inevitable material decay is made emphatic. It is the in-built fragility of the Situationist archive that mirrors the fragility of life.

Part II: Alternative Monuments

If *Mémoires* represents an attempt to recover the lost and disruptive history of the Situationist International from a personal viewpoint, then by contrast Michèle

⁶⁵ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 160, p. 115.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Thesis 160, p. 115.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

Bernstein's alternative monuments such as *Victory of the Commune of Paris* [fig. 73] can be understood as attempts to archive forgotten and repressed collective revolutionary histories. Bernstein produced her series of 'Victories', as they were labelled at the time, for an exhibition of works by members of the Situationist International at the Galerie EXI in Odense, Denmark, in June 1963. The title of the show was 'Destruction of RSG 6: A collective demonstration of Situationist International' (*Destruktion af RSG 6: En Kollektiv Manifestation af Situationistisk International*).⁶⁸ In fact, this was the first and the last collective exhibition by the Situationist International in a gallery context.⁶⁹ The 1963 date of the *Destruktion* exhibition is however important, in that it dispels the myth that after the split in the movement in 1962, the so-called Debordist faction stopped making art. The dispute in fact was not about art or cultural forms of protest as such, but whether attacks on art and its institutions should be accompanied by broader social protests. As Guy Atkins remarks: 'Debord believed in the total rejection of the prevailing consumer society, whereas the Germans and the Scandinavians maintained that the existing institutions could be successfully infiltrated and undermined'.⁷⁰ At the fifth Situationist conference in Gothenburg, the former Spur group member Heimrad Prem suggested that artists should work within the possible, but Debord maintained that 'a conniving avant-garde was Public Enemy number 1'.⁷¹ By the end of the session tempers were frayed and epithets like 'cultural pimp' were hurled around. The dilemma of course for artists was that they needed to sell their work to live, and even Debord and the so-called radical faction survived by selling paintings that had been given to them by

⁶⁸ *Destruktion af RSG 6* (Galerie EXI: Odense, 1963).

⁶⁹ This refers to the Debordist faction of the Situationist International. Those who had been expelled or had chosen to resign from the first Situationist International by 1963 did continue to exhibit their work in galleries, including Constant, Jorn, de Jong, Prem etc. either as individual artists, or as members of the Second International where relevant. On the second Situationist International see Stewart Home, 'On the theoretical poverty of the Specto-Situationists and the legitimate status of the Second International' in his *Assault on Culture* (A.K. Press: Stirling, 1991), pp. 41-44. For a revised view of the Scandinavian section see Simon Ford, 'The Secret Society of the Spectacle' in *Art Monthly* (no. 177, June, 1994), pp. 14-16.

⁷⁰ Atkins, *Asger Jorn: The Crucial Years*, p. 60.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Asger Jorn.⁷² Although after 1963, the Debordist faction (unlike Constant, Jorn, Nash, Prem and other members of the Situationist Bauhaus) did abandon the gallery location and turn to the street.

In Debord's introductory essay to the show, entitled 'The Situationists and the New Action Forms in Politics and Art',⁷³ the title 'Destruction RSG 6' is explained as a direct reference to: 'the English comrades [the *Spies for Peace*] who made public in April plans for the "Regional Shelters of Government -6."' ⁷⁴ That is, the 'Spies for Peace' group made public the secret location of the British government's nuclear shelters. It was this attack on the ruling organization of social space that the Situationists claimed they wanted to salute and carry further by: 'arranging in Denmark the manifestation "Destruction of RSG-6". We recognize hereby not only this struggle's international dissemination, but just as much its extension to another front, to the artistic side of the same global struggle'.⁷⁵

Alongside Bernstein's series of 'Victories' (three in all), the other contributors to this exhibition included: Guy Debord, who is assigned the title film maker and editor in the catalogue, and his so-called *Directive* paintings [fig. 74]; the Danish painter and editor, J.V.Martin, and his series of 'Thermonuclear Cartographies' [fig. 75]; and works by the Belgian painter and editor Jan Strijbosch, unfortunately there is no written description or illustration of these works only a list of titles, for example *Where there is Freedom, There is no State* and *A Spectre Haunts the World: The Power of the Workers Councils*.⁷⁶ In Debord's catalogue introduction the series of 'Victories' by Michèle

⁷² For details of the conference and the break see 'la cinquième conférence de l'I.S. à Göteborg' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 7, April, 1962), pp. 25-31.

⁷³ Debord, *Destruktion RSG 6*, pp. 9-12 (in English in the original catalogue).

⁷⁴ For more details on the 'Spies for Peace' operations see Debord, *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷⁵ *Destruktion RSG-6*, op. cit., p. 11. The acknowledgement of the artistic side is important as a corrective to the rumours that the Debordist faction of the Situationist International gave up art for politics.

⁷⁶ *Destruktion RSG 6*, pp. 21, where five works are listed. Also listed are three works by Bernstein (p. 21); five works by Debord (p.21); seven 'Cartographies' by Martin (p. 22) as well as five other works by Martin (p.22) with titles such as *Call Abby 1255* and *Ask for Chaplin*, again there is no written description

Bernstein, presented as a painter and writer [fig. 76] (and drinker), are described as 'a renewal of battle painting: but in opposition to Georges Mathieu and the ideological reaction upon which he has based his little publicity scandals'.⁷⁷ For the Situationists, the performative paintings of Mathieu [fig. 77] were interpreted as an apology for, and therefore as a contribution to, the survival of the conditions of the Spectacle, as opposed to its critique and transformation. Often theatrically dressed, Mathieu performed his battle paintings in front of a live audience. Paul Schimmel has described one of Mathieu's paintings, *The Battle of Bouvines*, as follows: 'a monumental gestural frieze about an undistinguished battle in European history. In a series of strokes, gestures, marks and diagrammatic traces, the paintings record a remarkably formal and controlled texture'.⁷⁸ The Situationists regarded such performative history painting as no more than a publicity stunt intended to accrue celebrity status for the artist. Mathieu's gestural painting technique that went under the name of *art informel* (and which has been considered as the French equivalent of abstract expressionism) seemed more interested in the look and texture of the final canvas than in making explicit its relation to the actual battle memorialised by the particularity of the title.

In the catalogue to the 1963 exhibition, Bernstein's 'Victories' were called alternative battle-paintings. And in an interview a year later, given by various Situationist members to representatives of the 'Parisian Centre of Socio-Experimental

of photos of these works. For the Situationists' interest in Anton Pannekoek's model of 'workers councils' see Paolo Salvadori, 'Provisional Theses For the Discussion of the New Theoretical-Practical Orientations of the S.I.' (1970) excerpts published in Knabb, *Situationist Anthology*, pp. 357-361. Reference to workers councils litter the pages of the Situationists' journal *internationale situationniste* and are too numerous to list here, but in particular see René Riesel, 'Préliminaires sur les conseils et l'organisation conseilliste' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 12, September, 1969), pp. 64-73.

⁷⁷ Debord, *Destruction RSG-6*, p. 12. Asger Jorn also drew attention to Mathieu's 'actor-painting' as a French phenomenon as opposed to Pollock's Northern 'solitary' action painting in Atkins, *Asger Jorn: The Crucial Years*, p. 39. Mathieu executed a painting 12x36 ft. at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre in just 20 minutes on a stage before an audience, see Georges Mathieu, *From the Abstract to the Possible* (Editions du Cercle d'Art Contemporain: Paris, 1960), p. 20.

⁷⁸ Paul Schimmel, 'Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object' in *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979* (T&H: London, 1998), pp.17-119, (p. 30).

Art', Bernstein's models are again described as '*anti-tableaux*' (anti-paintings).⁷⁹ There seems to be some anomaly however in the reference to Bernstein's works as paintings at all. For what appeared to be called 'paintings' were (judging from photos in the catalogue) three-dimensional works [fig. 73]. The apparent solidity of these particular works was in fact confirmed by Bernstein in a conversation I had with her. She described the uneven terrain, visible beneath the cluster of toy soldiers and drips of paint, as made from plaster.⁸⁰ The mixture of the media used separates the series of 'Victories' from any medium specific categorization of painting or of sculpture. Though, at one level it is possible to interpret the negative import of the word 'anti' paintings, as applied to Bernstein's solid 'Victories', as part of a strategic critique of the gestural and performative associations of *art-informel* painting. As a form of abstract painting already accepted by the institution of modern art, it can be seen to be subverted by its confrontation here with a new realism, in the form of the corrupting presence of kitsch props, such as toys, scattered across the modelled landscape. However, these three dimensional scenes (a sort of frozen tableaux vivant in a staged or theatrical sense, where low stuff infiltrates an instituted high artistic terrain) ^{are} simultaneously understood as a critique of Pop Art (*le pop art*). It is necessary to point out here the Situationists' rather limited critique of Pop Art as 'materially and ideologically characterized by indifference and dismal satisfaction'.⁸¹ Against *art informel* and against Pop Art, Bernstein's 'Victories' seemed to be suggesting a different conceptualisation of art and its function. Indeed, Bernstein's toys, dripped with paint, seemed to be playing a different sort of

⁷⁹ 'Réponse a une Enquête de Centre d'Art Socio-Experimental' in *internationale situationniste* (no.9, August, 1964), pp. 40- 44, (p.44), the contributing Situationists are listed as J.V.Martin; J.Strijbosch; R. Vaneigem and R. Viénet.

⁸⁰ From an interview I had with Bernstein at her home in June 1999.

⁸¹ 'Réponse', p. 44. For more positive political and psychoanalytical interpretations of Pop Art see Tom Crow, 'Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol' in *Art in America* (no. 75, May, 1987); and Hal Foster 'The Return of the Real' in *The Return of the Real* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1996).

game; not as useless adjuncts or kitsch accessories, but as metaphorical soldiers given the important job of winning a war, or rather of replaying history, where battles that were once lost are now replayed and corrected as a series of victories.

The photograph of Bernstein's miniature soldiers, surrounded by an indistinct plaster terrain, is pictorially reminiscent of an image of soldiers that appeared in Debord and Jorn's book *Mémoires* [fig. 78].⁸² From the flattened out perspective of the photograph, the similarity between the blank fields of the page and the plaster base, the use of drips of colour, the clusters of groups of soldiers, is a suggestive comparison that makes Bernstein's later works (c.1963) appear as a three dimensional translation of the two dimensional spread in *Mémoires* (1958). In the first section of this chapter I argued that the soldiers in *Mémoires* represented a militarised economy of language that confronts its formless other, as represented by the surrounding irregular and broken streaks of grey-green ink. However, Greil Marcus gives a different interpretation of this same image that is useful here. He suggests that the two page spread in *Mémoires*, whose only text reads 'Population and Great Economic Questions,' coupled with its illustration of fourteen sketches of nineteenth century European soldiers dressed for foreign lands, seems to prompt critical and somewhat negative commentary such as: 'in the Old World, all social questions are really military questions, or rather questions of imperialism, which is to say that, in the middle of the twentieth century, with empires collapsing, imperialism has turned back on its source, the home country, which must now be administered as the last colony'.⁸³ In contrast to this, I suggest that Bernstein's soldiers are intended as positive figures, as representatives of victories. And like their

⁸² Roberto Ohrt makes a visual comparison of these works but not in the same terms as myself, see *Phantom Avantgarde; Eine geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst* (Edition Nautilus: Hamburg, 1990), p. 274.

⁸³ Greil Marcus, 'Guy Debord's *Mémoires*: A Situationist Primer', p. 127. For an account of the Situationists' view of France's colonization of Algeria see 'Les Luttes de Classes en Algérie' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 10, 1966), pp. 12-21.

producer, these soldiers are unencumbered by the historical particularity of the outcome of the events that they help to replay and to reinvent.⁸⁴

Counterfeit Monuments

Bernstein's victories are specific, as revealed by their titles: *Victory of the Bonnot Gang* [fig. 79]; *Victory of the Grand Jacquerie of 1358*; *Victory of the Commune of Paris*; *Victory of the Workers Councils in Budapest*; *Victory of the Spanish Republicans*.⁸⁵

Rather than on the side of imperialism, Bernstein's toy-soldiers play the role of revolutionaries, and successful ones at that. Yet, as the titles of the works reveal, these victories fly in the face of history. According to conventional historical narratives all these battles were lost and the partaking revolutionaries brutally suppressed and defeated by the forces of imperialism and the Spectacle. Bernstein has produced counterfeit monuments that act as correctives to history by replaying lost battles as victories. A reminder perhaps, that it is those who win that write history. A suggestive model for this gambit is given in *internationale situationniste* (no. 9, 1964) where Bernstein's works are described as a form of ^αnew ^{unrealism} ~~realism~~ (*nouvel irréalisme*), a form which is itself defined by its 'always beginning a new departure for the transformation of the world'.⁸⁶

Bernstein's new departure for transforming the world involves the rewriting, or rather the reconstruction, of models of history. These may be counterfeit exemplars, but they also perform as false documents in the sense attributed by Debord to the poetical writings of Lautréamont, where against the surface logic or truth of events, the opposite

⁸⁴ The photographs of Bernstein's works also bear a visual resemblance to the stills from a film about the Light Brigade that accompany images of Debord's board game 'Kriegsspiel', in Debord's *Panegyrique: vol II*, no pagination.

⁸⁵ List of titles taken from the interview in *internationale situationniste* (no.9, 1964), p. 44. The three works exhibited by Bernstein in the *Destruktion RSG-6* show are listed in the catalogue as: *Victory of the Commune of Paris*; *Victory of the Spanish Republicans*; and *Victory of the Grand Jacquerie of 1358*, p. 21.

⁸⁶ *Destruktion RSG-6*, p. 44.

is utopianly declared, as for example when Lautréamont wrote: 'I do not accept Evil. Man is perfect. The spirit does not fall. Progress exists...As well as my friends will not die, I will not speak of death'.⁸⁷ Although playful, Bernstein's counterfeit monuments are also serious gambits, close in kind to Vaneigem's earlier postulate in his essay 'The Bad Days will End', which suggests that if the desire to experience the revolutionary festivals of the past is urgent enough it 'enables one to rediscover *lost* history, to salvage and rejudge it'.⁸⁸ To recollect and commemorate an alternative history allows the subject to imaginatively view the world through a different optic. This counterfeit prism refracts the past to enable a different view of the present, to imagine how it might have been if the revolutionaries had won, or how it could be if the battle is replayed and won. More significantly however, is the implication that in imagining a corrected revolutionary history it is also possible to re-imagine an altered subject of that transformed history. Therefore the role of fantasy plays an important part in reconstructing the situation and its subjects (both present and past) otherwise.⁸⁹ However, this new historical subject is not fantastic in the sense that its formation is external or independent of its history, but rather, the subject emerges immanently as its repressed and utopian protagonist. In the words of Vaneigem, to rectify the past is: 'to change the psychogeography of our surroundings, to hew our unfulfilled dreams and wishes out of the veinstone that imprisons them, to let individual passions find harmonious collective expression'.⁹⁰ And more specifically, as regards Bernstein's series of resurrected 'Victories', Vaneigem claims that they sought to 'dereify historical events, to rescue them from artificial

⁸⁷ Debord, *Destruction RSG-6*, p. 12.

⁸⁸ Raoul Vaneigem, 'Les Mauvais Jours Finiront' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 7, 1962), pp. 10-17. It is reprinted in Knabb as 'The Bad Days will End', in *Situationist International; Anthology*, pp. 82-82, (p. 85).

⁸⁹ Bernstein's monuments to a particular construction of history could also be said to reveal that history itself is a construction.

⁹⁰ Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Rebel Press/Left Bank Books: London, 1994), p. 234.

entombment in the past',⁹¹ by resurrecting and thus transforming them. Yet, a question remains as to exactly how the past is revived by the Situationist archivist, as well as a question concerning the substantive relation that the past is revealed as having with the present in the Situationists' alternative archive.

Phantom Histories

In the *Destruction-RSG-6* catalogue essay, Debord makes a comparison between events that had taken place on January 16th of that year, in Caracas, Venezuela. Some armed revolutionary students stole five paintings from a French art exhibition, which they said they would return on condition that the government released some political prisoners. Debord connects the events in Caracas with the anarchist Bakunin's suggestion, apparently made during the revolt in Dresden in 1849, that pictures should be taken from the city museum and set up as a barricade at the town gates, in order to see whether the attacking troops would be self-conscious about continuing to shoot (the Caracas students actually put this theory to the test—even if they were ultimately unsuccessful). As Debord notes: 'we can see how the affair in Caracas at once joins together with one of the high points in the revolutionary rising of the last century and at the same time goes one step further'.⁹² What Debord seems to be suggesting here, is that the overlaying of historical events is at moments revelatory, that is, the present situation is at times able to reveal aspects of the past that were perhaps lost or hidden.

In his 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle*, Debord claims that 'history itself is the spectre haunting modern society'.⁹³ This is a *détournement* of the opening lines of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848): 'A spectre is haunting Europe- the spectre of

⁹¹ Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, p. 266.

⁹² Debord, *Destruction RSG-6*, p. 10.

⁹³ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 200, p.141.

Communism'.⁹⁴ Debord replaces the 'spectre of communism' with the spectre of history (understood as affective or lived experience) as that which has been repressed by the reified conditions of the Spectacle. The Spectacle's accelerated replication of pseudo-events are used as a sort of armour to cover over the fact that 'individuals do not actually experience events' any more.⁹⁵ But buried beneath this surface distraction, or rather immanent to all the 'glitter that covers up and decorates the old order of society,'⁹⁶ is the ghostly residue of another history. As with the concept of the *mémoire involuntaire*, the spectre is also connected with its past situation, as the shadow presence of a now absented or decayed body that returns to haunt the present as trace.

To understand how the spectre connecting the past to the present is given substance, one needs to establish a non-linear and non-progressive model of history. Walter Benjamin presents such an alternative historical model: 'to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was" (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger'.⁹⁷ Transposing this model to the Situationists' era, their moment of danger was connected to the increasing loss of affective experience behind the suffocating veneer of the Spectacle. It is under these conditions that the urgent need to archive the disappearing history of lived experience became paramount. The archive becomes the means to bring the dead back to life. But the form of this revival, as well as the moment in which the archive is reconstructed, can make all the difference to the type of historical entity or subject that is resuscitated. For example, regarding another postwar archive, Benjamin Buchloh has argued that the *Atlas* (1962-to present) project of the former East German artist Gerhard Richter, formally resembles earlier avant-garde photomontages, in that it consists of a

⁹⁴ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, with an introduction by AJP Taylor (Penguin Books: London, 1985), p. 78.

⁹⁵ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis. 200, p. 141.

⁹⁶ Debord, *Destruction RSG-6*, p. 9.

⁹⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (Thesis VI) in *Illuminations*, p. 247.

collaged collection of found amateur photographs combined with journalistic and advertising photography [fig. 80]. Yet the historical moment of its construction makes all the difference to its function and meaning. According to Buchloh, Richter's *Atlas* radically undermines the utopian aspirations of previous avant-garde uses of photomontage through its contingencies. If, as Buchloh suggests, 'the agitational and emancipatory dimension of photomontage had originated in the desire for the radical transformation of hierarchical class relations and the structures that determine authorship and production,'⁹⁸ then, by contrast, Richter's *Atlas* seems to invert this model, by its consideration of photography and its various practices as 'a system of ideological domination, more precisely, as one of the instruments with which collective anomie, amnesia, and repression are socially inscribed'.⁹⁹ Buchloh suggests that Richter's archive attempts to explore the various registers of photography 'as the representational system within which historical repression is physically enacted and transmitted'.¹⁰⁰ The imagery of consumption (which Debord called the Spectacle) provides an image bank for postwar artists, such as Richter, that represented 'the collective lack of affect, the psychic armour with which Germans of the postwar period protected themselves against historical insight'.¹⁰¹ For the Situationists, the increasing banality of consumer society was a global, not only local, phenomenon. Indeed, Buchloh's analysis that banality, as a condition of everyday life, was registered in its specifically German modality 'as the condition of the repression of historical memory, as a sort of psychic anesthesia',¹⁰² finds ready analogy in postwar France. It too tried to repress and disavow its history of Nazi

⁹⁸ Benjamin Buchloh, 'Gerhard Richter's *Atlas*: The Anomic Archive' in *October* (no. 88, Spring, 1999), pp. 117-145, (p. 134).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 141.

collaboration, behind the pulsing machinery of the Spectacle.¹⁰³ Yet, for the Situationists, this historical amnesia stretched way beyond recent history to include the events of the Commune of Paris, the Jacquerie of 1358, and other events as commemorated in the titles of Bernstein's involuntary monuments; namely, monuments that illuminate in a flash, the danger of their amnesty by the Spectacle. However, the problem remains, as Buchloh points out, of how to reconstruct historical memory 'from the position of repression and disavowal', that is, of 'attempting to reconstruct remembrance from within the social and geopolitical space of the very society that inflicted trauma'.¹⁰⁴ Or to translate this problem into Situationist terms, how can you salvage history from the position of petrification, where the Spectacle is the reigning social organization of: 'a paralysed history, of a paralysed memory, of an abandonment of any history founded in historical time'.¹⁰⁵

Proust's concept of the *mémoire involuntaire* relates it to an event in the past that had not been registered as an experience. Either this event was too precipitous or perhaps too shocking. But perhaps all memory has something traumatic about it, in that it can only be recalled as trace. According to Freud the traumatic event is not registered as an experience by the subject in the moment of its happening, but it may be triggered by subsequent events, and it is in this sense that Jean Laplanche comments that 'it takes two traumas to make a trauma'.¹⁰⁶ Hal Foster elaborates on this comment as meaning that: 'one event is only registered through another that recodes it; we come to be who we are only in a deferred action (*nachtraglichkeit*)'.¹⁰⁷ Using this Freudian model of deferred action, it is plausible to suggest that history for the Situationists, including their

¹⁰³ For a Situationist critique of the banality of postwar everyday life and culture in general see Raoul Vaneigem, 'Banalités de Base I' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 7, April, 1962), pp. 32-41; and 'Banalités de Base II' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 8, January, 1963), pp. 34-47.

¹⁰⁴ Buchloh, 'Gerhard Richter's *Atlas*', p. 127.

¹⁰⁵ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Thesis 157, p. 114.

¹⁰⁶ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

own, is constituted in a similar way: 'as a continual process of protension and retension, a complex relay of anticipated futures and reconstructed pasts –in short, in a deferred action that throws over any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and repetition'.¹⁰⁸ This commentary implies that the subject of history is, for the Situationist archivist, a process of uneven development that involves acts of desublimation, as well as moments of going astray, getting lost and inventive replays of past revolutionary situations. According to Freudian analysis, that which has been repressed, including the past, cannot return 'so benignly, so auratically –precisely because it is damaged by repression.'¹⁰⁹ That is, the repressed element, once it returns or is recollected, bears the scars of the violence of its repression, of its moment of prohibition. From this perspective, the damaged and distorted form of *Mémoires* may be interpreted as mirroring the fractured and censored history of the subject of the Situationist International. In turn, Bernstein's monuments that commemorate the repressed events of the Commune of Paris with cheap, plastic toys on a plaster terrain also indicate the violence of its repression in ways that assume a grotesque and absurd guise. In 1961 Asger Jorn had highlighted the importance of absurdity in his essay called '*la pataphysique une religion en formation*'.¹¹⁰ As a former member of the 'college of pataphysics', a group investigating what Alfred Jarry called 'the science of imaginary solutions', Jorn appreciated the anarchic potential of humour. He even makes a reference to an anarchist thesis, 'to each their own absurdity,' to register the disruptive and subversive power of the absurd.¹¹¹ Artaud too referred to 'humour-as-destruction' in his

¹⁰⁸ Foster uses the Freudian model of repetition and deferred action to put forward a more radical model of the Neo-Avant-Gardes of the 1950s and 1960s (in a mainly North American context). See 'Who's Afraid of the Neo-Avant-Garde?' in *The Return of the Real*, pp. 1-33.

¹⁰⁹ Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p. 164.

¹¹⁰ Asger Jorn, 'la pataphysique, une religion en formation' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 6, August, 1961), pp. 29-32.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 31. For a brief account of the 'college of pataphysics' see Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture*, pp. 22-25.

essay the 'The Theatre of Cruelty'.¹¹² Therefore, it is possible to argue that the parodic dimension of Bernstein's monuments works analogously to the act of cutting in *Mémoires*. That is, both works are constructed through destructive gestures, in order to draw attention to the violating and sadistic character of the Spectacle's historical amnesia.

In the Situationists' case, it is important to counter any symptomatic reading of their expression of the return of a repressed history, with its strategic fracture. That is, it is necessary to fully register their deliberate use of exaggerated signs of chaos, disorder or absurdity to point out the distorted historical perspective recorded in the Spectacle's official archives. In certain respects the Situationists' archive (like Richter's *Atlas* according to Buchloh) is anomic, in that it stands outside the law. On the one hand, it is anomic in the sense of representing figures marginalized and outlawed by dominant historical narratives; on the other hand, it is lawless in its form. For example, both *Mémoires* and the 'Victory' series are fabricated out of cheap detritus, a medium that is deliberately low. *Mémoires* also refused authorial speech through the *détournement* of readymade languages and images, and of course, its rough sandpaper covers could physically vandalize anything that came too close for comfort.

Archival Consumption

In a somewhat ironic twist of fate, Michèle Bernstein's monuments, dedicated to the revival and salvaging of lost histories, were themselves prematurely destroyed by fire. An account of this destructive incident is reported in the article 'The S.I. and the Incidents in Randers', published in *internationale situationniste* (no. 10, 1966).¹¹³ On the 16th March 1965, one year after the *Destruktion RSG-6* exhibition, the Danish

¹¹² Artaud, *Antonin Artaud*, p. 243.

¹¹³ 'L.I.S et les incidents en Randers', pp. 22-26.

Situationist J.V Martin had been involved (with other activists) in protests against the arrival of a troop of German soldiers ^{that} ~~the~~ were to take part in organized manoeuvres with the Danish army. This was the first time that the German army had entered Denmark since the end of the Nazi occupation in 1945. The Situationists' headquarters in the town of Randers had been used as a meeting place for organizing various protests, and on the 18th March, just as Martin was leaving the building an incendiary device exploded, slightly injuring Martin's young son.¹¹⁴ The resulting fire devastated the building [fig.81] including Bernstein's 'Victories' and J.V.Martin's works from the *Destruction RSG-6* that had been stored there. The Situationists interpreted this annihilation as a positive act where 'the security blanket of art found itself burnt'.¹¹⁵ The destruction of the artwork was like a potlatch, its consumption by fire signalling its transformation from consumer item to burnt offering. In fact, the act of consumption more generally was itself identified by Debord, in 1959, as part of the Situationist project, as Greil Marcus comments: 'what the group meant to practice, Debord said in 1959, looking back, was the "role of pure consumption" –the total consumption of all the images and words of the past, the total consumption of the group's surroundings, and ultimately the total consumption "of its time."'¹¹⁶ A consumption of time literally in the case of Bernstein's burnt monuments, but also an eating up of time represented by the aleatory narrative structure of *Mémoires*, where the reader, as decoding detective, wastes their time by pursuing an ending that continually evades capture. In Bernstein's case, her three dimensional monuments were also literally transformed from objects into images,

¹¹⁴ For a more detailed account of the protest and the arrest of the bomber, who turned out to be a former soldier in the Danish army and his trial see 'L'I.S et les incidents de Randers' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 10, 1966), pp. 22-26.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

¹¹⁶ Greil Marcus, 'Guy Debord's *Mémoires*: A Situationist Primer', p. 127. The quotes from Debord can be found in the transcript of his 1959 film 'On the passage of a few persons through a rather brief period in time' in Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle and other films* (Rebel Press: London, 1992), pp. 24-40, (p. 27): 'It tended toward a role of pure consumption, and first of all the free consumption of its time.'

in the sense that all that remains of them is their photographic depiction [fig. 73].¹¹⁷ The physical artefact now survives as an afterimage, that is, as a ghostly index of its original form. But as a photographic trace, these alternative victories continue to haunt the present. The spectre of the history of the Situationist International becomes a sort of ghost in the machine of the Spectacle. A question remains as to how eruptive this spectre might prove to be in the future.

The remains of the Situationist archive were also consumed by a museum. In *internationale situationniste* (no. 5, 1960), under the heading 'Situationist Information' (*renseignements situaionnistes*) it was announced that the Silkeborg Kunstmuseum in Jutland (the principle modern art museum) was to set up a 'situationist library' (*bibliothèque situationniste*). This library was itself to be subdivided into the following sections: a pre-situationist section, collecting desirable (*souhaitable*) documentation from all the avant-garde movements, since 1945, that had played a role in the formation of the Situationist movement; a proper Situationist section, containing all publications by the Situationist International; an historical section, destined to receive works on the Situationist International, but 'for the moment welcomes only the anti-situationist propaganda which has started to appear here and there'.¹¹⁸ And finally, listed as probably the most interesting section, the library had opened a section of copies (*section des copies*), which aimed to conserve all the works copying (in any way whatsoever) some of their artistic realizations, and to use this recognition to critique the art world - which refused to voluntarily recognize that some of the artists they exhibit had been involved with, or had even been members of, the Situationist International. A final note

¹¹⁷ In chapter 3 I suggest that the temporality of the photo is ec-static, meaning that it is both of its time but also exists outside of that time in the sense of its afterlife at later moments. This adds to the complex relation of time and the image, the past and the present etc., in the Situationist archive.

¹¹⁸ 'Renseignements situationnistes' in *internationale situationniste* (no. 5, 1960), p. 11.

also mentions that sometime in the future a cinema was also planned, which would store and show all their films.

The Situationists were not unaware of the apparent paradox of choosing a museum as the site to store their archive. Not only does the museum site ratify the collectable status of Situationist material, but it also risks presenting them as complicit with the processes of institutional recuperation, by providing the necessary fetishes, relics or objects of fascination for the avid Situationist archivist (myself implicated here). Or in the Situationists words: ‘we do not doubt that in the following years many specialized historians, from Europe and America, and ultimately from Asia of Africa, will make the journey to Silkeborg if only to complete and control their documentation of a “Pavillion de Breteuil” of a new genre’.¹¹⁹ The Situationist International recognized that as an historical subject it risked recuperation by counter revolutionary forces, as indicated by the reference to the royalist reactionary Louis Auguste de Breteuil (the Breteuil Pavilion), who was appointed to the position of controller-general by Louis XVI on 11th July 1789 during the early stages of the French Revolution. Despite the risk of institutional recuperation, the Situationists’ fear of loss or of being forgotten ensured that they didn’t leave the site of the storage of their history to chance, even if this meant setting themselves up within the walls of the enemy camp. The Situationists’ own reasoning behind this gesture, was of beating the museum at its own game of avant-garde recuperation. Rather than let the museum and its specialized historians select and sanitize the Situationists’ archive, they would take responsibility for the selection process themselves. It is my contention however, that the Situationist archive was not only conservative, a store house of memories, it was also (and continues to be) potentially eruptive as a counter hegemonic history, as symbolized by the abrasive

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

covers of *Mémoires* and the traumatic traces of Bernstein's consumed 'Victories'. No doubt a smile could be seen on their faces in this perverse project of constructing an archive dedicated to the destruction of conventional processes of historical memorialization; smiling that is, in the knowledge that their stored memories remain a site of potential disruption, by forcing the museum to store its anomic enemy within. An archive that is contained and sanitized up to a point, but which is also (at least this was the Situationists' hope) like a dormant virus waiting for an opportune moment in which to overcome the immunizing defences of its host.

This model of a Situationist archive as eruptive is notably absent in Andrew Hussey's recent article on Guy Debord entitled 'Situation Abnormal'.¹²⁰ Here, Hussey defends the publication of his book, namely *The Game of War: The Life and Death of Guy Debord*, against the accusations laid against it by Debord's 'intimates and "pro-Situationist" fundamentalists'.¹²¹ In particular Debord's so-called disciples accuse Hussey of 'making a museum of Situationist ideas'. That is to say, they consider all histories of Debord (and the Situationist International more generally) as capitulating to the forces of spectacular domination, precisely by preserving and fixing his (their) image as a dead correlate of the present. To monumentalize Debord (or the Situationists) is to admit to their failure. Hussey's response is that 'Le Musée Guy Debord' already exists as confirmed by the abating representation of the 'cult of Debord in fashionable and best selling magazines'. Therefore, since Debord has already entered the 'pantheon of great French intellectuals', Hussey's book is merely an epitaph to Debord's failure to have escaped iconic petrification.

¹²⁰ Andrew Hussey, review in *The Guardian* (Saturday July 28th, 2001) p. 3, which explains the reasons for his writing *The Game of War: The Life and Death of Guy Debord* (Jonathan Cape: London, 2001). Considering Debord's view on the pulsing machinery of the Spectacle it seems appropriate to cite a newspaper source here.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

What both Hussey and Debord's disciples reveal however, is their agreement on a particular model of the archive as inevitably deathly. Hussey's response is to accept this inevitable death, whilst the disciples' strategy is to suppress and destroy any 'anti-situationist' literature, in the name of the keepers of the flame of truth. Both parties reveal a blind spot concerning the possibility of an alternative model of the archive, not as mortifying but as potentially transformatory. An involuntary archive, as indicated by the damaged form of *Mémoires* and the spectral form of Bernstein's 'Victories', continues to put pressure on any attempt to construct a model of history as complete. A Situationist archive constructs a model of history that is precariously balanced between what Debord called the pole of the memorable and that of oblivion. History, like memory, is represented as a palimpsest: subject to erasures, distortions, magnification and splitting. Like the collage form of *Mémoires*, history and its emergent subjects are a composite of fractious incidents, uncanny encounters, dead ends, new beginnings etc; all of which are in turn open to revisions and exclusions, but also to the possibility of revolutionary transformations. The act of recollecting Situationist events or salvaging and storing their personal or collective memorabilia is not in itself a deadly enterprise. For it is not a question of recollecting their history the way it actually was, of capturing and freezing it that is, since this is an already impossible and idealist task. The Situationist past continues to overlap with the present, it is an immanent residue within the present, and the form of its return or reconstruction is unpredictable. More generally, the concern of a Situationist archive is to discover the eruptive potential of the past as it emerges within a present moment of crisis. What is at stake is rediscovering those moments of temporal intersection that prove to be explosive and revelatory. As Debord stated at the beginning of *Mémoires*, the Situationist project experimented with forms of social and cultural interventions that were completely unacceptable (*complètement*

inacceptables) to the forces of Spectacular oppression. It has been the aim of this pursuit of the Situationist subject to both recognize and realize the Situationists' quest for the subversive element, understood as a potentially disruptive residue haunting the situations of the present.



Bibliography

Ali, Tariq and Susan Watkins, *1968: Marching in the Streets* (Bloomsbury: London, 1998).

Albistur, Maïté and Daniel Armogathe, *Historie du féminisme français: de l'empire napoléonien à nos jours, tome 2 (des femmes)* (Paris, 1977).

Andreotti, Libero and Xavier Costa, editors, *Situationists, Art, Politics, Urbanism* (Museu D'Art Contemporani: Barcelona, 1996).

Andreotti, Libero and Xavier Costa, editors, *Theory of the Dérive and Other Situationist Writings on the City* (Museu D'Art Contemporani: Barcelona, 1996).

The Angry Brigade 1967-1984: Documents and Chronology (Elephant Editions: London, 1985).

Aragon, Louis, *Les collages* (Hermann: Paris, 1965).

Aragon, Louis, *Paris Peasant*, translated by Simon Watson Taylor (Jonathan Cape: London, 1971).

Arendt, Hannah, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (Faber and Faber: London, 1961).

Art & Language, 'Ralph the Situationist', *Artscribe International* (no.66, Nov/Dec, 1987), pp. 59-62.

Artaud, Antonin, *Selected Writings*, edited by Susan Sontag (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1976).

Arte Nucleare, 1951-1957 (Galleria San Fedele: Milan, 1980).

Art in Theory: 1815-1900, edited by Charles Harrison et al., (Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, 1998).

The Art of the Everyday: the Quotidian in Postwar French Culture, edited by Lynn Gumpert (New York University Press: N.Y., 1997).

Asger Jorn, 1914-1973, exhibition catalogue with contributions from Troels Andersen et al. (Stedelijk Museum: Amsterdam, 1994).

Atkins, Guy, *Asger Jorn: The Crucial Years, 1954-1964* (Wittenborn Art Books, Inc: N.Y., 1977).

Atkins, Guy, *Asger Jorn; Supplement to the Oeuvre catalogue of his paintings from 1930-1973* (Lund Humphries: London, 1986).

Aujourd'hui, (no. 10, November, 1956).

Bachelard Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas (Beacon Press: Boston, 1994).

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Hélène Iswolsky (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1984).

Ball, Edward, 'The Great Sideshow of the Situationist International', *Yale French Studies* (no. 73, 1987), pp. 21-37.

Bandini, Mirella, *L'estetico il politico: da Cobra all'Internationale Situatlonists 1948-1957* (Officini Edizione: Rome, 1977).

Barret, Michèle, *Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis* (Verso: London, 1980).

Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800-1914, second edition edited by Robert Gildea (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996).

Barrot, Jean, 'Critique of the Situationist International' in *What Is Situationism? A Reader*, edited by Stewart Home (AK Press: Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 24-62.

Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida*, translated by Richard Howard (Vintage: London, 1993).

Barthes, Roland, *Image, Music, Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (Fontana Press: London, 1977).

Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies* (Editions de Seuil: Paris, 1957).

Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (Paladin Grafton Books: London, 1973).

Barthes, Roland, *The Responsibility of Forms*, translated by Richard Howard (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1985).

Barthes, Roland, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, translated by Richard Miller (The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore/London, 1976).

Bataille, Georges, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy. Volume I: Consumption*, translated by Robert Hurley (Zone Books: N.Y., 1991).

Bataille, Georges, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy. Volume II: the History of Eroticism & III: Sovereignty* (Zone Books: N.Y., 1993).

Bataille, Georges, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, edited and translated by Allan Stockl (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1985).

Batchelor, David, 'Daniel Buren', *Artscribe International*, 'A little Situationism issue' (no. 66, Nov/Dec, 1987), pp. 51-54.

- Baudelaire, Charles, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne (Phaidon: London, 1995) reprint of the 1964 edition.
- Baudrillard, Jean, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, translated by Charles Levin (Telos Press: N.Y., 1981).
- Baudrillard, Jean, *The Mirror of Production* (Telos: St Louis, 1975).
- Baudrillard, Jean, *La société de consommation*, (Editions Denoël: Paris, 1970).
- Baudrillard, Jean, *Le Système des objets* (Denoël-Gonthier: Paris, 1968).
- Baudrillard, Jean, *Seduction*, translated by Brian Singer (St. Martin's Press: N.Y., 1990).
- Baudrillard, Jean, *Selected Writings*, edited by Mark Poster (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1988).
- De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, translated and edited by H.M. Parshley (Picador: London, 1988) reprint of 1953 edition.
- Becker, Carol, 'Herbert Marcuse and the Subversive Potential of Art', *The Subversive Imagination: Artists, society and Social Responsibility*, edited by Carol Becker (Routledge: London, 1994), pp. 113-129.
- Benhabib, Seyla and Drucilla Cornell, editors, *Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late-Capitalist Societies* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1987).
- Benjamin, Walter, *The Arcades Project*, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1999).
- Benjamin, Walter, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* translated by Harry Zohn (Verso: London, 1997).
- Benjamin, Walter, *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn (Fontana Press: London, 1992).
- Benjamin, Walter, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia' (1929) in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (Verso: London, 1979), pp. 225-239.
- Benjamin, Walter, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, translated by Edmund Jephcott (Schocken Books: N.Y., 1978).
- Beret, Chantal, 'Constant: New Babylon, 1957-1974; deux maquettes et un dessin' in *La Revue de Louvre et des Musées de France* (vol. 50, no.1, February, 2000), pp. 75-7; 117.
- Berman, Marshall, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (Verso: London, 1983).

Bernstein, Michèle, 'About the Situationist International' in *The Times Literary Supplement* (no. 3262, September 3, 1964), p. 781.

Bernstein, Michèle, 'Eloge de Pinot-Gallizio' in *Pinot Gallizio* (Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie: Paris, 1960).

Bernstein, Michèle, *La Nuit* (Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1961).

Bernstein, Michèle, *Tous les chevaux de roi* (Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1960).

Berreby, Gérard, editor, *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'internationale situationniste: 1948-1957* (Editions Allia: Paris, 1985).

Bersani, Leo, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (Columbia University Press: N.Y., 1986).

Birtwhistle, Graham, *Living Art: Asger Jorn's Comprehensive Theory of Art Between Helhesten and Cobra (1946-1949)*, (Reflex: Utrecht, 1986).

Blazwick, Iwona, editor in consultation with Mark Francis, Peter Wollen and Malcolm Imrie, *An Endless Adventure...an endless passion...an endless banquet: A situationist scrapbook* (I.C.A./Verso: London, 1989).

Borden, Iain, 'The City of Psychogeography' in *Architectural Design* (vol. 69, no 11/12, 1999), pp. 103-5.

Bottomore, Tom, ed., *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Blackwell Reference: Oxford, 1983).

Boumiaud, Nicolas, 'Situationist International' review of exhibition at Centre Georges Pompidou in *Flash Art* (no. 146, May/June, 1989), pp. 122-3.

Bourges, Hervé, editor, *The Student Revolt: The Activists Speak* (Panther: London, 1968).

Bracken, Len, *Guy Debord: Revolutionary* (Feral House: California, 1997).

Brau, Eliane, *Le Situationnisme ou la nouvelle internationale* (Nouvelles Editions Debresse: Paris, 1968).

Brau, Jean-Louis, *Cours, camarade, le vieux monde est derrière toi! Histoire du mouvement révolutionnaire étudiant en Europe* (Albin Michel: Paris, 1968).

Brennan, Teresa, editor, *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Routledge: London, 1993).

Breton, André, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (The University of Michigan: Michigan, 1969).

Breton, André, *Nadja*, translated by Richard Howard (Grove Press: N.Y., 1960).

Breton, André, *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, edited by Franklin Rosemont (Pluto Press: London, 1978).

Bristow, Joseph, *Sexuality* (Routledge: London, 1997).

Brouste, Judith, 'Ralph Rumney: The Elegant Dissident' in *Art Press* (no. 253, January 2000), p. 54.

Brown, Bernard. E., *Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt* (General Learning: Morristown, 1974).

Brown, Bill, 'The Look we Look at: T.J. Clark's Walk Back to the Situationist International' in *Arts Magazine* (vol. 65, January, 1989), pp. 61-4.

Brown, Bruce, *Marx, Freud and the Critique of Everyday Life: Toward a Permanent Cultural Revolution* (Monthly Review Press: London, 1973).

Buchloh, Benjamin H.D., 'From Detail to Fragment: Décollage Affichiste' in *October* (no. 56, Spring, 1991), pp. 99-110.

Buchloh, Benjamin H.D., 'Gerhard Richter's Atlas: The Anomic Archive', *October* (no. 88, Spring, 1999), 117-45.

Buchloh, Benjamin, H.D., *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2000).

Buchloh, Benjamin, 'The Primary Colors for the Second Time: A Paradigm of Repetition of the Neo-Avant-Garde' in *October* (no. 37, Summer, 1986).

Butler, Judith, *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (Routledge: London, 1993).

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge: London, 1990).

Caillois, Roger, *Man, Play, and Games* (The Free Press: Glenco, Ill.: 1961).

Caillois, Roger, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia' in *October* (no. 31, Winter, 1984).

Cardan, Paul, *Modern Capitalism and Revolution* (Solidarity: London, 1974).

Cardinal, Roger and Robert Short, *Surrealism: Permanent Revolution* (Studio Vista: London, 1970).

Carroll, Lewis, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (Mcmillan and Co: London, 1995) reprint of 1872 edition, Illustrated by Sir John Tenniel.

Cassou, Jean et al, *Art and Confrontation: France and the Arts in an Age of Change* (Studio Vista: London, 1970).

Castoriadis, Cornelius, *The Castoriadis Reader*, edited and translated by David Ames Curtis (Blackwell publishers: Oxford, 1997).

Caute, David, *Sixty-Eight: The Year of the Barricades* (Hamish Hamilton: London, 1988).

Caws, Mary Ann, *The Surrealist Look: An Erotics of Encounter* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1999).

Celant, German, editor, *Arte Povera* (Electa: Milano, 1985).

Celant, Germano, *L'Inferno dell'arte italiana*, translated by Liz Heron (Costa & Nolan: Genoa, 1990), pp. 75-82.

Certeau, de, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendell (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1988)

Certeau, de, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life: Volume 2: Living & Cooking*, edited by Luce Giard and translated by Timothy J. Tomasik (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1998).

Christov-Bakargiev, Carolyn, editor, *Arte Povera* (Phaidon: London, 1999).

Ciret, Yan, 'Guy Debord: Total War' in *Art Press* (no. 253, January 2000), pp. 50-53.

Cixous, Hélène, 'Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays' in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, edited by Alan. D. Schrift (Routledge: London, 1997), pp. 148-173.

Clark, T.J., 'Jackson Pollock's Abstraction' in *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal 1945-1964*, edited by Serge Guilbaut (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1992 edition), pp. 172-238.

Clark, T.J., *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Thames & Hudson: London, 1990 edition).

Clark, Tim et al., (The English Section of the Situationist International, 1967), *The Revolution of Modern Art and The Modern Art of Revolution* (Chronos Publications: London, 1994).

Clausewitz, von, Carl, *On War*, translated by J.J. Graham (Wordsworth Classics: London, 1997).

Cobra 1948-1951 (Van Gennep: Amsterdam, 1980).

Cohen, Margaret, *Profane Illuminations: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1995).

Cohen-Bendit, Daniel & Gabriel, *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative*, translated by Arnold Pomerans (André Deutsch: London, 1968).

The College of Sociology (1937-39), edited by Denis Hollier and translated by Betsy Wing (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1988).

Cook, Malcolm, editor, *French Culture Since 1945* (Longman: London, 1993).

Copjec, Joan, 'Vampires, Breast-Feeding, and Anxiety' in *October* (no. 58, Fall, 1991), pp. 25- 43.

Copley, Antony, *Sexual Moralities in France, 1780-1980: New Ideas on the Family, Divorce and Homosexuality* (Routledge: London, 1992).

Crary, Jonathan, 'Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory' in *October* (No. 50, Fall, 1989), pp. 97-107.

Crary, Jonathan, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1994).

Crow, Thomas, *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent, 1955-69* (George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd: London, 1996).

Crow, Tom, 'Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol' in *Art in America* (no. 75, May, 1987).

Data (Italy). 3(9), Autumn 1973.

Dean, Carolyn. J., *The Self and its Pleasures: Bataille, Lacan, and the History of the Decentered Subject* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1992).

Debord, Guy, "*cette mauvaise réputation...*" (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1993).

Debord, Guy, *Commentaires sur la société du spectacle* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1992).

Debord, Guy, *Comments of the Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Malcolm Imrie (Pirate Press: Sheffield, 1988).

Debord, Guy, *Considérations sur l'assassinat de Gérard Lebovici* (Editions Gérard Lebovici: Paris, 1985).

Debord, Guy, *in girum imus nocte et consumimur igni: A Film*, translated by Lucy Forsyth and Michael Prigent (Pelagian Press: London, 1991).

Debord, Guy and Alice Becker-Ho, *Le Jeu de la guerre (Relevé des positions successives de toutes les forces au cours d'une partie)*, (Editions Gérard Lebovici: Paris, 1987).

Debord, Guy and Asger Jorn, *Mémoires* (Jean-Jacques Pauvert Aux Belles Lettres: Paris, 1993) reprint of 1959 edition.

Debord, Guy, *Oeuvres Cinématographiques Complètes: 1952-1978* (Editions Champ Libre: Paris, 1978).

Debord, Guy, *Panegyric: Vol. I*, translated by James Brook (Verso: London, 1991).

Debord, Guy, *Panégryrique: Tome Second* (Librairie Arthème Fayard: Paris, 1997).

Debord, Guy, *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of the Society of the Spectacle* (Chronos Publications: London, 1983).

Debord, Guy, *Guy Debord présente Pollatch (1954-1957): Edition Augmentée* (Gallimard: Paris, 1996).

Debord, Guy, *Society of the Spectacle* (Black & Red: Detroit, 1983).

Debord, Guy, *Society of the Spectacle and Other Films*, translated by Rebel Press (Rebel Press: London, 1992).

Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Zone Books: N.Y., 1995).

Debord, Guy, *La société du spectacle* (Editions Buchet-Chastel: Paris, 1967).

Debord, Guy, *La société du spectacle* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1992).

Debord, Guy and Gianfranco Sanguinetti, *La Véritable scission dans l'Internationale*, (Editions Champ Libre: Paris, 1972).

Debray, Régis, 'Remarks on the Spectacle' in *New Left Review* (no. 214, November/December, 1995).

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe* (Editions de Minuit: Paris, 1972).

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Robert Hurley et al., (The Athlone Press: London, 1984).

Descargues, Pierre, 'Free, Wild, the Twinned Works' review of Cobra Art in *Cimaise* (vol. 45, no. 256, Oct/Dec, 1998), pp. 29-39.

Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debate, edited by Michèle Barret and Anne Phillips (Polity press: Cambridge, 1992).

Destruktion: RSG-6 (Galerie EXI, Odense, Denmark, 1963).

Diederichsen, Diedrich, 'Asger Jorn', *Artscribe International* (no. 66, Nov/Dec, 1987), pp. 55-58.

Jean Dubuffet: Retrospective (Dallas Museum of Art: Dallas, 1966).

Dubuffet's Walls: Lithographs for les Murs, exhibition catalogue (Hayward Gallery: London, 1999).

Duchen, Claire, *Women's Right and Women's Lives in France: 1944-1968* (Routledge: London, 1994).

Dumontier, Pascal, *les Situationnistes et mai 68: théorie et pratique de la révolution: 1966-1972* (Editions Gérard Lebovici: Paris, 1990).

Elsken, Ed van der, *Love on the Left Bank* (Andre Deutsch: London, 1957).

Elsken, Ed van der, *Parijs! Fotos 1950-1954* (Bert Bakker: Amsterdam, 1981).

Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1968).

Feeser, Sigrid, 'Asger Jorn: Retrospective: Schira Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main, exhibit' in *Kunstforum International* (no. 130, May/July, 1995), pp. 367-8.

Ffrench, Patrick and Roland-François Lack, editors., *The Tel Quel Reader* (Routledge: London, 1998).

Fer, Briony, 'Surrealism, Myth and Psychoanalysis' in *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism*, edited by Fer et al, (Yale University Press: New Haven/London, 1993), pp. 171-249.

Ferry, Luc and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay in Antihumanism*, translated by Mary H.S. Cattani (The University of Massachusetts Press: Mass., 1990).

'Festival of the Oppressed: France 1968- Special Issue' *New Left Review* (no. 52, Nov/Dec, 1968).

Fišera, Vladimir, *Writing on the Wall, France, May 1968: A Documentary Anthology* (Allison & Busby: London, 1978).

Flugel, J.C., *The Psychology of Clothes* (Hogarth Press: London, 1930).

Fontana (McRoberts & Tunnard Ltd: London, 1960).

Ford, Simon, 'Pseudo-Situationism' in *Art Monthly* (no. 210, October, 1997), pp. 19-22.

Ford, Simon, *The Realization and Suppression of the Situationist International: An Annotated Bibliography 1972-1992* (AK Press: Edinburgh, 1995).

Ford, Simon, 'The Secret Society of the Spectacle' in *Art Monthly* (no. 177, June, 1994), pp. 14-16.

Forrester, John, *The Seduction of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan and Derrida* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1992).

Foster, Hal, *Compulsive Beauty* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

Foster, Hal, *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Bay Press: Washington, 1985).

Foster, Hal, *The Return of the Real* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1996).

Foster, Hal, editor, *Vision and Visulaity*, Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, No. 2, (Bay Press: Seattle, 1988).

Foster, Stephen C, *Lettrisme: Into the Present* (University of Iowa Muscum: Iowa, 1983).

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish* (Allen Lane: London, 1977).

Foucault, Michel, *Madness and Civilization* (Tavistock: London, 1967).

Foucault, Michel, *Les Mots et Les Choses* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1966).

Foucault, Michel, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, translated by R. James Goldstein et al. (Semiotext(e): N.Y., 1991).

Foucault, Michel, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*, volume II, translated by Robert Hurley (Penguin Books: London, 1985).

Fourier, Charles, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourlier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, translated and selected by Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (Beacon Press: Boston, 1971).

Fraser, Ronald, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (Chatto & Windus: London, 1988).

French Cultural Studies: An Introduction, edited by Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly (Oxford University Press: oxford, 1995).

Freud, Sigmund, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, The Penguin Freud Library, Volume 4, translated by James Strachey (Penguin Books: London, 1991).

Freud, Sigmund, 'Fetishism' (1927) in *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, The Pelican Freud Library, Volume 7, translated and edited by James Strachey (Penguin Books: London, 1977), pp. 345-357.

Freud, Sigmund, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, The Penguin Freud Library, Volume 11, translated by James Strachey (Penguin Books: London, 1991).

France and the Mass Media, edited by Brian Rigby et al (Macmillan: London, 1991).

France and Modernization edited by John Gaffney (Avebury: Aldershot, 1988).

France in Modern Times: From the Enlightenment to the Present, fifth edition, Gordon Wright (W.W. Norton & Co., N.Y., 1995).

French Culture since 1945, edited by Malcolm Cook (Longman: London, 1993).

From the Abstract to the Possible, exhibition catalogue (Editions du Cercle d'Art Contemporain: Paris, 1960).

Fruchter, Norman, 'Movement Propaganda and the Culture of the Spectacle' in *Liberation* (vol. 16, no. 3, May 1971), pp. 4-17.

Gallizio, Giuseppe-Pinot, *Pinot Gallizio nœ 'europa del dissimmetrict*, exhibition curated by Francesco Poli in collaboration with Martina Corgnati (Mazzotta: 1992).

Gallizio, Giuseppe-Pinot, *le situationnisme et la peinture*, exhibition catalogue (Galerie 1900-2000/Marcel Fleiss: Paris, 1989).

Gallop, Jane, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction* (MacMillan: London, 1982).

Gamboni, Dario, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (Reaktion Books: London, 1997).

Gasquet, Vasco, *les 500 affiches de mai 68* (Ballard: Paris, 1978).

Gilman, Claire, 'Asger Jorn's Avant-garde Archives' in *October* (no. 79, Winter, 1997), pp. 33-48.

Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s (Queens Museum of Art: N.Y., 1999).

Gombin, Richard, *Les Origines du Gauchisme* (Seuil: Paris, 1971).

Gombin, Richard, *The Radical Tradition: A Study in Modern Revolutionary Thought*, translated by Rupert Swyer (Methuen & Co Ltd., London, 1978).

Gonzalvez, Shigenobu, *Guy Debord: ou la beauté du négatif* (Editions Mille et une Nuits: Paris, 1998).

Gosling, J.C.B., *Pleasure and Desire: The Case of Hedonism Reviewed* (Clarendon Press: London, 1969).

Gottraux, Philippe, *Socialisme ou Barbarie, un engagement politiques et intellectuel dans le France de l'après-guerre* (Payot: Lausanne, 1997).

Gray, Christopher, *Leaving the 20th Century: The Incomplete Work of the Situationist International* (Free Fall Publications: London, 1974).

Guilbaut, Serge, editor, *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal, 1945-1964* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1992).

'Guy Debord and the Internationale situationniste: a Special Issue', *October* (no. 79, Winter, 1997).

Habermas, Jürgen, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, translated by Frederick Lawrence (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1987).

Hatton, Brian, 'A Dazzling Vision: Constant's New Babylon: The Hyper-Architecture of Desire' in *Architects' Journal* (vol. 209, no. 20, May, 1999), p.47.

Haug, W.F., *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society*, translated by Robert Bock (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1986).

Haynes, Deborah J., *Bakhtin and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1995).

Hess, Rémi, *Henri Lefebvre et l'aventure du siècle* (A.-M. Métailié: Paris, 1988).

Hoffman, Justin, 'Heimrad Prem: Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich' exhibition review in *Artforum International* (vol. 35, February, 1997), pp. 97-8.

Hollier, Denis, ed., *The College of Sociology 1937-9*, translated by Betsy Wing (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1988).

Holmes, Diana, *French Women's Writing 1848-1994* (Athlone: London, 1996).

Home, Stewart, *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents From Lettrisme to Class War* (AK Press: Stirling, 1992).

Home, Stewart, ed., *What is Situationism? A Reader* (AK Press: Edinburgh, 1996).

Huizinga, Johan, *Homo Ludens: A Study in the Play-Element in Culture* (The Beacon Press: Boston, 1955).

Hubert, Renée Riese, *Surrealism and the Book* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1988).

Hughes, H. Stuart, *The Obstructed Path: French Social Thought in the Years of Desperation, 1930-1960* (Harper & Row Publishers: N.Y., 1967).

Hughes, H. Stuart, *Sophisticated Rebels: The Political Culture of European Dissent, 1968-1987* (Harvard university Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

Hussey, Andrew, *The Game of War: The Life and Death of Guy Debord* (Jonathan Cape: London, 2001).

Internationale Situationniste: Edition Augmentée (Librairie Arthème Fayard: Paris, 1997).

Irigaray, Luce, 'Women on the Market' in *The Logic of the Gift*, edited by Alan. D. Schrift (Routledge: London, 1997), pp. 174-189.

Isou, Isidore, *Réflexions sur M. André Breton* (Editions Lettristes: Paris, 1948).

Isou, Isidore, 'The Creations of Lettrism' in *The Times Literary Supplement* (no. 3262, September 3, 1964), pp. 796-7.

Jackson, Julian, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-38* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1988).

Jacqueline de Jong; nieuw werk (Editions Vincent Steinmetz: Amsterdam, 1987).

Jappe, Anselm, *Guy Debord*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, with a Forward by T.J. Clark (University of California Press; Berkeley, 1999).

Jameson, Fredric, *The Prison-House of Language* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1972).

Jardine, Alice, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1985).

Jardine, Alice and Anne M. Menke, editors, *Shifting Scenes: Interviews on Women, Writing, and Politics in Post-68 France* (Columbia University press: N.Y., 1991).

Jay, Martin, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1994).

Jones, Amelia, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1998).

Jong, Jacqueline de., *Le jour des montagnes philosophique* (1984), Art reproduction in *Flash Art* (International edition) (no. 129, Summer, 1986), p. 109.

Jong, Jacqueline de., interview in *Situationistische Internationale: 1957-1972* (Museum of Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien: Vienna, 1998), pp. 68-71.

Asger Jorn, 1914-1973, exhibition catalogue with essays by Troels Andersen, Graham Birtwistle and Johannes Gachnang (Stedelijk Museum: Amsterdam, 1994).

Jorn, Asger and Guy Debord, *Fin de Copenhague* (Editions Allia: Paris, 1986) reprint of 1959 edition.

Jorn, Asger, *R.a. présente vingt peintures m odifiées par Asger Jorn*, exhibition catalogue; May 6-28 (Galerie Rive Gauche: Paris, 1959).

Jorn, Asger, *R.a. augustinci présente les "Nouvelles Défigurations" de Asger Jorn*, exhibition catalogue; June, 1962 (Galerie Rive Gauche: Paris, 1962).

Jorn, Asger, *Open Creation and its Enemies with Originality and Magnitude (on the system of Isou)*, translated by Fabian Tompsett (Unpopular Books: London, 1994).

Jorn, Asger, *Signes Gravés sur les Eglises de L'Eure et du Calvados*, (Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie: Copenhagen/Paris, 1964).

Les Jounrées de mai: photographe de France-Soir (Hachette: Paris, 1968).

Jover, Manuel, 'Le turbulent Asger Jorn' in *Beaux-Arts Magazine* (no. 128, Nov, 1994), p. 115.

Kaprow, Allan, *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings*, text and design by Kaprow (H.N. Abrams: N.Y., 1966).

Kaprow, Allan, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, edited by Jeff Kelley (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1996 edition).

Kate, Karl, 'The Critique of Everyday Life, Marxism, and the New Left' in *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* (vol. 16, 1971-72).

Knabb, Ken, ed., *Situationist International: An Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets: Berkeley, 1981).

Krauss, Rosalind, *The Optical Unconscious* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1993).

Krauss, Rosalind, 'Perpetual Inventory', *October* (no. 88, Spring, 1999), pp. 87-116.

Kristeva, Julia, *Desire in language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, edited by Léon Roudiez and translated by Alice Jardine et al (Blackwell: Oxford, 1980).

Kristeva, Julia, *La Révolution du langage poétique* (Seuil: Paris, 1974).

Lacan, Jacques, *Ecrits: A Selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan (Routledge: London, 1995).

Lacan, Jacques, *Feminine Sexuality/ Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*, edited by Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, translated by Jacqueline Rose (Macmillan: London, 1982).

Lacan, Jacques, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller and translated by Alan Sheridan (Vintage: London, 1998).

Laubier, Claire, editor, *The Condition of Women in France: 1945 to the Present, a Documentary Anthology* (Routledge: London, 1990).

- De Lauretis, Teresa, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1987).
- Lautréamont, (Isidore Ducasse), *Poésis*, edited by Alexis Lykiard (Allison & Busby: London, 1980).
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Critique de la vie quotidienne, I: Introduction* (Grasset: Paris, 1947).
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Critique of Everyday Life' Volume I: Introduction*, translated by John Moore (Verso: London, 1991).
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, translated by Sacha Rabinovitch (Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, 1990).
- Lefebvre, Henri, *The Explosion: Marxism and the French Upheaval*, translated by Alfred Ehrenfeld (Modern Reader Paperbacks: London, 1969).
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Introduction to Modernity; Twelve Preludes, September 1959–May 1961*, translated by John Moore (Verso: London, 1995).
- Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell: Oxford, 1991).
- Lemaitre, Maurice, 'What is Lettrism?' in *Ur* (no. 3, second series, 1952).
- Lemaitre, Maurice, *Toujours à l'avant-garde de l'avant-garde jusqu'au paradis et au-delà* (Centre de Créativité: Paris, 1972).
- Leonard, Diana and Lisa Adkins, editors, *Sex in Question: French Materialist Feminism* (Taylor & Francis: London, 1996).
- Levin, Thomas Y., 'Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord' in the exhibition catalogue *On the Passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time*, edited by Elizabeth Sussman et al (The MIT Press/ICA: London/Boston, 1989), pp. 72-123.
- Les Lèvres Nues 1954-1958*, facsimile edition, (Plasma: Paris, 1978).
- Lewino, Walter, *L'Imagination au pouvoir* (Le Terrain Vague: Paris, 1968).
- Lichtheim, George, *Marxism in Modern France* (Columbia University Press: N.Y. & London, 1966).
- Linder, Mark, 'A Few Things Architects Should/Don't Know about Situationists and Literalists' in *Design Book Review* (no. 43, Fall, 2000), pp. 30-35.
- Lukács, Georg, 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' in *History and Class Consciousness*, translated by Rodney Livingstone (Merlin Press: London, 1971), pp. 83-222.

McDonough, Thomas F., 'Situationist Space', *October* (no. 67, Winter, 1994), pp. 59-77.

Marcus, Greil, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the 20th Century* (Picador: London, 1997).

Maayan, Miriam-D., 'From Aesthetic to Political Vanguard: The Situationist International, 1957-1968' in *Arts Magazine* (vol. 65, January, 1989), pp. 49-53.

Magnus, Carl et al, *Situationister i konsten* (Bauhaus situationiste: Orkelljunga, 1966).

Marcuse, Herbert, *Eros & Civilization* (Sphere Books Ltd: London, 1969).

Martos, Jean-François, *Histoire de l'internationale situationniste* (Editions Gérard Lebovici: Paris, 1989).

Marx, Karl, 'Commodities and Money' in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, volume I, translated from the third German edition by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling and edited by Frederick Engels (Lawrence & Wishart: London, 1983), pp. 43-144.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, with an introduction by AJP Taylor (Penguin Books: London, 1985).

Mauss, Marcel, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, translated by W.D. Halls; foreword by Mary Douglas (Routledge: London, 1997).

Mellor, David Alan and Laurent Gervereau, editors, *The Sixties: Britain and France, 1962-1973* (Philip Wilson: London, 1997).

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Gallimard: Paris, 1945).

Miller, David, *Anarchism* (J.M. Dent: London, 1984).

Mitchell, Juliet, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (Penguin Books: London, 1974).

Mitchell, Juliet, *Woman's Estate*, reprinted with afterward (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1986).

Moi, Toril, 'Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Politics: A Conversation with Juliet Mitchell', *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Vol. 93, no. 4, Fall, 1994), pp. 925-949.

Moi, Toril, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (Routledge: London, 1985).

Moretti, Franco, 'Dialectic of Fear' in *Signs Taken for Wonders* (London, 1983).

Moscovici, Claudia, *From Sex Objects to Sexual Subjects* (Routledge: London, 1996).

Moses, Claire Goldberg and Leslie Wahl Rabine, *Feminism, Socialism, and French Romanticism* (Indian University Press: Bloomington, 1993).

Mulvey, Laura, *Fetishism and Curiosity* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1996).

Mulvey, Laura and Margarita Jimenez, 'The Spectacle is Vulnerable: Miss World 1970' in Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Macmillan: London, 1989).

Les murs ont la parole: Journal mural mai 68 –Sorbonne, Odeon, Nanterre..., citations recueillies par Julien Besançon (Claude Tchou: Paris, 1968).

Nadeau, Maurice, *The History of Surrealism* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1978).

Negt, Oskar and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1993).

Nesbit, Molly, 'What is an Author' in *Yale French Studies*, issue on 'Everyday Life' edited by Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, (no. 73, 1987).

New French Feminism: An Anthology, edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivon (Schocken Books: N.Y., 1981).

Nixon, Lawrence, 'Imagining Woman: Foucault, the Situationist International and the Politics of Disassociation', *Journal of Gender Studies* (vol. 4, no.1, 1995), pp. 17-25.

NY international Kunst, exhibition catalogue (Silkeborg Kunstmuseum: Denmark, 1960).

'Obituary' in *Art in America* (vol. 83, February, 1995), p. 111.

O' Brown, Norman, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Wesleyan University Press: New England, 1985) reprint of 1959 edition.

O'Doherty, Brian, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, expanded edition, introduction by Thomas McEvelley (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999).

Ohrt, Roberto, *Phantom Avantgarde: Eine Geschichte der Situationistischen Internationale und der modernen Kunst* (Editions Nautilus: Hamburg, 1997).

Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979, exhibition catalogue with essays by Kristine Stiles et al. (Thames & Hudson: London, 1998).

Ozouf, Mona, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, translated by Alan Sheridan (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1988).

Paris: May 68: An Eyewitness Account, not paginated (Dark Star and Rebel Press: London, 1986).

- Paris: Paris, 1937-1957*, exhibition catalogue (Centre Georges Pompidou: Paris, 1981).
- Péret, Benjamin and George Munis, *Les Syndicats contre la révolution* (Eric Losfeld: Paris, 1968).
- Perry, David.L., *The Concept of Pleasure* (Mouton & Co.: The Hague, 1967).
- Phillips, Christopher, 'Homage to a Phantom Avant-Garde: The Situationist International' in *Art in America* (vol. 77, October, 1989), pp.182-91.
- Phillips, Christopher, 'Society of the Spectacle at Exit Art' in *Art in America* (vol. 84, June, 1996), p. 97.
- Picq, Françoise, *Libération des femmes: les années mouvement* (Editions du Seuil: Paris, 1993).
- Pinot-Gallizio*, exhibition catalogue (Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie: Paris, 1960).
- Pinot Gallizio e il laboratorio sperimentale d'Alba* (Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna: Turin, 1974).
- Pinot Gallizio: le situationnisme et la peinture: du 13 février au 4 mars 1989, Galerie 1900-2000* (Marcel Fleiss: Paris, 1989).
- Plant, Sadie, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (Routledge: London, 1992).
- Plant, Sadie, 'The Situationist International: A Case of Spectacular Neglect' in *Radical Philosophy* (no. 55, Summer, 1990), pp. 3-10.
- Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave' in *The Republic*, translated by Desmond Lee (Penguin Books: London, 1987), pp.255-264.
- Posner, Charles, editor, *Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1970).
- Poster, Mark, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton University press: Princeton, N.J., 1975).
- Potlatch 1954-1957*, complete facsimile edition (Editions Gérard Lebovici: Paris, 1985).
- 'Premiers matériaux pour une théorie de la jeune-fille', *Tiqqun: organe conscient du parti imaginaire* (Février, 1999).
- Premises: Invested Spaces in Visual Arts, Architecture & Design From France, 1958-1998*, exhibition catalogue (Guggenheim Museum: N.Y., 1999).
- Price, Brian, 'Plagiarizing the Plagiarist: Godard Meets the Situationists: Jean-Luc Godard's *la gai savoir* (1968)' in *Film Comment* (vol. 33, Nov/Dec, 1997), pp. 66-69.

Proust, Marcel, *Remembrance of Things Past*, volume I, translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (Penguin Classics: London, 1987).

Raspaud, Jean-Jacques and Jean Pierre Voyer, *L'Internationale situationniste: protagonistes, chronologies, bibliographie (avec un index des noms insultés)* (Editions Champ Libre: Paris, 1972).

Raymond Hains: *Accents, 1949-1995*, exhibition catalogue (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien: Germany, 1995).

Reid, Jamie. *Up They Rise: The Incomplete Work of Jamie Reid* (Faber: London, 1987).

Revaluing French Feminism: Critical Essays on Difference, Agency and Culture, edited by Nancy Fraser and Sandra Lee Barthy (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1992).

Richter, Hans, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (Thames & Hudson: London, 1978).

Rifkin, Adrian, *Street Noises: Parisian Pleasure, 1990-1940* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1995).

Roberts, John, 'Eleven Theses on the Situationist International' in *Selected Errors: Writings on Art and Politics, 1981-90* (Pluto Press: London, 1992), pp. 114-125.

Robertson, George, 'The Situationist International - its Penetration into British Culture' in *Block* (no. 14, 1988), pp. 39-53.

Rocker, Rudolf, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, preface by Noam Chomsky (Pluto Press: London, 1989).

Rose, Jacqueline, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (Verso: London, 1986).

Ross, Andrew, 'The Rock 'n' Roll Ghost' in *October* (no. 50, Fall, 1989), pp. 108-117.

Ross, Kristin, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

Rohan, Marc, *Paris '68: Graffiti, Posters, Newspapers and Poems of Events of May 1968* (Impact Books: London, 1988).

Rotella, exhibition catalogue, edited by Renato Barilli and Tonino Sicoli (Charta: Milan, 1996).

Rubin, Gayle, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex' in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, edited by Rayna Reiter (Monthly Review Press: N.Y., 1975).

Rumney, Ralph, *Le Consul*, edited by Gérard Berreby (Editions Allia: Paris, 1999).

Sadler, Simon, *The Situationist City* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

Samuel, Raphael, *Theatres of Memory, Volume I: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (Verso: London, 1994).

Sandrine, Garcia, 'Project for a Symbolic Revolution; the Rise and Fall of the Women's Movement in France', *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Vol. 93, no. 4, Fall, 1994), pp. 825-869.

Sanguinetti, Gianfranco, *On Terrorism and the State*, translated by Lucy Forsyth and Michel Prigent (Chronos: London, 1982).

Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes (Routledge: London, 1991).

Schrift, Alan. D., editor, *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity* (Routledge: London, 1997).

Scott, Joan Wallach, *Gender and the Politics of History* (Columbia University Press: N.Y., 1988).

Seale, Patrick and Maureen McConville, *Red Flag, Black Flag: The French Revolution 1968* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1968).

Segal, Lynne, *Why Feminism? Gender, Psychology, Politics* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1999).

Shields, Rob, *Lefebvre, Love And Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (Routledge: London, 1999).

Shipway, Mark, 'Situationism' in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, edited by Maximilien Rubel and John Crump (Macmillan: London, 1987), pp. 151-72.

Silver, Kenneth E., 'Modes of Disclosure: The Construction of Gay Identity and the Rise of Pop Art' in *Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition, 1955-62* (Rizzoli: N.Y., 1993), pp. 178-203.

Silverman, Kaja, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1988).

Silverman, Kaja, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (Routledge: London, 1992).

Silverman, Kaja, *The Subject of Semiotics* (Oxford University Press: N.Y., 1983).

Soper, Kate, *Troubled Pleasures: Writings on Politics, Gender and Hedonism* (Verso: London, 1990).

'The Spies for Peace Story' in *Anarchy* (no. 29, July 1963), pp. 197-229.

Stich, Sidra, *Yves Klein* (Hayward Gallery/Cantz: London, 1995).

The Subversive Imagination: Art, Society and Social Responsibility (Routledge: London, 1994).

Suleiman, Susan Rubin, *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

Sussman, Elizabeth, et al, editors, *On the passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time: the situationist international, 1957-1972* (The MIT Press/I.C.A: Boston/London, 1989).

Smith, Peter, 'On the Passage of a Few People: Situationist Nostalgia', *Oxford Art Journal* (Vol. 14, no. 1, 1991), pp. 118-125.

Stone-Richards, Michael, 'A Reflexion on the French and the American Perception of Guy Debord' in *Parachute* (no. 93, Jan/March, 1999), pp. 56-58.

Therborn, Göran, 'Dialectics of Modernity: On Critical Theory and the Legacy of Twentieth Century Marxism', *New Left Review* (no. 215, Jan/Feb, 1996), pp. 59-81.

Theweleit, Klaus, *Male Fantasies: Volume II: Male Bodies: Psychoanalysing the White Terror*, translated by Chris Turner et al. (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1989).

Thirion, André, *Révolutionnaires sans révolution* (Editions Robert Laffont: Paris, 1972).

Todd, Allan, *Revolutions: 1789-1917* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998).

Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives, tome II: 1940-1969 (Eric Lorscheid: Paris, 1982).

Turkle, Sherry, *Psychoanalytical Politics: Jacques Lacan and Freud's French Revolution*, second edition (The Guilford Press: N.Y., 1992).

Vague, Tom, 'The Twentieth Century and How to Leave It: The Boy Scout's Guide to the Situationist International' in *Vague* (no. 16/17, 1988), pp. 13-46.

Vague 22: Media Sickness, 1990 (special edition including interviews with Ralph Rumney, Jamie Reid, and articles on the Situationists).

Vaneigem, Raoul, *The Book of Pleasures* (Pending Press: London, 1983).

Vaneigem, Raoul (under the pseudonym Jules-François Dupuis), *Histoire désinvolte du surréalisme* (Editions Paul Vermont: Nonville, 1977).

Vaneigem, Raoul, *Louis Scutenaire* (Editions Seghers: Paris, 1991).

Vaneigem, Raoul, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Rebel Press/Left bank Books: London, 1994).

Vaneigem, Raoul, *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations* (Editions Gallimard: Paris, 1967).

Viénet, René, *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (Autonomedia: N.Y., 1992).

Vienne, Veronique, 'Confessions of a Closet Situationist' in *Communication Arts Magazine* (vol. 42, no. 1, Mar/April, 2000), pp. 26-35.

Wall, Irwin. M., *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1991).

Watson, Simon, 'Apodeitic Outline' in *Evergreen Review* (May/Junc, 1960).

Wilson, Sarah, 'Greer, Sex and the Sixties' in *The Sixties*, edited by David Alan Mellor and Laurent Gervereau, (Philip Wilson: London, 1997).

Wollen, Peter, 'Fashion/Orientalism/The Body' in *New Formations* (1987).

Wollen, Peter, et al, *On the Passage of a Few People through a rather brief Moment in Time: the Situationist International 1957-1972* (The MIT Press/ICA: Boston, Mass., 1989).

Wollen, Peter, 'The Situationist International', *New Left Review* (no. 174, 1989), pp. 67-95.

Wollen, Peter, 'Situationists and Architecture', *New Left Review* (No. 8, Mar/Apr, 2001), pp. 123-139.

Yates, Frances A., *The Art of Memory* (Harmondsworth: London, 1978).

Žižek, Slavoj, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (Verso: London, 1999).

