

the physical frame of television, the box, disappears, in favor of flat monitors and image projections. Then, in effect, that membrane will be wrapped over the physical world.

The logic of the box as container is quite different from the logic of video- and computer-aided projection onto the world or immersion in a virtual environment. Projected or liquid crystalline images are surfaces of light, not bodies in space. Fine-grained phantoms in saturated colors lack a body or frame to contain them or a luminous path to betray their origin. Their scale can be superhuman in larger-than-life projection, while liquid crystals can be miniatures worn like jewelry. Such images need not coincide with a frame or support. Like shadows of stained glass without the need of window or sun, they are easily wrapped over any architectural frame or object. An architecture of giant or miniature skins of light can be condensed over walls or objects in real space. With the help of a computer, an image can be broken over a surface or object in the world in any shape, in any size, in whole or in fragments. Ultimately, we can invest these images and objects with speech and the ability to perform as agents: even now, video walls alive with motion speak with human voices in the mall.

Our box of symbols and words is emptying out, spilling husks of speech, wisps of letters, and gestures into the air. Without the shelter of the niche or box *from* as well as for words, inside has become outside and outside has become inside without a frame to call us home from dreaming. What once was television is becoming life itself, wrapped with metaphors in light and sound, a world without edges or end, a space without place, where planes overlap and intersect without boundaries or frames. Without the taming work of culture that marks and maps and frames, we would risk regression in a world of mundane magical transformations and commodity terror.

## FOUR

### An Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television

**Thus television turns out to be related to the motor car and the aeroplane as a means of transport for the mind.**

—Rudolf Arnheim

This chapter articulates an intuition that has been expressed from time to time in critical literature—that television is similar or related to other, particular modes of transportation and exchange in everyday life. The

investigation of the subjective and formal bases of this intuition is limited here to the built environments of freeways and malls.<sup>1</sup> Television and its analogs, the freeway and the mall, are conceptualized as a nexus of interdependent two- and three-dimensional cultural forms which don't so much *look* alike as observe similar principles of construction and operation. These shadows or inverse aspects of the work world are forms of communication that also function interdependently.

Freeways, malls, and television are the locus of virtualization or an attenuated *fiction effect*, that is, a partial loss of touch with the here-and-now, dubbed here as *distraction*. This semifiction effect is akin to but not identical with *split-belief*—knowing a representation is not real, but nevertheless momentarily closing off the here-and-now and sinking into another world—promoted within the apparatuses of the theater, the cinema, and the novel. Its difference lies primarily in that it involves two or more objects and levels of attention and the copresence of two or more different, even contradictory, metapsychological effects. Ulti-

mately, distraction is related to the expression of two planes of language represented simultaneously or alternately, the plane of the subject in a here-and-now, or *discourse*, and the plane of an absent or nonperson in another time, elsewhere, or story.

However, beyond the invocation of an *elsewhere* and a "spacing out" or partial absence of mind described here, many aspects of "distraction" are left to the imagination or to later treatment: a review of the rich field of the iconography of automobiles, freeways, malls, and television,<sup>2</sup> an account for the shifting relations between mastery and bondage and the feelings of pleasure and boredom involved in their use, and the ambiguous value the analogs of television enjoy in our culture—each in its own way being considered a "vast wasteland" and a waste of time as well as a devotion allied with the American dream.

The preconditions of distraction are postulated in the phenomenon of "mobile privatization," and the general features that promote this divided state of mind are described as "the phantasmagoria of the interior." Furthermore, freeways, malls, and television are posed as interrelated and mutually reinforcing systems organized in a way which allows for "liquidity," the exchange of values between different ontological levels and otherwise incommensurable facets of life, for example, between two and three dimensions, among language, images, and the built environment, and among the economic, societal, and symbolic realms of our culture.

Television is a key element of these exchanges and transformations, not only because it invests images with exchange-value, but also because it models exchange itself, both as an apparatus which includes the viewer virtually in discourse and via representations of constant shifts through various ontological levels, subjective relations, and fields of reference. The dualism of *passage* and *segmentation* which is part of the freeway, mall, and televisual realms is discussed more theoretically in relation to *discourse* and *story*.

There is nothing discrete about television, for its very nature is to annex pretelevisual culture and leisure time to itself. This chapter seeks, in broad strokes, to situate television as a cultural form in a larger sociocultural context of everyday life. This speculative project draws explicitly and tacitly on previous works of synthesis to support its premises, for example Raymond Williams's relation of broadcasting to the changing social context of mobile privatization in which it developed; Walter Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk* or arcade project of research on the genealogy of commodity fetishism in the nineteenth century in

glass- and steel-enclosed shopping arcades, dioramas, and such exhibition halls as the Crystal Palace; and Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the *chronotope* or unit of space/time that oscillates between literary representation and the spatiotemporal experience of everyday life. The archetypal chronotope, the *road*, for instance, invites comparison with the *freeway*, as does Benjamin's conception of the *arcade* with the *mall*.

Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* is an inspiration to the basic premise of interchangeability between signs and objects described here. Noting that "in modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called *metaphorai*" (115),<sup>3</sup> de Certeau articulates concepts of language and narrative with such forms of everyday life as architecture, transportation, and food. His vision of liberation from formal determination, surveillance, and control is based on the distinction between language and society as formal systems versus language as it is enunciated or as a social form enacted in practice at any one time. This distinction is expressed spatially, for example, as the difference between *place*, a proper, stable, and distinct location, and *space*, composed of intersections of mobile elements, taking into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. He concludes that "space is a practiced place," a geometry of the street redefined and made habitable by walkers (117).

De Certeau's vision of liberation via enunciative practices bears the marks of its conception in another time and place, that is in a pre-mall, pre-freeway and largely print-literate, pretelevisual world. In the meantime, in the United States at least, the very nature of the street and pedestrian activity as well as the predominant modes and media for linguistic communication have changed. However, the notion of praxis as enunciation, be it linguistic, pedestrian, or other, which evades predetermined paths and escapes from literal reality into an *elsewhere* and to other levels of consciousness is, as we shall see, one fully congruent with the operation of malls, or for that matter, freeways and television. Indeed, *distraction* is based upon the representation of *space* within *place* (in which, as we shall see, space becomes displaced, a *nonspace*) and the inclusion of (for de Certeau, liberating) *elsewheres* and *elsewhens* in the here-and-now.

Thus, de Certeau's very means of escape are now designed into the geometries of everyday life, and his figurative practices of enunciation ("making do," "walking in the city," or "reading as poaching") are modeled in representation itself. Could de Certeau have imagined, as he wrote on walking as an evasive strategy of self-empowerment, that

there would one day be videocassettes which demonstrate how to "power" walk? This investigation takes stock of this new cultural environment.

To contour this new terrain is less to map postmodernity than to explain why a map per se is virtually impossible to construct. For the level of iconicity shared by television and its analogs is one of common preconditions and principles of articulation rather than one of resemblance in shape or the boundedness of contiguous or even specifiable locations in space. Rather, these analogs share the *nonspace* and the simultaneous temporalities of *distraction*.

### DEREALIZED SPACE

The late twentieth century has witnessed the growing dominance of a differently constituted kind of space, virtuality or a *nonspace* of both experience and representation, an *elsewhere* that inhabits the everyday. Nonspace is not mysterious or strange to us, but rather the very haunt for creatures of habit. Practices and skills which can be performed semiautomatically in a distracted state—like driving, shopping, or television-watching—are the barely acknowledged ground of everyday experience. This ground is without locus, a partially derealized realm from which a new quotidian fiction emanates.

*Nonspace* is a ground within which communication as a flow of values between and among two and three dimensions and between virtuality and actuality—indeed, an uncanny oscillation between life and death—can "take place." One finds the quintessential descriptions of nonspace in the postwar generation which was first to explore suburbia. Tony Smith's description of a car ride along a newly constructed section of the New Jersey Turnpike at night (quoted in Hobbs 14) expressed a formative experience of *elsewhere* out of which grew (in the 1960s) the conception of environmental art by artists like Robert Smithson. With earthworks such as *Spiral Jetty*, Smithson undermined the objecthood and the locus in space of his sculpture, lost somewhere between documentation in a gallery or museum and an inaccessible referent somewhere else. Robert Hobbs explains Smithson's nonsite and nonspace sculptures as a profound assessment of mid-twentieth-century experience:

In an era of rootlessness, massive reordering of the landscape, large-scale temporary buildings, and media implosion, he viewed people's essential apprehension of the world as a rejection of it. Vicariousness,

projection to some other place by rejecting where one actually is, has become a dominant mid-twentieth-century means of dealing with the world. Making the nonsite (which brings together nonseeing and nonspace under one rubric) a primary determinant of his aesthetic forms, Smithson emphasized ways people nonperceive. (15–16)

Later descriptions of nonspace (for example Baudrillard's notion of simulation) also emphasize it as a focus of derealization. Baudrillard conceives of simulation as a loss of referential anchorage to the world or the insecurity of denotation as it applies primarily to objects, whereas his own spatial allusions to *networks*, *inert masses*, and *black holes* lay claim to a kind of poetic scientificity. But this mixed metaphor in "The Ecstasy of Communication" is the vehicle which conveys the full complexity of his conceptualization of spatiality in postmodernity: "The vehicle now becomes a kind of capsule, its dashboard the brain, the surrounding landscape unfolding like a televised screen (instead of a live-in projectile as it was before)."<sup>4</sup> The interiors of the home television viewing space, the automobile, the space capsule, and the computer are ultimately associated with the interiority of the human mind. The image of the exterior world from these interiors is no longer a "Western window" onto reality, but for Baudrillard, the dubious vision of television.

In his popular and playful ontology of the shopping mall, *The Malling of America*, William Severini Kowinski goes even further, calling the mall a "TV you walk around in." Here the mode of locomotion is different, but the interiority (not just exterior vision) of the viewer is equated with television itself: "The mall is television, [in terms of] people's perceptions of space and reality, the elements that persuade people to suspend their disbelief" (71). These spatial comparisons depend on a common experience of some degree of fictitiousness within their (un)realities. The implication is that television epitomizes a new ontology of the everyday: vast realms of the somewhat-less-than-real to which significant amounts of free time (unpaid leisure, the shadow of work) are devoted on a routine, cyclical basis. The features of this derealized or *nonspace* are shared by freeway, mall, and television alike.

The first distinguishing feature of nonspace is its dreamlike *displacement* or separation from its surroundings. Freeways are displaced in that they do not lie earthbound and contiguous to their surroundings so much as they float above or below the horizon. The freeway disengaged from its immediate context is "a bridge over the barriers of both social and natural geography," offering as well "a continued shelter from engagement with ghetto areas" (Kevin Lynch, quoted in Brodsky 39--

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40). In Kevin Lynch's famous study of cognitive maps of the city, from the point of view of the streets, the freeway is almost invisible, "not felt to be 'in' the rest of the city" (quoted in Brodsky 31). Similarly, from the subjective point of view of a driver or passenger experiencing motion blur, the city isn't visible either except at times as a distant miniature seen from a freeway which is usually also physically depressed or elevated from its surroundings or shielded by its own greenbelt. To paraphrase Charles Kuralt, the freeway is what makes it possible to drive coast to coast and never see anything. In fact, the freeway divides the world in two, into what David Brodsky calls "local" and "metropolitan" (24) orientations. These also denote two realities: the one, heterogeneous and static; the other, homogeneous and mobile. The passage between them can be accompanied by a shock, a moment of "severe disorientation" (Brodsky 24).

Furthermore, the process of displacement is a prelude to condensation. The freeway not only represents transportation from the city in the suburbs, but it is also a greenbelt and an escape "from the world of stucco into an urban preserve of open space and greenery" (Brodsky 49). Suburbia is itself an attempt via serial production to give everyman and everywife the advantages of a city at the edge of the natural world. Thus, the suburbs are "a living polemic against both the large industrial metropolis and the provincial small town," which nonetheless manage to "maintain the facade of a garden patch of urban villages, a metropolitan small town, without ever compromising the anonymity that is a hallmark of city life" (Brodsky 33, 45).<sup>5</sup> Freeways and the suburbs they serve are thus examples of the "garden in the machine," which provides mass society with a pastoral aesthetic and rhetoric.

Malls are similarly "completely separated from the rest of the world." Kowinski calls this separation "the first and most essential secret of the shopping mall":

It was its own world, pulled out of time and space, but not only by windowless walls and a roof, or by the neutral zone of the parking lot between it and the highway, the asphalt moat around the magic castle. It was enclosed in an even more profound sense—and certainly more than other mere buildings—because all these elements, and others, psychologically separated it from the outside and created the special domain within its embrace. It's meant to be its own special world with its own rules and reality. (60)

The mall is a spatial condensation near a node where freeways intersect, serving a certain temporal radius; it is "a city, indeed a world in miniature."<sup>6</sup> Shops that are four-fifths of normal size<sup>7</sup> are linked to-

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gether within a vast and usually enclosed, multileveled atrium or hall, devoted solely to the pedestrian consumer (albeit served by autos and trucks).<sup>8</sup> A regional center saturated by chain stores which turns its back on local shops,<sup>9</sup> the mall is the paradoxical promise of adventure on the road within an idyll of Main Street in a small town before the age of the automobile (see Graham and Hurst).<sup>10</sup>

The mall is not only enclosed, Kowinski adds, but it is protected from exposure to the natural and public world through unobtrusive but central control. This private surveillance escapes the kind of sharp vigilance in the light of democratic values to which it would be subject in the public world: we do not expect the consumer to possess the same kinds of rights or responsibilities as the citizen. Shopping malls are essentially governed by market planners (that is, by a fairly limited pool of mall entrepreneurs, builders, owners, and managers) and market forces. Each mall is carefully situated and designed in terms of its architecture; the "retail drama" of its syntax of shops and types of commodities, promotions, and advertising conveys a unified image that attracts some parts of the surrounding population and discourages others.

Consumers of all ages (but probably not all social conditions) come together to recreate the lost community of the street and the agora now under the private management of the arcade. The courts of foot traffic allow consumers and "mall rats" (nonconsuming loiterers) to intermingle in an attenuated and controlled version of a crowded street. Thus the mall retains elements of the milling crowd, but as a private space in which anonymous individuals, preferably ones with particular demographic characteristics, gather en masse. So the paroxysms of release from individuality via bodily contact described by Elias Canetti in *Crowds and Power* are unlikely; the street celebrated by Bakhtin as a place of festival which erases boundaries between self and other is scarcely imaginable.<sup>11</sup>

Rather than a site of "contamination," the mall is a place to shore up the boundaries of the self via commodities which beckon with the promise of perfection from beyond the glass or gleam of the threshold in brightly lit shops. These commodities with roles in retail drama have a somewhat dreamlike quality even in terms of their use-value, for they are less often connected with labor or the small necessities of life (for example, needles and thread, nails and hammers, seed and fertilizer, and so forth) than linked to leisure and a designer lifestyle (note the category shift of pots and pans, now that cooking is linked to luxury living). Rather, the preferred commodities of retail drama are "lost

objects," the very things a subject desires to complete or perfect his or her self-image. And, rather than being unique, these objects are mass-produced, the very ones to be seen advertised on television, in print, and on display beyond the glass.

Television is likewise premised upon private reception in an environment isolated from events "out there," which determine the conditions of life outside the home. John Ellis has described this practice as the "double distance" of television's complicity with the viewer against an "outside world" represented as "hostile or bizarre," and the viewer's delegation of "his or her look to the TV itself."<sup>12</sup> Both means of distancing constitute "the opposition 'inside/outside', which insulates the viewer from events seen by TV" (169).<sup>13</sup>

But this division of the world is complicated by the reconstruction of an idealized version of the older forms of transport, social, and media communication within the very enclosures from which they are excluded. The past inscribed within the present is constructed *as past* through this very act of separation; a local and heterogeneous world beyond continues to exist but with fading resources, a phantom from an anterior world. This interior duality has symbolic dimensions as well: oppositions between country and city, nature and culture, sovereign individual and social subject are neutralized only to be reconstituted within nonspace in a multilayered compromise formation, a utopian realm of *both/and* in the midst of *neither/nor*.

This process of displacement from context is also one of dislocation. In a quite literal, physical sense, freeways, malls, or television are not truly "places." That is, they cannot be localized within the geometrical grids that orient the American city and countryside.

As Brodsky explains in his essay on the L.A. freeway, a freeway is not a place but a *vector* (25–26);<sup>14</sup> even its name or number is a direction rather than a location. Channels of motion dedicated solely to one-way, high-velocity travel, freeways are largely experienced as "in-betweens," other than as places where one enjoys the full reality of a point of departure or a destination. And magnitude on the freeway is popularly measured in minutes rather than miles. Yet, within that waste of time spent in-between, usually alone and isolated within an iron bubble, a miniature idyll with its own controlled climate and selected sound is created. In this intensely private space, lifted out of the social world, the driver is subject, more real and present to him- or herself than the miniatures or the patterns of lights beyond the glass, or farther yet, beyond the freeway.

Television is also dislocated, insofar as it consists of two-dimensional images dispersed onto screens in nearly every home in the United States, displaying messages transmitted everywhere and nowhere in particular. Television is also a vast relay and retrieval system for audiovisual material of uncertain origin and date which can be served up instantaneously by satellite and cable as well as broadcast transmission and videocassette. Other two-dimensional media including newspapers and periodicals (the prime example being the hybrid satellite/print production of *USA Today*, that appeared briefly as a television magazine program as well) are increasingly identified less with the specific location(s) from which they emanate (insofar as that can be ascertained) and more with a range or area of distribution they "cover"—indeed, mass-circulation media have constituted the "nation" as a symbolic system of common associations as well as a legal and political creation. The freeway and the mall provide the greatest evidence and manifestation of a homogeneous, material culture, just as television is the main source of shared images (visual and acoustic). There is also a "national" weather within these enclosed spaces of mall and home and auto—the even temperature of the comfort zone.<sup>15</sup>

Nonspace is not only a literal "nonplace," it is also *disengaged* from the paramount orientation to reality—the here-and-now of face-to-face contact. Such encounter with the other is prevented by walls of steel, concrete, and stucco in a life fragmented into enclosed, miniature worlds. As Brodsky explains: "Metropolitan life suggests the disintegration in space and time of individual's various dwelling places. Often living in 'communities without propinquity', the individual metropolitan must somehow confront the task of reintegrating his or her environment. . . . One does not dwell in the metropolis; one passes through it between dwelling places" (2). This task of reintegrating a social world of separated, dislocated realms is accomplished by means of an internal dualism, of *passage* amid the *segmentation* of glass, screens, and thresholds. Thus, each form of communication becomes a *mise-en-abyme*, a recursive structure in which a nested or embedded representation reproduces or duplicates important aspects of the primary world within which it is enclosed.<sup>16</sup>

The freeway, for instance, is divided into a realm of passage, both over the outside world and from inside an idyllic, intensely private, steel-enclosed world of relative safety. At the same time, the sociality with the outside world that has become physically impossible inside the automobile is recreated via radio, compact disc, and tape.

Television is similarly derealized as communication; that is, the primacy of discourse in television representation is not anchored as enunciation in a paramount reality of community, propinquity, and discursive exchange. While every act of enunciation disengages an utterance from the subject, space, and time of the act of enunciation (see Greimas and Courtes),<sup>17</sup> television—with its temporal and spatial separation of interlocutors into a one-way, largely recorded transmission—is *doubly disengaged*. Hence televisual utterances waver uncertainly in reality status. However, the primary levels of “interface” with the viewing audience of television are those televisual utterances which represent direct engagement or address oriented proxemically on face-to-face discourse, that is, the discursive level of presenters, hosts, and spokespersons. The discursive plane of television includes all sorts of unrelated, nonprogram material from ads, logos, IDs, and public service announcements, to promotions and lead-ins, as well as the discursive segments within programs themselves, from openers and titles to presentational segments. This primary plane of discourse seems to be an overarching presumption of television representation even when it isn't directly on-screen, and it builds the framework of television flow as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

Further acts of internal disengagement install second- and third-level segments as units of narrative (disengaged) or dialogue (engaged) within the primary discursive plane of the television utterance. However, the nesting order of disengagement does matter, for Greimas notes that the effect is different when dialogue is included in narration rather than when narrative is included in dialogue. In the former situation, predominant in the novel, for example, dialogue is referentialized, that is, given a spatiotemporal locus (however fictive) by the narration; in the latter situation, predominant in U.S. televisual representation, narration is dereferentialized, that is, lifted out of a spatiotemporal context (however real) into a symbolic or affective realm. That is to say, even in nonfiction genres such as the news, the dominant reference point of the utterance will be a simulacrum of an ultimately fictitious situation of enunciation rather than a world outside.

#### METAPSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF PRIVATIZATION

In “Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” Walter Benjamin anticipated the everyday world to come and discovered the roots of non-space in the phenomenon of *privacy* and enclosure. Indeed, the

nineteenth-century arcades of Milan served as a direct model for the contemporary American mall.<sup>19</sup> While *privatization* has largely been conceived as an economic and political term,<sup>20</sup> it appears to have metapsychological effects associated with its derealized surroundings—the postmodern development of what Benjamin called the “phantasmagoria of the interior,” a mixture of levels of consciousness and objects of attention. The process of distancing the worker from the workplace and the enclosure of domestic life in the home, separated from its social surroundings, allowed a compensatory realm of fantasy to flourish, a conglomeration of exotic remnants in which new and old are intermingled. This phantasmagoria of the interior broke with the immediate present in favor of a primal past and the dream of the epoch to come. However, the twentieth-century phantasmagoria idealizes not the primal but the immediate past, and is an agent responsible for its decay. And the utopia or dystopia which these forms anticipate seems less a vision of a future earth transformed for good or ill than a hermetic way of life liberated from earth itself.

The temporal world is also lifted out of history in favor of cyclic repetitions less determined by than modeled secondarily on daily and seasonal cycles of the sun, the stages of life, and the passage of generations. As labor is more and more liberated from solar and circadian rhythms, cycles of commuting, shopping, and viewing become shiftable as well. Television program schedules are “intricately woven into the fabric of our routine daily activities” (Moore 23), because they are organized by the same division of labor outside and inside the family which recruits the daily commuter and the recreational shopper. And it is the demands of labor itself that may produce a state of mind and body which is best compensated within the comfort zone.

Time is largely experienced as duration on the freeway, a “drive time” guided by graphics in Helvetica, connoting a clean, homogeneous or unmarked publicness and a vague temporality from the 1960s on (Savan). Continuity with the past is represented largely in terms of automobile model and year. Similarly, within the mall (as in Disneyland, McDonald's and other realms of privately owned mass culture), decay or the fact of time itself has been banished from cycles of destruction and regeneration via a scrupulous cleanliness and constant renewal of worn parts.

On television, duration of viewing time is also the prime experience of temporality. The work of time itself as decay is seldom represented in images of the human body or everyday life. Nor is the past so much

remembered via narrative as it is rerun or embedded as archival images within contemporary, discursive presentation. Even the image quality of the past—records of grainy black and white—is gradually undergoing electronic revision to meet today's expectations. The phantasmagoria of television and its analogs is thus less to be imagined as escape to flickering shadows in the cave than as a productive force that shapes spatiotemporal and psychic relations to the realities it constitutes. The state of mind promoted within the realms of nonspace can be described as *distraction*.

Distraction as a dual state of mind depends on an incomplete process of spatial and temporal separation and interiorization. The automobile, for instance, is connected to the world outside via the very glass and steel which enclose the driver. However, the dualism of outside / inside within these separate realms means that a connection with "outside" drifts between a "real" outside and an idealized representation.

A sheet of glass alone is enough to provide a degree of disengagement from the world beyond the pane. Add to this the play of light which appears to be part of the *mise-en-scène* of the mall, the freeway, and television—the world beyond the glass glows more brightly than the darker passages and seats we occupy. Beyond its glow, even the "real" world seen through a clear glass windshield, shop window, or screen has a way of being psychically colored and fetishized by the very glass which reveals it; the green glasses of the inhabitants of the Emerald City of Oz are a mythic expression of this vitreous transformation.<sup>21</sup>

However, green visions promote a state of mind that remains somewhere between Oz and Kansas, or between regression to the primal scene and a commercial transaction: because mental life on the freeway, in the marketplace, and at home is linked to very real consequences for life, limb, and pocketbook, it requires vigilance while it also allows for and even promotes automatism and "spacing out." "Being carried away" to a full-blown world of fantasy is not in order—but the "vegging out" of the couch potato is a well-publicized phenomenon. Malls and freeways also can induce a state of distraction: for example, the very design and intentions of the mall taken to extreme can induce what the "cosmallogist" Kowinski diagnoses as the "zombie effect" (floating for hours, a loss of a sense of time and place) which he diagnoses as a copresence of contradictory states of excitement enhanced to the point of overstimulation mixed with relaxation descending into confusion and torpor (339). In discussing the habit of driving Brodsky calls "detached involvement" (47) an awareness of the outside environment

mixed with that of an intensely private world within the interior of the automobile. Noting that the automobile is one of the few controlled environments for meditation in our culture, he describes how even the temporal link with the outside world may fade: "Perhaps no aspect of the freeway experience is more characteristic than the sudden realization that you have no memory of the past ten minutes of your trip" (41).<sup>22</sup>

In his mythological investigations of everyday life, Roland Barthes made the subjective experience of driving a metaphor for the operation of mythology itself. In "Myth Today," he turned from analysis of objects and scenes like the "cathedral-like" "New Citroën" to the practice of driving as an alternation between two objects of attention:

If I am in a car and I look at the scenery through the window, I can at will focus on the scenery or on the windowpane. At one moment I grasp the presence of the glass and the distance of the landscape; at another, on the contrary, the transparency of the glass and the depth of the landscape; but the result of this alternation is constant: the glass is at once present and empty to me, and the landscape unreal and full. (123)

For Barthes, this constant alternation constitutes a spatial category of a continuous *elsewhere* which is his model for the alibi of myth. If we were to expand Barthes's metaphor of semiotics and driving with concepts of discourse, the alternation of which he wrote would also be one which shifts between planes of language and subjectivity. That is, the awareness of a subject would shift between a here-and-now in the interior of the automobile and awareness of a world elsewhere beyond the glass (in which the interior is also lightly reflected) through which the subject speeds. But because the interior of the auto is disconnected and set in the midst of a new kind of theater of derealized space, the experience of what is normally the paramount reality—the experience of self-awareness in a here-and-now—becomes one of unanchored mobility. This mobile subject in the midst of *elsewhere* is a cultural novum and the model for a new kind of fiction effect, a fiction of presence unbound and uncircumscribed by the fourth wall, without a 180° line to separate the world of the imaginary and the subjunctive from the commonplace.

The freeway provides the most obvious examples of *mobile subjectivity*:

Each [freeway] exit ramp offers a different visual as well as kinesthetic sensation. The interchange is like a mobile in a situation where the

observer is the moving object. It is the experience of an effortlessly choreographed dance, with each car both performing and observing the total movement and the freeway architecture providing the carefully integrated setting. (Brodsly 50)

Yet from the observer/moving object's point of view, this mobility is a paradoxical feeling of stasis and motion. In *nonspace*, the body in motion is no longer a kinesthetic key to reality, for at the wheel of the automobile or of remote control engaged in small motor movements which have become highly skilled and automatic, it explores space as an inert mass, technically or electronically empowered with virtual or actual speed. Indeed, what we experience is not an erasure, circumvention, or fragmentation of the body, but its investment with a second and more powerful skin within which a core remains secure, intact, and at rest in a vortex of speed.

Of course, mobility is a multifaceted and paradoxical concept per se, with many fields of reference: from displacement from one location to another to the freedom of movement which is symbolically equated with social mobility, to the feelings of pleasure in effortless flight which has roots in infancy, to the fundamental psychic link of motion with causality and subjecthood first described by Aristotle. But mobility also suggests the opposite of subjecthood, the freely displaceable and substitutable part, machine or human, which enables mass production and a consequent standardization brought to the social as well as economic realm. *Nonspace* engages all of these possibilities.<sup>23</sup>

Motion is not only paradoxical, it is also relative. Safe within the halls of consumption, the body may stroll with half a mind in leisurely indirection. But the shops passed in review are themselves a kind of high-speed transport, the displacement of goods produced in mass quantities in unknown elsewhere into temporal simultaneity and spatial condensation. And on the freeway as well as the airplane, a new and paradoxical experience of motion has evolved: on one hand, the relative motion of an enclosed space beyond which the world passes in high-speed review; or inversely, the dynamic sensation of movement itself experienced by a relatively inert body traversing the world at high speed.<sup>24</sup> At least before the advent of the simultaneous and multiple perspectives of cubism, motion in Western representation was usually confined to the world of the story beyond the glass, stationary or moving images presented for the eyes of a stationary (and one-eyed) subject. A "bubble" of subjective here-and-now strolling or speeding about in the midst of elsewhere is one of the features that constitute new, semifictitious realms of the everyday.

Of course, any mobility experienced by the television viewer is virtual, a "range" or displaced realm constituted by vectors, a transportation of the mind in two dimensions. Our *idyll*, or self-sufficient and bounded place, is the space in front of the TV set, what Baudrillard calls "an archaic envelope" ("Ecstasy" 129). Yet Baudrillard thinks bodies left on the couch are "simply superfluous, basically useless," "deserted and condemned," like the immense countryside deserted by urbanization. But these couch bodies are also travelers, responding in a checked, kinetic way to the virtual experiences of motion we are offered as subjects or view in objects passing our screens.<sup>25</sup> Television also offers the road in the midst of the idyll, reconstituting a virtual world of face-to-face relationships shared between viewer and television personalities displaced or teleported from elsewhere in the process, a fiction of the paramount reality of discourse. Thus *discourse* or represented acts of enunciation can be understood as a container for both the viewer and the personalities of television which provides protection from a world thereby constituted as beyond and elsewhere.

Discursive segments also constitute a plane of passage between the shows, items, and stories embedded within the plane. Sometimes *passages* are even marked as such via the motion of subjects who can speak as if directly to us, the viewers within the televisual representation. For instance, the syndicated yet local program, *Evening Magazine*, often showed its local hosts in motion, walking as they introduced unrelated, packaged stories (produced at many different stations) to the viewer.<sup>26</sup> While this practice seems strange and gratuitous, it is quite simply a visual realization of the virtual power of language as a means of transport. The use of movement as passage marker is echoed, for instance, in the work of visual anthropologists Worth and Adair,<sup>27</sup> who, in trying to understand the films they had incited members of the Navajo tribe to make, concluded that "almost all the films made by the Navajos portray what to members of our culture seems to be an inordinate amount of walking" (144). Worth and Adair concluded that for the Navajo, walking itself was an event and "a kind of punctuation to separate activities" (148). On television, such marking may also be represented in far more minimal than spectacular ways, for example, spatially via shifts of an on-screen subject in body orientation and eyeline or verbally via the use of discursive shifters. Thus the overall discursive framework of televisual representation, including the use of hosts and presenters of all kinds, provides a means of passing between object-worlds, be they stories provided for entertainment or fantasies which surround commodities, in a way which virtually includes the viewer.



In *Visible Fictions*, John Ellis determined that the *segment* is the basic unit of television (in opposition to or modification of Raymond Williams's notion of flow).<sup>28</sup> The basic dualism of televisual representation opts for neither concept alone but helps to explain why, despite its segmentation into unrelated items, television is not commonly perceived as fragmented, but rather experienced as unified and contained. Nor is that coherence achieved simply by virtue of "flow" or the juxtaposition of items on the same plane of discourse. The duality of *passage* and *segmentation* in physical as well as represented space is related in turn to the dual planes of language, the engaged discourse of a subject in passage, and the disengagement of stories from the here-and-now of the subject.

The separate segments that disengage from discursive passages are recursive or embedded "hypodiegetic worlds" (McHale 113) at one level removed from the frame of passage. Segments with widely disparate topics in contrasting expressive moods from the tragic or the comic to the trivial or traumatic can be united via discourse into flow. Other sub- or "hypo" levels of narration can appear within any one discursive or narrative segment—three, for instance, are typical of news reports (115) (see part 1). Thus television discourse typically consists of "stacks" of recursive levels which are usually quite different in look and "flavor." These stacks are also signified at different spatial and temporal removes from the viewer and have different kinds of contents. Thus a shift of discursive level is also a shift of ontological levels, that is, to a different status in relation to reality. Television formats then amount to particular ways of conceptualizing and organizing "stacks" of worlds as a hierarchy of realities and relationships to the viewer.

Formally, shifting from one televisual segment to another may be a shift in the hierarchy of discourse—but shifts and passages between levels can also occur within segments. For instance, there is a category of television segment, including advertisements, logos, and rock videos (see my "Rock Video"), the *raison d'être* of which is to engage the viewer with a sign, image, or commodity by means of a represented passage through a whole range of discursive and ontological levels. Such segments are *condensations* of what are ordinarily dispersed in syntactic alternations of discursive segments with embedded stories or fantasies.

Furthermore, televisual representations may include several layers in the same visual field *simultaneously*. An obvious example is the image of the narrating news anchor against "world" wallpaper and over-the-

shoulder news windows. Like television, freeways and malls provide similar examples of multiple worlds condensed into one visual field: for example, the automobile windshield is not merely glass and image of the world into which one speeds, but also a mirror reflection of the driver and passengers; a rearview mirror provides a window of where one has been as well as side views of landscape unfolding and distorted by speed.

The representation of the copresence of multiple worlds in different modes<sup>29</sup> on the television screen is achieved via division of the visual field into areas or via the representation of stacked planes which can be tumbled or squeezed and which, in virtual terms, advance toward and retreat from the visual field of the viewer. Discursive planes are differentiated from embedded object-worlds via *axes*: changes of scale along the *z*-axis of spatial depth indicate a proxemic logic of the shared space of conversation with the viewer. In contrast, embedded stories are oriented around *x*- and *y*-axes, actually or virtually by means of the field/reverse field of filmic continuity editing. The primary logic of alternation in television segments is then not that of suture of the story-world, as in filmic fictions,<sup>30</sup> but rather of communication with a spectator in various degrees of "nearness." The constant reframings in and out along the *z*-axis of depth which David Antin saw as part of the television form apparently do have a function as links with a spectator rather than as inexplicable or gratuitous reframings of a spatially continuous, diegetic world. Even in fictional worlds beyond the plane of discourse, a relation to the *z*-axis of discursive relations with the viewer can be discerned. For example, in her discussion of soap operas on television, Sandy Flitterman notes the lack of continuity editing and the practice of alternating framing of characters in a two-shot as nearer to and farther from the viewer (200). This practice can be explained historically by the television studio situation of live editing by means of switching between two cameras. But it can also be explained as part of a proxemic logic of relations with the spectator which pervades even fictional worlds.

What is ultimately at stake in this insistent relation to the viewer is a site of exchange. For the representation of mixed and simultaneous worlds is deeply allied with the cultural function of television in symbolically linking incommensurabilities of all sorts—the system of goods or commodities and the economic relations it orders, the sexual-matrimonial system which orders sociality, and the symbolic order of language, including images, symbols, and the spoken and written word. If

television itself is a great storehouse for tokens of all these cultural systems, exchange-values are created by their juxtaposition, but even more by means of passages through them, in which television programming offers many different itineraries from which to choose.

The viewer as mobile subject has remote control over trajectories and channels plus power to take the off-ramp and leave the zone of televisual space. However, the television viewer who enters a car to go shopping, or even to work, hasn't left *nonspace* behind—these realms are variations thereof. (For this reason "home shopping" channels represent less the interaction of television with the world than a "short circuit" of communication and growing withdrawal into enclosed systems.)

Thus the realm of *nonspace* is divided again via the play of motion and stillness organized by passages and thresholds to the worlds behind the glass, by a *mise-en-scène* of light and darkness, and by proxemic indicators of nearness and distance within an unanchored situation. This very mobility allows what could be a profoundly disorienting and fragmented experience of life to act as a powerful means of reunifying the flow of time and space into a virtual here-and-now of a communal world. Voices and images offer community to a disengaged and enclosed world of the home, the automobile, and the mall. A banished, paramount reality is recreated as a phantom within elsewhere. The result may be the "secular communion"<sup>31</sup> of the freeway, the shared passages of the mall, or parasociality in relation to television personalities. Thus the institutions of mobile privatization restore a vision of the world from which they are disengaged and which they have largely displaced.

### A NEXUS OF EXCHANGE BETWEEN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND SYMBOLIC SYSTEMS

Realms of everyday experience—the freeway, the shopping mall, and television—are part of a sociohistorical nexus of institutions which grew together into their present-day structure and national scope after World War II. Transportation, broadcasting, and retailing displaced the earlier sociocultural forms of modernity such as the railroad, the movies, and the shop windows along a brightly lit boulevard (Williams 26).<sup>32</sup> These earlier forms of modernity were in themselves means of surveillance and control. Like the cinema, the railroad is an odd experience of immobile motility, virtual and actual, in which spatiality retains a semipublic nature.

Institutions of communication after World War II intensified processes of privatization and massification which had begun far earlier. Private life in the postwar era presumed a significant amount of leisure or discretionary time and "an apparently self-sufficient family home" which "carried, as a consequence, an imperative need for new kinds of contact" (Williams 27). Raymond Williams pointed out the paradox which the notion of "mass" communications hides—the increasing functional isolation and spatial segmentation of individuals and families into private worlds which are then mediated into larger and larger entities by new forms of communication.

In the United States, the paradox of mass culture and social isolation is even more acute, for to a far greater extent, the public airwaves, rights-of-way, and places of assemblage have been given over to private ownership or use and to market forces. Perhaps because the principles of mobile privatization are congruent with widely and deeply held American values of the good life along with dreams of social mobility which hold that ideal attainable for all, the choice of the private automobile over public conveyances, for instance, "seems to reflect an overwhelmingly popular consensus rarely matched by social movements, and it flourishes because it continues to serve that general will" (Brodsly 36). The principles of mobile privatization guided the creation of systems of transport and social communication that promise liberty in the midst of sociality, privacy amongst community, and an autonomy of protected selfhood nourished by its environment.

What the institutions of mobile privatization then represent are a means of social integration and control which can dispense with the need for any "central" or panoptical position of surveillance, visible display of force, or school of discipline, because they are fully congruent with the values of individualism and hedonistic pleasure, as well as desires for social recognition and dreams of community. Furthermore, the practices of driving, shopping, and television viewing are dreams become habit.

Take, for instance, the perception of freedom and self-determination experienced by the driver of the automobile in comparison with that public mode of transport, the train. An automobile driver, Otto Julius Bierbaum, exclaimed in 1902:

The railway just transports you—and that's the immediate contrary to traveling. Traveling means utmost free activity, the train however condemns you to passivity. Traveling is getting rid of the rules. But the railway squeezes you into a time-table, makes you a prison of all kinds of rules, and locks you into a cage that you are not supposed to

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leave and not even to unlock whenever you want. . . . Who considers that traveling may as well call a march in review a stroll. (Quoted in Sachs 3-4)<sup>33</sup>

The automobile represents an apparent freedom from the lockstep of a public time-schedule as well as "the complete subversion of the traditional sanctuary of the public realm—the street," so that merely driving a private automobile can be understood as a ritual expression of national faith: "Every time we merge with traffic we join our community in a wordless creed: belief in individual freedom, in a technological liberation from place and circumstance, in a democracy of personal mobility. When we are stuck in rush-hour traffic the freeway's greatest frustration is that it belies its promise" (Brodsly 5). This faith in mobility sustains cultural homogeneity rather than diversity; and paradoxically, the feelings associated with vast improvements in the freedom of motion are in lockstep with submission to demands for greater conformity.

A common faith in freedom of movement and of choice among commodities, destinations, and channels sustains the institutions of mobile privatization. They are the realms of answered prayers, embodiments of dearly held beliefs and phantoms of desire become commonplace, a field of action constituted by the automatisms and chains of associations which make up vast networks in the symbolic system of our culture. Constraints built on these chains of associated ideas are owned, not imposed, and require very little surveillance. As an early theorist of representational punishment cited by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* explained:

This link [between ideas] is all the stronger in that we do not know of what it is made and we believe it to be our own work; despair and time eat away the bonds of iron and steel, but they are powerless against the habitual union of ideas, they can only tighten it still more; and on the soft fibres of the brain is founded the unshakable base of the soundest of Empires. (103)

The empire of the habitual is the matrix of mental and social life, made of mundane opportunities and choices and composed of practices conducted half-aware, which assemble one's very personhood. What is new in contemporary life are not these institutions of mobile privatization per se, but the interpenetration of layer upon layer of built environment and representation, the formative and derivative, the imaginary and mundane. Embodying values as neither here nor there,

## An Ontology of Everyday Distraction

both present and absent, they are ideal expressions of the *zones* of ontological uncertainty, expressions of both Kansas and Oz.<sup>34</sup>

Although we may perceive no alternative, no one forces people to watch television or to drive, particularly on the freeway, or to go to the mall or to buy anything on display there or on television. But few indeed resist. One prescription for an aesthetic mode of resistance to consumer culture requires the passerby to remain bewitched on this side of the window, glass, or mirror, poised at the moment between perfection and lack, never cashing in desire for the disappointments of fulfillment.<sup>35</sup> But aesthetic resistance depends on an older disposition of the subject in relation to the spectacle of an imaginary world framed and discrete behind the glass. The cycle of consumption in a "highway comfort" culture is designed for maximum mobility and circulation of a consumer inside the imaginary world of images and objects. One of the successes of this system of interrelations is on one hand, the liquidity of images, objects, and commodities, and on the other, the ease with which the subject passes from one role to another—driver, passerby, and consumer—each requiring a different mode of attention and psychic investment in objects.

Such *convertibility* between these various systems of communication and exchange is necessary; freeways, malls, and television are not merely similar in form, they are systems constructed to interact in mutually reinforcing ways.<sup>36</sup> Each institution is a kind of sociocultural distribution and feedback system for the others: television (most obviously as mass-audience, network broadcasts) serves as the nationwide distribution system for symbols in anticipation and reinforcement of a national culture presented not only as desirable but as already realized somewhere else. The mall is a displacement and the enclosure of the walkable street and a collective site in which to cash in the promises of the commodities seen on television. The freeway is the manifestation of personal mobility at its most literal, its radius a lifeline that makes the consumption style of suburban living and shopping economically feasible as well as logistically possible. The auto on the freeway is a juncture between television and mall, a "home" and commodity fetish on wheels. Convertibility between systems means that values can be exchanged whether they are expressed as commodity objects or images, in two or three dimensions or in gigantic or miniature scale.

Just as the mall is a miniature suburbia, a figure of desire become literal and three-dimensional, the television box is a quintessential miniature, both as copy *and* prototype. Even in its gigantic form, the

large screen projection, it is no bigger than a picture window or an alternative to wallpaper. Bachelard explains how miniaturization is an attempt to master and control the world, which one can then enter in one's imagination by making oneself very small (148–82). This *miniaturization* is responsible for the feelings of safety linked with malls, freeways, and television, what Susan Stewart in *On Longing* termed “feminization,” as opposed to a “masculine” metaphor of the gigantic as abstract authority of the state in collective and public life. Miniaturization is a process of interiorization, enclosure, and perfection, one in which the temporal dimensions of narrative or history are transformed into spatial ones, a plenitude of description of seemingly endless details. This contraction of the world which expands the personal serves a process of commodification as well, the transformation of action into exchange, nature into marketplace, history into collection and property. The realm of the gigantic and exaggerated in public life, a collective body in pieces, has been shrunk into a perfect whole. Kowinski describes the technique of miniaturizing the shops and concessions in theme parks and malls as designed to evoke the nostalgic feelings the adult has when visiting the world of childhood, the once vast seen as tiny. The incomprehensible then comes near, no longer too far away or too foreboding: the distant and the exotic are sought in order to collapse them into proximity and approximation with the self.

However, once within the miniature, the universe looms endless, just as the stars shine through Benjamin's glass-topped arcades of nineteenth-century Paris. How are malls, freeways, and television as miniatures compatible with representation of the universal and the social? In *Learning from Las Vegas* Robert Venturi described a new kind of monumentality which began with the Las Vegas strip cut off from the surrounding desert and concluded within the darkened and low-ceilinged casinos, spotted with islands of activity, from glowing tables to garden oases. Rather than the tall and imposing, like the skyscraper as up-ended panopticon and symbol of coercive or (via reflective glass) impenetrable power, the new monumentality is long and low, without discernible edges or ends or secure locus in place, rather like mirages lifted above the grids of homes, shops, and offices. Indeed, the very lack of panoptical positions afforded within the wings and cubbyholes of the typical mall is responsible for its sense of endlessness and a sense of disorientation within it. The freeway is “long and lowness” incarnate, but it also offers “kinks in the road” beyond which one can anticipate the unknown, in which accident and death can lurk, as a prime source of the monumental within a highly controlled, otherwise predictable

system. “Kinks in the road” on television are temporal in order, possibilities of irruption of the unexpected in a plot or a schedule within an endlessness of parallel worlds which go on whether switched on or not, whether we watch or not, a world which is a primary reference in daily conversation, which we may or may not be equipped to enter.

In principle, miniatures like the mall are conceptual units which are invertible: that is, a mall can be lifted off the page, a scale model can be shrunk or expanded and plunked down in a nowhere that is anywhere that suitable freeway access and (usually upscale) demographics prevail. This liquidity is certainly one of the secrets of commodity culture, allowing signs and images to become realized as objects of desire and also to circulate freely between different levels of reality. One still “unnatural” and hence disconcerting feature of postmodernity is the presence of glowing signifiers of desire realized in the midst of everyday life—images magnified into monuments (for example, Michel de Certeau speaks of New York skyscrapers as “letters”) or the big world shrunk down to the miniature size of a theme park or a mall. This invertibility between language and reality, that is, world-to-image-to-world fit, is inherent in the performative aspect of language, or in the capacity to declare worlds into existence within designated and proper boundaries. But those boundaries now extend to cover much of everyday experience: perhaps never before has it been so opportune or so feasible to realize a symbol or idea dramatically in 3-D. This expansion of the performative, making the actual virtual and the virtual actual, is behind the most recognizable features of postmodernity as theorized in Boorstein's culture of the image and “pseudo-events,” in Callois's description of an undecidable state between the animate and inanimate,<sup>37</sup> and in Baudrillard's “simulations.” Beyond liquid worlds that readily convert into one another, we are now undergoing a process of gradual convergence of the analogy of television with television itself. In the mall, not only can television screens be found in department stores and passages, but the mall as an architectural form has begun to sprout “video walls.” On the freeway, we can soon anticipate the appearance of the virtual video screen or “head-up display” that will float in a driver's field of vision like a freeway sign (Duensing 3).<sup>38</sup> It seems that soon one will have to speak of one great machine.

## CONCLUSION

The nonspace of privatized mobility is not neutral ground. It is rather the result of the dominance of one set of values over other values

held a little less dear. Those other values, loosely allied with the "public sphere," are represented but not included in a way which gives them substance. The dominance of the values linked with mobile privatization is also the result of a misunderstanding. Ideas in the marketplace, that is, words and images as markers of economic and social exchange, are not the same thing as the free marketplace of ideas; and correlatively, consumers are not the same thing as subjects of discourse. Broadcast and narrowcast ratings and cassette sales figures, for instance, are the measure of the first kind of marketplace, the pure exchange-value of language and images. To the extent that the stock of ideas is determined by pure exchange-value, the marketplace of ideas is diminished. (Deregulation and dismantling of obligation to a "public," however defined, are perhaps better understood as a "depublication" of transport, social, and media communication, the legal and regulatory surface of the general phenomenon of privatization discussed here.) To strengthen the second kind of values—those related to discursive exchange among subjects, community, and a shared commitment to the just as well as the good life—requires foundation work. First, a widely held sense of the difference between the market value and the discursive value of ideas must be established. Then, recognizing the extent and scope of an attenuated fiction effect in everyday life—an effect now largely unappreciated or considered trivial and hence subject to little vigilance—might already be a step toward bringing distraction within a controlled, psychic economy of disavowal. For distraction both motivates and promotes the "liquidity" of words and images in economic exchange by undermining a sense of different levels of reality and of incommensurable difference among them.

However, the analysis of the situation advanced here suggests how difficult such a project has become. First, the means of advancing such notions are largely restricted to those very venues of privatization and distraction which work against them. Furthermore, older concepts of liberation in everyday life based on "escape attempts" (see Cohen and Taylor) and figurative practices are no longer viable in a built environment that is already evidence of dreamwork in the service of particular kinds of commerce, communication, and exchange. Indeed, older notions of the public realm and of paramount reality have been largely undermined, and a return to a pretelevision world of politics, the street, or marketplace is unlikely.

Not that there is nothing outside of the built environment of freeways, malls, and television. There is indeed a heterogeneous world of

local values; the decaying world of the city and town left beyond the enclosures is also becoming a gentrified and lively realm of privilege and experimentation. Because the realms of privatization present a facade of self-sufficiency and self-determination, means of change are easier to imagine as coming from those realms outside than from within. Thus a prime strategy that has been devised for changing television is one of penetration of these enclosed worlds with other public and private voices.<sup>39</sup> What is ultimately at stake in puncturing everyday enclosures for low-intensity dreams are the rights and responsibilities of subjects in the public realm, a once gigantic, now shrunken terrain to be reclaimed from everyday life.

However, when included within television, the public and private worlds outside are distanced ontologically under several other layers of representation. That is why inclusion in representation per se is not enough to open the television apparatus out into the public world—for the privileged sites of subjectivity on television are first, those allotted to the enunciation of televisual utterances and the interests those utterances serve; and second, to those subjects in passage represented in the utterance, shifting between a relation to the viewer and relations to embedded object-worlds. That is, the very formats and conventions that have evolved in U.S. televisual representation work against dialogue with the "other," the excluded outsiders. Or the past and otherness are included by proxy in a way that blunts the sense of an outside and of other possible worlds.

Furthermore, even the embedded narratives or dramatic segments under the plane of discourse are not conducive to the representation of change, either formally or at the level of social content. Narrative that embraces change, heterogeneity, and historical reach is undermined at a global level by the underlying serial organization of televisual representation per se: the notion of a linear sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end, in which "something happens," is limited to the microlevel of the segment. The spatiotemporal organization of narrative on television can be compared with Bakhtin's analysis of the "road" chronotope in Greek romance. That is, the road was not a place where a change from one state or condition to another could occur—it was rather an obstacle course which merely delayed the eventual reunion of two characters who were destined to be lovers. These characters neither change, nor develop, nor age in a journey governed solely by fortuitous incident. Like the romance, television narrative often manages to combine a sense of passage with an ultimately static situation. Like itinerar-

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ies in the mall or the freeway, these stories are highly segmented enchainments that have largely given up any pretense of development. The itineraries of viewing will always pass by representations of cultural goods of various kinds, over and over, but the system of combination seems impervious to change.

So when the dominant principles of alternation on television work against both the narrative process of change in characters and a rhetorical process of argumentation, how can they then challenge or encourage change in the mind of the viewer? Differentiation by means of lifestyle and disposable income must be distinguished from the differences between subjects in "local" and "heterogeneous" outside realms. That is why the proliferating venues for ever more demographically segmented audiences for audiovisual representation bode well only if they also bring about formats that allow for the entry of new subjects from the outer world at the primary level of discourse. However, considering that this primary level of discourse is itself a fictional representation of discourse and part of a process that transforms outsiders automatically into insiders, the problem of representing discourse is one of degree. At best one can present a somewhat more intersubjective fiction of discourse and an only somewhat different kind of celebrity and momentary fame.

Yet, models of "penetration" and discursive exchange are necessary and useful precisely because the power relations of mobile privatization are the conventional expression of a kind of legal and social fiction based on widely held values. Changes in shared fictions, values, and beliefs occur over the long term, slowly and incrementally, not merely because once-shared values are discredited or may be no longer viable, but because alternative values and their constituencies have labored to mark themselves in discourse. I believe the criticism of television can serve cultural change where it keeps such long-term goals in mind.

## FIVE

## What Do Cyborgs Eat? Oral Logic in an Information Society

**"Well, I'll eat it," said Alice,  
"and if it makes me grow  
larger, I can reach the key;  
and if it makes me grow  
smaller, I can creep under the  
door; so either way I'll get  
into the garden and I don't  
care which happens!"**

—Lewis Carroll<sup>1</sup>

For couch potatoes, video game addicts, and surrogate travelers of cyberspace alike, an organic body just gets in the way.<sup>2</sup> The culinary discourses of a culture undergoing transformation to an information society will have to confront not only the problems of a much-depleted earth, but a growing desire to disengage from the human condition. Travelers on the virtual highways of an information society have, in fact, at least one body too many—the one now largely sedentary carbon-based body resting at the control console that suffers hunger, corpulence, illness, old age, and ultimately death. The other body, a silicon-based surrogate jacked into immaterial realms of data, has superpowers, albeit virtually, and is immortal; or rather, the chosen body, an electronic avatar "decoupled" from the physical body, is a program capable of enduring endless deaths. Given these physical handicaps, how can organically embodied beings enter an electronic future? Like Alice, this requires asking ourselves if and what to eat.

**PART THREE**

**MEDIA ART  
AND  
VIRTUAL  
ENVIRONMENTS**

# SIX

## The Body, the Image, and the Space-in-Between: Video Installation Art

**But our argument indicates that [learning] is a capacity which is innate in each man's mind, and that the organ by which he learns is like an eye which cannot be turned from darkness to light unless the whole body is turned.**

—Plato

The following hypotheses on video installation art are speculative answers to fundamental questions that someone rather new to video installation as an art form might ask. The answers posed here were based on research and interviews with artists and were conceptualized with the tools of cinema and television theory rather than with those of the discourse of art history. The basic

questions—what is a video installation? What are its means of expression? How do these differ from the media per se and from other arts? What kinds of installations are there? What effects on a visitor does the art form promote? What cultural function does or could this art form serve?—are questions I would never have cared enough to ask had I never experienced a video installation. Such an experience, for instance of Bruce Nauman's "Live Taped Video Corridor" (1968–70),<sup>1</sup> can be stunning. To me it was as if my body had come unglued from my own image, as if the ground of my orientation in space had been pulled out





A view down Bruce Nauman's "Live Taped Video Corridor" (1969–70). Wallboard, camera, videotape, and two monitors. 975.4 x 50.8 cm (384 x 20 inches), ceiling height. Panza Collection, Gift 1992. Copyright Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. (FN92.4165BN 17), copyright 1998 Bruce Nauman/Artists' Rights Society (ARS), New York. By permission of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Artists' Rights Society, and Bruce Nauman.

from under me. Some installations jam habitual modes of sensorimotor experience; others operate at a more contemplative level, depending for their effect on the passage of images or conceptual fields through various dimensions rather than on the passage of the body of a visitor through the installation. Yet even then, the visitor is enclosed within an envelope of images, textures, and sounds.

We lack the vocabulary for kinesthetic "insights," for learning at the level of the body ego and its orientation in space. (Perhaps such learning principles might be considered "Deweyan," a "figuring within" as opposed to the "reading" of literature or the "imagining" of pictorial art.) These hypotheses attempt to articulate this kind of experience, in a preliminary to a poetics of video installation art. Detailed description and interpretation of specific installations must reluctantly be left aside. The following sections address in turn (1) the conditions of existence of the art form; (2) its plane of expression and different levels within that plane; (3) the disposition of bodies and images in space; and (4) the temporal and experiential passage, reflections toward a metapsychology of closed-circuit and recorded video installation art.

### THE CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE OF A NONCOMMODITY ART FORM

The designation *video installation* is not an accurate guide to what is undoubtedly the most complex art form in contemporary culture. However, the term does suggest much about this art form's conditions of existence: *installation* per se suggests that an artist must actually come and install the elements, including electronic components in the case of video, in a designated space. Such an activity presumes the support of an entity to clear and hallow the ground to be occupied, that is, most likely a museum, but sometimes also a gallery, an alternative, or even perhaps a commercial or public space. Thus, installation is a topsyturvy art that depends for its very existence on museums or like institutions, whereas for commodity arts such as painting, the museum serves as the pinnacle of validation in a longer history of display.

Furthermore, the process of installing suggests a temporary occupation of space, a bracketed existence enclosed by a matching process of breaking down the composition into its elements again and vacating the site. Thus, installation implies a kind of art that is ephemeral and never to be utterly severed from the subject, time, and place of its enunciation.

In contrast, an object that can be completely freed from the act of its production, such as a painting, becomes displaceable and freely exchangeable, that is, commodifiable. In addition, this severance from the process of enunciation is what ordinarily allows a magical origin or aura to be supplied to objects of art. It is the tie to process, to the action of a subject in a here-and-now, whether loose or tight, which works against the installation as a commodity and also suggests why it is so hard to document. While an installation can be diagrammed, photographed, videotaped, or described in language, its crucial element is ultimately missing from any such two-dimensional construction, that is, "the space-in-between," or the actual construction of a passage for bodies or figures in space and time. Indeed, I would argue, the art is the part that collapses whenever the installation isn't installed.<sup>2</sup>

The frame of an installation is then only apparently the actual room in which it is placed. This room is rather the *ground* over which a conceptual, figural, embodied, and temporalized space that is the installation breaks. Then, the material objects placed in space and the images on the monitor(s) are meaningful within the whole pattern of orientations and constraints on the passage of either the body of the visitor or of conceptual figures through various modes of manifestation—pictorial, sculptural, kinesthetic, aural, and linguistic.

Note that the artist vacates the scene in installation per se.<sup>3</sup> This allows the visitor rather than the artist to perform the piece. Indeed, she or he is *in* the piece as its experiential subject, not by identification, but in body. Thus, the installation is not a proscenium art. (Hence the choice of "visitor" over spectator or viewer.) It is not hard to see the relation of installation to other anticommodity art forms that emerged in the 1960s, such as conceptual art, performance, body art, earth works, and expanded forms of sculpture.<sup>4</sup>

But how does this noncommodity art survive? Sometimes an installation is commissioned by a museum, such as the Whitney Museum for its Biennial, or by the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, or the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. In addition, like "single-channel" or narrative video, the form is generally dependent on corporate, civic, and charitable art subventions and the economic support of the artist in some other occupation. Provided an installation is site-independent and can be reerected in various places, a museum-sponsored tour can also generate rentals for the artist/installer.<sup>5</sup>

Because of the nature of its economic support, some artists decry the growing "bureaucratization" of the art: that is, funding a piece requires not only formal requests to corporations, foundations, and commissions, but the generation of detailed plans, models, and prototypes; improvisation is reduced to a minimum. But, however detailed a video installation becomes in conception, there remains an element of uncertainty and risk at the level of the material execution and installation of its elements conceived by the artist, and an element of surprise in the actual bodily experience of the visitor. Indeed, I speculate that exploring the materialization of the conceptual through all the various modes available to our heavily mediated society is at the heart of the cultural function of video installation.

In that sense, the "video" in video installation stands for contemporary image-culture per se.<sup>6</sup> Each installation is an experiment in the redesign of the apparatus that represents our culture to itself: a new disposition of machines that project the imagination onto the world and that store, recirculate, and display images, and a fresh orientation of the body in space and a reformulation of visual and kinesthetic experience.

While video installation as a form is not directly related to or dependent on the institution and apparatus of television, it is just as hard to imagine the art form without television as it is to imagine the contemporary world without it. Not only do we live surrounded by images, but our built environment and even our natural world have largely

passed through image-culture before rematerializing in three-dimensional space. Thus, though they completely overpower the art form in size and reach, television broadcasting, cable, and the videocassette as usually consumed are each but one kind of video installation that is reproduced over and over again in a field of open and otherwise unrealized possibilities.<sup>7</sup> The materialization of other possible apparatuses allows us to imagine alternatives and thus provides the Archimedean points from which to criticize what we have come to take for granted.

The following section distinguishes video installation from proscenium arts such as theater and film, as well as from traditional painting and sculpture. Various modes and types of installation apparatuses are then discussed, drawing on examples from various artists, emphasizing first spatial, then temporal dimensions.

### ONE AMONG THE NEW ARTS OF PRESENTATION

Explaining why the video installation is not theatrical or filmic does much to clarify other aspects, from its metapsychology to its modes of expression, which distinguish it from the other more illusionistic arts.

In the proscenium arts—and one can begin them with Plato's "Simile of the Cave"—the spectator is carefully divided from the field to be contemplated. The machinery that creates the vision of another world is largely hidden, allowing the immobilized spectator to sink into an impression of its reality with horror or delight but without danger from the world on view. The proscenium of the theater, and in its most ideal expression, the fourth wall, as well as the screen of film divide the here-and-now of the spectator from the elsewhere and elsewhen beyond with varying degrees of absoluteness. The frame of a painting likewise allows a painting not to be taken literally (as well as to be transportable and salable), and to allow a not-here and not-now to occupy the present. The visitor to an installation, on the other hand, is surrounded by a spatial here-and-now, enclosed within a construction that is grounded in actual (not illusionistic) space. (The title of the group installation exhibition and catalog, *The Situated Image*, emphasizes that aspect.)

Video installation can be seen as part of a larger shift in art forms toward "liveness" that began in earnest in the 1960s, in a field that included happenings, performance, conceptual art, body art, earth works, and the larger category of installation art. If there are two planes of language,<sup>8</sup> a *here* and *now* in which we can speak and be present to each other, and an *elsewhere* and *elsewhen*, inhabited by people and things that are absent from the act of enunciation, then these new arts

explore expression on the plane of presentation and of subjects in a here-and-now.

Art on the plane of presentation can be contrasted to art as representation, an evocation of absences that has been the focus of artistic exploration since the Renaissance. Representation invokes things apart from us, using language as a window on another world. In Western art, that world came to be represented as realistically as possible, using a variety of techniques such as perspective in painting and photography. Other techniques developed to suppress the here-and-now in which we inevitably receive representations, for instance, separation from the realm of reception by means of the aforementioned proscenium, frame, or screen. In photography and the cinema, the separation became absolute temporal and physical separation. Cinema spectators immobilized in darkness were like the prisoners in Plato's cave, not held in place by chains but by machines of desire, enjoying the impression of mastery over an imaginary world. We ordinarily think of fiction effect and illusionism in terms of these arts of representation.

While the cinematic machine or apparatus includes the cinema in which viewers sit and the projection room (not to mention the box office and the candy counter), "movies" are what appear on the screen, just as photographs and paintings are what appear in frame. Attention to this other plane, the here-and-now of production and reception beyond the frame, became a rich object of theoretical investigation and a critique of representation in philosophy and in cultural and film studies—as well as in art—in the 1960s.<sup>9</sup>

It is hard to imagine at first how much this new ontological status—presence, or here-and-nowness of art with the receiver of art—changes the rules of art making and receiving. In fact, from the beginning there were many who refused the work on the presentational plane the status of art. For one thing, if art and everyday life can share the same place of language, what distinguishes art from life? What happens when "experience" must substitute for "transcendence"? What does it mean to participate in art? At first, these questions may not have seemed complicated: a faith in perceiving things as they "really" are and a habit of confusing the present tense with reality and of equating experience with personal change, common to the 1960s, may have been useful in exposing the fictions of there and then and in exploring the apparatuses of the past. But the disconcerting discovery of fictions and manipulations that inhabit the here-and-now is an ongoing project of video installation.<sup>10</sup>

The impetus behind the artistic exploration of this plane of presentation and discovering its rules and limits perhaps began with utopian desires to change society via changes in consciousness (see Rosler). But the impetus was also apparently ontological—a new and virtually unknown postwar world had yet to be explored, a world mythically first discovered for art in Tony Smith's cat ride along a newly constructed New Jersey Turnpike at night. What Smith saw in the dark horizon beyond the freeway has become in the intervening period a landscape of suburbs, malls, and television in which everything, including the natural environment, is either enveloped by the low-intensity fictions of consumer culture or abandoned to decay. A subject in this everyday world is surrounded by images and a built environment that are at times hard to tell apart. Three-dimensional objects are no longer a prior reality to be represented, but rather seem to be blowups of a two-dimensional world. As I suggest in chapter 5, two and three dimensions interchange freely with each other in a derealizing process so hard to grasp that we turn to catchwords like *postmodernism* in desperation.

The arts of presentation and, particularly, video installation, are the privileged art forms for setting this mediated, built environment into play for purposes of reflection. Indeed, the underlying premise of the installation appears to be that the audiovisual experience supplemented kinesthetically can be a kind of learning not with the mind alone, but with the body itself.

While the new arts of presentation have been conceptualized as "theatrical" (see Fried),<sup>11</sup> it is important to note the massive difference between the two worlds of a traditional theater, in which the audience receives the events on stage as happening safely in an "elsewhere," and a theater in which events happen on the same plane of here-and-now as the audience inhabits. It is as if the audience in this new kind of theater were free to cross the proscenium and wander about on stage, contemplating the actors' makeup and props, able to change point of view, to hear actors' asides, seeing both the process of creating an imaginary world and—more dimly than before—the represented world itself. But the difference can be even more radical, for in performance art, as opposed to traditional theater, the body of the performer and his or her experience in a here-and-now can be presented directly and discursively to an audience, which thereby becomes a *you*, a partner inhabiting the same world, possessing the capacity to influence as well as respond to events.

Even sculptural objects could participate in this plane of presenta-

tions in a here-and-now: minimal sculpture in the 1960s, as Michael Fried perceptively noted at the time, offered a sculptural object, not as a monument or memorial of some world or time, but as an ersatz person that confronted the viewer *in his or her own space*. Indeed, the work consisted not just of an object, but implicated the physical space around the object and the play of light in it. The minimal object also required a subject capable of realizing the work, responding to the changing light and positions of a here-and-now, so that each time a work is perceived it is a different one.

Even the inevitably more narrative "single-channel" video art is part of this move toward exploring the presentational plane. While structuralist film was largely engaged in a modernist exploration of the unique properties of the medium, narrative video has long been engaged in exploring what it means to narrate stories, how stories are told, what cultural function narrative serves, and so on, so that the plane of presentation is represented over stories in a "messier," multileveled form.<sup>12</sup>

Instead of offering simplicity, the presentational arts are hybrid and complex. For instance, even though the plane of expression of presentational arts is essentially the present, it is possible to explore physically more than one tense—reference to the past and future can coexist with the present, provided that all are figured and grounded in the experience of here-and-now. Two types of video installation art can be differentiated by tense:

1. Closed-circuit video plays with "presence." A "live" camera can relay the image and sound of visitors in charged positions in installation space to one or more monitors. Shifting back and forth between two and three dimensions, closed-circuit installation explores the fit between images and the built environment and the process of mediating identity and power.

2. The recorded-video art installation can be compared to the spectator wandering about on a stage, in a bodily experience of conceptual propositions and imaginary worlds of memory and anticipation. A conceptual world is made manifest as literal objects and images set in physical relation to each other. That is, the technique for raising referent worlds to consciousness is not mimesis, but simulation. In general, the *mode* of enunciation in video installation in terms of speech-act theory is *performative* or *declarative* (see Searle and Vanderveken). Legitimated and contained by the boundaries of the art institution, a world is declared into existence. It need not match the world outside (that is, be constative), nor does installation video command the visitor nor commit the artist nor merely express some state of mind.

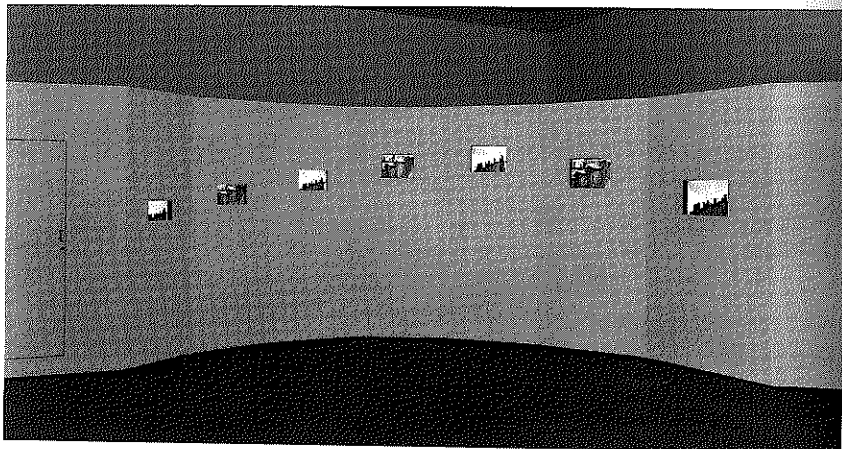
One could further divide this field of installation work into the referent world(s) that symbols made literal evoke. Yet it seems that these worlds are seldom clearly one thing or one tense—they are rather a copresence of multiple worlds, linked like stories (Mary Lucier's "Ohio at Giverny," 1983), like sagas (Joan Jonas's "Iceland Naples Express [Icelandic and Neapolitan Volcanic Sagas]," 1985–88), like dreams (Rita Myers's "The Allure of the Concentric," 1985) and obsessions (Ken Feingold's "The Lost Soul," 1988) as condensations of public and private space (Muntadas's "The Board Room," 1987), or even as if they were a simile (Dieter Froese's unrealized "Eavesdrop") or syllogism (Francesc Torres's "Belchite-South Bronx," 1987–88). In this sense, multiple channels distributed over multiple monitors are but another way of setting copresent worlds in relation to each other. And from the beginning, installation video has been a mixed medium: closed circuit with recorded video, slides, and photography.

What ultimately distinguishes one type of installation from another is less tense or medium than whether or not the visitor spatially enters two as well as three dimensions or remains in "real" space. The ultimate question that differentiates among the arts of presentation appears to be, who is the subject of the experience? Performance, even where it has installationlike sets, differs from installation, because the artist occupies the position of the subject within the installation world. Interactive work differs in yet another way. Room is made for the visitor to play with the parameters of a posited world, thus taking on a virtual role of "artist/installer" if not the role of artist as declarer and inventor of that world.<sup>13</sup> In a larger sense, all installation art is interactive, since the visitor chooses a trajectory among all the possibilities. This trajectory is a variable narrative simultaneously embodied and constructed at the level of presentation.

### THE PLAY OF APPARATUSES: PASSAGES IN TWO AND THREE DIMENSIONS

Television as a kind of primordial video apparatus already encloses the viewer within a virtual space of the monitor in several ways: light from the screen (as emphasized in the title of another group video installation, "The Luminous Image") bathes surrounding space in shifting tones and colors. In addition, what is on the television screen typically begins by presenting itself as if it were a here-and-now actually shared by viewer and media presenters and personalities. That is, television has developed a mode of presentation that envelops the viewer

## MEDIA ART AND VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS



Two channels alternate on seven monitors placed at various heights in Mary Lucier's video installation "Ohio at Giverny" (1983). Installation view Whitney Museum. By courtesy of Mary Lucier.



Sculpture: a single unit from Mary Lucier's video installation displaying burned vidicon tubes. "Untitled Display System" (1974/88). Whitney Museum at Equitable Center. Photo: Bill Jacobson. By courtesy of Mary Lucier.

## The Body, the Image, and the Space-in-Between

and presenter in a virtual space of an imaginary conversation. This "fiction of discourse" or of presence is furthered by the habitual and distracted way in which we receive television.

If, however, the television apparatus were a video art installation and not a part of a habitual home environment, then awareness of the charged position in space in front of the television set (that is, the position of a virtual subject of address) would be part of the experience of the visitor. Furthermore, one would be aware of the television set itself as an object, with a shape and position in (living-room) space. One could walk around the "news" and note the back side of the "window on the world"—the annexation of our own three-dimensional world by the two-dimensional image would be obvious not only to our conscious minds but a part of our sensorimotor experience (see my "Architecture").

The development of video installation as an art form and the discovery of its parameters can begin, as in John Hanhardt's work on Wolf Vostell and Nam June Paik, with the use of the television set itself as sculptural object. To become aware of its sculptural aspects, this object had to be freed from its context, as in Paik's displacement of the monitor into clothing for the (female) body (Charlotte Moorman's "TV Bra for Living Sculpture," 1969) or as in his reorientation of television sets into "TV Clock" (1968–81; described in Paik), in a literalization of the temporal order of television programming. The displacement of TV sets into a natural setting in "TV Garden" (1974–78), on which "Global Groove" (1973), tape compiled from all over the world, was played, demonstrated an image world as natural and international environment. That is, our image-surround no longer represents a world apart; it is our world. The computer processing of images, in which Paik played a pioneering role, is another indication that images were now themselves our raw material, the natural world upon which we exercise our influence as subjects.

Rather than pretending to timelessness (see Kraus), these early TV sculptures were subjected to the processes of mortality, in a literal kind of deconstruction, submitting the object to destruction, decay, and disappearance as in the performance of physical burial in Wolf Vostell's TV "Dé-collage" (1961). The performance of Ant Farm's "Media Burn" (1975) comes to mind as well. Mary Lucier's closed-circuit installation "Untitled Display System" (1974/1988), displaying on a monitor the "live" image from a camera burned and scarred by light, is another example of the machine made mortal.<sup>14</sup> The contrary process (to the

death drive) of building sets into greater and greater unities is exemplified in Paik's work, with his robot family, and continuing to such symbolic forms as "Video Flag X" (1985, in the collection of the Chase Manhattan Bank), "Video Flag Z" (1986, collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art), "Flag Y" (1986, collection of the Detroit Institute of Art), and "Get-Away Car" (1988, collection of the American Museum of the Moving Image).

The physical arrangement of television monitors into sculptural objects continues to be significant in installation video, though when an artist wishes to suppress the immediate reference to the primordial American video installation—the home TV set—that TVs and even video monitors inevitably bring to mind, then how to mask or distract the visitor from these connotations becomes a problem. Then, various housings and sculptural enclosures for monitors are part of a strategy for allowing other apparatuses to emerge.

Developing the parameters of video installation beyond the monitor image/object itself, video sculpture can present an act of inverting what is inside to the outside: for example, in Shigeko Kubota's video sculpture "Three Mountains" (1976–79),<sup>15</sup> it is as if the TV image of mountains were emptied out, its contents taking geometrical shape in the pyramids surrounding the monitors. These pyramids are then no longer imitations of mountains, but processed, so to speak, through our image culture and offered to us again as image ghosts and mental apparitions in three dimensions.

But the act of inversion is not limited to image culture per se: Ken Feingold sees his installations as exteriorizations of his own interior mental life. Alternatively, as I interpret an installation by Mary Lucier, "Asylum, A Romance" (1986), the symbolic map of our culture with its dared and inadequate oppositions and boundaries is made manifest and undermined as obsolete (see my "Mary Lucier: Burning and Shining").

The interiority of such exteriorized images becomes most obvious, least anchored in materiality, in video projections, such as Peter Campus's "mem" (1975) (see Duguet 233–34). There is no monitor, only the visitor's body and perceptual system in relation to an image projection system, an interrelationship embodied in ghostly images, nothing but light. In contrast, this projection of interiority can be given massive form, equivalent to the very walls around the visitor, in Bill Viola's "Room for St. John of the Cross" (1983).<sup>16</sup> The saint's imagination is projected as the visitor's overwhelming subjective view of a risky flight

over mountain peaks. (Meanwhile, an exterior surface of calm contemplation is presented within the interior of a hut with a still video image of a snow-capped mountain.)

There are also different degrees to which installation work occupies three-dimensional space, for example, the video wall, the kinetic painting, the relief, the sculpture, and the installation. Insofar as spatial positions outside the two-dimensional field are charged with meaning that is an essential aspect of the work, all these levels partake of the poetics of installation. The spectator thus enters a charged space-in-between, taking on an itinerary, a role in a set in which images move through different ontological levels with each shift in dimension, in a kinesthetic art, a body art, an image art that is rather an embodied conceptual art.

Once multiple monitors and multiple channels of video were used, other parameters for comparison and contrast came into play. In Ira Schneider's "Manhattan Is an Island" (1974), for example, an informational topographic map was created from video recordings taken at various height levels (a boat, a helicopter) and locations (downtown, midtown, uptown) of Manhattan.<sup>17</sup> In "Time Zones (A Reality Simulation)" (1980), Schneider attempted the same on a world scale, displaying a circle of twenty-four (recorded, but ideally simultaneous satellite) images, one from each zone. These pieces are technologically complex, but conceptually simple elaborations of the notion of place.

In their collaboration on temporality, "Wipe Cycle" (1969),<sup>18</sup> Frank Gillette and Ira Schneider used nine color monitors around which pretaped material, live broadcast television, and live closed-circuit television images from the entrance to the gallery were subjected to time delay and switching. Here the possibility for an image track to migrate from monitor to monitor was exploited, as well as a series of contrasts between three different types of "liveness" and time delay. In his own work, however, the serial contrasts Gillette makes are not restricted to the same conceptual realm. For example, in "Quidditas," a three-part installation from 1974–75,<sup>19</sup> images and ambient sound were collected in Cape Cod, Vermont, and New Hampshire, in a display that compared three different rates of "nature time." (Here, rather than establish equivalent series, the camera could establish rhythms counter to that of natural processes.)

Beryl Korot's "Dachau" (1974) was the first video installation to systematically explore the juxtaposition of the material on monitors, in a process that could be compared to serial music, or, as Korot noted, to

weaving.<sup>20</sup> The spatial disposition of four monitors recreates a kind of broken proscenium space; it is the play at the temporal level that makes the piece, as intended, "impossible to put on television" (Korot, interview 1989) and that forces a viewer to watch the images differently. The ascetic, black-and-white video images show a rather banal tour of the contemporary concentration camp in Dachau, the Holocaust an absence like horror left unspoken. The monitors use architectural features in the image to create vertical and horizontal patterns. The images from two channels alternate across the monitors: a/b/a/b. However, the pattern is not true—there is a slight delay that puts every repetition across the visual field a little off. The whole reflects a complex relation to recording and memory, to images and what they do and don't convey.

I have come to think of this possibility for repetition, contrast, and migration of images across a shape as a poetic dimension of video installation; that is, it is a practice that deemphasizes the content of images in favor of such properties as line, color, and vectors of motion, with content of their own to convey. The choreography of these properties is another kinesthetic dimension of transformation.<sup>21</sup>

The transformation from monitor to monitor, from two to three dimensions and back again, is most visible when these ontological levels do not match and the conceptual is transformed in its passage through various material manifestations. Curt Royston's installations (such as "Room with Blinds" [1987] or "Flat World" [1987]) are like large paintings folded over, creating such mismatches at an optical level: two and three dimensions intersect—but the information one gets by examining the three-dimensional painting/relief/sculptural objects up close contradicts the (false) perspectival image one gets from a distance or by viewing a video monitor. (Note that Royston's video image can potentially include a visitor within the "painting.")

Several of Muntadas's pieces illustrate another kind of mismatching: that is, the conceptual realm of the installation is not contained within a gallery space, but spills over into public space. The "Board Room," shown in Barcelona at La Virreina (1988), is one example. In another piece, "haute CULTURE Part I" (Montpellier, France, 1983), a seesaw with a monitor at each end, tilted one way in a mall and the other way in a museum, makes an implicit comparison between the two sites. In "Part II" (Santa Monica Mall 1984) the difference between the two social-institutional spaces is virtually moot—one seesaw with monitors tilts slowly this way and that. These pieces suggest that an installation

need not coincide with its container or exist in contiguous space; what unites an installation is the conceptual space that breaks unevenly over a spatial realm charged with social meaning. Another Muntadas technique, the evacuation of all the image material from the installation "Exposicion" (1985), leaving only the shell or spatial frame, is yet another exposure of the mismatch of realms ordinarily so liquid in our commercial image culture that the seams are virtually invisible to us. Thus, we learn that ideas and dreams are not utterly interchangeable with images nor are they exchangeable with bodies and objects.

### EXPERIENCE IN ONE OR FOUR DIMENSIONS

If there is transcendence in the presentational arts, it must come not from elsewhere, nor in a controlled regression to a preconscious state via identification with the not-self as self. These arts address the wide-awake consciousness that we call experience. Such a realm is not immune from its own fictions and intensities, nor does it lack spirituality; play, ritual, and revolution are part of this plane of presence. Experience implies that a change has taken place in the visitor, that he or she has learned something. This learning is not a kind of knowing better but nevertheless . . . , nor is it knowing unleashed from the habitual realm of a body that never learns but rather endlessly repeats. Rather, it exploits the capacities of the body itself and its senses to grasp the world visually, aurally, and kinesthetically. If the first kind of transcendence in the arts is the kind denigrated in Plato's "Simile of the Cave," the second kind of transcendence, while not a peripatetic philosophy in motion through the groves of academe itself, could be compared with the trajectory of a prisoner in motion from the darkness to light. (If it is possible to do so, I would prefer not to adopt Plato's idealism or his hierarchy of values along with his simile.) An installation without this intertwining of corporeal and conceptual transcendence would be nothing more than an exhibition, a site for learning knowledge already known, transmitted by the authorities who know it—governments, corporations, schools, and other institutions of all kinds.

To describe the things we can learn from installation art requires interpretation of each experience itself. These things are left to the detailed treatment they deserve in other venues, but the range of subjects treated in installation art is easy to summarize as vast—from the spatial and temporal notions of identity, to the exploration of image culture, reaching from the technological sublime to institution of art

itself, to mourning the loss of the natural world and the desire for the renewal of a spiritual dimension in material reality.

### **"YOU HAD TO BE THERE": THE LIMITS OF VIDEO INSTALLATION**

Beyond whatever failures there might be in specific installations that, for whatever reason, might offer visitors an experience of puzzlement or boredom rather than insight, there are limitations intrinsic to the art form. Perhaps the most intransigent problem is the relation of video installation to temporality, a subject left virtually unaddressed until now: as a spatial form, installation art might appear to have escaped the ghetto of time-based arts into the museum proper, leaving single-channel video art to fend for itself. Video installation, however, remains a form that unfolds in time—the time a visitor requires to complete a trajectory inspecting objects and monitors, the time a video track or a poetic juxtaposition of tracks requires to play out, or the time for a track to wander across a field of monitors, and, one might add, the time for reflection in the subject her- or himself, that is, for the experience of a transformation to occur.

Temporal unfolding is commonly organized within video installations in repeating cycles that allow a visitor to enter and leave at any point. (Some installations cycle a kind of narrative instead.) There is a contradiction between cyclic repetition in the art form and the transcendence of repetition through experience that is the desired result—yet at the level of each individual visitor this contradiction may be moot. A more practical problem with temporality has to do with the dominant mode of perceiving in museums and galleries. However long the cycle, at whatever rate the installation unfolds, this unfolding is incompatible with taking in visual objects all at once, in a matter of seconds. If in response to this dominant mode, one were to reduce temporal unfolding to the barest minimum, what would happen then to the notion of experience or transcendence? This incommensurability of perceptual modes is of course related to the difference between the arts of presentation and the arts of representation, and the different planes of language that have come to cohabit in the museum.

In this light, the "museumization" of installation art can be evaluated in two diametrically opposed ways. In one way, installation art could be said to transform the nature of the museum itself, now a place fraught with problems related to the commodification of art and the penetration of corporations with economic agendas of their own into the command

of the art world. Installation art in this setting reinvigorates all the spaces-in-between, so that the museum visitor becomes aware of the museum itself as a megainstallation, even to the point of self-critique: an installation full of spatial positions charged with power, full of fetish-objects transposable anywhere, a site that oils the fluid transpositions of concepts and commodity-objects between ontological realms.

On the other hand, installation art begins to partake in a long-overdue recognition afforded to arts of presentation. In the process, installation art itself could become more commodifiable, a prestige art, and its practitioners a relatively closed elite. I personally see that there are intrinsic limits to the commodifiability of installation art that brake what some would see as its corruption as well as its acceptance. More problematic is the accessibility of the art form itself to a general public. "You had to be there" to know what an installation is. Even then, until recently a general lack of discourse on the arts of presentation has led to incomprehension or misunderstanding about the premises or goals of this art form as well. For instance, the experiments with feedback of sound and image in the closed-circuit video experiments of the early 1970s have been long been diagnosed as narcissism.<sup>22</sup>

Surely, narcissism is one moment in an oscillation at the threshold between gaining and losing one's own image. However, in retrospect the virtual relation between the body of the perceiver and the monitor image was precisely one of decentering. Remembering Nauman's claustrophobic "Live Taped Video Corridor" with which this chapter began underlines the possibilities for disturbing the relation to one's own body image. Unlike film, in which the camera, the optical printer, and the projector occupy the same position at different times, in live closed-circuit video, the monitor operates simultaneously with the camera and must be placed asymmetrically to it to some degree or other (barring putting the camera *into* the monitor). This decentering effect is hidden in the ordinary use of video as one-way television. The skewed relation between physical space and its representation on screen becomes apparent in live video feedback, most especially when the viewer's body in relation to his or her own image is involved. Splitting apart the symmetrical relationship of the body and the image breaks the illusion most fundamental to mass culture and to broadcast television—that serially produced merchandise or broadcast images are meant "just for you."

Aesthetic strategies for displacing that symmetrical and virtual relation between the body and the screen are at the heart of the closed-circuit video installations of Bruce Nauman, Peter Campus, Dan Gra-



ham, and others. Single-channel videotapes by these artists as well as by Joan Jonas, Vito Acconci, and other artists of the period experiment with shifting relations between the body of the artist, the camera, and the monitor.

While "Vertical Roll" (1970) is her best-known performance video of the period, Joan Jonas's profoundly simple "Left Side Right Side" of the same year (seven minutes, black-and-white) uses a mirror and a monitor to demonstrate the fragmentation and multiplication of the self-image. At first, with the constant refrain of her voice and her finger pointing, "This is my left side, this is my right side," we find that the mirror image (which divides the body into parts and reflects them in symmetrical right/left inversion) doesn't at all match the video image, which is a replica of the body image. Furthermore, the video replicant is free to wander, no longer tied to a mirror position; once recorded, it is unleashed in time as well to enjoy its semiautonomous but ever so repetitive existence. When seen in the same frame together, the mirror image and the replicant image produce confusing inverted symmetries. Peter Campus's video and glass installation "Interface" (1972) allows the visitor to experience this division and multiplication for her- or himself by projecting the visitor's video image onto the same glass on which reflected light produces a mirror-reflection. The double image that results is inverted right and left and can overlap or divide, according to the visitor's will. This theme of overlapping and superimposed right-left inversions of the self-image is played to its conclusion in Peter Campus's 1973 performance video "Three Transitions" (six minutes, color). The first transition superimposes video feedback of the other side of a paper screen on a closed-circuit image of Campus seen at the screen from the back. As Campus is shown slitting the screen and bending through it, the image of his body is seen from both sides of the screen in a complex rotated, inverted, and converging symmetry, as if he and his alter ego were scooping each other out. Thereupon Campus climbs entirely through and tapes up the wound in the screen, leaving only the bandaged paper in view. In the second transition, as Campus smears himself with a chroma-keyed color, his own closed-circuit image appears in the matte created by the smears. However, his live superimposed image does not quite match his face—yet it is as near as one could ever get to an identity. The image inside the mask trembles, in fact, in a disturbing rendering of the conscious creation of one's own presentation of self. The third transition burns the paper on which Campus's own feedback image has been keyed, eventually leaving

Joan Jonas demonstrates the difference between her mirror image and the replicant in the monitor in the video "Left Side Right Side" (1970).  
By courtesy of Joan Jonas.



"This is my right eye."

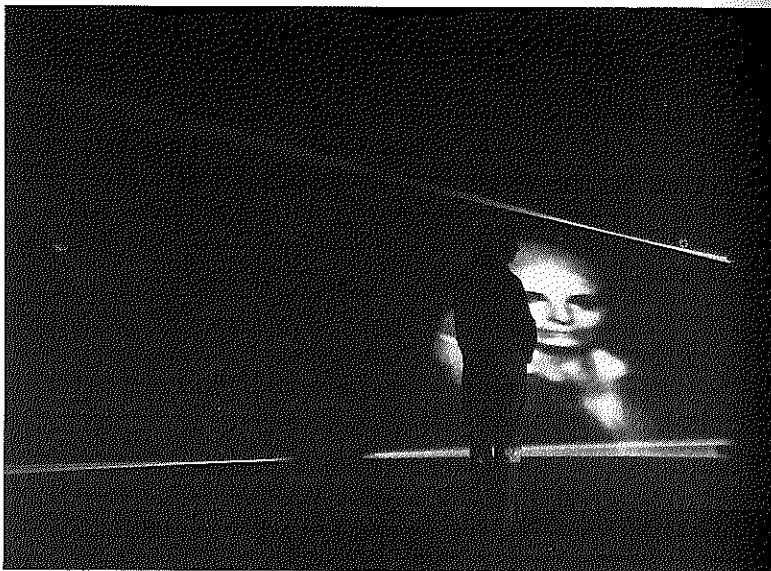


"This is my left eye."

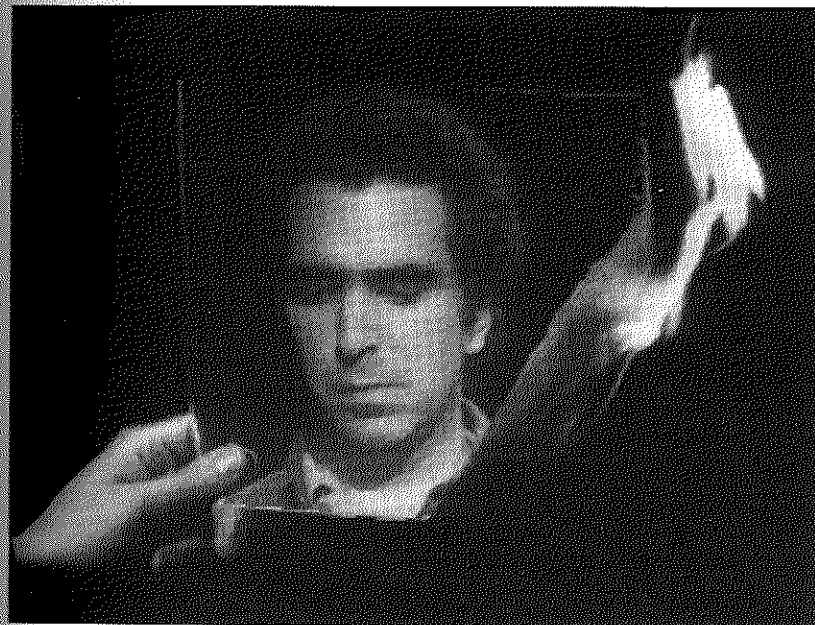
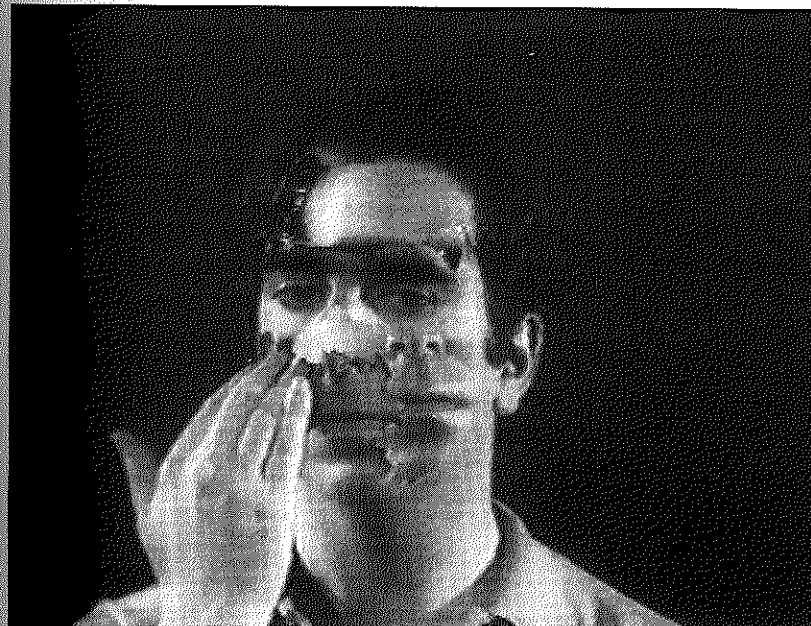
Peter Campus



The artist, Peter Campus, confronts his reflected image and his video replica on the glass in "Interface," a closed-circuit video installation, Bykert Gallery, New York 1972.  
Photo: Nathan Rabin. By courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.



A visitor encounters her anamorphic closed-circuit projection in Peter Campus's "mem" (1975), a video installation in variable dimensions. Installation: Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 1979. (Private collection, Hamburg.)  
By courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.



The second and third transitions in progress, from "Three Transitions" (1973) by Peter Campus. Frame grab by Electronic Arts Intermix.  
By courtesy of Peter Campus.

nothing but empty screen space. Here is the subtext of the closed-circuit work of the period *in nuce*.

In an example of aural and audio feedback, Richard Serra's video "Boomerang" (1974) allows the viewer to witness the confusion that results from the overlap of Nancy Holt's live speaking voice with its playback at an approximately one-second delay. As Rosalind Krauss describes it, "Because the audio delay keeps hypostatizing her words, [Holt] has great difficulty coinciding with herself as a subject. It is a situation, she says, that 'puts a distance between the words and their apprehension—their comprehension', a situation that is 'like a mirror reflection . . . so that I am surrounded by me and my mind surrounds me . . . there is no escape'," from what Krauss calls "the prison of a collapsed present" (Krauss, "Narcissism" 181). However, nearly two decades and much cultural experience later, the problem appears not to be the hypostasis of one unbroken and continuous "now" without connection to the past, so much as it is a proliferation of "nows" in hybrid "heres" and a displacement of the self that results in a multiplication of personas or "me's."

The most elaborate environment for exploring temporal and spatial disjunction and the multiplication of mirror reflections and video replicants is Dan Graham's closed-circuit installation "Opposing Mirrors and Video Monitors on Time Delay" (1974). The configuration is chiasmic: two monitors face toward mirror walls across from each other; each monitor is fed by a camera on the opposing monitor. Furthermore, one monitor is on time delay, meaning that one might be able to stand in front of the camera, cross the room, and possibly glimpse oneself in the monitor on the opposite side. However, there is no dearth of images of self or of other visitors: one might focus on one's mirror reflection or the mirror reflection of one's mirror reflection; or one's image reflected in the mirror in the monitor, and so forth, or for that matter, see any other visitor in one of these permutations. The inability to master the spatiotemporal situation is figured in monitor images themselves: each monitor displays an infinite recursion or *mise-en-abyme* of the opposing mirror image of the room with the other monitor in it with another room and monitor in it. However confusing, the situation inspires collaborators to send signals to visitors on the other side of the room in improvised mirror-monitor play. In fact, with few exceptions, live feedback pieces benefit from the cooperation of other visitors; if one cannot have one's own image, one can at least be recognized by exchanging it with someone else.

The emphasis of the art of the period on the moment of absence or loss of the image must be seen in the context of mass culture and its emphasis on fostering the impression of presence. Under such conditions, to cultivate a taste for exhilarating disillusionment and breathtaking loss is to call the foundation of mass consumer culture into question.

In this decade, techniques have evolved for producing ever more involving and encompassing perceptual illusions. In an era when cameras can travel under the surface of the skin, the desire to experience, interact, and even touch the image in an apparently unmediated way refuses to stop at the screen itself. As a culture, we want to break through to the other side of the screen and enter inside the image itself. It is as if we could break into the computer monitor, and, like a traveler, explore a virtual space of stored audiovisual information.

#### 4. An Ontology of Everyday Distraction

1. Rudolf Arnheim's mention of the "aeroplane" along with the "motor car" suggests another analog of television in the airport, in the experience of flying, and in the air transportation network (164, also quoted in Rath 199). This investigation is primarily concerned with consumption and everyday experience. Because flying is not as everyday an experience as driving and shopping and because it is imbricated directly in corporate as well as military and surveillance uses of images (for example, Paul Virilio's *War and Cinema*), the airplane as analog of television is left to exploration elsewhere.

The mass-circulation periodical which preceded television, the magazine in print, is another obvious and important analog of television. The magazine format and the "magazine concept" were discussed in the paper on which this chapter is based, given at the Conference on Television at the Center for Twentieth Century Studies in 1988.

2. Todd Gitlin's discussion of the iconographic function of the automobile in the program "Miami Vice" and its juxtaposed ads exemplifies this kind of analysis. For a general description of the iconography of automobiles, the title essay of Marshall McLuhan's *The Mechanical Bride* remains among the most insightful in making the link between technology and sexuality, the automobile and the female body as a love machine with replaceable parts. Stephen Bayley's *Sex, Drink, and Fast Cars* is a more recent monograph on the subject which notes pleasures of all kinds connected with the automobile, from kinesthetic/visceral and aesthetic to the sadomasochistic and death-driven. Bayley emphasizes the masculinity of that iconography. The difference between the two conceptions of automotive gender may be negotiated via the distinction between an interior womblike comfort zone versus the exterior, between driver and driven, the auto-woman as object of mastery and status display. Malls, on the other hand, are a predominantly female domain, as papers by Ann Friedberg and Meaghan Morris demonstrate and develop, while the gender of the television even in terms of the machine itself is divided in ways related to division of labor in the home and workforce.

3. The projects of synthesis drawn on here also have in common their work against the terror imposed by theory or intellectual discourse as well as the terror of the state. By returning to an earlier rich and highly validated cultural period at the cusp of the development of commodity culture, Benjamin's long-term view circumvents some of the immediate intellectual prejudices of his age which might foreclose the capacity to analyze cultural forms in the broadest sense. Bakhtin's appreciation of heterogeneity and the mixture of different voices in culture is designed to validate difference and make heard suppressed and otherwise voiceless parts of the social world. He developed the concept of the *chronotope* (see esp. the essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel") in an age in which intellectuals sought tools for circumventing a closed discourse with concepts which reached into the manifestations of daily life in representation for reminders of what is not included in it. Compare other work which turns to the common, the everyday, and the "real" in the 1930s and 1940s in the context of economic failure and the exposure of discourses of the "word" as tools of institutional power. The relations of class to culture that Williams

studied formed the intellectual framework against and within which he articulated his ideas. Michel de Certeau's project of evasion and transformation of dominant and predetermined forms of everyday life can also be seen as an attempt to poke holes in a hermetic, structuralist notion of language as well as to find possibilities for liberation in the everyday.

4. E. Ann Kaplan cites Baudrillard's automobile metaphor in relation to a McLuhanian comparison of hot and cold media in *Rocking around the Clock* 50-51.

5. Brodsky is here writing of Los Angeles. The same dream is in force today, despite smog and congestion. "The sustaining dream of most Southern Californians is to not live in, or even near, a city. Just as when millions of young families flocked to the small farming town on the fringes of a burgeoning Los Angeles after World War II, today people are seeking economically and socially homogeneous suburban neighborhoods. In short, they're looking for a comfortable small-town atmosphere within commuting distance of a big city, an almost idyllic place to watch the kids, the grass, the real estate values and the equity grow while they pursue the American dream" (Sam Hall Kaplan 28). The author explains that today people who look at computer screens all day do not want tract housing, but rather accept higher density in order to attain a "village atmosphere." Despite what is sometimes considered an infrastructure nearing the point of defeat and random outbreaks of freeway frustration into violence, surveys of Los Angeles commuters suggest surprising equanimity and even satisfaction with their lot.

6. "On both sides of these passages, which obtain their light from above, there are arrayed the most elegant shops, so that such an arcade is a city, indeed a world, in miniature"—*Illustrated Paris Guide*, cited by Walter Benjamin in "Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century" (165).

7. Modeled directly on buildings in theme parks such as Disneyland, which was itself modeled on Disney's hometown of Marceline, Missouri. Kowinski 67, reviewing the work of Richard Francaviglia.

8. The typical layout of a mall includes two fully enclosed levels, a central court, and side courts, with one or more department stores or "anchors" at either end, and about one hundred shops, services, and eating places. The interior typically mixes elements associated with exterior and interior design. The Urban Land Institute defines a mall as "a group of architecturally unified commercial establishments built on a site which is planned, developed, owned and managed as an operating unit. . . . Design, temperature, lighting, merchandise, and events are all planned according to unifying principles" (see Kowinski 60).

9. The difference between the two is not merely size and ownership but every facet of public relations, marketing, and retailing (see DePalma 1).

10. Graham and Hurst note that corporate atriums are "parallel forms to the suburban shopping malls" which evidence the same tensions: "The urban corporate atrium is an attempt to smooth over contradictions between environmental decay and technological progress. As a minitopian retreat from the stresses of city life it revokes the old notion of a 'garden' as an idealized landscape (the return to a preurban Eden), attempting to reconnect it to the idea of technology as an aid to man." The authors conclude that because these

atriums are largely separate from the fabric of the city, they represent exclusive enclaves which do not serve democratic values or the maintenance of community (71).

11. A recent application of the *chronotype* to film noir by Vivian Sobchack in "Lounge Time" suggests the importance of the semipublic *lounge* as an idyllic contrast to the road for rootless postwar sexual-social relationships. Today's homeless and displaced people find public lounge space with difficulty, for it has been rededicated to driving and paying customers and linked to commercial sightlines.

12. For an interpretation of pleasure and the home reception of the news related to this very distancing from the world, see Stam 23–43.

13. Joshua Meyerowitz discusses displacement in the figurative sense as a loss of the sense of place in the social hierarchy in *No Sense of Place*. He argues that because televisual representation has provided a view of the "backstage" of adulthood and masculinity, as well as political power, the dominant positions in the social hierarchy have been essentially demystified for children, women, and the citizen. His observations about the "public-public" nature of events such as the press conference "that are carried beyond the time-space frame by electronic media, and therefore are accessible to almost anyone" (287), are plausible as applied to representation before it is mediated by the television apparatus. Here it is argued that the realm of controlled production and privatized reception as a framework within which such "public-publicness" is embedded has significant consequences not only for the representation itself but also for the metapsychology of its reception. Notions such as "nonspace" allow the imaginary aspects of Meyerowitz's unifying and leveling process to be conceptualized.

14. In many cities, the freeway once acted as a kind of container or beltway around the city, eventually to become surrounded by suburbia. However, wherever the freeway may be drawn on the map, it is not really "located" in the grid of streets over or under which it extends, nor is it accessible without specially designed transitions, which are, as Lynch pointed out, not always easy to locate from the street.

15. The effects of an imaginary unity are not restricted to "nationhood," but can extend to smaller and greater units. See, for instance, Rath on the counternational effect of the broadcast transmission area in German-speaking countries.

Andrew Ross describes how the weather acts as an ideology, a means of naturalizing the social, and a way of explaining "an otherwise apparently contingent world of events" ("Work" 123). Note that Ross is discussing the weather outside the venues discussed here—the world without comfort control beyond the window or glass. The "ideology" of the national weather inside is a more truly "lived relation" to the relations of production for most Americans. Meanwhile, the vagaries of traffic and the speed of travel to work, the beach, or the mall as impeded by accidents and contingencies, are most often considered and treated as if they were a force of nature like the weather "outside" of which Ross speaks.

16. Brian McHale provides an explanation of the *mise-en-abyme* and its impor-

ance for postmodernist literary fiction in expressions of ontological uncertainty (124–28).

17. The engaged utterance is a simulacrum of the situation of enunciation, that is, *discourse*. The disengaged utterance is story. Note that subject, space, and time can be engaged or disengaged separately rather than en masse.

18. "Flow" here is not the pure juxtaposition of unrelated segments that Raymond Williams found so fascinating in television. It is rather the result of proposing a model hierarchy among segments, in a way related to Nick Browne's notion of the "supertext," but conceived in terms of discourse and including other discursive material on a par with commercials. At some primary level, though, Williams's pure and unreconstructed flow undeniably plays a role in television reception. See also Turner in "Frame."

19. Kowinski, in "The Mall as City Suburban," describes the motivation for building the first mall as providing needed opportunities for face-to-face contact among the isolated environments of cars, housing, and office. Victor Gruen modeled the first covered mall in the United States, Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota, on covered pedestrian arcades, especially the Galleria Vittorio Emanuel in Milan in 1956 (Kowinski 119). The large department stores of Europe were in turn modeled on the garden city in such ideal realizations as the Crystal Palace.

20. Public and private are complex and historically shifting notions. While Jürgen Habermas is the best-known contemporary philosopher of the disappearance of the public realm, this concern has a long tradition in the United States in the struggle between market forces and democratic values for dominance of areas of life. Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* traces the changing practices and concepts regarding *privacy* from the Greeks through the Romantic period and is the most generally helpful on the concept.

21. See Culver, whose enlightening link between Frank Baum's *Emerald City of Oz* and the growth of commodity display in shop windows is tied to a model of discrete fiction and identification rather than the utterly different disposition of the spectator "inside" the glass which characterizes the most sophisticated development of consumer culture. Culver's main question can guide any investigation of the institutions of consumption: why is it that Americans so willingly and apparently knowingly seek out and accept bogus substitutes, paper symbols, and commodity objects they know are inadequate to fulfill their needs, not to mention their desires? Culver presumes this occurs as an act of will—rather than in a state of distraction.

22. Spaulding Gray's "L.A., the Other" features a "real" story told by a woman who suddenly finds herself traveling in the opposite direction on the freeway miles from where she was last aware of her relative position. She interprets this lapse as an intervention in her life by beings from outer space. Such experiences of "spacing out" are viewed here as endemic rather than otherworldly.

23. I might add that this experience of motility and subjectivity is divided differently by gender, much as David Morley has described the power relations around the dial and the remote control around the family television—the wife and mother decides what to watch only when no one else is there. Just so, the

experience of driving is gendered. As his future bride said to Sonny Crockett in an episode of the 1987–88 season's "Miami Vice," "I'll bet no woman has driven your testosterone."

24. See the chapter "Speed" in Stephen Kern's *The Culture of Time and Space 1880–1918* for a discussion of the distinction between relative and absolute (subjectively intuited) motion. Note also that *nonspace* is not at all Kern's "empty space" or the void. Paul Virilio's meditations on the relation between speed and power of a coercive or military nature are only peripherally related to the "private" speed developed here.

25. See Freud on jokes and body responses to "too much" and "too little" in *Jokes and the Unconscious*.

26. The two local hosts of the show address the home viewer directly across the heads of nameless other people, as if they were in a bubble of space which could exchange talk and looks with our home-viewing space, while an objectively closer realm in front of them remains an otherwise distant and unrelated diegetic world. This bubble of subjectivity can also be found in other televisual genres such as logos and rock videos. What seems to be at stake are two things: the end of a "line" or fourth wall which divides representational realms, and the notion of a mobile rather than stationary or positioned spectator and/or presenter, able to roam and cross the barriers between multiple worlds at will. The constant alternation of static settings with "driving" segments in "Miami Vice" is an inverse example of the process embedded within story, marking the interiorized subjectivity or "true" self "under cover," also reflected in music and conversation.

27. "For the Navajo, walking was an important event in and of itself and not just a way of getting somewhere. We expected the filmmakers to cut out most of the walking footage—but they didn't. It was the least discarded footage" (Worth and Adair 146). "In reading the Navajo myths and stories later we were struck by how, in most Navajo myths, the narrator spends much of his time describing the walking, the landscape, and the places he passes, telling only briefly what to 'us' are plot lines" (147).

28. See 120–21 and 140–41, and generally his discussion of television. Ellis does not relate "segmentalization" to the development of spot advertising, whereas it could be argued that the struggle for control of the enunciation which led to spot advertising is served by segmentation, that is, an argument of consequences not from particular events but from techniques of power.

29. These include mixtures of pictorial systems, two- and three-dimensional images, symbols, and the written word in a single image as well as different planes of language. Worth and Adair considered it odd that the Navajos made photos with layouts of painted words to "try out ideas" and that they linked clips of symbolic events without concern for spatiotemporal continuity. However, layouts of painted words would be quite compatible with contemporary televisual representation.

30. Especially in regard to fiction films on television, such an alternation of story and discourse is perceived as interruption by all sorts of extraneous material and an incessant disruption of the psychological mechanism of disavowal that Beverly Houston explained in "Viewing Television."

Segmentation imposed on continuity editing is a mismatch of principles of

coherence and dramatic unity of character, plot and setting, and editing, as well as conditions of viewing which promote fairly concentrated attention, and identification can only suffer thereby. What is interruption from the point of embedded fictions is more likely to be perceived as passage among segments and engagement with the viewer in discursive genres. Nonetheless, ads have retained the sense of being foreign bodies in flow at least since the advent of spot advertising in the mid-1950s, whereas when sponsors controlled programming the shift of subjects of discourse was smoother.

31. "It is hardly an exaggeration to call the freeway experience," as Joan Didion does, "the only secular communion Los Angeles has" (quoted in Brodsky 36–37).

32. The boulevard is discussed at length in Berman; street lighting in Schivelbusch.

33. Sachs goes on to explain how the symbolic value of the auto is undermined as soon as it becomes generally accessible and how it actually generates social inequalities.

34. See McHale, esp. 43–58. McHale proposes that the shift in dominance from epistemological to ontological questions is the primary distinguishing feature of postmodernism. The *zone* is a concept with a prior history in nineteenth-century Paris suburbs.

35. "In short, Dorothy loves the mechanism which turns display into a narrative of desire and enables her to experience the pastoral idyll vicariously. . . . She desires the figure that represents desire, recognizing in that image her own capacity for infinite desire" (Culver 112–13).

36. Kowinski stresses the chain of relationships: "The shopping mall completed the link between the highway and television; once the department stores and the national chains and franchises were inside, just about anything advertised on the tube could be found at the mall. The mall provided the perfect and complementary organization for the national replicated and uniform outlets of the Highway Comfort Culture. The mall, too, was national, and it was also replicated and uniform in management as well as appearance—the chains knew what to expect just about everywhere. They could slip easily into any mall; one size fits all" (51).

37. Denis Hollier calls Caillois's essay on the praying mantis in *Le myth et l'homme* the first to deal with the issue of simulation (76–77).

38. Duensing describes the technology patented by Jay Schiffman of Auto Vision Associates in Ferndale, Michigan. The virtual television is resisted for safety reasons, but its gradual acceptance is anticipated as a process comparable with the pioneering of the car radio by Bill Lear in 1929. What kind of programming the virtual television will display is discussed largely in terms of safety and attention. The process of looking at the virtual screen while driving is described in terms of "time sharing."

39. Avenues for images and voices which might represent subjects other than network representatives, advertisers, and celebrities, that is, members of a general public, or for that matter other private voices remain few: independent productions, the lowly public service announcement, cable community access programming, private networks for exchanging videocassettes, and computer networks. The growing segmentation of what was once broadcasting into cable

channels and superstations supported by satellite as well as the videocassette is an opportunity for heterogeneous voices to enter into representation—but only if the discursive practices developed in network television are themselves changed. Venues of “publicness” that range from PBS and C-SPAN to Paper Tiger and Captain Midnight merit separate discussion as to how each contributes as a model of entry into the realms of distraction.

### 5. What Do Cyborgs Eat?

1. Epigraph on a nineteenth-century human growth hormone from chapter 1 of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. The outcome of the pill is revealed in chapter 2: “‘Curiouser and curiouser!’ cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English). ‘Now I’m opening out like that largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye feet!’” Alice’s early Wonderland adventures are largely culinary and like those of smart drug users, especially concerned with “fit.”

2. Allucquère Roseanne Stone has nominated this attitude of “cyborg envy” (619). Her article “Virtual Systems” addresses the notion of “decoupling” (620) agency or subjectivity from the physical body and calls attention to the spiritual overtones in virtual worlds. Yet, she claims, “The ‘original’ body is the authenticating source for the refigured person in cyberspace: no ‘persons’ exist whose presence is not warranted by a physical body back in ‘normal’ space. But death in either normal space or cyberspace is real, in the sense that if the ‘person’ in cyberspace dies, the body in normal space dies, and vice versa” (604).

Manuel De Landa’s *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines*, a history of technology from the machine point of view, implies not only a fundamental problem of incompatibility but ultimately of opposed interests of humans and machines. Of course, the discursive strategy of posing a subjectivized and empowered telos for machines is making humans aware of our own alienated and thus unchecked desires and actions.

3. Definition from *The American Heritage Dictionary*, cited in Schwab (80). Donna Haraway writes, “By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation” (“Cyborg Manifesto” 150). Haraway’s “The Actors Are Cyborg” insists on the metalepsis of the cyborg as “monster” or “boundary creature” who speaks from within the belly of the monster.

Of course, Haraway’s is but one of many formulations of the cyborg metaphor—from *Robocop* and *The Terminator* versus *Terminator 2* to the totalizing subject of the war machine to Haraway’s own bad-girl hybrid in a local war against dualisms. Her rhetorical strategy is to displace a female subjectivity from (a feminist essentialist vision of) nature into the machine, as opposed to De Landa’s radical exclusion of human subjectivity from the developmental logic of the machine.

Note that the “machine” metaphor applied to monastic life and other political and social organizations does not address the more literal problem of physical accommodation of the body and the electronic discussed here. However useful the cyborg as metaphor may be, it begs the question of fusion in the first place—or it is satisfied with making all tool users into cyborgs.

4. “Meat” is the human body as defined in *Mondo 2000’s A User’s Guide to the New Edge*: “This expression communicates the frustration that people dealing with an infinitely expandable infosphere feel at the limitations imposed upon the wandering mind by the demands of the body” (170).

5. See Grosz for a lucid description of the difference between repudiation, negation, and disavowal as psychical defense mechanisms and an application of these categories strategically, rather than therapeutically, in cultural criticism. Grosz’s article was brought to my attention by Patricia Mellencamp’s *High Anxiety*.

6. The excerpt from Patterson’s *Eating the “I”* continues: “I had always thought that one class of beings eats another; that all forms of life, gross and subtle were engaged in a kind of perpetual eating or, as Gurdjieff called it, ‘reciprocal maintenance.’ The different classes (the vertebrates, invertebrates, man and angels) are separated by what they eat, the air they breathe and in what medium they live. It had never occurred to me that within classes of beings the strong psychically feed on the weak. The waitress was ‘food’ for her boss” (284).

7. In *identification*, or mirroring and mimicry, one mistakes not-self (for instance, a mirror image) for the self. Thus, identification with a double or like demands distance (ultimately to be overlooked) and a slight difference in scale between a subject and an object (a difference to be ignored).

8. An oral typology of covering or engulfing/being covered or engulfed also plays a role in the logic of some video games and computer displays and interaction with, for instance, the Pac-Man or Macintosh Windows and interface.

9. The passage specifically refers to “the love-relationship to the mother.” In some psychoanalytic thinking, orality is not restricted to an oral or primitive stage. Richard M. Gottlieb in “Rethinking Cannibalism” notes the pervasiveness of cannibalistic fantasy in contemporary culture. His remarks especially emphasize the theme of the body in pieces (much like food that is cut up, broken, and torn) as well as the theme of the resurrected or intact body. Gottlieb also suggests that digestion, decay, and decomposition are part of this body-as-food continuum, themes comparable to the terms of waste and abjection in this chapter.

10. For contrasting visual images of nonfood, see “Future Food,” a glamour shot of gels and pills, steel worm/conduit, and rather menacing looking brussels sprouts (year 2010), styled by Erez and photographed by Joshua Ets-Hokin, in *Mondo 2000 3* (Winter 1991): 102. A contrasting matte and ascetic simulation of an ad for a soup of supplements captioned, “Do you need a soup of supplements? . . . especially if you can’t stand broccoli and brussels sprouts,” appears in *Toufexis* 55.

11. Metaphor courtesy of St. Jude, *Mondo 2000*.

12. Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw of Designer Foods™, however, emphasize

## 6. The Body, the Image, and the Space-in-Between

1. I saw it at a retrospective at the Long Beach Museum in 1988. The piece is discussed in detail in Kraus (24) and in my "Closed Circuits and Fragmented Egos," given at the Society for Photographic Education, Rochester, 1989.

2. To clarify, naturally all of the elements that make up a video installation, such as sculptural objects and the videotapes themselves, are art, too—they are not yet an installation. Another practical consideration for artists is that what is left over when the space-in-between is removed may, however, be of considerable bulk. Thus installation artists have in common their storage problems, sometimes solved by living amid the sculptural remains of up to two decades of work. As a consequence, some artists have been exploring smaller, more compact forms that do not enclose the visitor. Shigeo Kubota has always considered her work sculptural and self-contained—so the change in her most recent work is largely in scale. Rita Myers is exploring a type of Duchampian peephole-on-a-scene in future work.

3. However, there is such a thing as performance video, which may have sets and the presence of a "live artist," as well as electronics.

4. The fact that space-time can be rented to the installation visitor (via a museum fee) suggests a relation to popular kinds of rental institutions such as movie theaters or funhouses, to which Ken Feingold compared the form in a conversation with me. Yet what the installation visitor rents is not so much a seat as the right of passage. One might find the popular shadow of this art form in an experience somewhere between the didacticism of a multimedia display and the bodily experience offered by a funhouse. See the discussion of the exhibition form by Judith Barry.

5. Not that installation art today is not for sale—the artists cited in this chapter figure in American and European museum, corporate, and private collections. Although some respected artists of the installation form have yet to realize income from their work, others, including Nauman, Graham, and Paik, are among the superstars of the art world. After a period when the art market turned its attention to neotraditional art forms, the 1990s has seen a resurgence of collector interest in electronic and performance arts, including media installation.

6. Film installations are rare. One example is Roger Welch's simulation of the drive-in movie apparatus, "Drive-In: Second Feature," installed at the Whitney Museum, 1982. However, there are video installations that use filmic constructions of space within the monitor image. Marie-Jo Lafontaine's "Victoria" installed at the Shainman Gallery, 1989, is one example. Slides with inserts of other (sometimes moving) image material are a more common reference to our frozen image culture, reminiscent of billboards, posters, and walls. See my "Architecture" for a detailed interpretation of two installations in this medium.

7. Dara Birnbaum's work has been the most directly related to the reworking and critique of the televisual representational forms per se, in such installations as "P M Magazine." See Buchloh's *Dara Birnbaum*. In a very different vein, Judith Barry's "Maelstrom" places the body of the visitor within a new construction of spatial representation seen primarily on television, the forced perspectival space of motion control and image processing.

8. Language here is used in an inclusive sense to encompass all forms of expression, including the nonverbal and artistic. Émile Benveniste theorizes about these two planes in *Problems*. Gérard Genette extends this distinction to literary genres in "Frontiers." In subsequent writing on the subject, Genette has stressed that these planes of language are not either/or distinctions, but rather coexist in subtle shifts even within a narrative form. These planes in art, undoubtedly as complex and copresent, are presented here in global form for the sake of introducing the distinction between them.

9. Ann-Marie Duguet treats video installation at the end of the 1960s and during the early 1970s as a period in which the apparatuses of representation since the Renaissance were systematically explored and critiqued. She views the closed-circuit installation form of video as the privileged tool of this exploration, as it models representation itself.

10. The deconstruction of presence and identity is also the project of post-structuralist philosophy (Derrida and Foucault) and psychoanalysis (Lacan) as well. I discuss the notion of the fiction of discourse as it operates in American broadcast television in chapters 1 and 2. In my view, installation video deconstructs rather than furthers this fiction.

11. The description of the sculpture as surrogate person and Smith's ride on the New Jersey Turnpike are also addressed by Fried.

12. My analyses of television representation show that it is discursive in this way as well, but not self-consciously or in a way that questions its own process. I have addressed the multiple levels of discourse in particular videos in several places: "Video Mom," "Cyclones," and reviews of AFI Video Festivals of 1987 and 1988.

13. The world created via interaction can be digitized on a computer screen, but it is not one that a visitor can enter bodily. Unless there is charged space outside the screen or a passage for the body, we have left the realm of installation art per se. To questions about how interactive interactive video actually is, again the analysis of experiential subjects is illuminating: the visitor interacts with what or whom? Is the interaction dialogic (that is, between two subjects) or does it amount to a range of choices within a system of organization (who is the subject then)?

14. A theme that continues in, for example, her installation "Asylum, a Romance" (1986). See my "Mary Lucier."

15. A plywood construction with mirror, two five-inch TV sets, and five thirteen-inch TV sets. The four channels were a Grand Canyon helicopter trip; a drive on Echo Cliff, Arizona; a Taos sunset and mirage; and a Teton sunset. See the description in *Shigeo Kubota* 37, 39.

16. Described in detail in *Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1988) and discussed in my "Interiors."

17. The piece had six to seven video and audio channels and from nineteen to twenty-three monitors on pedestals, plus a video camera when presented at the Kitchen Museum (1974) and the Whitney Museum (1977).

18. Such was the hardware needed to make the serial comparison: to an audio loop add three half-inch reel-to-reel VHS recorders comprising two for prerecorded playback and one live channel of input from a black-and-white camera, time delayed and displayed every four seconds. The live image appeared on



the center screen alternating with four seconds of live broadcast TV. The switcher constantly changed the placement of the other channels of time-delayed, live images and prerecorded playback (four of each) on the eight screens surrounding the center. Today, multiple-monitor, multiple-channel installations are commonly as complex.

19. Shown on three monitors set in a shallow 122° curve about two-and-a-half feet apart.

20. See the reproduction of her score in the description of the piece in *Video Art*, edited by Schneider and Korot. Her subsequent installation, "Text and Commentary" (1977), made this weaving metaphor explicit. "Dachau" was one of the three pieces in the Long Beach retrospective of 1988 and was also included in the retrospective in Cologne (1989).

21. The retrospective *American Landscape Video*, comprising three of the seven installations—Mary Lucier's "Wilderness" (1986), with its strong narrative dimension, Doug Hall's "The Terrible Uncertainty of the Thing Described" (1987), and Steina Vasulka's "The West" (1983)—exploited these poetic possibilities in very different ways. See my "Interiors."

22. William D. Judson emphasizes the contribution of Rosalind Krauss's 1976 critique of this strand of work with feedback of the artist's own image in displacing the application of modernist aesthetic criteria to video (Judson). Krauss's first example for the narcissism thesis, Vito Acconci's "Centers" (1971), would seem to support her diagnosis of capture in a parenthesis between the camera and the monitor. The artist points into a camera lens, adjusting his position by looking at a monitor: as a result, the image of Acconci's finger points out of the center of the monitor. "I'm looking straight out by looking straight in" (EAI, 12). Of course, since the camera would have to be above or at the side of the monitor, centering himself required constant readjustment and recalculations in what is a slightly asymmetrical configuration. The monitor is not a mirror and the replicant image is not a reflection—the production of "Centers" is decentered, if the image is not. Pointing at the viewer is also an exaggeration of the use of virtual address typical of commercial television or the news. Similarly, to interact with one's own monitor image, e.g., to kiss it, requires prior taping or a temporal delay in order to create the impression of simultaneity. Krauss exempts "Boomerang," Campus's installations, and Joan Jonas's "Vertical Roll" from her critique of narcissism through their strategies of media critique from within, physical assault on the mechanism, and the sculptural qualities of installation per se. However, the overall equation of monitor and mirror is problematic.

## 7. Cyberscapes, Control, and Transcendence

1. Gibson was using a typewriter at the time he wrote *Neuromancer* and his fantasy of the space on the other side of the monitor was based on little knowledge of the state of computing. See Scott Rosenberg. Timothy Binkley carefully distinguishes these levels in "Refiguring Culture."

2. N. Katherine Hayles's distinctions between absence/presence and randomness/pattern, made in "The Seductions of Cyberspace," might be con-

ceived as different stages of information (which have different psychic roots and subject-effects) that coexist rather than that succeed each other in a developed information society (173-90, esp. 186-87).

3. Allucquère Roseanne Stone emphasizes opacity of computer packaging in "Sex, Death and Architecture." For Friedrich Kittler, the myth of user-friendly software generates a dangerous ignorance of machine language, which is in any case, a "Protected Mode."

4. Virtuality compares to what Sigmund Freud described as "uncanny," evoking both a strange and familiar feeling that recalls the moment of the discovery of sexual difference or the sight of a corpse.

5. See chapter 1, especially the citation from "A Conversation between Peter Weibel and Friedrich Kittler."

6. Bogard's *The Simulation of Surveillance: Hypercontrol in Telematic Societies* came out too late to take account of in writing this chapter. It offers a model of surveillance similar to one of the possibilities discussed here under "control" and in chapter 3 as "telematic danger." However, Bogard uses a narrower definition of simulation (as pastness not as the simulation of presence) and treats virtualization and hyperrealization as equivalents of surveillance. Hence its model of surveillance is different in that it is narrower, yet more all-encompassing.

Julia Scher has explored the psychical and cultural implications of electronic and computer surveillance in work spanning over a decade, including her 1993 installation, "Predictive Engineering," at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, mixing live and recorded video on two chiasmatically arranged and elegantly situated surveillance camera and monitor set-ups.

7. Marsha Kinder developed the discomfiting gender implications of the killing moves and the arcade milieu of "Mortal Kombat" in a paper delivered at the Console-ing Passions Conference in Tucson in April 1994.

8. Allucquère Roseanne Stone discusses the notion of warrant and the "fiduciary subject" in "Sex, Death and Architecture" and other places.

9. Wolfgang Schivelbusch deals with the history of street lighting and its social and cultural ramifications in *Disenchanted Night*. The advent of electric light was the beginning of suburbanization. Edison's carbon-filament incandescent light was patented in 1880. The census of 1880 didn't mention use of electric power in industry but by 1900 it was equal with steam. Edison invented illumination by electricity in 1876, and by 1879-80, cities were lighting streets with arc lamps. The electric trolley was developed in 1887, permitting the first suburb, Tuxedo, New York, to come into existence. See Hession and Sardy.

10. An appreciation of the acculturation of the machine to the human appears in my "Judith Barry." A discussion of the mixture of the physical and the projected appears in my "Muntadas' Media-Architectural Installations."

11. Those who want to "fill" cyberspace have been charged with the sin of neocolonialism on occasion. However, indigenous people are not "in" cyberspace to be conquered and colonized, but in the realm outside that has been obscured by virtualities. Here is rather another instance of discursive struggle—whose legacy and whose culture will occupy those virtual spaces? At best one can fill cyberspace with many voices and traditions.

12. While this piece was a collaboration in every phase, Toni Dove was

primarily responsible for the visual realizations of this virtual world and Michael Mackenzie for its plot(s) and interactive design. In addition, a team of programmers and computer-based designers, along with a large mainframe computer, contributed to this very labor-intensive project. As Mackenzie pointed out, while dramatic productions have a well-known division of labor and a general sense of the time necessary to complete each task, this is a new area in which the very production structures and practices must themselves be improvised. Toni Dove described the end result as an armature without the beta testing one would do from inside, much as Mackenzie sees it as a kind of drama that has been constructed and presented without the fine-tuning of a rehearsal process. Yet far from being an orphan, each sees this piece as an important part of the trajectory of his or her work.

13. The passage continues: "There were no signs directing your gaze, no coin-operated binoculars, and no brochures answering your unasked questions about local flora, geology or the history of the land. . . . By the mid-twentieth century, it seemed, nature had to be explained to its human inhabitants; it was not enough to just try to experience it. As a result, conflicting information about the natural world blankets out visual and aural environments. Much of this information is promotional—that is to say, often misleading, mystifying, or simply irrelevant" (53).

14. MacCannell proposes that the loss of authenticity in everyday life fuels the tourist's search for authentic nature and community, thereby producing the simulation of both and the recedence of the physical world under superimposed signs and images.

15. Tourism and its practices have been the object of cautionary and demystifying sociological and ethnographic studies and semiotic analyses for at least two decades. (It is amazing how relatively few positive values are accorded to the romance and the revenue involved.) For instance, the "self-destruct theory" of mass tourism puts ostensibly harmless activities such as sight-seeing in the context of a slow death of a cultural landscape, while "Doxey's index of irritation" charts the phases of the host population's reaction to guests, from initial euphoria to antagonism. Shaw and Williams review many of these theories and models.

16. Pinney questions whether surrogate travel is travel at all if it doesn't leave the spot. However, this understanding of the virtual environment does not take into account that the display and interactive devices do indeed act as frame and that virtual motion is travel in effect, if not actually. The distinction between actual and virtual travel becomes less telling once we recognize that "depth" in the narrational journey is already a metaphor—therefore, why can't movement through the space of an embodied metaphor be as effective (or not) as movement through physical space?

17. Elizabeth Grosz's "Bodies-Cities" deals with the city and the body (not city as body). Susan Stewart's *On Longing* is useful on the imaginary social body as one gigantic individual. In a particular example of the pathetic fallacy, the landscape in Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" evokes the pregnant body of the protagonist. The city as skeleton or corpse evokes the symbolic or "unfilled" nature of cyberspace, though it may also be a bleak view of contemporary cities.

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