JAST

JOURNAL OF AMERICAN STUDIES OF TURKEY

NUMBER 25

SPRING 2007

VISUAL CULTURE ISSUE

Journal of American Studies of Turkey

A semiannual publication of the American Studies Association of Turkey, *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* operates with a blind peer referee system. It publishes work in English by scholars of any nationality on American literature, history, art, music, film, popular culture, institutions, politics, economics, geography, and related subjects. Contributors need not be members of the American Studies Association of Turkey.

Articles which cross conventional borders between academic disciplines are particularly welcome, as are comparative studies of American and other cultures. The journal also publishes notes, comments, book and film reviews. Details about the submission of manuscripts are given at the back.

The American Studies Association of Turkey disclaims responsibility for statements, whether of fact or opinion, made by contributors.

The American Studies Association of Turkey was founded in 1988 to promote American Studies in Turkey and where possible to assist Turkish scholars working in the field by providing material and funds. It also aims to further research and publication in Turkish-American comparative studies. Enquiries concerning applications for membership should be addressed to the Office of the Secretary, American Studies Association of Turkey, Cinnah Caddesi 20, TAD Binası Kat 4 Oda 48, Kavaklıdere, Ankara, Turkey.

The *JAST* homepage, containing various information and all articles, is available on the World Wide Web at http: / /www.asattaed.org.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey has been indexed in the MLA International Bibliography, *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory,* and the American Humanities Index since the publication of its first issue of Spring 1995, and in the *MLA Directory of Periodicals* since 1999.

Publisher:
On behalf of American Studies Association.
President, Gülriz Büken
Editor in Chief:
Nur Gökalp Akkerman
Address of ASAT:
Cinnah Caddesi No:20, Oda 48,
Kavaklıdere, Ankara, Turkey
Printed by
Alp Ofset Matbaacılık Ltd. Şti. Ankara, Turkey
Copies and Date:
500 copies, March 2009

Yayın Sahibi:
Türkiye Amerikan Etüdleri Derneği Adına,
Gülriz Büken
Sorumlu Yazı İşleri Müdürü:
Nur Gökalp Akkerman
Yayın İdare Adresi:
Cinnah Caddesi, No: 20, Oda 48,
Kavaklıdere, Ankara
Basıldığı Yer ve Matbaa:
Alp Ofset Matbaacılık Ltd. Şti. Ankara
Baskı ve Basım Tarihi:
500 adet, Mart 2009

Cover Photo: Jeffrey Baykal Rollins, "Sophia"

ISSN 1300-6606

Editorial

The editors of *JAST* would like to extend their thanks and appreciation to the former Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Dr. Ayşe Lahur Kırtunç. Her diligence, patience and initiative have contributed immeasurably to the quality and continuity of *JAST* and played a major role in making it the esteemed journal that it has become.

We hope to maintain the standards and accomplish our share in contributing to the advancement of American Studies in Turkey as all editors before us have done.

May *JAST* have many more editors and issues to come!

Nur Gökalp Akkerman
Editor-in-Chief

Barış Gümüşbaş
Editor

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 3-4

Introduction: Visual Culture

Sırma Soran Gumpert

I am pleased to present this issue of *JAST*, offering a selection of articles all of which deal in one way or another, with visual culture, particularly in connection with the USA.

It hasn't been long since visual culture has been recognized as a distinct field of study. Yet, it is quickly gaining popularity in numerous academic fields, from cultural and literary studies to political science and economy. A term loosely used by art historians, sociologists and scholars of media long before becoming an official area of study, visual culture now represents a place of convergence for disparate disciplines, and is an inherently interdisciplinary affair, both in terms of content and method.

Visual culture scholarship, in other words, does not represent nor does it aspire to represent a branch of academia, such as film studies, art history, or photography. Rather, it is a way of pointing to a host of academic methodologies all of which emphasize the visual aspects of experience itself. There are, however, a number of recurrent points of orientation within this vast and difficult-to-map territory known as visual culture:

(1) Most scholars would agree that the study of visual culture concerns itself with the position of the spectator. That is to say, any critical analysis within the field of visual culture brings with it, in Irit Rogoff's words; "an entire range of analyses and interpretations of the audio, the spacial and the psychic dynamics of spectatorship" (14). The predominance of all that is visual in the modern world—the photograph, the film, the internet, the media in general—has made the importance of the spectacle and spectatorship outstanding and nearly irreplaceable. It is for this reason that the interpretation of the act of viewing, looking, eye witnessing, and consuming the image has taken on a significant task in recent years. Any scholar of visual culture will be interested, then, in the numerous ways in which individuals react to, approach, or read the world around them in visual terms, or rather, (often contradicting) in the many ways they see the world.

(2) It is not only the spectator that is under the looking glass of visual culture studies, it is also the endless variety of images that bombard us in our daily lives. Visual culture scholars attempt, in one way or another, to read these images. That is to say, the interpretations of the visual world, understanding the meanings and/or codes that are overtly or covertly transmitted by way of images, also constitute an intellectual basis for scholars in the field of visual culture.

(3) Visual culture scholarship furthermore analyses and criticizes the visual as a reflection of culture, of ideology and the political domain, and also as a powerful component in the formation and transformation of (a) culture. The cultural shift toward the visual and away from the verbal and textual poses numerous questions about the changes cultures may be undergoing. What does a culture of the spectacle mean?

One issue of a journal cannot hope to answer all of these questions. The main focus of this particular issue of *JAST* is quite practical: an effort to suggest how visual culture has been approached in diverse scholarly fields in America in the late twentieth and the early twentyfirst centuries. The subjects touched upon here include: post-9/11 New York architecture, the poetry of Ted Jones, American abstractionist and expressionist painting in comparison with Turkish art, the photography of Walker Evans, American photography by renowned black poets, the spectacle of the body in popular American television, female artists' reading of the female body, and the representations of the city in science fiction film.

Works Cited

Rogoff, Irit. "Studying Visual Culture." *The Visual Culture Reader*. Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge, 1998. 14-26.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 5-16

A Black Vision in a White America?: The Beat Poetry, Art and Illustration of Ted Joans

Gordon J. Marshall

Introduction

Studies of the culture of the Beat Generation have emphasized two specific facets of this movement. First, that the Beats placed emphasis on the literary in order to promote their particular vision of the post-1945 world which ran counter to the dominant discourse of the time. Second, as A. Robert Lee has explained, that despite the role which African Americans played in providing the cultural material for the Beat vision, "the Beat phenomenon rarely seemed to speak other than from, or to, white America" (Lee 305). That is, African Americans' only position within this culture was to offer up their space and identity in order to allow the Beats to create work based on African American culture for white consumption, in a sense, to sell their cultural capital to whites who desired it. Lee and most commentators on Beat writing and culture argue that within this discourse there could be no place for African Americans as Beat writers or artists; I will argue that this was not always the case.

There was the potential for the creation of an African American literary or artistic space but not the cultural or linguistic base to do so in the immediate postwar period. W. E. B. Du Bois labeled this lack of a separate and distinct African American consciousness which could be translated into an African American voice or vision, *double consciousness*. The inner battle between an African American self-identity and seeing oneself through the eyes of white America according to Du Bois, threatened to destroy the African American intellectual. While this is a harsh indictment of racial identity in America, his statement that it should be possible to see oneself as both an "African American" (Du Bois uses the term "Negro") and an American is plausible and would be at least partly realized in the period after the Beats when African American artists and writers began to speak amongst themselves and to others in the African American community under the rubric of the Black Arts Movement (Du Bois 3). This double consciousness can be seen as transgressive such as when Ted Joans combined his training in European art and his knowledge of African American culture, speaking in a "white" voice while engaging with African American lived

experience. While he could not achieve the "authentic" African American voice Du Bois and others were searching for, he was able to challenge racial norms and carve out a space for himself as a Beat artist and poet on his own terms. This is in essence, I argue, what Paul Gilroy is illustrating in his work *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness:* that it is possible to merge a vibrant African, in this case American culture, with an existing white framework and view the two as part of one larger culture or vision (Gilroy 3).

A. Robert Lee's articles discuss the lives and impact of all three major African American Beat poets, LeRoi Jones, Ted Joans, and Bob Kaufman. For our purposes, I will focus here on Ted Joans, who blended his poetry with his training in art and thereby created a visual rendering of black identity in postwar America. Joans also bridges the two periods of Beat activity from 1948 to 1957 (he came to New York in 1950) and 1957 to 1960 (after the publication of *On the Road*) and was an active part of the Beat Generation until his exodus from New York to Europe and eventually Africa in 1961.

For those unfamiliar with both Joans and the work of the Beat Generation, I am referring to those writers, poets, artists, musicians and their compatriots who formed a distinct cultural subgroup within post-world war II American society. This group created a literary and social space for those who shared their criticism of postwar culture, economy, politics and morality. They connected with others either physically within these social spaces, usually in the large urban centers of America, or intellectually by reading the novels, poems and viewing the polemical pieces of its artists. I connect Ted Joans to this group because he was physically and intellectually a part of it. But more importantly, as I have stated above, African Americans as a whole have been marginalized within Beat culture by those who have documented the lives and writings of the Beats. In documenting Joans' life and work I wish to show how not only as an African American, but as an artist and poet, he took part in building a culture of resistance that challenged not only the hegemonic social order that came after the war in the name of fighting communism. Pushing that challenge further he called not only those in power but many of the Beats themselves to account for the racist nature of American society in the 1950s.

Joans' involvement in the Beat Generation has been noted in many of the major works on the Beats, yet it has always only been in the form of a footnote or reference to his being part of the group. Ironically, his absence has been explained away by the claim that not enough has been written about him. In addition to the two entries in the volumes of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* for both African American Poets and the Beat Generation, only four articles

have been written about Joans. Two have been by the same author, A. Robert Lee, one is an interview with Henry Louis Gates Jr., and the last a study of why his work is not considered canonical. Few of the publications delve deeply into his position as a writer and none cover his art in any great detail. In one of the few books that shows artwork by Joans and photographs of him, not only does it not actively engage with his work, it does not even mention him by name except within the confines of the photo captions (Phillips 158 and 160). By examining Joans' life, his poetry and his art, focusing on the illustrations he included in his books of poetry, I will argue that Joans was more than just a member of the Beats. Through his art and poetry, Ted Joans made a unique and significant contribution to the challenging of postwar cultural norms that formed the foundation of Beat thought in the twenty years after 1945.

The Early Life of Ted Joans: 1928-1961

The main sources of the life of Ted Joans, the two Dictionary of Literary Biography entries under "Afro-American Poets since 1955" and "The Beats: Literary Bohemians in Postwar America," give contradictory accounts of his early years. The Beat entry explains that Joans was born on a riverboat the son of a gambler/entertainer who at the age of twelve put a horn in Joans' hand and sent him off into the world (Miller). While there is evidence that Joans himself did spread this rumor, his father was, in fact, a riverboat entertainer. However, Joans was actually born in Cairo, Illinois in 1928, attending primary and secondary school in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky, in the limited and segregated space of the African American education system, something Joans later spends time on in his poetry. During this period he suffered one of the many traumatic events in his life; in 1943 when Joans was 15 his father was killed in a race riot in Detroit, an event which kept issues of racial identity and racism at the forefront of his work (Lee 317). After high school, he entered Indiana University, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting in 1950. He then moved to New York City to begin his eleven year residence in the city, ending when he decided that, like Man Ray forty years earlier, who had claimed that "Dada cannot live in New York," that New York and America were not ready to accept poets, artists or African Americans on any real terms (Kuenzli). Like Ray, Joans left the city for Paris, settling in Amsterdam and eventually moving between Africa and Europe where he would spend the next decade before returning to an America that he felt was ready to accept the African American as an equal (Woodson). During his time in New York, he spent the first four years working as an artist moving amongst the circles of Jackson Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists. By 1955,

having been introduced to Allen Ginsberg and the Beat circle he began to write more poetry, becoming an established poet by 1959 with the publication of his collection, *Jazz Poems*.

Returning to the competing narratives of Joans' life, I wish to focus on these "histories" because I believe they clearly illustrate the complex nature of the Beats' relationship to race both in the postwar period and in the study of that period by academics. Instead of portraying Joans as a working poet and artist in the 1950s, he is positioned as a myth, "born on a river boat, put out by his father with a trumpet to make his way in the hip world" (Miller). Joans becomes at the same time both an abstract symbol and the physical manifestation of the "hipster," what other white Beat writers thought a free and open existence could be like, without attempting to understand the difficulties involved in living such a life. As Maria Damon explains, this "veneer of hyper-verbal poseurism hides what for many minority Beats was, in fact, a life of 'secret terrible hurts' [like the death of Joans' father at the hands of whites,] that will never be known because the principals are dead, and they covered their tracks extremely well" (Damon 143).

Further, Joans has been placed on the margins of the literary culture of the Beats, positioned more as a hipster, or the spiritual leader of the Beats, and not as a true Beat poet. LeRoi Jones in his 1963 study of African American culture and music, *Blues People*, explains the difference in cultures between those like himself and Ted Joans: university educated middle class African Americans and the jazz musicians who inspired the Beats.

> White beboppers of the forties were as removed from the society as Negroes, but as a matter of choice. The important idea here is that the white musicians and other young whites who associated themselves with this Negro music identified the Negro with this separation, this nonconformity, though of course, the Negro himself had no choice. But the young Negro musician of the forties began to realize that merely by being a Negro in America, one *was* a nonconformist. (Jones 188)

This initial emergence of the nonconformist or hipster was rooted in music and a specific, urban space within African American culture. However, Jones argues that the African American musician was not representative of the attitudes of African American society as a whole, in fact, integration had made the middle class abandon specifically African American cultural expression in favor of taking on a white identity (Jones 176). In essence these "hipsters" were as alien to African American writers as they were to whites. This is missed

by almost all of those writing about or commenting on the construction of Beat culture in postwar America. All African Americans are lumped in with the hipster as being outside of white culture. While this is true, the hipsters stood outside of African American culture as cultural producers and as idols for young African American men. Even for Ted Joans, whose father had been an entertainer, African American jazz culture was outside of his understanding, as evidenced by his choosing white European and American ideas of art and literature, and living in Greenwich Village rather than Harlem.

This is not to say that Joans was not involved in this particular African American culture; he did know and live with saxophonist Charlie Parker and was mentored by poet Langston Hughes. The point is that he did not have some privileged access to it, an access whites assumed based on his race. Further, while Joans may have created a myth of the hip around himself, he was clear about his own life in his writing. In his 1961 collection of poetry, *All of Ted Joans and No More,* he explains his life up to his decision to leave America for Europe and then Africa:

> Like man, I came to the Village scene after doing the school bit in Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois, came here to paint and I did… got married and saw the birth of four masterpieces that ex-wife and I created… after four years, divorce, blues, beat bread, then split to Europe, Middle East and Africa . . . will still miss my old hipster friends. . . . [H]ave had write ups and photos in Life and Time magazines, Sepia and Ebony magazines, New Yorker, Holiday, Whisper, Pica and numerous monthly girlie magazines . . . I am much in love and plan to split New York's Greenwich Village uncurbed-dog sidewalks, I hate cold weather and they will not let me live democratically in the warm states of the United States, so I'm splitting and letting America perish in its own viscous puke or letting America find and live that Moral Revolution that I hope would happen. (Joans, *All of Ted Joans 94)*

In a few paragraphs, Joans has put forward his own life history and positioned himself within the Beat and artistic discourse of 1950s New York. Finally, he explains that the loss of the Beat dream is linked to what he perceived as the inability of America to achieve the dream of democracy in the climate of the cold war and rather than grow bitter with the struggle for change as many Beats had, he leaves America to let it die or mature.

More than just a member of the core Beat group, Joans was an integral part of the promotion of Beat ideas, reading "Jazz poetry" at a number of coffee houses in New York, and in the process popularizing spoken word and drawing large numbers of listeners to his sets. He created a business, Rent-a-Beatnik, to raise money for his art and those of his friends by renting out Beatniks, young people dressed in the accoutrement of the stereotypical Beat writer and affecting the disinterested Beat pose, for entertainment of the middle and upper classes at their parties in New York. Yet at the same time he did not quest for the kind of fame that Kerouac or Ginsberg enjoyed, choosing neither to fight the system nor conform to it. He published his work in limited editions and through small presses. It is this work, both his poetry and the illustrations that accompanied them that was essentially a contemporary history of the Beat Generation in New York in the late 1950s.

Creating an Image in Words and Pictures: The Early Poetry and Art of Ted Joans

Having outlined some of Joans' life I would like to turn to his illustrated poetry and his portrayal of Beat life in the 1950s through that poetry, as well as, a small collage he completed before leaving New York. Joans, like most of the Beats focused on what can be considered the last great taboo of American society: the frank and explicit discussion of sex and sexuality. This is made even more trangressive by the particular nature of race in America. While sex between whites would have been upsetting enough for most Americans, sex between an African American man and a white woman was actually illegal in several states and looked down upon in almost all. Whether Joans slept with white women or not is irrelevant, the readership and those who would be informed about his poetry through the mass market magazines which profiled the Beats would read the women he is talking about as white. As Toni Morrison states in her book, *Playing in the Dark,* "until very recently, and regardless of the race of the author, the readers of virtually all of American fiction have been positioned as white" (Morrison xii). That is, the sex he is discussing would automatically be construed as interracial and as an African American man writing about sex with white women, he would have been doubly transgressive and placed within the over two hundred year old discourse of the Black man threatening the honor and purity of white women.

In a similar manner, the reading of art in America was also understood as white unless the artist was explicitly labeled as African American. Thus, the gaze

both of the artist and the implied viewer is fixed as white and, as such, the image is filtered through this particular worldview. The stripping away of blackness from works of art is something that Joans also engaged with in an attempt to destabilize the meanings imposed both on his texts and his images.

In what seems to be even more radical than some of his poetry, Joans bombards the viewer with images from white high culture, science, colonial views of Africa and other images all meant to communicate two meanings. On the surface the images were faithful reproductions of white cultural memory and artifacts but beneath and in the mind of the artist, he appropriated the white culture in order to subvert it for his art. Maria Damon explains that Beat in this period, "was one where ethnic and subcultural styles were readily borrowed and experimented with, and consumed in the crassest sense of thoughtless appropriation" (Damon 148). I challenge the one sided nature of her claim, that African Americans were unable to draw freely from the styles of whites as whites had drawn on African American cultural imagery in this period. Instead, Joans was able to subvert white images from their traditional meanings and impose his own interpretation upon them, essentially stripping the image of its meaning, allowing whites to recognize the images or drawings as white, yet subverting the meanings in a manner not consistent with the initial meaning of the subject. That is, Joans paints in white forms with an African American vision. He attempts to unify the split consciousness to be both an artist and an African American while resisting the label of African American artist.

Returning to the transgressive nature of Joans' poetry it is obvious that this fear of the interracial relationship was not considered problematic when the gender roles were reversed. The best example of the racial transgressor as hero is seen in the work of Beat Generation writer Jack Kerouac and his book *The Subterraneans* published in 1958. In the text, Kerouac's narrates first the desire of his protagonist Leo Percepied to have a relationship with an African American woman and second, the period spent actually dating the woman, named Mardou Fox, and the eventual breakup of Percepied and Fox. While the story does not end well, Kerouac is not held responsible to account for crossing a social line that had been permeable for white men since the beginning of slavery, yet when the book was made into a film Mardou was cast as a white woman, the feeling being that America was not ready for any kind of story where an African American woman held power over a white man. I use the example of Kerouac, not only because he was a contemporary of Joans, but to illustrate the nature of race not only in America as a whole, but in the culture of the Beats as well.

Creating the Hip Aesthetic

Joans' early poetry, while it did focus on sex also closely examined his relationship to the hip culture of jazz. In his poem *Hallelujah I Love Jazz So,* he explains that, "Jazz is my religion and it alone do I dig the jazz clubs are my houses of worship and sometimes the concert halls some holy places are commercial like churches so I don't dig sermons there I buy jazzside to dig in solitude" (Jones, *Jazz Poems*). He positions Jazz music and the culture of the jazz club as holy, just as other Beats did, but he is more conscious of the transition of Jazz from marginalized cultural form to mass culture prop than other Beats were and is careful to stay on the side of what he thinks is the purer form.

While Joans' jazz and sex poems are an important part of his work, I would like to focus on his portrayal of life in the city, since these poems can be seen in some ways as the sociology of an emerging culture in postwar America. Joans is able to explain life in the Beat scene more clearly than most Beat writers and was therefore able to promote this cultural rebellion to the uninitiated on terms they could understand. In his 1961 collection, *The Hipsters*, Joans paints a portrait in words of life in Greenwich Village in the late 1950s. In his poem "The Scene" he puts forth his hope that the Beats could teach America about racial and social harmony;

> Here is Greenwich Village, New York, the home of the hipster, hipnick, beat, beatnik, flip, flipnik, etc., where several thousand top people of all races, creeds and colors, work, play and live in the sometimes peace and sometimes harmony and try to enjoy the lofty fruit of U.S. democracy. (Joans, *The Hipsters*)

In "Dramatis Personae," Joans defines the different characters such as the "Jivey Leaguer" a play on the term Ivy Leaguer, who "is a half-way cat whose sole concern is to be part of everything which he puts down or cashes-in-on as it suits his eternal search for girls… [or the] . . . Hipper-than-thounik . . . the overread writer or painter of sorts who speaks as an astute authority on every subject, even sex, which she knows only from books" (Joans, *The Hipsters*). Joans is able to portray a life which is populated with real people, who have real flaws and are described in a new argot.

As important as the text of his poetry is the visual poetry of his collages and sketches that are placed all around the poems. It is here that Joans, I would argue, is one of the most transgressive Beat poets; by using his artistic skills and his historical knowledge, Joans uses "white images" from medical texts, industrial

designs, travel narratives of Africa and even European artistic "masterpieces" to illustrate his vision of the Beat world. He has turned the mainstream culture's own vision of itself into a weapon against postwar society's hypocrisy. His use of medical illustrations, especially depictions of surgery and dissection, is analogous to the idea of his work reaching deeper into the American consciousness to expose not only the inherent racism of American society but the hegemonic construction of postwar life as a whole.

While the words of "Dramatis Personae" are powerful and his construction of the characters which populate the culture of the Beat a modern map of the underbelly of New York, he chooses to illustrate this scene not in twentieth-century terms but in the visual imagery of the Renaissance and Enlightenment. He portrays the "Hipper-than-thounick" as a French Salon hostess, gathering her writers and artists around her in order to instruct them in what is worthy of her support. The "Jivey Leaguer" is a Renaissance scholar or poet, using his skills to attract women or sponsorship not in the service of a higher art (Joans, *The Hipsters*). Joans takes the white image of European art and gives it an African American voice, forcing those who read his poems and see his illustrations to understand the interconnected nature of white (both American and European) and African American cultures. Using the high art of white discourse, Joans is able to challenge the idea that black and white are separate entities, forcing white images to speak to the white reader, stripped of the white identity or voice that had previously been connected with them.

In the same vein, yet more jarring to the reader, Joans employs images of surgical procedures or dissections. These images, such as the one depicted in his poem "Uh Huh" seem to strike at the heart of the race issue in America. That is, there is no difference beyond pigmentation underneath the skin. But the very nature of a hand being cut open and spread apart with surgical tools could also be an analysis of the postwar period itself. The image of the body being opened and examined by authority could lay the framework for a critique of the hegemonic postwar culture of containments invasion of all parts of American society (many formerly private areas, such as one's thoughts) in a search for deviance and difference of any kind (Joans, *Jazz Poems*).

In "We Split the Beat Scene," Joans turns the white image of Africans back on itself, holding up a mirror to those who produced a culture that would produce these images, demanding to know why they were acceptable and challenging the boundaries of that acceptability (Joans, *All of Ted Joans 6-7*). He carries this theme further in his 1959 collage work, *The Ronnie Manhattan Mau Mau Return from Mexico*, where he uses traditionally white views of savage natives, a white

term of derision for an African uprising and imposes a scientific diagram of a dissected body over one of the natives in the images, in order to challenge the legitimacy of American views of Natives, Africans and the supremacy of Western science as the norm in American culture (Joans, *Mau Mau*). Joans connects the plight of the Native American and the nationalist uprising in Kenya which was coming to its conclusion in the late 1950s. This connection is a direct result of the mainstream media's tying the savage African with his machete to the savage "Indian" with his tomahawk which was still a part of the American cultural landscape. Here Joans is criticizing the white mindset which saw the Kenyan uprising as another episode of savage violence which had plagued colonizers since they first settled the new world and the linkage of savagery in Africa with the savage nature of African Americans (Foreman 79-81). Yet he places tools of modernity in the hands of the Natives, who carry modern trunks or cases tied to lengths of wood as if modernism has defeated them by imposing their culture while minimizing the culture of the New World's original inhabitants. By speaking to the viewer through images of a white past, Joans is able to further challenge the racist mythology of American culture.

His artistic style placed him outside of the artistic mainstream, continuing to work with figures and images in an age of non-political abstract expressionism. Joans' style was political and his vision of America directly contradicted the established culture's values and exposed the lengths they would go to in protecting those values. In many ways the violence of his imagery reflected the intellectual, cultural and physical violence of the cold war period.

Yet this is not what Joans has been remembered for. In Richard Elliot Fox's article, "Ted Joans and the (B)reaching of the African American Literary Canon," the sexism of Joans' work is emphasized over his portrayal of real issues and conflicts in both Beat life and in postwar America (Fox 41-58). His poem "The Sermon" from *Jazz Poems*, which focuses on the role of young white women in the Beat life, as one might assume, is not flattering or positive. He positions the woman as supporter to the poet or hipster saying, "if you want to be popular with real hipsters, DON'T TALK SO MUCH and please dont (sic) ever argue . . . you should sit in the coffee houses and beerbars and spend some money on the farout cats of the fine arts . . ." (Joans, *Jazz Poems*). Yes, his work is sexist, so is the work of almost all male Beat writers, in fact of almost all male writers in this period. Joans is typical of his peers in his sexism, but atypical in the messages hidden within the poem where he advises women to be creative, to not stay in their hometowns if they want to be hip, to remember not to have sex without protection, to watch out for sexually transmitted disease, to read *Howl*

and *the White Negro*, essentially to live the Beat life without apology. He also inserts silhouettes of women's bodies beside the poem in various body types from the thin "beat chick" to a much more voluptuous woman, engaging with a full spectrum of both women's bodies and their minds. While this discourse is rooted in sexism, it would be anachronistic to expect Joans to conform to some higher state than other writers at the time. Yet, at the very least, even with this he is transgressive by talking about women as the center of his poem which is something that other Beats rarely did. Women, like African Americans, were usually two-dimensional figures in texts which were narratives of the experiences of white men.

Conclusions

More than a poet, an artist or an African American, Ted Joans was a part of the rejection of the hegemonic culture of the postwar era which attempted to ignore or undermine those determined to expose the cracks in its edifice. As Maria Damon has claimed for the work of African American Beat poet Bob Kaufman, "he fully deserves to be restored to the Beat historiography as well as to American and African-diasporic literary historiography in general and certainly introduced to the college classroom" (Damon 142). With Joans' death in 2003, perhaps it is time to rescue his life, literature and art from the marginalization and invisibility that he fought against all his life.

Works Cited

Damon, Maria. "Triangulated Desire and Tactical Silences in the Beat Hipscape: Bob Kaufman and Others." *College Literature* 27.1 (Winter 2000): 139-157.

DuBois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1903, 1999. February 12, 2007 <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu.gate.lib.buffalo.edu/toc/modeng/public/DubSoul.html>.

Foreman, Joel, ed. *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons.* Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1997.

Fox, Richard Elliot. "Ted Joans and the (B)reaching of the African American Literary Canon." *MELUS* 29.3-4 (Fall 2004): 41-58.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness.* London: Verso, 1993.

Jones, LeRoi. *Blues People: Negro Music in White America.* New York: William Morrow and Company, 1963.

Joans, Ted. *Jazz Poems*. New York: Rhino Review, 1959.

---. *The Ronnie Manhattan Mau Mau Return from Mexico* 1959. In Phillips, Lisa, ed. *Beat Culture and the New America, 1950-1965.* New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1995. 159.

---. *All of Ted Joans and No More.* New York: Excelsior Press Publishers, 1961.

---. *The Hipsters.* New York: Corinth Books, 1961.

Kuenzli, Rudolf. "'Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York:' Whitney Museum of American Art—art exhibit." *ArtForum*. April 1997. February 15, 2007. <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_n8_v35/ai_19416265/pg_1?tag=content;col1>.

Lee, A. Robert. "Black Beats: The Signifying Poetry of LeRoi Jones/Imamu Amiri Baraka, Ted Joans and Bob Kaufman." *Beat Down To Your Soul: What was the Beat Generation?* Ed. Ann Charters. New York: Penguin Books, 2001. 303-327.

Miller, James A. "Ted Joans." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 16: The Beats: Literary Bohemians in Postwar America.* Ed. Ann Charters. New York: The Gale Group, 1983. February 10, 2007. <www.infotrack.galenet.com>.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992.

Phillips, Lisa, ed. *Beat Culture and the New America, 1950-1965.* New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1995.

Woodson, Jon. "Ted Joans." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 41: Afro-American Poets since 1955.* Ed. Trudier Harris. New York: The Gale Group, 1985. February 10, 2007. <www.infotrack.galenet.com>.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 17-30

The Metaphors of Spatial Merging: The Female Body as House in the Work of Mary Caponegro, Louise Bourgeois, and Francesca Woodman[1]

Ceylan Ertung

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar once asked, if a pen is a metaphorical penis entitling men to have authority over the creative process, whence should women derive their creative powers; or in other words, with what *organ* can women generate texts? By saying "women have sexual organs more or less everywhere" (252) Luce Irigaray gave the answer by suggesting that woman's creative organ is their body. *Ecriture Feminine* which translates roughly as feminine writing or writing in the feminine mode, implies writing from or by the female body. According to Helene Cixous, feminine writing would constitute a counter language which has a subversive potential to explode the oppressive structures of conventional thought and language; giving woman the ownership and the authorship of their own bodies that have been denied to them. She says, "By writing herself, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display—the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions" (Cixous 116).

As Cixous's words suggest, women's relationship to their bodies has been problematic since the ancient times. Cast in the role of the body by the "rational, disembodied" men, women have been seen as a lack or an anomaly because of the morphology of their sexual organs. They have been reduced to sexual objects to be looked at or to be owned because of the materiality of their bodies, and because of their reproductive faculties, they have been expelled from the public space and relegated to the private space of the house.

In spite of differences in detail, every human society uses the difference between male and female genital morphology to classify individuals and to assign them social, economic, political and sexual positions in society.

---

[1] This is a revised version of a paper presented at the 32nd Annual American Studies Conference, "Perceptions of Space and the American Experience," November 7–9, 2007 held at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey.

The conceptualization of female biology as an aberration of the male norm in Western thought, has engendered an insidious form of essentialism—biologism—in which women's essence is defined on the virtue of their biological characteristics. As Elizabeth Grosz maintains, biologism is often based on some form of reductionism in that social and cultural factors are seen to be the effects of biological causes (48). Since women are tied to the functions of reproduction and nurturance, a biologist/essentialist ordering of society limits women's social and psychological capacities denying them an equal position and place in society. Consequently, women and men have different status in terms of control of property, control of labor, and political participation (Spain 3). As Daphne Spain explains, throughout history and across cultures, geographic and architectural spatial arrangements have fortified differences between men and women: "Women and men are spatially segregated in ways that reduce women's access to knowledge and thereby reinforce women's lower status relative to men's. "Gendered spaces" separate women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege" (3).

The gendered construction of space has been elaborated by many feminist scholars. Elizabeth Grosz in *Time, Space and Perversity* shows how the notion of the *chora* (space), that Plato describes in *Timaeus* as an indescribable, labile and unstable concept, has a direct albeit often unacknowledged link with femininity as it is associated with the sexually coded terms of "mother," "nurse," "receptacle," and "imprint bearer." In *Timaeus* where Plato attempts to explain the genesis of the universe, he sets up a series of binary oppositions that have become the hallmarks of Western philosophical thought: the distinctions between being/becoming, the intelligible/sensible,the ideal/material, the divine/mortal, all of which can be said to represent the distinction between the perfect world of reason and the imperfect material world (Grosz 113). According to Plato the passage through the perfect to the imperfect; (from the form to the reality) is made possible by *chora*; the space necessary for the existence of material objects (Grosz 114). According to Grosz, this intermediary space of the *chora* that Plato describes as a "receptacle" is highly feminine; even maternal: "*Chora* can only be designated by . . . [her] function: to hold, nurture, bring into the world. . . . *[C]hora* has neither existence nor becoming. *Not* to create or produce—this is the function of the father, the creator, god, the Forms—but to nurse, to support, surround, protect, incubate, to sort, to engender . . ." (115).

According to Grosz, the idea that in reproduction it is the father who gives all the specific characteristics to incubation provided by the mother has its roots in Plato's explanation in *Timaeus*. The erasure of woman's defining

role in procreation, and her consequent erasure from the society as an active agent on the virtue of her biological capacities, result in a gender-stratification that accords men a higher status than women as a group, assigning the latter a subservient position that man exploits and abuses to their own ends. Moira Gatens's statement: "the female body in our culture, is seen and no doubt often 'lived' as an *envelope, vessel, or receptacle*" (41), seems to support Grosz's reading of the Platonian chora. In a similar manner Kathleen M. Kirby accentuates the link between the female body and space:

> Gender ideology . . . not only determines our interactions in space, but defines us as space. "Woman" connotes a space that is penetrable, susceptible, passive, submissive, imploding, collapsing upon itself; "man" derives from a space assumed to be expansive, rigid and intrusive. (137)

This paper deals with the work of three women artists; the Italian American short story writer Mary Caponegro, the French American painter and sculptor, Louise Bourgeois, and the American photographer with an Italian name, Francesca Woodman. Producing their work in the male oriented spaces of literature and arts, Bourgeois, Caponegro and Woodman, through their different mediums of expression comment on the relationship between domestic space and the female body, and reveal the anonymity and self-effacement that comes with the territory. Through their work they show how, in Elizabeth Grosz's words:

> The containment of women within a dwelling that they did not build nor was even built for them—can only amount to a homelessness, within the very home itself; it becomes the space of duty of endless chores that have no social value or recognition, the space of the affirmation and replenishment of others at the expense and erasure of the self, the space of domestic violence and abuse, the space that harms as much as it isolates women. (122)

All three artists, in their respective works take the female body as their point of artistic departure, as Cixous has suggested, and challenge and subvert traditional roles attributed to women by expressing their anger, alienation, isolation and entrapment within a body that has not been defined by them, and their confinement in a domestic space/role that is not of their choosing. By focusing on the female body in their works, these three women artists produce "a new space of comprehension in which the body becomes nothing less than a new source of understanding equal to mind" (Komar 94).

Apart from their shared theme of psychological and physical entrapment, the techniques they employ are also similar. All three artists make use of boxes not only as objects but also as forms permeating the structure of their artistic medium. The tightly contained narrative space of Caponegro's story doubles the structure of the house her character inhabits; the box-like structure of the houses that incorporate Bourgeois's women in her *Femme-Maison* paintings point to the psychological dimension of women's entrapment in the domestic role. Furthermore, both Bourgeois and Woodman have been associated with the feminist art movement of the 1970s and both make use of the figure of the female nude; challenging and appropriating its male monopoly in their own representations of the figure from a female perspective. In *The Nude Male: A New Perspective,* Margaret Walters explored the gendered conceptualization of the nude figure:

> Over the centuries of western civilization, the male nude has carried a much wider range of meanings, political, religious and moral, than the female. The male nude is typically public: he strides through the city squares, guards public buildings, is worshipped in the church. The female nude on the other hand, comes into her own only when art is geared to the tastes and erotic fantasies of private consumers. (8)

Through her nude women in *Femme-Maison* paintings Bourgeois, on the one hand, perpetuates the anonymity of the female nude; while, on the other hand, she disrupts the scopophilic tendencies of the viewers by denying them a complete vision of the figure in her hybridization of the female body with the house. Furthermore, Bourgeois also challenges the tradition of the passive "reclining nude" by making her women stand on their two feet and in a constant effort at communicating with the world. Francesca Woodman on the other hand, in her nude self-portraits, disrupts the easy consumption of her corporeal form by constantly fragmenting her body, putting it into highly unnatural shapes and often refusing to become the central point of attention either by appearing at the corner of the photograph or by becoming incorporated by the objects or the structure that surrounds her. Woodman's choice of the square format, over the horizontal, as Eva Rus argues, is deliberate, as it creates a constricted space (box-like) in which a viewer is made aware of how the body is framed and constrained within the physical limitations of the interior spaces she chooses to use as her setting (14). Bourgeois, Caponegro and Woodman, in their respective metaphorical conflations of the female body with the architecture of the house,

provide a criticism of the limited roles, functions and space women are allowed to occupy in society, based mainly on their biology.

"The Daughter's Lamentation," the opening story in Mary Caponegro's *The Complexities of Intimacy* (2001), is the complex account of the "intimate" relationship between a daughter and an architect father, rendered through the daughter's interior monologue making the interior space of her mind identical with the space of her text. Basically a story of patriarchal violence and rape, the narrative represents multiple forms of violation of female spaces, ranging from the internal female spaces of the daughter's womb and mind to the transgression of her private space within the house she co-habits with her father. The daughter remains nameless throughout the story, so does the father, however throughout the narrative the father is referred to with a capital F, pointing to patriarchal domination.

After her sisters have gone and her mother died the daughter has remained behind "out of filial piety, nobility or stupidity" (11), to take care of her aging father. The house they inhabit had been built (or at least designed) by the father, and the daughter seems constantly at a loss trying to find her way in the labyrinthine construction of the house, never being able to reach the middle: "I am up, I am down, I've never quite arrived . . . never stationary, my feet perpetually between steps" (16). Situated next to a lake, the house is highly gothic, gloomy and dark, eliciting uncanny sensations for the daughter: "the house has taken on a quality of inaccessibility, awkwardness, as strong a word as threat may be truest" (24). As she explains,

> The house . . . conforming to no law with which I am acquainted is a kind of wood box slightly skew not salt box, neither hat nor shoe, a leaning tower without a Pisa's dignity, haphazard, squat and deep within, a strange conglomerate of spaces extending from cellar to attic, each appearing infinite, made separate instead of connected by a series of steps, altogether unfinished yet cramped. (13)

In his book *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely,* Anthony Vidler identifies the uncanny with all the phobias associated with space including, "'la peur des espaces' or agoraphobia . . . [and] its obverse, claustrophobia," arising mainly from the interior space of an individual's mind (6). As Sigmund Freud explained in his essay on the uncanny in 1919, uncanny arose when something that once seemed homely—*heimlich*—was transformed into *unheimlich*, unhomely (Vilder 6). The daughter's spatial estrangement and

obvious disorientation in the house are provoked by the unexpected violation of her body by her father in the family home, turning the once secure and familiar space of the house into a strange and threatening territory; from the homely to the unhomely.

The way the daughter describes the house also makes use of the symbolism of boxes (suggestive of the irrational and the unconscious) revealing the daughter's psychological and physical entrapment—something we also see in Bourgeois's and Woodman's work. Furthermore, the structure of the house doubles the daughter's narration as her narrative is equally labyrinthine, with no particular telos. Just as the house that she inhabits is unfinished, in fragments—so is the daughter and her narrative, she hardly ever completes a sentence and seems not to know anything for certain, the majority of her statements are in the either/or format. This technique of "mise en abyme" that Caponegro employs points to the parallelism between the daughter's (woman's) enclosure in the patriarch's physical space and her containment in the conceptual universe of patriarchy. This idea is also invoked later when she confides in her mother the father's rape: "'Oh no, don't give me one more thing to bear,' my mother said when I attempted to confide, as if all the weight of civilization had finally stooped her, reduced her, the collective grandeur of those monuments, remnants, fragments: Stonehenge, the Pyramids, the Berlin Wall; the Temple at Delphi, the Taj Mahal; the Fountain of Trevi, the Colosseum, and Bernini's angels, I fear, instead of bearing her aloft in ethereal grandeur, were like weights around her wrists and ankles, dragging her silently into the Tevere, so much stone" (19).

All the structures that Caponegro refers to in this section are masterpieces created by men either for religious, political or personal reasons. As Elizabeth Grosz argues, the production of a (male) world; the construction of an "artificial" environment, religion, philosophy, all point to the attempts of men to build a universe,

> upon the erasure of the bodies and contributions of women/mothers and the refusal to acknowledge the debt to the maternal body that they owe. They hollow out their own interiors and project them outward, and then require women as supports for this hollowed space. Women become the guardians of the private and the interpersonal, while men build conceptual and material worlds. (121)

The following quotation from the story, charged with double meaning supports Grosz's argument and unveils the similarities between the violation of nature and of the female body:

> bridges, roads and by extension buildings, are the marks man thrusts into the unsuspecting wilderness. This is craft: intrusion masked as intuition, this is clever alteration such that man can make himself creator in the guise of God to lay these marks upon the earth, thus persuading a perceiver they belong there. (23)

The expression, "unsuspecting wilderness" reinvokes the imagery of the daughter's violation by her father, his intrusion of her bodily space doubling that of nature's in the hands of male "world builders."

An architect by profession, the father has spent the large portion of his life travelling around the world to observe the architectural masterpieces and to find the secret behind an architecture that rhymes with nature (19). The outcome of all those years of observation and travel that is put into practice in the house that he has built however is far from reflecting the vision he must have acquired, pointing perhaps to its impossibility. The house, he has built is in decay, and its foundation is less than solid, so the daughter, who now feels like a protective parent to her father offers to support this structure "like Atlas supporting the world" (12): "Might I then catch the door before it makes the sound he cares so little for, offer an appendage as a hinge of sorts? I'd stay the door with hand or foot before it had a chance to slam . . ." (12). Her offering of her body as a support to the foundation of the house accentuates the erasure of the daughter's identity as a separate entity from the house that was built by her father. Her positioning of herself as a support for her father's house attests to her status of chora in the Platonic tradition.

As a matter of fact, the daughter is a cliche of the selfless woman, or the house-wife; whose only duty seems to be the guardianship of the male—in this case the patriarch's—order. Lacking an identity or a life of her own, she indulges in self-objectification, fetishization even; seeing herself through the other's eyes, what Sandra Bartky has called "a panoptical male connoisseur" seems to dominate her sense of self-awareness: "for instance, note my posture, bearing the drama of my silhouette, as I lean against a pillar just outside the station" or "my clavicle, that part of my anatomy which never failed to elicit admiraton on stage" (18).

As it has been suggested by John Berger and Laura Mulvey among others the daughter's sense of self is supplanted by a sense of being under the surveilling gaze of another, in particular that of her father. Lacking an identity the daughter fantasizes that she is a character of fiction: "ever my father's princess, my King,

my Lear, whose suffering I see and feel, and make, against my will, my own, my maker, my betrayer, why can't I abandon you abuser" (15). It is here that the daughter makes the reader realize for the first time, albeit implicitly, that the father has been abusing her sexually. This transgression is implied strongly in the leitmotif of "trapped sexuality." While speaking of her days as a ballerina the daughter says: "one is always leaping up or from or into the arms of a man whose sex is trapped in a stocking, like the squeezed face of a thief" (15), an image she invokes repetitively as she wonders, lost in the spaces of the house. The male sexuality described as entrapped in a stocking as the squeezed face of a thief suggests the unnatural hence the hidden nature of her sexual abuse by her father. As a thief enters a house, secretly, and has no right to be there, so does her father enter her body. Moreover, the imagery of leaping to and fro, suggests that the daughter is unable to find stability or a stable point with which to define herself. However, stasis is also dangerous, threatening, she has to keep moving, as anytime she seems to reach stasis the abuse is repeated:

> I still nearly gasp each time I *finally* find the ground floor only to find *him* in the place I dont expect, a place which strikes me as *unnatural*, at very least inconsistent with convention . . . just as certain people stand too close to those with whom they speak, transgressing tacit boundaries of private space, this intimacy transgresses some more subtle spatial code. (23, italics mine)

In this section the structure of the house and the body of the daughter are rendered in equal terms, making it difficult for the reader to pinpoint which of the two constructs the daughter is referring to. This doubling of the house with the body of the daughter points to the impossibility of imagining the daughter's identity outside the boundaries of the home; her lack of an identity and agency is underscored in the overlapping descriptions of her bodily space with the space of the house.

Ignored by the mother and covered up by the family doctor, this rape, the transgression of the daughter's bodily space and integrity seems to have dislocated her psychologically and rendered her physically unable to navigate the labyrinthine structure of the house. Furthermore the fact that the daughter is unable to openly articulate the abuse of her father is implied through the reinvocation of the imagery of trapped sexuality: "'Oh no,' like a muffled scream of horror, as from a mouth inside the squeezing skin of a stocking" (20). Like a ghost, the daughter is doomed to haunt the house her father built never to wander out of it nor ever to reach equilibrium; a sense of separate, stable identity (McLaughlin 146). The story ends on the lamentation of the daughter:

> How shall I bear to maintain this curious house, which of course will be my legacy to inherit? I will dance as if in ritual atonement or bereavement- I who must atone for other's sins, I whose grief precedes this one—I'll dance before the setting sun to keep the illusion of equilibrium as I nightly drown. (27)

The daughter's words are echoed by Luce Irigaray, who in her *Elemental Passions* summarizes the predicament of women:

> I was your house. And when you leave, abandoning this dwelling place, I do not know what to do with these walls of mine. Have I ever had a body other than the one you constructed according to your own idea of it? Have I ever experienced a skin other than the one you wanted me to dwell within? (qtd. in Grosz 122)

The traumatic history of the daughter's abuse by her father has curtailed her development as an autonomous being, and she lacks the means to fully articulate and negotiate her problematic past; and art seems to offer her no solace, as her experience as a ballerina results only in a "stilted corporeal narrative" (15), doubling/exacerbating the bodily oppression she has been subjected to in real life.

The issues of abuse, anonymity, self effacement, objectification of the female self, and entrapment that were dealt with in Caponegro's story, are elaborated by Bourgeois in her *Femme-Maison*[2] series: initially a series of drawings and paintings Bourgeois made in the 1940s and then returned to in the 1980s in the sculptural form, the *Femme-Maisons* depict the embodiment of the house by the female body. In the early drawings and paintings the *Femme-Maisons* are female nudes who have domestic architecture placed on the upper part of their bodies. In all of them we can see an arm or two—and sometimes three—as if waving or signalling for help, as if trying to say "Hey! See me I am here." The positioning of the house on the upper body replacing or embodying the female figure's head—which is the site of rational thinking—is significant suggesting that woman's thinking capacities are walled in by her domestic role—and her nakedness, while on the one hand is suggestive of her bodily existence, her identification with materiality, is also a comment Bourgeois makes on the objectification of

[2] The *Femme-Maison* series of Louise Bourgeois that have been translated as Women-Houses or House-women, could also be translated as house-wives since "femme" in French also means wife.

the female body as sexual object. By merging the domestic house with a naked female form Bourgeois seems to embody the two constricted roles women are assigned in society: house wife and sexual object. Bourgeois's criticism of the gendered stereotypes and limited range of roles attributed to women in society resonated with the concerns of the 1970's American feminism; her women-houses were seen emblematic of "'the feminine mystique' of their desires for something more than [a] husband and . . . children and [a] home" (Friedan 29).

In one of the earliest examples of the *Femme Maison*[3] series made in 1947, Bourgeois depicts a female figure that has bars where the sexual organs need to be, suggestive of woman's imprisonment in her body, and through her sexuality and reproductive faculties, her entrapment behind the walls of the house. Just as the daughter in Caponegro's story supported her father's house as "Atlas supporting the world," in the *Femme Maison* drawings, Bourgeois's women seem to be carrying the burden of their domesticity on their shoulders. Furthermore, like the daughter's anonymity in the story, the recognizable features of these women—their faces—are hidden behind the structure of the house and its dark windows offer no glimpse of their distinguishing features implying that these women have no individual identity. The erasure of the distinguishing features of the female body is a theme shared also by Francesca Woodman. As Deborah Wye has commented:

> [In the *Femme-Maison* series] woman's most obvious sign of her identity, her face has been replaced by a house. The implication is devastating. Domesticity becomes the very definition of these women since they have no other means by which to speak. They are prisoners of the house and also hide behind its facade thereby both denying their identity through this challenge to, as well as determination of, their wholeness. (17)

Furthermore, the round, curved form of the bodies of Bourgeois's women are rendered in direct opposition with the rigid, rectilinear shape of the houses that engulf them. In her article, "The Squaring of the Circle: The Male

---

[3] Due to copyright reasons I cannot include the *Femme Maison* pictures in this article. For those who are interested, please see the following links respectively:

< http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/oct/07/louisebourgeois>,

<www.artnet.com/.../artmarketwatch9-11-07-4jpg>,

< http:www.recirca.com/rviews/louisebourgeois/index-shtml>.

Takeover of Power in Architectural Shapes," Cillie Rentmester concentrates on the "curved/angular polarity in architecture. Rentmester observes that the architecture of the matriarchal societies of the Mediterrenean and Near East that had been predominantly oval and round shaped, was supplanted by the angular architecture of Greece, suggesting the "male takeover of power in architectual shapes" (qtd. in Komar 90). The juxtaposition of the angular shapes of the houses with the curved bodies of the women who support them point to the unnatural and intrusive qualities of these structures, an idea also invoked in Caponegro's story.

The *Femme-Maison* sculptures, on the other hand, dating approximately forty years from their painted precursors, continue the critical and anxious streak of the earlier figures. In a sculpture made in 2001, the female body is now shown as positioned horizontally, as a landscape upon which the house is situated like a tombstone in a graveyard. The figure of the woman is naked and mutilated (like the classical statues), she lies on her back, her head, her arms and legs have been cut off, she has been rendered static, in other words killed. She no longer has the eyes that were previously hidden behind the dark windows, nor the arms with which to ask for help, no matter how ineffective the gesture would have been in the previous artwork. It goes without saying that of course, through her anonymous female figures imprisoned within the structure of the house Bourgeois is far from conveying a message of passive acceptance. On the contrary, in her body-based paintings and sculpture, Bourgeois's work epitomizes the subversive feminist art movement of the 1970s, characterized by its exploration of gendered identity and a critique of gendered stereotypes.

Like Caponegro and Bourgeois, Woodman also seems to have been particularly interested in the construction of the female self, the female body and its embodiment by the domestic space of the house. Benjamin Buchloch maintains that Woodman's photography is,

> An attempt to articulate female desire outside of the system of patriarchal representation, and to articulate it with photography, the medium that is both the most permeated and the most promising project to dismantle the symbolic. (49)

In her photographs, which she had referred to as "ghost photos," Woodman often poses naked in decaying domestic interiors and her face is seldom discernible. She looks more transparent than tangible, and seems to be enveloped by the space or the structure of the domestic interiors she chooses for her mise-en-scene.

In one of her *Space*^{2} photos,[4] Woodman appears to be immersed in the wall, and a wall paper passes through her; whether or not she is being entombed, or coming out from the wall -- one can hardly tell. Her body can be seen only in fragments, the fact that the central point of attention is on the belly button -- the locus that binds the mother to her baby through the umbilical cord, suggesting to the viewer that it is primarily the woman's reproductive role and function that casts her in the role of the body and domestic servant, entrapping her behind the walls of both.

In another *Space*^{2} photograph, Woodman again appears one with the wall, the lower part of her body is painted the same color with the wall, while her face is blurred. Her posture and positioning of her left hand on the wall invokes the feeling that she has been cornered and has no place to go, with her back against the wall. Her naked body adds to her unease; it is as if she is trying to evade the gaze of the viewer by merging herself with the wall. In House # 4, Woodman is in a reclining position, one that reminds the viewer of a woman in labor, her face is again hidden behind the column of the fireplace, the fireplace itself invoking the image of a woman's sexual organ. The upper portion of her body seems to be in motion, as if in a struggle to get away, but the fireplace looks as if it is crashing her. She seems unable to move under its weight, and cannot escape her destiny as a woman.

Woodman's immersion in her surroundings, and mimicry of the objects around her can also be explained in the light of Roger Callois's article "Mimicry and Legendary Psychastenia" as explored by Grosz in her book *Volatile Bodies*. Callois's paper is an ethnological and sociological analysis of the behavior of insects that mimic other insects or "feign" their surroundings or other creatures. Callois parallels the insect's ability for bodily imitation to psychosis, described by Pierre Janet as "legendary psychastenia" in which the psychotic is unable to locate himself or herself in a position in space (Grosz 46). Grosz explains this phenomenon of "depersonalization by assimilation to space" experienced both by insects and by the psychotic as:

> Both the psychotic and the insect renounce their rights to occupy a perspectival point, abandoning themselves to being spatially located by/as others. The primacy of one's own perspective is replaced by the gaze of another, for

[4] Please see the following links:

<http://www.berk-edu.com/RESEARCH/francescawoodman/pages/woodman010html>.

<http://www.heenan.net/woodman/providence/rhode-islan-13.shtml>.

> whom the subject is merely a point in space and not the focal point organizing space. (47)

If identity is the distinction of a being from its environment, the psychastenic has no identity, as it can be no longer distinguished from its surroundings. Legendary psychastenia and the psychastenic body can be applied as a metaphor to explain the work of Caponegro, Bourgeois and Woodman, respectively; underlining the criticism inherent in their work of the traditional roles women are assigned in society that deny them a fully developed—if any—subjectivity.

Despite the temporal gap and their different modes of expression, through their body- based narratives, Caponegro, Bourgeois and Woodman reveal the unequal positioning of women in patriarchal societies and explore what it means to be an artist in such a milieu. Their work articulates the contradiction inherent in the experience of a woman artist: of taking on the position of a subject in a society that traditionally has treated her as an object, making their work an arena to establish a sense of personal and sexual identity (Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro 40). By using the traditionally male art forms of literature, painting and photography, these women artists appropriate the infected modes of expression, and turn them into transgressive and liberating instruments that allow them to explore what it means to be a woman, from a female point of view.

Works Cited

Bartky, Sandra Lee. "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power." In *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. Ed. Katie, Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stansbury. New York: Columbia UP, 1997.

Buchloch, Benjamin. "Francesca Woodman: Performing the Photograph, Staging the Subject." *Francesca Woodman: Photographs 1975-1980*. New York: Marion Goodman Gallery, 2004.

Caponegro, Mary. *The Complexities of Intimacy*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2001.

Chicago, Judy and Miriam Shapiro. "Female Imagery." *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Ed. Amelia Jones. London: Routledge, 2006.

Cixous, Helene. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Ed. Mary Evans. London: Routledge, 2001.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Penguin, 1965.

Gatens, Moira. *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.

---. *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies.* New York: Routledge, 1995.

Irigaray, Luce. "This Sex Which Is Not One." In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies.* Ed. Mary Evans. London: Routledge, 2001.

Komar, Kathleen L. "Feminist Curves in Contemporary Literary Space" *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space.* Ed. Margaret R. Higonnet. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1994.

Kirby, Kathleen M. *Indifferent Boundaries: Spatial Concepts of Human Subjectivity*. New York: Guilford, 1996.

McLaughlin, Robert L. "Mary Caponegro." *The Review of Contemporary Fiction.* 21.3 (Fall 2001): 111-150.

Nixon, Mignon. *Fantastic Reality: Louise Burgeois and a Story of Modern Art.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.

Rus, Eva. "Surrealism and Self-Representation in the Photography of Francesca Woodman," May 2004, 27 December 2007 <http//: www.uscanada.org.us.1html>

Spain, Daphne. *Gendered Spaces.* Chappel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1992.

Vidler, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994.

Walters, Margaret. *The Nude Male: A New Perspective.* New York: Penguin, 1978.

Wye, Deborah. *Louise Bourgeois.* Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1978.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 31-44

Eye Was There: From the World Trade Center to the Freedom Tower[1]

Devrim Kılıçer Yarangümeli

Fear can cause blindness, said the girl with dark glasses, Never a truer word, that could not be truer, we were already blind the moment when we turned blind, fear struck us blind, fear will keep us blind, Who is speaking, asked the doctor, A blind man, replied a voice, just a blind man, for that is all we have here.

Jóse Saramago, *Blindness*

Architecture, as one of the most powerful and familiar forms of visual communication, occupies a major place in visual culture. American architect Daniel Libeskind, who is the winner of the master plan for rebuilding Ground Zero, clarifies the point when he says: "I believe that design and architecture are the foremost communicators of all—they tell a story. Without them, there would be no history, no reference about where we are, where we have been and where we are going; not only as individuals but as a society" (Libeskind, "News"). Furthermore, Walter Benjamin in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" holds architecture above any other art form arguing that many other art forms have developed and perished in time, but not architecture (239). Benjamin underlines that the human need for shelter is lasting; therefore, the art of creating spaces, architecture has never been idle (240). He writes that "[architecture's] claim to being a living force has significance in every attempt to comprehend the relationship of the masses to art" (240).

Architecture develops hand in hand with powers of civilization. In building the first house people began to create, and equally important, began to control their own environment. In this light, architecture has arisen from the primitive hut in the humans' need and desire to have a say in their surroundings. Also, in this way people have been able to communicate their needs and desires in their dwelling places, and architectural products. Architectural products also leave a

---

[1] This article has been derived from the author's Ph.D. dissertation titled "Symbolic and Ontological Meanings of Skyscraper New York City in American Culture."

significant mark in the history of civilizations: "the characteristic buildings of each period are the memorials to their greatest institutions" (Mumford 193). Each community then communicates its needs through the environment they build.

In its more inclusive sense, an understanding and engagement with architecture is fundamental to any comprehensive understanding of culture. Buildings express the human capacity to organize and control the environment within which they live and thus to articulate their cultural world. One can argue that it is through architecture that cultures express and understand themselves and others. Equally important is the fact that the built environment is the product of power relations within the community that created it: "Architecture is not the autonomous art it is often held out to be. Buildings are designed and constructed within a complex web of social and political concerns. To ignore the conditions under which architecture is practiced is to fail to understand the full social import of architecture" (Leach 14). Yet it is often hard to find architectural texts that do not represent buildings as merely technical objects or art objects. Architectural discourse needs to see buildings in their social form, as social, political and psychological objects in that they are invested with social meaning and shape social relations.

Architectural space is a medium through which to understand society. As German cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer argues in "On Employment Agencies: The Construction of Space:" "Spatial images are the dreams of society. Wherever the hieroglyphics of any spatial image are deciphered, there the basis of social reality presents itself" (60). Obviously space is mediated by consciousness, and architecture is the product of a way of thinking. Space is never empty, as Foucault observes in "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," it is always "saturated with qualities" (349).

The fact that the skyscraper is an American invention; its full social import will reflect economic, social, political and also symbolic and psychological concerns of Americans. Skyscrapers as architectural forms are the products of a way of seeing and envisioning the American way. Further, an individual's perception of buildings or the built environment is mediated through his/her consciousness. In attempting to expose the forces by which the built environment is generated and perceived, psychoanalysis provides a necessary lens to address the whole question of the social import that skyscrapers have, and it becomes an indispensable tool in getting to understand a certain form of architecture and the mind frame of a society that has invented it. Moreover, psychoanalysis deconstructs unconscious controlling mechanisms both in the human mind

and in society. Accordingly, skyscrapers as modern images of towers function as a metaphor for social guardians, and in their essential phallomorphic form they stand as antitheses to the psychoanalytic metaphor of the house as a womb, where all human beings belong. Moreover, skyscrapers fuse the idea of power with masculinity in their essentially erect form. The effects of this type of architecturally symbolic guardianship go unnoticed for the most part in everyday life practices. It is the main interest of this article to examine the power of architectural visuality in American culture through a psychoanalytic lens focusing on the skyscraper form and taking the fallen Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and the Freedom Tower as its case study.

It goes without saying that towers are phallomorphic images. The phallus, we know, is a familiar symbol of fertility and regeneration. In the work of numerous critics more or less associated with psychoanalysis, the phallus is not necessarily the masculine organ itself but the values associated with it, specifically that of power. In Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, it is the constant threat of castration that the phallus takes on its symbolic function, and the phallus is thus always a reactive and defensive construct: if it claims the status of a transhistorical truth, this is always in some fraught relationship to the sense in which it is imagined to be "under attack." Therefore, the phallus is not a timeless entity with no historical content but a kind of hastily improvised patchwork of historical materials that might vary according to historical contingencies such as the mournful reassertion of national identity in the wake of World War I, the reassertion of a triumphant global capitalist order in the face of attacks on it on September 11, 2001.

If it is a patchwork, it would become impossible to assert that the phallus represents any one thing monolithically. To call it a phallus necessarily seems to imply that it has a gendered meaning, but this would have to be seen as overdetermined by other elements such as national identity, capitalism and the like in ways which would make any reading of it necessarily a tracing of those polysemantic overdeterminations. Insofar as the skyscrapers of Manhattan exhibit and engender desire and power through the dominant phallic and therefore a visual spatiality, the dispersal of power in its diffuse and symbolic forms are manifested through the idea of the phallus.

The threat of castration or rupture is in fact the lack of center and origin that makes any structure a site of eternal deferral of meaning. Rupture thus drives the productive nature of structure and makes meaning possible as a dynamic process at the same time as it makes meaning indeterminate. Just as for Freud the phallus might be seen as always reflecting and repeating the very

loss of the father that it tries to cover over, rupture re-emerges at every moment through the deferral of meaning rather than being some moment of originary or archetypal loss. What one might object to Freud is the fact that the connection of the phallus as the arbitrator of meaning to the determinate element of the penis is in itself the "erection" of a center and "prototype" of loss, for which all other losses then only become figures or copies. There can be no original loss which predetermines the nature of those that follow.

In the uncanny doubleness of the Twin Towers whose fall came to be the very symbols of the attacks in September 11, no originary reference remains. Baudrillard writes prophetically in 1983 in his *Simulations*:

> The fact that there are two of them signifies the end of all competition, the end of all original reference. . . . What they project is the idea of the model that they are one for the other, and their twin altitude presents no longer any value of transcendence. They signify only that the strategy of models and commutations wins out in the very heart of the system itself—and New York is really the heart of it—over the traditional strategy of competition. (135-136)

Indeed when the project of a World Trade Center was being worked out during the 1960s, it was intended to put an end to all competition. The proposal for the World Trade Center reads: "Today, the world stands on the brink of a boom in international trade. . . . To realize its role in the new era dawning for overseas trade and finance, this country must marshal its resources. One primary step in this direction would be to establish *a single center*, planned and equipped to serve that vital purpose" (qtd. in Glanz and Lipton 7, emphasis mine). The idea of a "single center" does not only refer to the proposed buildings themselves but also to the country and the city they were going to be built in.

The World Trade Center has been the symbol of the U.S. economic strength. In the 1960s Chase Manhattan Bank's Chairman David Rockefeller and his brother governor of New York State Nelson Rockefeller initiated the foundation of Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to commission a development project that would revitalize downtown New York which had been the financial center of the country. In 1962 architect Minoru Yamasaki was hired to head the design. Although Yamasaki believed that "If a building is too strong or brutal, it tends to overpower man. In it he feels insecure and uncomfortable" (qtd. in Glanz and Lipton 88), he designed two identical, huge, excessively simple

glass boxes. A great majority of the public and architectural critics protested these huge monoliths that cut off human activity on the streets, but they were also driven to it by its very height and identical doubleness. Therefore, not surprisingly enough, Michel de Certeau begins his chapter "Walking in the City" in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) as such:

> Seeing Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center. Beneath the haze stirred up by the winds, the urban island, a sea in the middle of the sea, lifts up the skyscrapers over Wall Street, sinks down at Greenwich, then rises again to the crests of Midtown, quietly passes over Central Park and finally undulates off into momentarily arrested vision. The gigantic mass is immobilized before the eyes. (91)

Thus the city turns into a text with the view from the tallest tower of the city. Being lifted up, means being "lifted out of the city's grasp" (de Certeau 92) out of its streets. With the panoptic, all-seeing, god-like eye that encompasses the whole city, the subject on top of the tower assumes the power of the structure. The cityscape from the tower transforms the walking subject, the pedestrian, into a voyeur. De Certeau draws on psychoanalysis and Foucault in his reworking of the interrelationship between power relations, the built environment, the subject and the visual field. He invokes the scopic drive or "scopophilia" as Freud formulated it in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality."

It is in the skyscraper's exhibition of corporate power and wealth that they draw the subject's desire to look. In the essays, Freud argues that "visual impressions remain the most frequent pathway along which libidinal excitation is aroused" (69). Pleasure in looking becomes a perversion, according to Freud, in the form of voyeurism and its double exhibitionism: "anyone who is an exhibitionist in his unconscious is at the same time a *voyeur*" (81). Freud's formulation as reworked by Lacan in the split between the organic eye and the gaze takes on a significant meaning in respect to towers. The towers with their soaring height incorporate a panoptic view of the city, gazing back at the walking subject. The gaze on part of the tower is aggressive since it belittles the one on the street, hence pouring out symbolic violence. This process is further underlined by Freud's assertion that the force which opposes "scopophilia" is shame (*On Sexuality* 69). The towers of Manhattan are also voyeurs gazing back at the subject and exhibitionists in their "unashamed" display of power. This becomes more forceful in the case of the World Trade Center as the peak

of the vertical city, and as "the most monumental figure of Western urban development" (de Certeau 93).

Underlining the monumental aspect the Twin Towers reached a hundred and ten stories replacing the Empire State Building as the tallest, although super tall skyscrapers do not make much economic sense. Indeed, after their completion in 1972 and 1973 the Twin Towers became the world's tallest buildings, only to be replaced by Chicago's Sears Tower a year later. Although they were no longer the world's tallest, they were the world's largest in terms of rentable office space until their destruction. They stood taller than any other skyscraper in New York's skyline and conveyed a symbolic message of American success and achievement. They stood as a symbol of America's financial power and as a symbol of American culture. *Washington Post* columnist Benjamin Forgey suggests that, "buildings—their shapes, materials, textures and spaces–represent culture in its most persuasive physical form. Destroy the buildings, and you rob a culture of its memory, of its legitimacy, of its right to exist." After their destruction the Twin Towers came to represent destruction and terror in a traumatized city.

The fall of New York's Twin Towers was voted "the most memorable TV moment" of the past fifty years in a recent poll conducted in Britain, proving to be more *memorable* than Neil Armstrong's televised landing on the moon in 1969 and the fall of the Berlin Wall twenty years later. Princess Diana's funeral took the second place in the poll (Reuters). Artist Damien Hirst was cited in an article in *The Guardian* (September 11, 2002) that he in an interview told BBC News Online that the attacks were designed to be watched giving way to a fierce controversy: "The thing about 9/11 is that it's kind of an artwork in its own right. It was wicked, but it was devised in this way for this kind of impact. It was devised visually" (Allison). *The New York Times* (September 11, 2002) cites Kenneth T. Jackson, the President of *New-York Historical Society*, as saying that September 11 has become "the most documented event in human history" (Boxer). David Levi-Strauss in *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics* (2003) reports that "On September 11th, more people clicked on documentary news photographs than on pornography for the first (and only) time in the history of the Internet" (184). What was it that made people all over the world become so immersed with the event? There is obviously more than one way to answer the question, and none of these answers can afford to ignore the power of visuality involved.

The fall of the Twin Towers has also been often referred to as a reminder of the Tower of Babel. It is important to remember why people had built the Tower of Babel: To preserve their name, and to avoid being scattered in judgment. Here one might see the principle behind the first and not the last tower: whenever human beings seek to reassert their own imaginary power and authority (phallus) they again and again construct a tower, a defense against the threat of castration in the form of a fetish object. As Freud explains in "Fetishism" (1927), the fetish is a substitute for the phallus: woman's (mother's) penis that the little boy does not want to give up. The fetish becomes a token of triumph over the threat of castration and serves as a protection against it, which necessarily implies a split in the subject's ego (952-956). However, the indeterminacy and overdetermination of the idea of the phallus should be underlined. The decenteredness of this idea can further thoughts about the precise ways in which Twin Towers functioned as a symbol not transhistorically but rather much more contingently in terms of national fetish, imagined "center" of a decentered and non-territorial global capitalism.

In the history of constructing high buildings the latest chain of the line is evident in New York City's redevelopment plans for Ground Zero, the site where the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center once stood "erect." Within two months after the attacks the governor of New York George Pataki established a new state agency responsible for overseeing the rebuilding process: Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC). LMDC's motto "Remember, Rebuild, Renew" underlines the desire to restore the phallus. LMDC Chairman John Whitehead said as he introduced the preliminary proposals for rebuilding the World Trade Center site: "We will rebuild. It is now not a question of whether, but a question of how" (CNN). Moreover, LMDC states its mission as "ensuring Lower Manhattan recovers from the attacks and emerges *even better than it was before . . . restoring a powerful, tall symbol* in Lower Manhattan's skyline" (LMDC, emphasis mine). Thus what Libeskind proposes is this phallic symbol embodied in the new tower, dubbed the "Freedom Tower" by Governor Pataki. This "powerful, tall symbol" will be 1,776-feet-tall, symbolizing the year of American independence. It will be the tallest building in the western hemisphere, that will be about 400 feet taller than the original Twin Towers, and about 100 feet taller than Taipei 101 of Taiwan (1,667 ft), the tallest of the world as of 2006.

In the "Design Plan for Freedom Tower"[2] Libeskind assures the LMDC that the new tower will become a "lasting icon and a symbol of renewal" to "recapture the skyline and establish a new civic icon for this city and our country" (LMDC-design plans). "The impulse to rebuild instantly captured the public imagination as an opportunity to express the resolve of the nation. Ground Zero, in other words, is already an ideologically charged site" (Ross 127). Indeed in its report "A Vision for Lower Manhattan" (2002), LMDC sets out the very ideology of rebuilding the tower: The design should serve the goal to underline the status of New York City as the destination of a pagan pilgrimage, as the destination of a quest for material success. Hence LMDC's chosen plan, which "preserves and reveals the slurry walls of the bathtub of the World Trade Center site as a symbol and physical embodiment of the resilience of American democracy and freedom in withstanding the attacks of September 11th 2001" (LMDC-A Vision for Lower Manhattan) is another architectural venture to rebuild the very loss.

The guiding idea for Libeskind's plan for rebuilding Ground Zero, which he calls "The Memory Foundations," is a new architecture based on "democratic ideals" (Libeskind, *Breaking Ground* 43) embodied in his childhood remembrance of the Statue of Liberty. However, for Libeskind, in recapturing a sense of place and history, buildings should never be nostalgic; they should speak to the present and the future:

> I am inspired by light, sound, invisible spirits, a distinct sense of place, a respect for history. We are all shaped by a constellation of realities and invisible forces, and if a building is to have a spiritual resonance, it has to reflect these things. No one knows how body and soul are connected, but connect them is what I try to do. I

---

[2] As Larry Silverstein, a real estate developer who had leased the Twin Towers a few weeks before the attacks, began to put on more pressure, economic worries have taken hold of the project. Also for security reasons Libeskind's plan was changed by David Childs of Skidmore, Owings & Merril who had been working for Silverstein from the beginning. With the changes, causing intense fights between Childs and Libeskind, the plan no longer has the slurry wall, the gardens, and the spire is replaced by an antenna tower. Libeskind is now only referred to as the master planner; David Childs is responsible for overseeing the rebuilding on behalf of Silverstein. However, as the rebuilding physically began only in the spring of 2006, and the Freedom Tower is expected to open in 2011 (a decade after the original towers were destroyed) no one can be sure what other changes might be done to the project. Therefore, though recognizing the fact that the original plan has been altered radically, the study at hand takes the original design as proposed by Libeskind as its basis.

> draw from my own experience—it's what I know—and in doing so, I strive for a universality. (Libeskind, *Breaking Ground 16*)

Therefore what Libeskind sought to propose for Ground Zero was a future having strong footing in history. This is also an economic history, because with the fall of the Twin Towers downtown Manhattan lost ten million square feet of rentable office space. Since Ground Zero is in the heart of Manhattan's financial district "it was psychologically as well as economically vital to provide the area with a future, to move on from its traumatic past" (Libeskind, *Breaking Ground* 38). To move on, recreating the past[3] was wrong, and what was called for was a reinterpretation. Libeskind implies that he did not want to make the same mistake Yamasaki made back in the 1960s, or competing architects were making in building a soaring, mega-structure that cut off life in the streets surrounding the building although they were revealing a strong sense of individuality, which is one of the basic tenets of American culture. Libeskind writes "[m]y aim was to mold the site into a coherent and symbolic whole by designing buildings that would ascend gradually in pattern. And I wanted not to build just another isolated building there, but to create a new neighborhood, a new harmonious community" (***Breaking Ground*** 46).

With "Memory Foundations" Libeskind achieves three goals: he reserves the memory, looks into the future integrating life in the street to the building, and recreates the lost office space. By keeping the original slurry wall of the Twin Towers he creates a living memorial, because the slurry wall is "a metaphoric and a literal stay against chaos and destruction. In refusing to fall, it seemed to attest, perhaps as eloquently as the Constitution, to the unshakable foundations of democracy and the value of human life and liberty" (Libeskind, *Breaking Ground* 43). He remembers telling the audience in the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center where the final six proposals for Ground Zero is first made public in 2002:

> I told them about what Nina [his wife] and I had seen in the slurry wall and the bedrock. And I told them that down in the pit, I thought back to my family's arrival in New York Harbor, just offshore from here, and that the memory of looking up at the Statue of Liberty had inspired part of my design. I envisioned five towers—tall but not

[3] This is a fundamental defect which Libeskind saw in the other competing proposals that aimed to create an impressive high point, and ultimately to replace the Twin Towers.

> too tall—arranged by increasing height, from south to north, so that they rose in a spiral with the same shape as the flame in Lady Liberty's torch. And the tallest, I had decided, should rise to 1,776 feet, to commemorate the Declaration of Independence, which brought democracy into the modern world. I would fill the upper floors of the tower with botanical gardens, as a confirmation of life. (Libeskind, *Breaking Ground* 47)

In Libeskind's plan there is a memorial site going into the bedrock of Manhattan and exposing the foundations of the Twin Towers, and a walkway along the slurry wall. Sheltering the slurry wall in an embrace is a museum and other cultural buildings. In remembrance of the rescue workers, police, and firefighters, there is a map on which the routes taken by "the heroes of the day" to arrive at the towers are traced. These lines are incorporated into the design by turning them into pathways opening out into the city from a public space at the intersection of Fulton and Greenwich streets, which Libeskind calls "September 11 Plaza." There is also an even greater plaza, a triangular area that is proposed to become lower Manhattan's largest public space. Libeskind calls it "The Wedge of Light" which is inspired by the ray of sunlight. Indeed Libeskind attaches great importance to light, he says: "temples were venerated not just as architecture, but as gods in stone; lit up, they seemed filled with life, animated by ideas, ideals. Light is divine" (Libeskind, *Breaking Ground* 55). Further, the plaza is defined by two lines: the first is a line of light that strikes on September 11 of every year precisely at 8:46 a.m.—the moment when the first plane crashed into the North Tower. The second line marks the spot where, at 10:28 a.m., the second tower fell. These two moments of September 11 defines "The Wedge of Light" that commemorates the events, united with another plaza called the "Park of Heroes." Libeskind offers a towering spire of 1,776 feet with gardens tied to a seventy-story skyscraper. Because gardens are "a constant affirmation of life" a skyscraper "rises above its predecessors, reasserting the pre-eminence of freedom and beauty, restoring the spiritual peak to the city, creating an icon that speaks of [American] vitality in the face of danger and [American] optimism in the aftermath of tragedy" (Libeskind, WTC Design Study). His conclusion to "World Center Design Study" reads: "Life victorious" (WTC Design Study). Libeskind essentially appeals to the emotions of a traumatized public barely using an architectural term. In his choice of words he is more like a populist preacher than an architect in evoking the themes of memory and mourning, of commemoration and renewal, but what he skillfully

achieves is a blurring of the distinction between commemoration and commercial development (Goldberger 213).

Ada Louis Huxtable writes in "Don't Blame the Architects" (June 7, 2003) in her column in *The Wall Street Journal* that Libeskind's plan "struck a common nerve:" "One had the sense, at the presentation, of an end to an undefined yearning and search. You could tell by the sustained applause and tears that this is what people really wanted, and what New York needs. . . . Forget the additional time and expense of a competition, nothing will ever be better than this" (Huxtable). Through the lens of the initial reactions to the plans for rebuilding Ground Zero it seems that the rebuilding efforts become something less than a commercial venture and a more symbolically political act, an opportunity to recreate the national fetish.

Libeskind's design is also important in that it "attains a perfect balance between aggression and desire" as the architecture critic of *The New York Times* Herbert Muschamp called it (qtd. in Goldberger 137). In the design's phallic erectility aggression and desire meet. The phallus is a reactive, a defensive construct against the threat of castration. As the penetration of the hijacked jets into the Twin Towers on September 11 symbolically castrated them, the lost phallus, which was in fact never present, is doubly recreated with the erection of a taller tower on Ground Zero.

Works Cited

Allison, Rebecca. "9/11 Wicked but a Work of Art Says Damien Hirst." *The Guardian*. September 11, 2002. June 14, 2005 <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,, 790058,00.html>.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulations*. Trans. P. Foss, P. Patton, and P. Beitchman. New York: Semiotext(e), 1983.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. 217-251.

Boxer, Sarah. "EYEWITNESSES; One Camera, Then Thousands, Indelibly Etching a Day of Loss." *The New York Times*. September 11, 2002. June 14, 2005 <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0dEED71F3EF932A2575AC0A9649C8B63>.

CNN. Official Website. 21 February 2004 <http:www.cnnstudentnews.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0207/16/wbr.00.html>.

De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.

Forgey, Benjamin. "Buildings that Stood Tall as Symbols of Strength." 4 June 2003 <http:// www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wpdyn?pagename=article&node=&content ld=A212>.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." In *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. Ed. Neil Leach. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 348-356.

Freud, Sigmund. "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality." 1905. *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*. The Pelican Freud Library Vol. 7. Trans. James Strachey. Gen. Ed. Angela Richards. New York: Penguin Books, 1977. 33-170.

---. "Fetishism." 1927. Trans. Joan Rivière. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Gen. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. 952-956.

Glanz, James and Eric Lipton. *City in the Sky: The Rise and Fall of the World Trade Center*. New York: Times Books Henry Holt and Company, 2003.

Goldberger, Paul. *Up from Zero: Politics, Architecture, and the Rebuilding of New York*. New York: Random House, 2005.

Huxtable, Ada Louis. "Don't Blame the Architects: The WTC Designs Are Visionary, but Process Is Business as Usual." *The Wall Street Journal*. January 7, 2003, 25 October 2005 <http://www.online.wsj.com>.

Kracauer, Siegfried. "On Employment Agencies: The Construction of a Space." Trans. David Frisby. *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. Ed. Neil Leach. London: Routledge, 1997. 59-64.

Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function." 1949. *Écrits: A Selection*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, 2004. 1-9.

Leach, Neil. Ed. "Introduction." *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Levi-Strauss, David. *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics*. New York: Aperture, 2003.

Libeskind, Daniel. *Breaking Ground*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2004.

---. Official Web Site. "World Trade Center Design Study." 2003. 2 June 2004 <http:// www. daniel-libeskind.com/press/index.html>.

---. Official Web Site. "News." 15 October 2007 <http://www.daniel-libeskind.com/no_ cache/ news/news-single-view/period/1192470257///browse/1/article/240/projects/>.

---."Design Plan for Freedom Tower." 21 February 2004 <www.renewnyc.org/plan_des_ dev/wtc-site/new_design_plans/freedom_tower_dec_19. asp>.

LMDC. Lower Manhattan Development Corporation Official Website. 21 February 2004 <http:www.renewnyc.org>.

---. Design Plans. 21 February 2004 <www.renewnyc.org/plan_des_dev/wtc-site/new_ design_ plans/freedom_tower_dec_19 .asp>.

---. A Vision for Lower Manhattan. 21 February 2004 <www.renewnyc.org/Content/*AvisionforLower* Manhattan.pdf>

Mumford, Lewis. *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization.* New York: Norton, 1934.

Reuters. "Twin Towers' collapse 'most memorable TV moment.'" October 17, 2007 <http://uk/reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idUKL 1553331120071015>.

Ross, Andrew. "The Odor of Publicity." *After the World Trade Center: Rethinking New York City*. Eds. Michael Sorkin and Sharon Zukin. New York: Routledge, 2002. 121-130.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 45-66

Do Tread on My Dreams: The Perception of Cityscape in Science Fiction Films

Cem Kılıçarslan

What are the dangers of the forest and the prairie
compared with the daily shocks and conflicts of civilization?

Charles Baudelaire

The city, the urban landscape with its idiosyncratic skyline and bird's eye presentations, has been one of the most dominant and recurring images of the cinematic representations of the science fiction genre. This preoccupation with the city and its visual depictions is hardly coincidental. An analysis of science fiction films with regards to their utilization of the cityscape and individual works of architecture reveals that there is a correlation between the meaning created by the science fiction film and the works of architecture shown on the screen. The architectural elements used in science fiction films are primarily compelling representatives of the modernist architecture and urban planning. Therefore, they make a visual commentary on the meaning created by the film in parallel with the ideology and mentality of the modernist thinking. Nevertheless, a survey of prominent examples of the science fiction genre reveals that these films make use of modernist architecture and urban planning to depict an inhuman, oppressive and totalitarian world; a view remarkably in contradiction with the basic tenets of the modernist ideal.

That cinema and architecture borrow from and are influenced by each other since the emergence of cinema is by no means a novel idea. As a matter of fact, there appears to be a close affinity between the art of cinema in general (and science fiction genre in particular) and architecture (and urban design in particular). In this symbiosis, architecture seems to have been influential in the set design in filmmaking and creating cityscapes, i.e. urban space where the action takes place (Albrecht i-vii), whereas films have given architecture inspiration, a test-bed and a playing ground where abstract concepts can be

visualized in spatial forms.[1] In his Introduction to *Architecture and Film*, Mark Lamster declares, "the architect and the filmmaker have much in common" (1). Stating that the members of both professions have similar work environments and methods, Lamster goes on to argue that filmmakers "insert architecture into their films," and thus use their camera to make statements about the built or unbuilt environment. On the other hand, architects, other than merely creating sets to be used in films, are profoundly influenced by films in the way they "envision their work and the way the public consumes architecture" (2). Lamster provides an illustrative definition of the cinematic architecture:

> Today, we often hear of architecture that is "cinematic"—that is, theatrical in effect and thematic in nature; the vast hotels of Las Vegas, the new Times Square in New York . . . are primary examples. . . . [Also, a] number of avant-garde practitioners have sought more abstract inspiration from the medium of films, finding in its use of montage, sequential progression, and spatial composition devices applicable to their own work. (2)

Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa adds, "Films are studied [by the architects] for the purpose of discovering a more subtle and responsive architecture" (i) and "even artistically more serious architecture today often seeks its inspiration and visual strategy from the language of movies" (ii).[2] As both cinema and architecture make use of light, movement and space as the basic elements of such language, architects do study and learn how the cinematic medium utilizes light in space to communicate mood, atmosphere and finally meaning in the film (Knox 2). Giuliana Bruno goes further and states that architecture, the design of space, generates a "cinematic narrative" and the city taking shape under the influence of cinema becomes what he calls "Cine City" (5), a place which is designed in accordance with the perception through the ocular of the film camera. All kinds of movements in and observation of such

---

[1] Cinema, within this context, serves to "exercise the imagined" (Uluoğlu et al. 2), i.e. visualizing the architectural design.

[2] Pallasmaa states that the cinematographer knows more about the application of light in spatial mediums and of optics than the architect. For further information see Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema.* Helsinki: Building Information Ltd, 2001. 155.

a city, especially the walking and sightseeing of the individual on the streets[3] and panoramic or bird's eye visions from a high point[4] thus acquire a cinematic quality: The walker's movement is that of the camera and the watcher's vision is what is seen through the ocular. Similarly, individual works of architecture, such as the buildings and interior designs, do have a cinematic quality, i.e. their experience by the eye and the movement within them is a sequential experience in space (Knox 2). The artistic and political implications of these statements are manifold and elaborately discussed by various scholars and critics. At this point it is crucial to refer to Walter Benjamin, in whose "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" the philosophical unification of the both arts and extrapolations on the issue of modernity can be found.

In his seminal work, Benjamin analyses the prospects of the new cinematic medium and defines the relationship between cinema and the modern city in a period when cinema was increasingly used by oppressive social and political forces, i.e. fascism. Touching upon the unrealized liberating possibilities of the medium, Benjamin purports that certain cinematic techniques, such as time-lapse, close-up and slow-motion, have caused a complete alteration in the

---

[3] At this point it is not possible to overlook the character of *the flaneur*, the urban wanderer of the modernist city as defined by Walter Benjamin. The flaneur, a figure of modernity, was the literal walker of the streets, the man inhaling the experience of the modern city. Benjamin found the ultimate example of the flaneur in the identity of poet Baudelaire, whose walks in the labyrinthine streets of Paris have become what Benjamin calls searches for "profane illuminations." For further elaboration on the issue, see Walter Benjamin's "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire."

[4] The political significance of an individual's acts in the city is most notably dealt by Michel de Certeau in his "Walking in the City." As de Certeau focuses on the political side of man's daily activities, he focuses on the act of walking as a form of expression on the side of the individual against institutions. For him, the individual may react to the restrictions of the system he lives in merely by walking. De Certeau's reliance on the individual as the primary agent who shapes the city or causes a change has interesting parallelisms with (albeit with significant differences from) the flaneur. While de Certeau's individual writes the text of the city, the flaneur is a wanderer, who takes more than he gives. The all-seeing power of the individual who watches the city from a high place, the second observation by de Certeau, is more compatible with and relevant to the imagery used in science fiction films. A similar rhetoric is presented by Roland Barthes and his observation of Paris from the top of the Eiffel Tower. For further information, see Roland Barthes. *Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies.* New York: Noonday Press, 1979.

way man sees and understands outer reality.[5] The introduction of this novel perception, according to Benjamin, is a more democratic mode of perception, one that will save man from the suffocation of the modern city life (236).

Benjamin concludes that "modernity cannot be conceived outside the context of the city, which provided an arena for the circulation of bodies and goods, the exchange of glances, and the exercise of consumerism" (Schwartz 30).[6] In other words, the summary of modern life was the imagery of rapid change and the rapid change of images. It is an amalgamation of the modern city and the cinema to such an extent that both can be interpreted as the same phenomenon taking place in different mediums. The image captured by the camera is the manifestation of the disorientation inherent in modern experience as observed in the city. As Anna Clayton states,

> [T]he city has become such an aesthetic focus for cinema. Like the cinema, the modern city is an iconographic form of the twentieth century and shares many of cinema's obsessions with speed, light and movement: the cinema and the city are kindred expressions of modern humanity. (57)

Benjamin's rhetorical question is a declaration of the unification of cinema and architecture within the concept of modernity: "Couldn't an exciting film be made from the map of Paris? . . . From the compression of a centuries-long movement of streets, boulevards, arcades, and squares into the space of half an hour?" (qtd. in Schwartz 30).[7] The answer is an almost anatomical unification

---

[5] In "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," Benjamin remarks;

> Thus technology has subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training. There came a day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by the film. In a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle. That which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception in the film. (175)

[6] It must here be noted that Benjamin owes a great deal of this observation to Georg Simmel's *Metropolis and Modern Life*, where Simmel's observation of the modern city; "the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions" (410) is also very much parallel to his own definition of cinema's basic qualities that has caused a change in the perception of the modern man.

[7] For more on this point, see Hansen, Miriam B. "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology,'" *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987): 179–224 and "Benjamin and Cinema: Not a One-Way Street," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 25, No. 2, (Winter, 1999), 306-343.

and fusion, i.e. the blending of the architectural element—both the building and the city—with the image constructed through the lens of the motion picture camera. It is at this point that the Swiss architect Le Corbusier's[8] application of the "architectural promenade" becomes quite illustrative.

Remembered as the most prominent representative of the modernist architecture and urban design, Le Corbusier made use of "cinematic juxtaposition of images in architecture as the changing views obtained by movement through space over time" (Knox 2). His cinematic perception of the architectural design—the architectural promenade—and the whole urban area are most visible in his projects of concrete and plastered unit masonry design Villa Savoye and Paris-based urban design and conversion projects *Ville Contemporaine* (The Contemporary City), and *La Cite Radieuse* (The Radiant City). As the modernist architectural theorist Siegfried Gideon concluded in 1928, looking at works by Le Corbusier, 'Still photography does not capture them clearly. One would have to accompany the eye as it moves: only film can make the new architecture intelligible" (qtd. in Penz 2). It is this cinematic quality of the finished architectural work and the city itself which resulted in science fiction's interest in the depiction of these elements in films. A synopsis of Le Corbusier's "cinematic architectural modernist philosophy" and ideals reveals the paradoxical but striking parallelism between this progressive mode of architecture/urban planning and science fiction films' use of such works to define oppressive social systems.

Emerging out of a demand for a corrective intervention, Le Corbusier's architectural philosophy was mainly based on a certain progressive vision and call for revolution.[9] Architectural modernism, for Le Corbusier and many others, was more a social project than an aesthetic one (Scruton 70). It considered urban

---

[8] Le Corbusier is the pseudonym for the Swiss-born Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-Gris (October 6, 1887-August 27, 1965).

[9] As Le Corbusier concluded,

> The history of Architecture unfolds itself slowly across the centuries as a modification of structure and ornament, but in the last fifty years steel and concrete have brought new conquests, which are the index of a greater capacity for construction, and of an architecture in which the old codes have been overturned. (1986: 267)

and architectural design as a means to construct a new space for its vision of the modern society[10]. Therefore, the modernist society and the city, from the very beginning, were parts of a social utopia with a certain Jacobin progressivism (Bowman 72). Le Corbusier's vision was a transformative and messianic mission and he worked on the existing and established cities to transform and liberate them, sometimes through demolition (Jencks 38).

Nevertheless, Le Corbusier was acting in accordance with the revolutionary's dilemma; a belief in a complete change for the good of the man and the society and the necessity to have the authority to be the agent of this change. While escaping from the authority of the past, Le Corbusier's architecture brought its own mechanisms of censure and imposition. The members of an elite class were to challenge the norms and shape urban space as their individual creative faculties directed.[11] The realization of such an ideology was to be achieved on both the greater scale, i.e. urban design, and the smaller scale, i.e. interior design and architecture.[12]

---

[10] Jane Jacobs in her *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* provides a detailed outlook of a city concept as defined by Le Corbusier:

> Le Corbusier was planning not only a physical environment. He was planning for a social Utopia too. Le Corbusier's Utopia was a condition of what he called maximum individual liberty by which he seems to have meant not liberty to do anything much, but liberty from ordinary responsibility. In his Radiant City nobody, presumably, was going to have to be his brother's keeper any more. Nobody was going to have to struggle with plans of his own. Nobody was going to be tied down. (2-3)

[11] Charles Jencks, at this point argues that modernist architecture is "suicidal." He argues, "[The modernist] can't face the destruction inherent in development, the deracination and cultural annihilation which Marx and Nietzsche expose. . ." (38). Jencks names Le Corbusier's "constant invocation to 'start again from zero,'" together with Roland Barthes' "anti-bourgeois zero-style" two contributing factors for the appearance of later simplistic and puristic modernist style (38).

[12] Of course, not all modernism was this totalitarian in attitude and there were many positive examples as well. For instance, Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre project and Fallingwater house were good and well-known examples of a modernist's trial to create residences that are in harmony with nature. Nevertheless, as architect Roger Scruton, among many others, maintains, when it came to urban design and city planning, it was Le Corbusier's ideas that were very dominant and to a certain extent it was his mentality that summarizes the project modernity's approach towards creating cityscapes best (73).

The primary characteristics of this vision were openness, utility and function, spaciousness and well-lightedness. In other words, the modernist architecture, from the very beginning, was trying to create what a later modernist Ernest Hemingway would title one of his stories, *a clean, well-lighted place;* an environment in which light and space provides a sense of relief for the modern man. The modern city was going to be a hygienic dwelling place of the classless and egalitarian society. Everything in the city was to have a function as the city was a huge machine itself (Jencks 37). At the center of the city-complex was a huge transportation center at the top of which stood an airport.[13] Le Corbusier put transportation at the core of the living complex; the multi layered transportation center was a hub to trains, highways and stations; a concept which is heavily employed by the futuristic science fiction films. There was a heavy reliance on the usage of individual cars as the primary means of transportation, a clear indicator of Le Corbusier's vision that an affluent society was based on private car ownership. The circulation of population and cars required an efficient and utilitarian traffic planning. Since he favored the car as the standard mode of transportation in the age of mechanization, everything in his city was organized so as to facilitate car traffic, which meant wide and strait streets dedicated to car traffic with no junctions.

Le Corbusier presents a vivid narration of his concept of the city. His vision follows the camera's movement, starting from an establishing shot of the whole city and descending onto the street level, a typical cinematographic technique very frequently employed by the science fiction films to establish the setting of the film:

> Suppose we are entering the city by way of the Great Park. . . . Our fast car takes the special elevated motor track between the majestic skyscrapers: as we approach nearer, there is seen the repetition against the sky of the twenty-four skyscrapers; to our left and right on the outskirts of each particular area are the municipal and administrative buildings; and enclosing the space are the museums and university buildings. The whole city is a Park. (29)

---

[13] Le Corbusier had a passion for the image of flying machines in the skies of the city he designs, as can be seen in his book *Aircraft* where he professed "The airplane…indicts the city," and added, "[it] embodies the purest expression of the human scale and miraculous exploitation of material" (18).

The offices were to be located at places which are convenient, i.e. central, well-lit spaces with great panorama. His *La Cite Radieuse* concept was similarly based on his modernist principles based on "reason" with a penchant for pure geometry to overlay a rationalized system for living on urban citizens (Hall 222-225). He believed that geometric forms were the way to civilize the mob-city of Paris and the modernist's geometric forms were thus bringing order and sanity to the disorder and randomness and chaos. He wanted a clear and functional city composed of straight lines, a city which is more a machine than a part of nature.[14] In Le Corbusier's vision, the city runs in a perfect choreography and hierarchy. In a very atavistic and authoritarian manner, he demanded that the city be organized on the basis of allotment. That is, business and offices were to be in the city center, factories at the outskirts, residential areas shaped like huge parks in between. The stratified city-either vertically in the shape of layers or horizontally within a grid pattern-was fundamental to Le Corbusier's perception. Unplanned and random foliage cannot be tolerated as it disturbs the balance of the geometric design. As the developments in material, i.e. glass, concrete and steel, led to the ability to build higher at the same time, the skyscraper emerged as the epitome of the new society (Kaes 147). The modernist utopia was to be composed of skyscrapers standing shoulder to shoulder.

There have been various explanations offered for the so-called failure of the Le Corbusier-style modernist project in the field of architecture and urban design (Clayton 58). The criticism surfaced only in the 1960s and various architects for the first time accepted that modernist architecture was too sterile, too elitist and too universal, i.e., it lacked local elements that would enrich it and give a better sense of individualism (Jencks 35-39, Scruton 77). Ironically, in its attempt to flee from the pretensions of the earlier styles, approaches and architectural concepts, modernist architecture created a mannerist style.

Filmmakers of the early twentieth century were direct witnesses to the emergence of the Le Corbusier style cityscapes and transformation of public

[14] "Paris, Rome, and Stamboul," Le Corbusier wrote, are "based upon the Pack-Donkey's Way," which meant they were of curvilinear type. He added,

> Man walks in a straight line because he has a goal and knows where he is going. . . . The pack-donkey meanders along, meditates a little in his scatter-brained and distracted fashion, he zigzags in order to avoid the larger stones, or to ease the climb, or to gain a little shade; he takes the line of least resistance. . . . The Pack-Donkey's Way is responsible for the plan of every continental city; including Paris, unfortunately. (1996: 44)

places. Therefore, science fiction films did not use the works of modernist architecture as a part of their meaning creation processes[15] only to show the audience nice looking places for aesthetic reasons. The works of modernist architecture have been used to give a sense of coldness, sterility and alienation. The city is depicted as a place of emptiness, as symbolized by the vast open spaces and geometric designs or a concrete jungle where invasion of the private space is commonplace. In other words, in science fiction films, the city evokes a sense of either agoraphobia or claustrophobia. Man is shown in clean looking and truly well-lighted environments but can hardly be called happy or in harmony with this environment.

In science fiction films, modernist architecture is shown as a part or the agent of the oppressive or dehumanizing surroundings. The cities have gloomy skylines dominated by high-rise buildings and most of the time a single skyscraper stands out among the others. This single skyscraper is generally associated with the authority and the ruling class/corporation/individual. In some of these science fiction films, this system eventually collapses, which is symbolized by the destruction of the skyline and/or appearance of sunlight, demolishing of the buildings and most notably a total destruction of the dominant skyscraper.[16]

There is a layered social system and class divisions are generally visible. The proletariat lives either on the ground level or underground, whereas the ruling class lives in high-rise buildings. The buildings are in conformity with the principles of modernist design with unpainted concrete slab look or glass facades. Geometric shapes stand out and define the contours of both the public places and the interiors, while white-colored ambient lighting supposedly gives a sense of clarity. Nevertheless, no individual is presented to be happy in this atmosphere and the central character is alienated not only from the whole cityscape but also from

---

[15] It must here be noted that Eric Mahleb's 2005 article "Architectural Representations of City in Science Fiction Cinema" presents a very comprehensive account of the case discussed in this article. While the basic argument and the case studies from the science fiction genre are different, Mahleb's article helped as a source of inspiration to form the science fiction part of this article.

[16] The image of the city when watched from a high-rise building has political as well as artistic connotations. Most notably, Michel de Certeau, in "Walking in the City," argued that such a God-like panoptic vision has voyeuristic qualities. This macro-perspective is strategic as it leads the observer to perceive, think and organize the components of the city from the point of view of a power holder, i.e. a shaping institution. The dominant skyscraper and the panoramic image of the city from the skyscraper in science fiction films are powerful images representing the power struggle taking place within the city.

his private living quarters. In other words, these films make use of the modernist style to show that such an architectural approach is more in conformity with an oppressive and authoritarian corporate system than a humanistic one.

The first and quite possibly the most striking example of the films to make a commentary on the new city designed in accordance with the modernist perspective was Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). Lang's portrayal of the Metropolis city was based on his first glimpse of lower Manhattan during his visit to New York City in 1924 and this imagery formed the basis of his bleak and machine dominated society of the future (Kaes 146-7). *Metropolis* was a warning for the audience of what a true metropolis would have been like if the modernist mentality had been permitted to realize its agenda (Claydon 63). Made in a modernist-expressionist style, *Metropolis* presented, beginning from the first seconds into the film, the city as a machine. Composed of various architectural elements such as skyscrapers, pyramidal Babelesque structures and even Gothic looking buildings, Metropolis was in total conformity with Le Corbusier's vision and projects. David Edelstein states that the similarity between Lang's and Le Corbusier's visions was not coincidental:

> Lang was no doubt cognizant of Le Corbusier's utopian "Radiant City," and his skyscrapers represent a Futurist ideal of transcendence via machine: The city's sharp angles and vertical thrust are arrogantly anti-Nature. The editing is meant to dislocate: Lang cuts between the towers and pleasure domes and fair-haired athletes in Greco-Roman poses and the Gothic Expressionist underworld, with its faceless bodies that move as no human bodies should.

In *Metropolis*, the society was composed of two strata; the workers who work and dwell in underground cities designed in and ornamented with geometric shapes and the wealthy who live on the surface in gigantic skyscrapers. Above the ground level lives a perfectly ordered clockwork city, which has a polished look. The skyscraper is the norm and the cars and pedestrian walkways are separated while aircraft fly freely among the buildings. Large geometric patterns and carefully placed lighting define the interiors. The city has an immense infrastructure which is a clear indicator of industrial and capitalistic progress. Nevertheless, typical of modernist style, it is cold, detached and alienating. The city, the machine keeping it alive, and the skyscrapers, hence the whole social system they represent, collapse in the final scene. Metropolis became the exemplary work for the future science fiction films and its imagery has been used throughout the genre.

Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* (1965) is a prominent example of science fiction films which use modernist style glass, concrete and light combinations and cold looking interiors to define an inhuman environment. The film takes place in a city controlled by a computer called Alpha 60, which "rules in the name of scientific logic" (Woolfolk, 192) and has banned all poetry, emotion and love. As Woolfolk observes, "Godard uses a variety of images centered on the theme of dehumanization or, more precisely, spiritual disenchantment and desecration to communicate the essential nature of [Alphaville]" (192-3). Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye-style cold interiors are the central elements of this imagery of dehumanization: the modernist "featureless functional architecture" reveal "the inner darkness of this world" (193) of hypocrisy, pretension and deception. The geometrically shaped buildings and interiors create a sense of claustrophobia and are presented more like cages that imprison man. There are no skyscrapers shown but the elite and the lower class distinction is obvious from the plot and dialogue. *Alphaville*, according to Chris Darke, interestingly does not depict a dystopian future; it presents a future "already taking place" (30). The modernist architecture of Paris of late 1950s and early 1960s was sufficient for Godard to present his vision without any special effects. Modernist architecture of *Alphaville* presents a city-image which is "almost entirely made up of architectural non-places [and] of empty transitional spaces" (33), that is, a city without identity. At the end, the protagonist presents Alpha 60 a riddle which leads it to self-destruct and enabling him to run away. The agent of oppression is destroyed but the city remains the same.

A similar theme of strict control of a city by an authoritarian body is presented in Michael Anderson's *Logan's Run* (1976), which makes extensive use of modernist architecture and cityscape as well. Set in 2077, the film depicts a city where the population, among many other things, is kept under strict control. The exterior shots at the beginning of the film reveal that there is a closed and controlled society within the dome structures which put a barrier between the interior of the dome-city and the nature outside. Reminiscent of Le Corbusier's philosophy, i.e. *Ville Contemporaine* and *Villa Savoye*, the buildings of the well-lighted futuristic city are made up of geometric construction blocks, such as pyramids, spheres and various prisms and transportation is the most visible element of the cityscape as can be observed in the dedicated carrier lines that convey bubble shaped transportation modules. High-rise buildings and geodesic constructions are representations of the modernist ardor of purist monumental constructions. The multi-storey interior of the dome-city is again flooded with artificial lights and has a polished appearance, almost to the degree of a worship of light and light-emitting objects. The disease-free and eternally

juvenile society is composed of young people who look happy. Yet, they are under strict demographic control and everyone reaching a certain age is terminated, i.e. killed, so as to maintain the population at a manageable level. Thus, behind the seemingly jovial and ecstatic daily life of the people lies a form of oppression which leaves no room for free will. Despite this conformist appearance, the system is based on unsound foundations. The resistance and rebellion of one individual causes the demise of the whole system at the end of the film, a scene depicting the fall of an inhuman civilization. The fall of the oppressive society and establishment of a seemingly more egalitarian and humane system happen only after a total annihilation of the modernist cityscape, architecture and sculpture takes place. The end suggests that the society will leave the enclosures and go into nature to establish a new and more humanistic system.

In a similar fashion, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) employed the modernist style of interior design to present the audience with a sense of coldness and hyper hygiene. In order to create an ethereal atmosphere, the interior of the space station Hilton is decorated with ultra modernist furniture and shiny white walls and glowing floor tiling. The individuals move over not in a natural looking hotel lobby but on a curvy space based on a x, y, and z planes of coordinates. The setting has no ornaments save for frames on the walls. At the Hilton lobby, characters sit on the modern style lava-red Djinn chairs. The plain-looking scene is designed to give the audience a sense of numbness: individuals with emotionless faces and speech, sitting in an environment completely inhuman and insipid.

The same glowing floor tiling is also used in the final scene in a very ambiguous manner. The indecipherable vision of the space-hotel room, decorated in kitsch Renaissance style, is actually set against a modernist background with the same cold white walls and floor. Thus, the bland purist modernist background and the objects of classical aesthetic conception are offered in an inharmonious and blank container. The homogenous ambient light does not seem to be emanating from an identifiable source. Thus, the allegedly refreshing modernist well-lighted atmosphere does not clarify human vision, nor does it create an environment where man can live in peace with his surroundings. Interestingly, there is no sound and dialogue in this long final scene, where Kubrick makes his own cinematographic contribution to the modernistic purism as advocated by Le Corbusier.

The audience is naturally encouraged to derive a meaning from the final scene but as no dialogue, sound or any meaningful action is offered, he is forced to focus on the environment, i.e. the space that surrounds the character.

Nevertheless, the artificiality of the atmosphere—as there are no windows—renders the whole scene much more unearthly and timeless. The scene depicting the interior space is in one sense nowhere and the time is never. However, this eternality, while serene, is far from being peaceful. In the renowned final scene, the protagonist is transformed into the star-child after he touches the mysterious and uncanny monolith –another modernist object of pure geometric shape without any detail. Nevertheless, the dualist nature of the set design creates a sense of remoteness instead of one of intimacy.

Le Corbusier's principle of land allotment, social stratification and interior design are also prominent elements in *Soylent Green* (1973) by Richard Fleischer. The film depicts a dystopian New York of 2022, where overcrowding and scarcity of food are the foremost concerns. New York, the established symbol of modernist architecture and lifestyle, has become a divided city of chaos where the poor and the rich residential areas are separated by empty canals crossing the city. While environmental degradation is the central issue of the film, the portrayal of the living quarters of people is a noteworthy part of the narration. The rich areas are composed of either high-rise tenements or detached garden houses, while members of the working class, such as the police officer protagonist, have to share cramped one-room apartments. The streets, where supposedly the modern man was to stroll and enjoy the city, have become arenas of riot and police action. The interior of the rich apartments are composed of cold white walls and with glass facades and illuminated by carefully placed light fixtures which give the rooms a purportedly warm atmosphere. The plot revolves around the true nature of the staple food of the society, the soylent green. As the protagonist reveals, the soylent green is made from cadavers of people most of whom willingly chose to commit suicide at euthanasia clinics, a practice which is encouraged by the administrative system so as to provide people with food. The corrupt system and the aristocrats who keep it under control live in Le Corbusier-inspired urban design and modernist style buildings. At the end of the film, the truth is uncovered by the protagonist and while the collapse of the corrupt system is not observed, it can be inferred that it will soon disintegrate. Thus, *Soylent Green* presents an anti-thesis of modernist thinking or to put it more correctly, a disaster the modernist architecture has become and led to.

Among others, it is *Blade Runner* (1982) by Ridley Scott which best illustrates what a Le Corbusier-inspired future urban environment will look like. The opening of the film presents Los Angeles of 2019 as a complete dystopia; a city as the complete antithesis of the modernist ideal, where the cityscape is dominated by eerie looking skyscrapers standing erect in a toxic atmosphere. The opening

fly-by shows a Los Angeles modeled after Le Corbusier's philosophy; segmented zones and stratified transportation and flying machines above buildings. The dominant element in the cityscape is the ziggurat-shaped high-rise complex, which houses Tyrell Corporation. Similar to other science fiction films, the high-rise or the skyscraper is the symbol of the power or the ruling class that dominates the means of production, i.e. the manufacturing of replicants. Nevertheless, *Blade Runner* makes the commentary that most of the upper class has already migrated to "off-world colonies" and the world cities are overtaken by the middle class and the proletariat. In other words, the modern city per se, or as a project of modernity has been abandoned. Los Angeles has become the victim of an Asian invasion and waste-laden streets have been converted into permanent open bazaars where Japanese is the standard language and exotic animals are bought and sold. The inflow of immigrants and the flux of urban space have brought about a version of architecture and city where the issue of harmony and peace can no longer be questioned.

The inspiration from Lang's *Metropolis* is obvious. Like Lang, Scott prefers to use a ziggurat, i.e. a pyramidal structure to visualize the corporate ruling class and social stratification.[17] Nevertheless, the dark and noxious atmosphere of the Los Angeles of the future is the ultimate nightmare or cul-de-sac of the modernist thinking and creativity. *Blade Runner*, thus, presents a city where modernist authority has gone out of control and created an urban atmosphere of lunacy and incomprehensibility. The project modernity, while aiming at creating a union with the whole world, has resulted in a complete disintegration and degeneration in the cosmos of *Blade Runner*. The modernist progressivism, in an ironical manner, produced a state of inertia where, despite its original mission, constant activity and advancement are no longer possible. As director Ridley Scott confessed, "We're in a city which is in a state of overkill, of snarled up energy, where you can no longer remove a building because it costs far more than constructing one in place" (Kennedy). Blade Runner marks the end of the modernist dream as it presents the audience the ultimate stasis in the shape of commotion.

Blade Runner presents the world through the perspective of a white male protagonist, Deckard, who finds himself alienated from his environment. Deckard looks at his environment as a stranger and cannot communicate with the inhabitants of the city. In other words, the man in this city can no longer interact with and comprehend his surroundings. Furthermore, Deckard is

[17] As David Clements observes, "The creators of the *Blade Runner* cityscape . . . openly acknowledged their heavy debt to Lang's vision."

troubled and challenged by the notion that his existence as a normal human being is at stake due to his affair with replicants. The city, apart from being inhumane itself, deprives man of his own identity. Despite the fact that the owner of the Tyrell Corp. is killed by the replicants, at the end of the film, the system does not collapse and the dystopia continues to exist.

The chaos of urban life as an indispensable part of modern city is the dominant element in *Johnny Mnemonic* (1995) by Robert Longo. The streets of Beijing, Newark and other cities of the future are places of anarchy and disease, drug use, an epidemic caused by drugs, and gang warfare. The city has become a malevolent place where a single skyscraper is the symbol of power and corruption again. The skyscraper in the film belongs to a pharmaceutical company which holds from the public a very important medical discovery; a new drug that could eradicate the epidemic, but the formula is not revealed for financial reasons. Almost every single character in the film is an outlaw or outcast and the city is a quintessential symbol of decadence with its trash covered streets. Naturally, in the final scene, the skyscraper is destroyed by the resistance movement and the said drug becomes public property. The leaders of the resistance and the protagonist watch the destruction of the corrupt corporate skyscraper as if the destruction is the ultimate solution to the corruption of the system. It is possible to state that the film is another manifestation that the modernist epoch, both as a philosophy and design movement, is closed. In another sense, the modernist approach towards architectural and urban design has caused the end of human cities and created a hubbub of human societies which are no longer possible to "correct and manipulate."

A different sort of criticism of a perfectly functioning future city was presented in *Gattaca* (1997) by Andrew Niccol. The film takes place in the near future where the society is controlled on the basis of genetic predilection to future career and social status. The film uses modernist architecture to augment its criticism of a concept of social hegemony. The issue of social control and class society is visualized in the form of buildings, workspaces and various elements of interior design. The hypocrisy of this social layering and classification is shown in parallel with modernist, cold and inhumane looking architecture. The buildings are made of crisp colorless concrete panels. The vast openings and squares are shown more than once but instead of providing the characters with a sense of spaciousness, peace and solitude, these well-lighted vistas belittle human beings and are shown as the arenas where the artifacts reminding the oppressive system haunt the individuals. The interiors resemble labyrinths in which the characters are confronted by ever-present social conditioning and

boundaries of work discipline. Artificially lit workspaces are clear indicators of monotony and an ideology based on over-standardization and dehumanizing professional success. Geometric shaped objects, a la *Metropolis*, adorn the *Gattaca* world, which is based on a worship of human genius produced by eugenics. Nevertheless, while the central character achieves his aim of going to space by deceiving the Gattaca corporate-institution, this success is ambiguous as the character's flight is only temporary and the system withstands individual exceptions. Hence, the modernist architecture symbolizes a system which is too strong and well-rooted to be destroyed by a simple destruction of a building or object.

Le Corbusier's vision of an ever-changing city which is an alienating force is best exemplified in the director Alex Proyas' *Dark City* (1998). In the film, the whole cityscape is designed to be an alien artifact rather than urban space created by man. In this city, people lead lives unconscious of the truth that the city they live in is constructed by an alien race, which every night at twelve o'clock reshapes the city according to their needs. As one of the aliens manifests later into the movie, "We build the city based on peoples' memories of different cities in different times." Thus, the city is the product of an urban planning process, i.e. a form of social control. The city is the means of deception the aliens use to control humans and the constantly changing city is what keeps humans alive. With its iconography of reason-worshipping as symbolized by the overlooking human head, the imagery of the living quarters of the aliens is in conformity with the modernist style squares as envisaged by early modernists and it does bear a striking resemblance to the imagery of *Metropolis*. Le Corbusier's influence is obvious in the metamorphosing cityscape. As he declared in 1947, "New York is not a completed city. It is a city in the process of becoming," one of the characteristics of the modern metropolis is its being in a constant state of the transformation and flux. The modern city, Le Corbusier professed, is a city of transformation carried out by the all-powerful architect. Nevertheless, in the film the metamorphosing city is what keeps its residents as prisoners and prevents their seeing the truth. At the final scene, the protagonist causes the destruction of the city and the dream-life led by the people. Following the destruction of the alien cityscape and aliens themselves, the city for the first time sees the sun, the symbol of liberty and truth.

A perfectly functioning social engineering system in a machine-like city as envisioned by Le Corbusier modernism sees it necessary that, to achieve such a balance and equality, its inhabitants should not have any emotions that make them differ from each other, as in the case of Kurt Wimmer's *Equilibrium*

(2002). The film uses the cityscape as a symbol of the ruthless and emotionless system of government of a city-state where everybody is forced to take a daily drug which eliminates human emotions. Thanks to this drug, the society has allegedly achieved a state of equilibrium, which is a concept championed by the modernists themselves (Milovanovic). As there are no emotions, there are no books, music, art and love. People are indoctrinated daily so that the system can maintain its credibility and survive. Drawing heavily from Orwell's *1984*, the Big Brother-like never-seen ruler of the city turns out to be an artificial impersonator and the system turns out to be based on the issue of deception of people for the benefit of an elite class that uses force to maintain the status quo. While borrowing heavily from Weimar architecture and Nazi iconography, the architectural planning and design of this modern city is also very much like *The Radiant City* by Le Corbusier with spacious public places and wide streets. The vast public squares are places where ideological indoctrination sessions and martial-arts based meditations are carried out. All the objects, icons and buildings denote power.

The colossal buildings disparage the individual identity and the protagonist feels he is reduced to his basic function, i.e. law enforcement officer responsible for the maintenance of the status quo. The interiors are again decorated with modernist furniture and lighting arrangements which are shown in a scene which shows the detachment and emotionless relationship between a father and his son. Carefully placed fixtures cast light on an otherwise empty hall. Workspaces, decorated with cold steel furniture give the audience a feeling of coldness and uniformity where individual differences are not permitted. Towards the final scene, the protagonist who has quitted taking his drug for some time, begins to feel human emotions, sees the sun and learns the truth about his true nature. The skyscraper, which symbolizes the oppression and the cityscape which brings to mind the modernist urban projects with its elevated transportation lines and segmented zones, are both destroyed in the final scene of the film.

How a city that is designed like a beautiful park can also hide a system based on class struggle and lack of free-will is the central theme of *I, Robot* (2004) by Alex Proyas The film depicts a city composed of closely located skyscrapers and other similar high-rise structures located along a central avenue-park. The incredibly tall US Robotics skyscraper has a glass-steel slick modernist body but a gothic or medieval looking top section which hosts the brain team of the society which is based on robot labor. The robots are presented as the proletariat, and one of them is in search of his individual identity and free-will and in the sub-

layers of the city a war takes place for the assurance of man's freedom against a devilish robot uprising. The interiors are steel-lined and walls are made of glass and passageways are lit with fluorescent light. Transportation takes place on underground motorways which are designed in geometric shapes. While the system is destroyed at the end, the skyscraper stands erect but is taken over by the protagonist, who watches the change taking place from the top of the skyscraper.

"The whole city as a park" approach is most notably depicted in the film *Aeon Flux* (2005) by Karyn Kusama. The story of the film revolves around a futuristic society which is living in an enclosed city called Bregna, which is separated from the surrounding nature by lofty walls on top of which run disinfectant sprayers. The whole world population is supposedly killed by a disease and the survivors live in the circular shaped city completely isolated from the nature outside. Reminding the closed and strictly controlled society of *Logan's Run*, the society and the city are champions of careful planning which leaves no room for chance and spontaneity. The city is amply supplied with parks, waterways and open spaces with carefully spaced foliage and other recreational areas. Nevertheless, despite its utopian outlook, the city-state is based on an authoritarian ideology of genetic reincarnation and population control. In complete conformity with the science fiction genre's usage of modernist architecture and city planning to symbolize totalitarian and dehumanizing social and political systems, the film makes frequent use of buildings, interiors and artifacts of modernist style. Buildings are made from concrete slabs, the interiors are decorated with glass, and geometric shapes are the dominant pattern in the design. While there are high-rise buildings that tower above the avenues and parks, the symbol of the authoritarian state is the flying egg-shaped library where the genetic heritage of the society is kept. The resistance movement and the protagonist who fight against the administration of Bregna cause a revolution and the object crashes into the wall that separates people from nature outside.

The films outlined herein suffice to reach the conclusion that the science fiction genre's affinity with modernist philosophy and modernist architecture and urban design in particular is intentional and resolute. Science fiction films make use of modernist architecture to associate it with the issues of social control, authoritarianism and oppression. Modernist architecture is presented as cold, dehumanizing and unnatural and beyond the visual aesthetics of the buildings and cityscape lie a cold and emotionless world which, in many cases, hosts individuals who yearn for a return to nature or the past. The future which modernist architecture symbolizes—or the very present it stands for—

is catastrophic and dystopian. Regardless of the form it assumes, the place is either claustrophobic or agoraphobic; a complete antithesis of the project modernity's dreams and aspirations. The failure of the project modernity, and thus of Le Corbusier, was the idea that the world could be shaped according to modernity's understanding of the concept of order. The issue of planning or bringing order to disorder, which Le Corbusier believed is what differentiates man from animal, is against nature. The demise of the oppressive system, the collapse of the skyscraper, the disintegration of the authoritarian computer/ mechanism as shown by science fiction films is the very failure of modernist vision envisioned by Le Corbusier. History has shown that the fall of modernist ideal was not followed by a restoration of a more humanitarian or environmentalist perspective for a long while, and, actually the fall was exacerbated, at least in the sense of the city, by a more chaotic social and cultural perception of human environment that has created further problems. Science fiction had made its first warning for such a future as early as the emergence of the modern city and it is likely that the solutions offered by the genre are yet to arrive.

Works Cited

2001: A *Space Odyssey*. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Perf. Keir Dullea, Gary Lockwood, William Sylvester and Daniel Richter. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968.

Æon Flux. Dir. Karyn Kusama. Perf. Charlize Theron, Martin Csokas, Jonny Lee Miller and Sophie Okonedo. Paramount Pictures, 2005.

Albrecht, Donald. *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture in the Movies.* New York: Harper&Row, 1986.

Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution. Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Perf. Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina and Akim Tamiroff. Athos Films, 1965.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. 217-251.

---. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire." *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. 155-200.

Berman, Marshall. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Blade Runner. Dir. Ridley Scott. Perf. Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young, Edward James Olmos and Daryl Hannah. The Ladd Company, 1982.

Bowman, James. "Heroism, Modernism, and the Utopian Impulse." *The New Atlantis.* 17.2. (2007): 70-78.

Bruno, Guliana. *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film.* New York: Verso, 2002.

de Certeau, Michel. "Walking in the City." Beyond the Body Proper: *Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*. Eds. Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2007. 249-258.

Chapman, Michelle. "Modernism and the City." 1996. *Fractal Myth*. 24 September 2007 <http://www.users.bigpond.com/schelle/essay/modern.html>.

Clayton, Anna. "CityScope: The Cinema and the City." *Global Built Environment Review* 5.1 (2005): 57-68.

Clements, David. "From Dystopia to Myopia: *Metropolis to Blade Runner." Culture Wars.* 6 December 2003. 11 September 2007 <http://www.culturewars.org.uk/ 2004-01/ dystopia.htm>.

Dark City. Dir Alex Proyas. Perf. Rufus Sewell, William Hurt, Kiefer Sutherland and Jennifer Connelly. Mystery Clock Cinema, 1998.

Darke, Chris. *Alphaville*. Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2005.

Edelstein David. "Radiant City: The Timely Return of Fritz Lang's Metropolis." *Slate*. 18 September 2002. 6 January 2008 <http://www.slate.com/?id=2071036>.

Equilibrium. Dir. Kurt Wimmer. Perf. Dominic Purcell, Christian Bale and Sean Bean. Dimension Films, 2002.

Gattaca. Dir. Andrew Niccol. Perf. Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman and Gore Vidal. Columbia Pictures Corporation, 1997.

Hall, Peter. *Cities of Tomorrow*. New York: Blackwell Publishers, 1990.

I, Robot. Dir. Alex Proyas. Perf. Will Smith, Bridget Moynahan and Alan Tudyk. Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation, 2004.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage, 1961.

Jencks, Charles. *The New Moderns.* London: Academy Editions, 1990.

Johnny Mnemonic. Dir. Robert Longo. Perf. Keanu Reeves, Dina Meyer and Ice-T. TriStar Pictures, 1995.

Kaes, Anton. "Metropolis: City, Cinema, Modernity." *Expressionist Utopias: Paradise, Metropolis, Architectural Fantasy*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1993. 146-165.

Kennedy, Harlan. "*Blade Runner*: Ridley Scott Interviewed." *Film Comment*. July-Aug 1982. 6 January 2008 <http://americancinemapapers.homestead.com/files/ bladerunner.htm>.

Knox, Matthew. *Rear Window Redux: Learning from the Architecture in Hitchcock's Film Using 3D Modeling and Animation*. ACM SIGGRAPH 2007 educators program. San Diego, California: ACM, 2007. 14. 6 January 2008 <http://portal. acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1282055#>.

Lamster, Mark. Ed. Architecture and Film. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000.

Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret). *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning.* 1929. *The Blackwell City Reader*. Eds. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson. New York: Blackwell, 1996. 20-29.

---. *Aircraft*. 1935. New York: Universe Books, 1988.

---. *Towards a New Architecture*. New York: Dover Publications, 1986.

---. "New York is not a Completed City." *When the Cathedrals were White: A Journey to the Country of Timid People*. Trans. Francis Edwin Hyslop. Detroit: Reynal & Hitchock, 1947. 44-46.

Logan's Run. Dir. Michael Anderson. Perf. Michael York, Richard Jordan, Jenny Agutter, Farah Fawcett and Peter Ustinov. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1976.

Mahleb, Eric. "Architectural Representations of City in Science Fiction Cinema." 30 June 2005, 30 December 2007 <http://www.yume.co.uk/architectural-representations-of-the-city-in-science-fiction-cinema>.

Metropolis. Dir. Fritz Lang. Perf. Alfred Abel, Gustav Fröhlich, Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Brigitte Helm. Universum Film (UFA), 1927.

Milovanovic, Dragan. "Dueling Paradigms: Modernist v. Postmodernist Thought." 1997, 7 January 2008 <http://www.soci.niu.edu/~critcrim/papers/drag-pomo. html>.

Mumford, Lewis. "What is a City?" *The Lewis Mumford Reader*. Ed. Donald L. Miller. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986. 104-107.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema*. Helsinki: Rakennustieto, 2001.

Penz, Francois. *Speech*. Evolution 2001 International Conference: SCALE—Screens, Audiences and Spaces. Odeon Cinema, Leeds, UK. 12 Oct. 2001.

Raban, Jonathan. *Soft City*. New York: Picador, 1974.

Rabinow, Paul. "Space, Knowledge and Power." *The Foucault Reader*. London: Penguin, 1996. 248-49.

Schwartz, Vanessa R. "Walter Benjamin for Historians." *The American Historical Review*. 106.5 (2001): 50 pars. 15 March 2008 <http://www.historycooperative. org/journals/ahr/106.5/ah0501001721.html>.

Scruton, Roger. "After Modernism." *City Journal.* 10.2 (2000).

< http://www.city-journal.org/html/10_2_urbanities-after_modernis.html>.

Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* Ed. Kurt Wolff. New York: Free Press, 1950. 409-424.

Soylent Green. Dir. Richard Fleischer. Perf. Charlton Heston, Leigh Taylor-Young, Chuck Connors and Joseph Cotten. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1973.

Toulmin, Stephen. *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.

Uluoğlu, Belkıs, Ayhan Enşici and Ali Vatansever, eds. *Design and Cinema: Form Follows Film*. London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006.

Woolfolk, Alan. "Disenchantment and Rebellion in *Alphaville*." *The Philosophy of Science Fiction Film*. Ed. Steven M. Sanders. Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 2008. 191-205.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 67-86

Gesture after the Gestural: Abstract Expressionism, American Visual Culture and Post-War Painting in Turkey

Lewis Johnson

It has been noted, in a number of different contexts, that post Second World War visual culture has been significantly shaped by practices, meanings and what has often been referred to as media—but might better be thought of as forms—that emerged in or were developed and effectively disseminated from the U.S. The continued significance of Hollywood cinema, for example, seems not to be underestimated in the assessment, by Bernard Steigler, that it is the cultural form of a certain type of narrative fiction film that has been effectively at work in the "'macdonaldization' of the world" (Steigler 100) pre- and post second World War. On the other hand, and concerning the later period more particularly, Jonathan Crary has articulated a strong case linking the television screen and the windscreen of the car in a co-operation that "reconciled visual experience with the velocities and discontinuities of the marketplace" (Crary 284). Both of these hypotheses, then, could be used to suggest the importance of "American" or U.S. visual culture, picking out certain developments in life in Turkey since the end of the Second World War: the first providing us, for example, with a context (along with that of European Art Cinema) for approaching the emergence of an actively different Turkish cinema particularly during the 1960s (Erdoğan 261), and the second, given the encouragement offered to road-building in Turkey by the U.S. since the 1950s, suggesting a mode of the promotion and—particularly since the de *facto* and then legalized deregulation of television broadcasting in Turkey in 1990 and 1994 (Çaplı and Tuncel 196-7)—the expansion of a vigorously capitalist culture.

However, in this paper, I shall be seeking to demonstrate that both of these hypotheses require a third in order both that the seductive power of American visual culture may be better understood *and* so as to be able to show how that the hold of that culture is incomplete and has been (and is likely to continue to be) effectively interrupted. Steigler's hypothesis concerning the Americanization of the world largely by means of a dominant Hollywood cinematic form needs to remain incomplete, imperfect as a hypothesis, in order to allow for the emergence of the counter practices and forms of Yeşilçam cinema. Further, Crary's clever argument depends on a sense of imaginary action as it is provoked by television

and guided towards an imagined fulfilment in the scanning of the landscape through the windscreen of the car, a fulfilment that remains imaginary even while the viewer-driver drives as if anywhere, enacting the go-as-if-anywhere deterritorializing movement required of labour under capitalism. The television viewer, at least before the advent of flat screen television, looks through the convexity of the screen, with what is shown at the edges there subtly stretched and then foreshortened. The car driver views through another "screen," as if actualizing and/or compensating for the distortions of what she or, more likely, he has seen, remembered and desired from the screen at home. Apparently insisting on the split between private dwelling and public space, public space is also that which is threatened by the excessiveness of the fantasies of the private, requiring, in Crary's Foucauldian argument, its policing as the space of the conformity of private desires to a public will.

Following Crary's hypothesis through, then, it is tempting to imagine that there is a trace of resistance to this modelling of public space by means of a "private" actor schooled in the vicissitudes of desire by means of the U.S. television drama in the dramas of road use in Turkey. Fifty people dead after traffic accidents in the recent Kurban Bayram, not to mention the hundred or so injured, as it was reported today, January 4, 2007, in the news. Public information campaigns of the late 1990s, seeking to warn road users of the undesirability of losing one's temper behind the wheel, may have "backfired" (this figure of speech, of course, already an account of something going wrong with a motorised vehicle) because, despite the warnings of the slogan accompanying the red and white figure, what that figure offered by way of an opportunity for identification was more desirable as model than the more judicious position of identification offered by the text. This account, which tends to repeat the notion that images are more powerful than words, would not, however, take account of this possibility of resistance to the modelling of space, the sadly heroic chancing of life on (or just a little way off) the highway.

What is at stake in these accounts of the influence of the U.S. or "American" visual culture? Returning to Steigler's grander sounding, but perhaps oddly more modest hypothesis, it may be understood that, in order for either of these theses to work as much as they promise to, the modelling of action needs to be further considered. It would not be news that there was resistance to such Americanization. Steigler himself is interested in what he calls the "cultural exception," indicating that he himself understands that this has by no means been complete or total. How, though, can we both accept that U.S. visual culture has been powerful to the point of influencing people and the things that they

do, while at the same time leaving room for an understanding of resistance? And what does such an understanding involve? How is the hypothesis that there is resistance not just to add up to the same as there being no effective resistance?

In this paper, I want to propose that the study of visual culture needs to attend to the series of forms of visual "objects" or texts in a way which gets inside Crary's imaginative and inventive hypothesis by treating the way in which passage across the framings of visual texts is guided. Such passage involves the ways in which a text attracts or distracts, holds or repels attention (as Crary's later work has itself explored), but also the ways in which it proffers models and modellings of what lies beyond its framings: movements, that is, that are both from outside to in and inside to out. What is particular to a visual text lies in an economy of these movements—by which I do not mean an "economizing," or some stable and essential character of the visual "object," but rather the modes of its conducting, including the relative jamming, of involvement in its effects, including its effects of meaning. The value of a consideration of the inter-relation of different kinds of visual "objects" or what I shall call (given that linguistic "objects" or texts, among others, also conduct, and jam, involvement across certain frames) texts is twofold: more pragmatically, the ways in which the frames of different types of visual texts are accounted for provides us with ways in which cultures can be understood to take place (culture, including visual culture, is not a repository of stable values; rather, it is the relations between texts and their "uses" of all kinds, from its norms of "comprehension" to its modes of uncomprehending apprehension); and, more essentially, and significantly for the question of the influence of the U.S. visual culture, how worlds are made, unmade or re-made according to the ways in which texts bring certain objects into being.

This paper aims to show, therefore, that what has been called, at least since the publication in 1952 of an influential critical essay by Harold Rosenberg, American action painting of the post Second World War era offers a case in which a certain norm of the comprehension of a series of visual texts and the generation of certain objects of emulation—in painting, but also beyond—can be retraced. Over fifty years, and many critical and revisionist accounts later, a renewed attempt to understand the influence of work by Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Clifford Still, Franz Kline or Mark Tobey, but also Robert Motherwell, Helen Frankenthaler and Lee Krasner, if not the emigré Armenian, Ashille Gorky, might at least promise something more than a reiteration if it could be shown that the ways in which such work has tended to be understood has relied on a notion that has guided

but restricted the generation of objects of emulation. This notion, as the place of Pollock at the head of this list of artists may suggest, is crucially that of gesture as action, or what has come to be called "the gestural." For it is my contention that the notion of action painting, and that of "the gestural" in painting, in the existentialist criticism of Rosenberg, but also in the revisions of the discourse of Peircian semiotics, if not speech act theory, of the last few decades, misconstrue the nature of gesture. In so doing, such accounts obscure and remain complicit with an understanding of art and culture that falsely segregates these two as objects, as if art were decidedly not culture, or, alternatively, and with an uncannily similar voluntaristic and subject-centring effect, as if it were nothing but culture; or, at least, and in effect, a sort of unknown space of culture.

The influence of American action painting, then, would be in providing a model of the artist-as-painter whose every painterly gesture was the very element of action, a will to paint as a will to act (no decadence here: this would be an essentially serious art). Uncannily, as I mentioned, and I shall show, critical revisions of this existentialist discourse have tended largely to expose the ways in which such a drive to authenticity is dogged by impossibility, re-reading the traces of artistic painterly activity as so many signs of interiority, seeking to impress itself in exteriority. The commonsense of this legacy of critical appropriation and re-appropriation would be—typically enough, where art is concerned—that it ought to be something that can be understood as valuable, but which fails to get its message across. As we shall see, this is something already anticipated in the criticism of Rosenberg, something which is read by him, in recuperative fashion, as an indication in favour of the purity of the intention-to-act, unwillingly caught up in the frames of art. This restitution of the meaning of painting, as action, becomes the model for the passage across the space of the image, a will-to-act in realization of itself, irrespective of what it may have picked up along the way.

My hypothesis, then, concerning this mode of the comprehension of post-war U.S. art, is that there is a disavowal of the play of the legibilities of gesture, and of the contexts of such legibility, in favour of its capitalized significance as will-to-act. Recent accounts of such painting in terms of the "performative," whilst allowing for a reconstruction of the ways in which the so-called neo-dadaist painting and/or sculpture of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, or the work of an Allan Kaprow, Jim Dine or Claes Oldenburg in art as performance and environment, if not Eva Hesse in sculptural work, as well as many later artists in and across such genres, may be understood to renegotiate the signs of the making of art in response to the emphatic model of abstract expressionist

painting, nevertheless tends to confirm abstract expressionism as model not simply for art, but also—depending on the detail of the use of this (sometimes) useful notion of the performative—for action, via the model of artistic activity. The question of what may be artistic about activity goes begging (Hopkins 34).

This paper also aims to show how, in the thinking of and in work by Turkish artist Ömer Uluç, and in comparison with other Turkish artists, how this model of artistic activity has been engaged: how a certain signature-effect of his use of paint emerges as a negotiation of the model of gestural art, which he would redirect by means of a re-engagement with a problematic of the classical tradition of the representing of living beings. This preoccupation with the classical vocation of painting, a vocation that may be said to antedate modern, if not postmodern divisions of Western and Eastern, has also been read as a rediscovery of regional and Eastern traditions of mark-making, in particular that of calligraphy. Uluç himself has consistently resisted this identification of his work. Commenting on Uluç's *Köpekli aile* [*Family with Pet*] of 1996 [figure 1], John Ash, in his catalogue essay, reiterates this point familiar from Uluç's discourse of the last thirty or so years:

> Uluç is right. It does not resemble calligraphy. It is more like watching subterrenean waters rise to the surface of a spring. (Ash 16-7)

The classical framing of painting is reiterated: what is painted resembles what lives or appears to live beyond the frame. The letter lacks spirit, and marks in painting are to be referred for preference to what would be closer to it: bodies, pre-eminently, as in the classical formulation of painting as *zoographia*, the painting of living beings, but where these are not, the traces of such bodies is to be preferred. Ash's comparison, here, perhaps offers us the spring as an event of nature, rather than as some site cultivated by man. It is not, however, unequivocal, even while the preferred reading is more likely the former. In resembling the appearance of the rising of subterrenean waters, Uluç's painting would report on the subjective effects of phenomena, rather than on any more objective object. Uluç has many times commented on an interest in boundaries between the abstract and figurative, perhaps most revealingly in an interview in 1986 when referring to the ". . . the narrow passage of the abstract and the figurative [that] had to do with the place I live in and its history" (Henric 1989). And it is not misleading, I believe, to link an experience of gesture in Uluç's work with a communication of an existence in space that is marked by a complex of experiences of İstanbul, involving phenomena of the spaces of interiors, the sea, its changing lights, if also (as in the *Submarine* and *Tanker* series of 1984 and

1985) its socio-political significance, as well as Byzantine and Ottoman visual culture, including its uses of the Baroque.

This last point is suggested by Sezer Tansuğ, but in a way that avoids thinking of this as a citation of the appearances of (among others) an Ottoman İstanbul Baroque. The desire to claim for Uluç a place in a lineage of important modern artists tends to dictate the formulations of this critical account, as the title of Tansuğ's essay, "A Logic of Progress" may be understood to indicate. But what has not been accepted, in the 1980s or 1990s criticism of Uluç's work, is the role of the undecidablity of citation as a way of understanding what Uluç's signature-effect of looped and crossed figurings of paint brings with it by way of a series of contexts of visual experience, including if not calligraphy itself also, then what I shall call a more generic "calligraphic," as part of a way of keeping open the meaning and value of the spaces of painting as something other than the space of evidence of a terminal gesture. Neither simply major nor minor, neither tragic nor comic, Uluç's work has been significantly guided by a necessary contestation of the meaning-value of the gestural. His resistance to an accounting of his work in relation to calligraphy is born of an understandable resistance to the localizing of his work in relation to exclusively regional visual traditions, a trope of the nativism of a neo-colonialist and neo-orientalist accounting for places as exemplifying or lacking the signs of progress. Tansuğ's critical essay is, fairly clearly, vitiated by this, and by a host of disavowals of the complexities of traditions (for Tansuğ, painting in Turkey, including calligraphy and embroidery [?], has "never had any link with theoretical notions, only with formal concerns,)" if also of an incoherence in the hierarchies of conceptualizations of experience in Western culture (the "historical conditions" that made possible the comprehension of painting *"only in terms of painting itself"* [his italics] is "based upon the essence of contemporary observation which is also built on historical consciousness" (Tansuğ 23).

The opposition between the contemporary and the historical sustains the would-be modernism of Tansuğ's account of Uluç's work, failing to register the way in which the question of gesture in art brings with it not only a problematic of the simulacral (in relation to which the issue of calligraphy and what I termed the "calligraphic" may, in part, by situated), but also of the ways in which the contemporary may precisely be understood as opening onto an unknown history. Rather than the architectonics of modernist historiography, in which tradition provides the foundation for a critical reassessment of a breaking away via what is essential in particular arts, like painting, or in art in general (the dominant object of promotion in and as discourses of contemporary art), the

recovery of the contemporary as the passage of gesture across the frame, with its traces, difficult to decipher though they may be, of what lies beyond, not least because of the generation of effects of encounter in the meeting, for example, of paint and support, requires that the contemporary be renounced as something art either is or is not. The term "contemporary" as used in connection with art names a problem, rather than a fact: Is what is current contemporary? What would make something contemporary rather than just current? One answer (if, indeed, not the only one) to these questions is to be found in this discovery of a history that gives a chance to a different sense of future, one, in the case of art in Turkey, that is not dominated by models of acceptance or rejection of Western, or American, art and visual culture.

In order to demonstrate this in detail, in connection with Uluç's work, as well as that of Adnan Çoker, let me return to the failures of the comprehension of gesture as the gestural in connection with abstract expressionism. The succinct formulation of this failure, the formulation that solicits failure as its criterion of art, is a brief, but crucial paragraph by Harold Rosenberg in his 1951 essay, "The American Action Painters." He has just pointed out that such artists (mentioning none by name) are not young (certainly not by today's international art world standards) having been around since the 1930s, have either, being or being in sympathy with Marxists, been painting society or, following the models of European art, like Cubism or Post-Impressionism, painting art. Having earlier argued, in effectively an idealist fashion, and in what will become a critical matter for later art and criticism, that the new painting has "broken down every distinction between art and life," drawing attention away from "aesthetic references" and towards "the kind of act taking place in the four-sided arena," Rosenberg seals the miscomprehension of painting, art and gesture that is characteristic of the discourse of the gestural:

> The big moment came when it was decided to paint . . . just TO PAINT. The gesture on the canvas was a gesture of liberation, from Value—political, aesthetic, moral. (Rosenberg 39-40)

It is sometimes difficult to unravel the valuable hints towards the critical issues at stake in Rosenberg's criticism, though here, in respect of this crucial topic, what is problematic is quite explicit. When a painting doesn't resemble something, or, as he has said in the opening paragraph of the second section of his essay, "reproduce, redesign, analyse or 'express' an object, actual or imagined," and we are invited to see it "not as a picture but an event" (Rosenberg 36), it seems, to him, and to many since, as if it can only be the event of an action, or,

at least, the record of such an action. The painting and/or picture would thus become a pure evidence of gesture as action, something "on the canvas." In line with a transcendentalism that is not uncommonly unacknowledged in the discourses of U.S. culture, though which Rosenberg (who has read Emerson, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre) admits earlier ("The work, the act, translates the psychologically given into the intentional, into a 'world'—and thus transcends it." (582)), mind is the latent object of an affirmation, even at the moment when matter and the body are conjoined, "on the canvas."

In a way that is unsurprisingly repeated in discourses on art (as well as much else), Rosenberg brings together the body and matter in his account of gesture, as he had done in the second paragraph of his essay. If he had, in part, renounced the notion of a picture, and of "aesthetic references" ("reference" being again an unsurprising, but misleading linguistic notion when conjoined with pictures, let alone with pictures, or objects, as art), he had not given up a notion of image, as the following makes clear:

> The painter no longer approached his easel with an image in his mind; he went up to it with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him. The image would be the result of this encounter. (Rosenberg 36-7)

The allure of an abject body, body merging with matter, haunts this portrayal of the "encounter" between the body, paint and canvas, the first facing, if not giving face to, the last. This trace of orientation, put in question by Pollock's activities, painting on a canvas on the floor, echoes and rejoins a critical nexus of modern aesthetics, at least since Kant's account of the sublime, that would secure the value of art as a sign, a means of indication, as it were, for the body in space (Derrida 132-3). It would be another American critic, Leo Steinberg, who, twenty years later, would respond to this strain of the residue of the orientational in the discourse on abstract expressionism in his critical promotion of the work of Robert Rauschenberg via what he termed "the flat-bed picture plane." Conjoining suggestions of scanning, even of a saccadic vision, moving laterally, rather than looking ahead, with that of printed pictures as well as text (the "flat-bed" is a term used to refer to a type of printing press), Steinberg's promotion of Rauschenberg's collage and combine-painting work is linked with an early articulation of a notion of the "post-modernist." Contesting the articulation of the "optical" in the later 1950s and 1960s criticism of Greenberg and Fried, Steinberg proposes a sense of space of art in which the sense of distance that would be achieved either in the Kantian sublime or the experience

of the opticality of the image would be disturbed in favour of what his text terms "a symbolic continuum of litter, workbench, and data-ingesting mind" (Steinberg 89). Prescient as this may seem of experiences of digital workspace, it is still articulated as a relating of body, if also mind, and matter.

The stakes of the questioning of the "gestural" are thus complex. But, if gesture is not evidenced "on the canvas" as traces in matter, as the discourses of the "gestural" either suggest or claim, then how is gesture in painting, or elsewhere, to be understood? Some success, in critical writing since the 1970s, has apparently been had of the use of the terms and conceptualities developed by C.S. Peirce, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To take just one case, the art historian and theorist Margaret Iversen argued in favour of using the Peircian triadic typology of signs, the symbol, the icon and the index, rather than the signified/signifier diadic problematic of the Saussurean sign. The role of the case of a painting by Pollock in her argument is worth pausing over, in order to see how a counter-narrative to Rosenbergian authenticity is staged, even while a crucial axiom of the understanding of gesture "in" painting goes missing.

For Iversen, the value of semiotics is to expose the heterogeneity of the signs that are used to make art. The Saussurean sign, as a conceptualization of visual objects, is weak because its postulate of an arbitrary relation between signifier and signified does not successfully grasp the non-arbitrary or "'motivated'" relation between what a picture looks like and what it signifies (Iversen 85). The double determination of the Saussurean sign is neglected, however, in this objection. Saussure's unstable axiom of the arbitrariness of the sign (there are onomatopoeic linguistic signifiers that sound like what they signify, as well as, say, blue "signifiers" signifying blue objects) is related to the more destabilizing axiom of the differential character of the signifier: the "arbitrary" signifier is referred, in its functioning as sign, to the differential system of which it is part, "p" working as "p" when, for example, it doesn't sound like "b" (an unreliable difference that Turkish protects by exchanging the former for the latter in grammatical compounds of "kitap" or "kebap"). This activity of referring, across differences with "no positive terms" as Saussure formulated it, is indicative of a "functioning" of a system in the "comprehension" of signs, operations that, often, go unnoticed, but which can be, in exceptional instances, brought to notice. In the case of visual texts, we might consider the case of colour: blue is often blue, but sometimes it is blue because it is not green. (This is about what is usually called the "experience" of colour, not just the words used to refer to "it.") What Derrida sought to indicate by the term "différance" is at work here, the differing-deferring of the signifier in the problematization of meaning and/or reference.

We may trace some of the implications of undecidabilities of referring as the operation of "différance" in connection with work by Pollock. Returning to Iversen's argument, it may be noted that what is missed in the promotion of a Peircean semiotics is, paradoxically, the operativity of the frames of visual texts. This ends up leaving transcendentalist, if not existentialist-type claims of the evidentiality of gestural marks in place. Peirce's typology of symbol, icon and index repeats a concern for the difference between the "verbal" and the "visual" in a way that confirms the hold of a Western metaphysics over the thought of signification. Language is (mostly) made up of symbols, signs that signify something "by contract or rule" (Iversen 89)—what Saussure brought further into question as that infamous "arbitrary." Visual texts may "contain" symbols, as when a tree means "life" (as in traditions of allegorical deciphering, we may "know" that a tree is part of life, is alive, but we are also supposed to "know" the difference between this kind of knowledge and knowledge through interpretation, in which something stands for something else), but pictures are largely icons, in Peirce's sense: signs that signify or represent (no difference in this theorisation here) because they resemble something, a picture of a tree resembling the appearances of a tree for someone. Peircean thought reduces vision: while claiming that the "image" of a tree that we "see" because the thing is pictured in our eyes is also a sign, and we are interpreters, in a process of what he calls "infinite semiosis," vision turns out to be a sort of experience of something that is fundamentally illusory, the world being nothing more than a sort of projection of something in the subject.

There has been much use of the third type of Peircean sign, the index, in connection with the criticism of photography. The index, something that signifies because of an "existential bond or connection" to something else, has been used to characterize the impression of an emphatic, if not melancholic photographic effect that, unlike other representational pictures like paintings, what is signified was once there, in front of the camera. Bernard Steigler is one among many who has insisted on this as something that has been fundamentally qualified by the advent of digital imagery: the "chain of luminances" linking our experience of a photograph of, say, Abraham Lincoln to the "touch" of light on his once living flesh is threatened by the scepticism that comes to occupy our credulity which has been brought on by the alteration in the status of what appears to have been photographed in a digital photo (Steigler, "The Discrete Image" 153-4). The indexicality of the photograph, which is also, when it is taken to represent something, an icon, would be brought into question.

But what is indicated here is that the boundary between the Peircean symbol and index is not itself stable. Iversen uses the latter notion to characterize the multiplication of "signs" that stand for Pollock in a painting like *No. 1A* of 1948 [figure 2]. The trails of paint, dripped from sticks, are also accompanied by several hand-prints in the top right-hand corner. The trails of paint would be indexes of Pollock's movement, as the hand-prints are indexes of his will-to-mark the canvas, even if they are also, like figures in photographs, icons signifying his hands because of resemblance. The attraction of Pollock's painting, for Iversen, would be in this multiplication of the signs of the artist: effectively, an attraction to the connotation of a gendered power, or will-to-power, that would be indicative of the troubled, and aggressive status of masculinity in American culture, as her subsequent accounts of work by Jasper Johns and Mary Kelly suggests (Iversen 90-2).

The criticism of Pollock as part of the formation, or re-formation, of masculinity is potentially illuminating. Julia Kristeva has perhaps taken this furthest in an account that stresses something of the topology of these signs of "presence," stressing a sort of sacrificial, Christ-like dispersal of the signs of the body across the space of the picture. Her account responds to that key issue of the orientational in the critical reassessments of art in modern aesthetics that she has sought to rethink. The hand-prints in the right-hand corner of *No.1A* would then be indicative of a tension between a propriating claim on space and the multiplication of the signs of the failure to do other than, as it were, hand-on a sort of desire to occupy that space (Kristeva 35-9).

It is tempting, then, to conclude that Pollock's work is a sign of failure to exist in space other than by means of this desire to possess and its dispersal, and the point of Kristeva's criticism is perhaps to raise this issue most acutely. We might conclude that, in so far as this is what is at stake in Pollock's drip paintings, then his work stands as means of promoting an ecstatic relation to this failure: something that would be complicit with the deterretorializing drive of capitalism, if not of its American promotion. The series of issues that preoccupy critical accounts of U.S. visual culture—capitalism; gender and racial identities—have been drawn in via the undecidabilities of the differences between the Peircian icon and index. To show how the gestural decomposes into such critical issues is significant; but, in order to approach the seduction of U.S. visual culture more closely, but, indeed, tracing a certain resistance to it, to understand how the traces of gesture can be re-read as histories and futures of a corporeality not trapped in the legacies of monotheological or liberationist thinking, we may return to work by Uluç, in contrast to that by his near contemporary Adnan Çoker.

Gesture is not present "on the canvas," as some of the following observations by Uluç testify concerning abstract expressionist painting, work by the American post-painterly abstractionist Morris Louis, published in an interview in Art Press in 1987 and a brief mention of Pollock's work from four years earlier. Uluç first went to the U.S. in 1953, studying engineering, if also, informally, painting, in Texas, Boston and New York in the following four years. His first one-person exhibition took place in 1955 in Boston at the Earl Pilgrim Gallery, two years after his first exhibiting opportunity in a group show with Kuzgun Acar and Güngör Güven at the Maya Galeri in İstanbul. Talking about his time in the U.S. more than three decades after arriving there, Uluç indicates that he became aware of the work of the abstract expressionists:

> During my first visit to the U.S. expressionism was dominating the art scene. This was the period when America was expressing its work of imagination. They were so fond of boldness and risk as if they were involved in some kind of gold rush. I was impressed a lot by this. (Tansuğ 24)

It is clear, also, from a remark recorded from an interview in 1983, concerning the "dynamism" of American compared to the "impotence" of French abstraction, that Uluç was drawn, like many painters from elsewhere (though unlike most Turkish painters of the time), to take greater notice of work from the U.S. of the 1950s, as part of the shift in the sense of what counted in modern art in the post-war years from Paris to New York (Henric 111).

But Uluç, like other non-American artists, was not at once drawn entirely to renounce the interests linked with modern art that he associated with the earlier pre-eminence of France. Indeed, following the relatively late emergence in 1963 of something like his characteristic mark-making and use of colour, what he termed, in 1969, "fields of colour . . . [that] started twisting about and curling up becoming more and more colourful" (Henric 111). Uluç began to cultivate his association with France, living in Paris, after London and La Haye, for a while in the mid-1960s where he had his first exhibition in France at the Galerie La Roue in 1966. It is perhaps outside the scope of this essay to make a conclusive claim concerning this measured and careful response to abstract expressionism, one that involved Uluç not in a struggle to make his name alongside those of the artists of the American vanguard, but rather in a re-engagement with Paris, the then displaced capital of the art world. It would be my hypothesis, taking into account, for example, the years, from 1973 to 1977, during which Uluç lived and worked in Nigeria, that it is as a response to the neo-colonizing

dominance of U.S. visual culture, including certain strains of U.S. art, that these displacements, from Turkey, via the U.S., to England, France and Nigeria, have been undertaken. Claiming in 1978 that he owed "a lot to a non-Western grand art which is African art," Uluç has also suggested that it is because, in Africa, "There are no anxieties about whether something consists of a figure or not" that, given that his "earliest paintings were like that anyway," he found his time there liberating (Henric 111 and 115). There are thus strong indications that it is the discourses of the criticism of western modernism, in their resistance to the undecidabilities of the modes of signification of pictorial figures that have dictated the split between so-called figurative and abstract painting, if not the correlative desires for certainties concerning visual experience, from which Uluç has wanted to remove himself.

This is not to say that Uluç has not drawn from the work of American artists. Indeed, the removal, geographical and in the terms of his thinking, was only desirable in the terms he has mentioned, I think, given the problematic complicities of the gestural with other forms of American visual culture. His interest in work by Morris Louis that he saw in 1965 is indicative of a concern for a certain loosening of the bonds that were claimed in the gestural between mark-making, freedom and an experience of space. Claiming for Louis' work, like Matisse's, a sense of "inner conflicts not easily seen," Uluç describes a sense of a debt to:

> . . . the feeling of space that moved out from the centre of the painting towards the edge of the canvas and even beyond. (Henric 118)

Louis' pouring of paint and the movement of the support to guide it in its movement across the canvas, rather than the use of brush or even stick, interrupted the correlation between acting and painting in thinking about American painting that the discourse of the gestural entailed [figure 3]. A certain release was thus obtained—this "post-painterly abstractionist" was also post-painter as the complex of body and instrument extended in space—from the paradigm of expressionism, if not of expression as such, in a generation of a sense of gesture that passed into a painting of figures, and tended not to emerge from them, and which brought with them a sense of space that spreads out around a gesture.

The importance of such a sense of gesture can be inferred from Uluç's remarks on Pollock. Contrasting himself with the legendary U.S. artist, Uluç has claimed that he was "not an expressionist," suggesting further that, because

Pollock was "either around [the canvas] or at the centre," that an insistence of a sense of presence of the artist either patrolling the perimeter of a space or occupying it was not what he was seeking (Henric 115). Thus, Uluç distanced himself from the split in the drives which, as noted above, preoccupy Pollock's work, that split between "propriation" and dispersal. When he was asked directly where the gesture that characteristically marks his paintings comes from, and whether it was "the whole body, the arm or just the hand that is in motion," Uluç replied:

> It became habitual to think with this motion. It helped me to find certain ways, repetition of figures, stuttering or the speed, and when it's possible to attain a tension and a livelier image. (Henric 118)

With the stress here falling on "livelier," Uluç confirms that account given above, of his interest in the classical tradition of the zoographic. In this, his work departs from the frames of the expressionist paradigm. Further, this concatenation of the purposes of gesture in the making of his work, from the vague "certain ways" and a sense of an exercise of control in repetition, to the figuration of speaking in "stuttering," followed by the suggestion of an experience of corporeality in "the speed" discovers, in series, some of the critical issues that the discourse of the gestural has assisted in repressing.

Gesture in the painting of figures, even of figures that are thought to represent something, is hardly new. This essay has not aimed to make gesture into a new "gestural," something with a single key to its understanding, like action or liberation. Uluç's account, on the contrary, draws attention towards the heterogeneity of contexts for such an understanding. We might note that gesture is not original: in so far as it is not just movement, and in so far as it appears to signify, even in an emphatic or supplementary way, it is a sort of text. Linked with the vagaries of speech, as in Uluç's "stuttering," if also with starting and stopping having not concluded, it remarks a boundary between the linguistic and non-linguistic, a boundary that preoccupies speakers of languages of all sorts, even while the manifestations of that boundary, folded over as if on itself, closing upon and partially opening up in excess of itself, differ. Marking the users of languages, the reinvention of gesture may be the reinvention of a relation to communication that is not dictated by language and its meanings. The sense of gesture as happenings of space, including a sort of citation of space, that leads as if towards theatre, as in Uluç's odd "certain ways," along with a sense of style, an idiomatic mode of communicating the temporalities of spaces, is perhaps what seals the pact with so-called visual arts, or with what Derrida would rename "the spatial arts" (Derrida, "The Spatial Arts" 12).

What is contested in Uluç's painting would be the nullification of the space of the picture as the space of the evidence of, rather than the complex of traces that comprise, gesture. The ideal field of the erasibility of the idioms of culture, in favour of a model of modernising colonization, gestural painting has functioned as the model for acting in space, leaving traces of the will-to-act that would disperse so as to allow for the remodelling offered via the screens of post-war U.S. visual culture. Not that this has been a deliberate policy, along the lines of the Cold War promotion of abstract expressionist art by CIA-sponsored agencies; more (at least in this context) an exploration of technical possibilities guided by the provocation of the unoccupiability of the spaces of images. The seduction, in particular, of post-war U.S. visual culture is into an imaginary of action that would render relations to the instruments of action as guided by a merging with the body, guided by the ideals of mind that would emerge out of an ecstatic experience of the abject body, the body as introjected and "itself" abjected.

The psychoanalytic theorization necessary to this formulation will have to await any more detailed elaboration and demonstration elsewhere, on another occasion. In conclusion, though, and in order to show how important the U.S. visual culture, including its models and discourses of art, have been, I should like to contrast the sense of gesture that exceeds the paradigm of the gestural as communicated by Uluç's painting with the negotiation of that paradigm in the work of his near contemporary, Adnan Çoker. Like Uluç, Çoker has achieved a sort of eminence in collections of Turkish painting that is remarkable for a consistency of certain elements. The work for which, since the 1960s, Çoker has become known, reuses geometrical figures, a limited palette of blacks, whites, metallic hues, more silver than gold, if also mauves and pinks, often in carefully controlled gradations. The effect is more one of a systematic fading or deepening of colour than of anything more easily read as indicative of mood or affect, and the use of geometric figures also, besides framing and containing what might otherwise be more evocative distributions of colour, tends to suggest certain narratives of a relation not to events of seeing what overwhelms, as with Uluç, but to some imagined and more distant scene, perhaps a non-terrestrial, even cosmic scene.

Such a claim is not meant as a conclusive statement concerning Çoker's "subject matter." An attentiveness to the means of signification in art (though hardly new: Hegel's *Aesthetics* insisted on an attention to a history of form) displaces narrowly authoritative and positivistic accounts of subject matter, statements of accomplished intention, in favour of accounts of meaning-effects that are repeated and/or altered in artistic texts. What is notable about Çoker's

work, in the context of this essay, as large-scale painting after the gestural, is the minimization of the traces of gesture. It is as if, in guiding viewing to those scenes of the cosmic, the artist has dedicated a particular effort to discourage readings that would relate traces of paint to corporeal existence. Not that this would be "direct." This paper has sought to show that this account of gesture in art, the "gestural" account of gesture inherited from abstract expressionism, is an illusory goal of power as force, as if the body were an object of the will of the mind, and gesture simply an emphatic, incontrovertible marking of matter. The criticism of post-war U.S. painting inherited via Rosenberg makes of gesture the ineloquent coda to meaning, rather than, as in classical rhetoric, a persuasive accompaniment to speech.

The problem with Çoker's work would be traceable from its over-determination by the dominance of the discourse of the gestural: as if painting had to avoid traces of gesture in order not to get caught in the complexities of U.S. cultural influence, if not hegemony. It is possible to read the "scenes" of Çoker's work as addressed to the mechanisms if not the processes of vision: looking at the thin rectangular "slits" suspended in space, shifting slightly to and from across an imaginary picture plane, it is as if the apertures of the eyes and a play of light within were being represented [figure 4]. Once again, this is to suggest that the referents of the pictorial texts are not stable (there are also potential meanings concerning the geometric, as the title indicates): meaning-effects are effects, rather than just meanings, because of this. And it is the processes of meaning-effects that provide relevant frames within which the activities of viewing can be identified and assessed. In this, Çoker's work keeps repeating modes of address that shift only between the transcendentalist or "cosmic" and an impoverished sense of the body as a sort of container for visual experience. The insistent sense of a technical mastery would reject the very tensions concerning corporeality and action that so-called abstract expressionist painting brought to the fore in the first place.

Unlike Çoker, Uluç has shown a regard for this, and one way of understanding the achievement of his work is to have shifted attention from a fascination with, or repulsion from, the gestural potentially towards an understanding of the ways in which art may cite culture, including cultural discourses, and thereby communicate senses of space. The meaning-effects of such spaces may be such as to communicate the reach of dominant notions of the body in space, even while interweaving traces of the experience, though not the belonging to, of other cultural traditions. I am thinking, here, of the issue of the calligraphic, as I mentioned it earlier. For, I have come to sense

an insistent sense of the calligraphic as haunting Uluç's careful use of paint. Granted, his concern has been to communicate something of an experience of seeing—that "being overwhelmed" considered earlier. But this does not exclude being overwhelmed by calligraphy. As a Turkish artist, resistant to the reaches of dominant accounts of what is of value in modern, if not post-modern art, he has resisted simply being assigned a role as regional, provincial or marginal. And his work does not "reference" calligraphy. But, despite his interest in the classical zoographic tradition, as suggested by his remarks concerning his interest in the tensions between the Byzantine and the Ottoman in the fabric of Istanbul, the seriality of the sites of calligraphy, from the architectural to the manuscript, offers a modelling of the ways in which bodies have moved across the spaces of the Islamic policing of figuration, gestures that fold over on themselves in the production of letters as if in conformity with the ban on figuration.

Like Uluç's signature-effect of paint crossing over itself, in which a trace of gesture is obscured as if by "itself," the calligraphic would be that which hinted towards the calligrammatic, a resemblance of letters to beings and vice versa, while continuing to distribute traces of its signature-effect elsewhere. This history—not the rejection of Ottoman in the modern Turkish, but the re-imagining of possible continuities with the histories of places and spaces caught up in the Ottoman-Islamic empire—marks Uluç's work. Speaking of his relationship to cultural traditions, he said:

> . . . art is not only a consideration of culture or only enlivening a culture or settling relationships with ancient culture. . . . to make art is to take risks. (Henric 114)

It has been such a taking of risks that has enabled Uluç's work to emerge from within the paradigm of the gestural to raise questions about how experience, vision and culture may be related in contemporary Turkish contexts in ways that might promise a more, rather than less informed relation between pasts and futures.

Works Cited

Ash, John. "Afternoon with Nudes and Monsters." [translation of "Nüler ve Canavarlarla Bir Öğleden Sonra."] *Ömer Uluç: 1995-1996-1997*. Ed. Veysel Uğurlu. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 1997. 7-23.

Crary, Jonathan. "Eclipse of the Spectacle." *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*. Ed. Brian Wallis. Boston: Godine, 1984. 283-94.

Çaplı, Bülent and Hakan Tuncel. "Türkiye," *Avrupa'da Televizyon: Düzenleme, Politikalar ve Bağımsızlık.* Open Society Institute, EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program: Ankara, 2005. 193-259. [Also 'Turkey', *TV Across Europe: Regulation, Policy and Independence.* Open Society Institute, EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program: Budapest, 2005. 1539-99.]

Derrida, Jacques. "The Colossal." *The Truth in Painting.* Trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod, Chicago: Chicago UP, 1987. 119-47.

---. "The Spatial Arts: An Interview with Jacques Derrida." Eds. Peter Brunette and David Wills. *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts:* Art, Media, Architecture. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 9-32.

Erdoğan, Nezih. "Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975." *Screen* 39.3 (1998): 259-71.

Henric, Jacques. "Ömer Uluç." Galeri Nev, *Ömer Uluç,* İstanbul: Galeri Nev, 1989. 110-118.

Hopkins, David. *After Modern Art 1945-2000.* Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

Iversen, Margaret. "Saussure v. Peirce: Models for a Semiotics of Visual Art." Borzello, Frances and A. L. Rees, *The New Art History.* London: Camden Press, 1988. 82-94.

Kristeva, Julia. "Jackson Pollock's Milky Way: 1912-1956." *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts* (1989): 35-9.

Steigler, Bernard. "The Time of Cinema: On the 'New World' and the 'Cultural Exception.'" *Tekhnema* 4 (1998): 62-112.

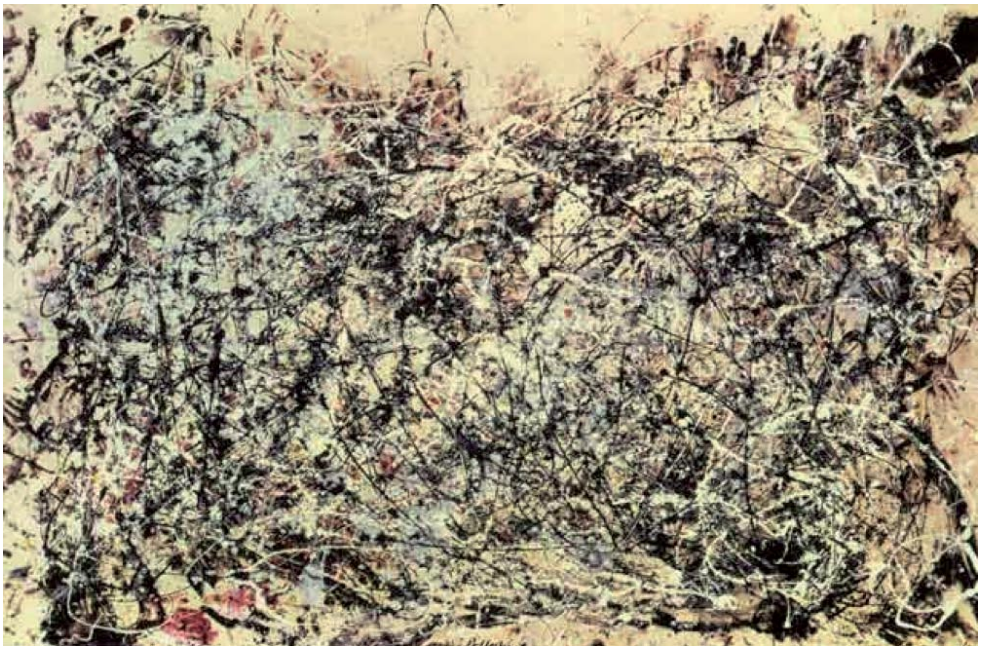
---. "The Discrete Image." Derrida, Jacques and Bernard Steigler. *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002. 145-63.

Steinberg, Leo. "Other Criteria." *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth Century Art.* London: Oxford UP, 1972. 55-91.

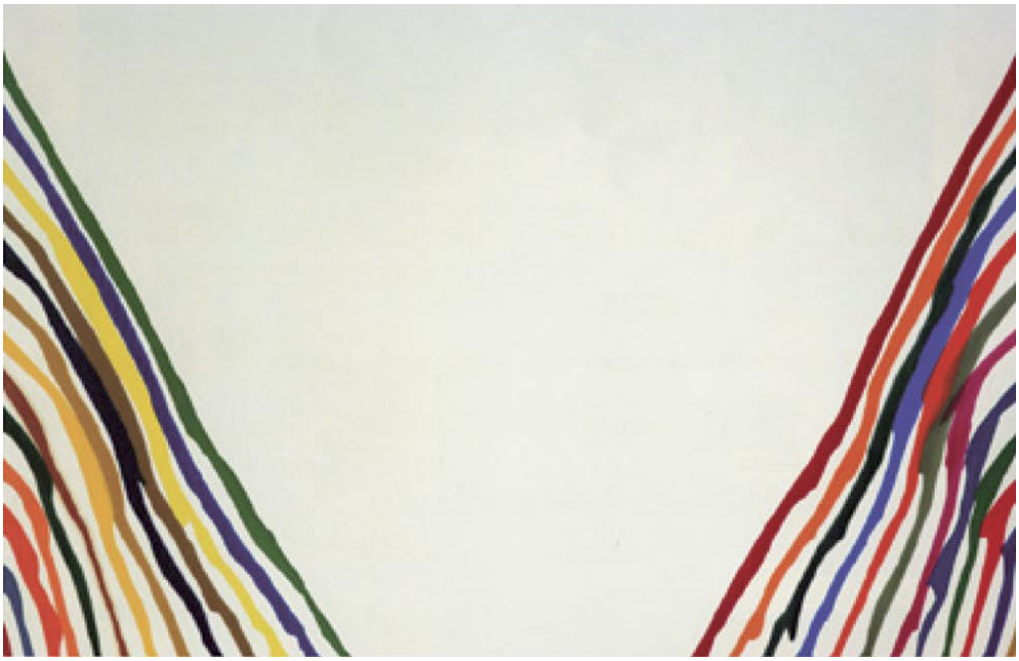
Tansuğ, Sezer. "A Logic of Progress." Galeri Nev, *Ömer Uluç,* İstanbul: Galeri Nev, 1989. 22-7.

List of illustrations

1. Ömer Uluç, *Köpekli Aile* [*Family with Pet*], acrylic on canvas, 130 x 200 cm, Rafi Portakal Kolleksiyonu, 1996.



2. Jackson Pollock, *No. 1A,* oil and enamel on unprimed canvas, 172.7 x 264.2 cm, MOMA New York, 1948.



3. Morris Louis, *Beta Lambda*, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 262.6 x 407 cm, MOMA New York.

4. Adnan Çoker, *Yarım Küreler ve Mor Kare* [*Half Spheres and Purple Square*], acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180 cm, Ayal Sevant Koleksiyonu.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 87-90

Sara Blair. *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007. 353 pp.

Clifford Endres

Harlem Crossroads is an important book for anyone interested in the Harlem Renaissance, African-American studies, the history of American photography, or the evolution of literary modernism in America. Using Harlem as a point of departure, Blair focuses on the canonical black writers of the 1930s and 1940s and the power held for them by the photographic image. Why Harlem? Because for photographers, especially after the riots of 1935 (which effectively spelled the end of the Renaissance), Harlem became "a provocative site for documentary meditation on race, usable histories, and the value of culture" (9). These photographers included not only Aaron Siskind and other members of the left-leaning New York Photo League but also Roy DeCavara, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Helen Levitt, William Klein, Don Charles, and Richard Avedon, to mention only the most prominent.

Blair's thesis is that the engagement of modernist photographers with the rich palimpsest of Harlem (James Weldon Johnson once remarked that you could trace New York's history in Harlem's transformation from Dutch to Irish to Jewish to Negro) gave rise both to a new stylistics and to new cultural stances. It was, she asserts, this new conception of the image that attracted the attention of black writers and contributed significantly to their experiments in literary form. Writers to whom she pays special attention include Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Chester Himes, Lorraine Hansberry, and Toni Morrison. All were closely involved with photography either as practicing photographers or as collaborators on photojournalistic texts, or both.

The backbone of Blair's book is her readings of specific images, both photographic and literary. She begins by analyzing Aaron Siskind's work in "Harlem Document," a photo-essay produced between 1936 and 1939. Siskind's images push the envelope of 1930s documentary photography as we know it from New Deal image-makers such as Walker Evans, Ben Shahn, and other Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographers. Indeed, Siskind's resistance

to the "Leica revolution" and the kind of "candid camera" work carried out by Evans (as in, for example, *Many Are Called*) and others is underscored, as Blair notes, by his choice of camera: a bulky 4 x 5 or 5 x 7 view camera whose technical requirements of loading, viewing, and composing made it impossible for the subject not to know that he or she was being photographed. In contrast to the "objective" school of photography, where the camera keeps a studied distance from the subject of its documentation, in Siskind's work the subject becomes an active participant. The result is a foregrounding of social context and its role in image production.

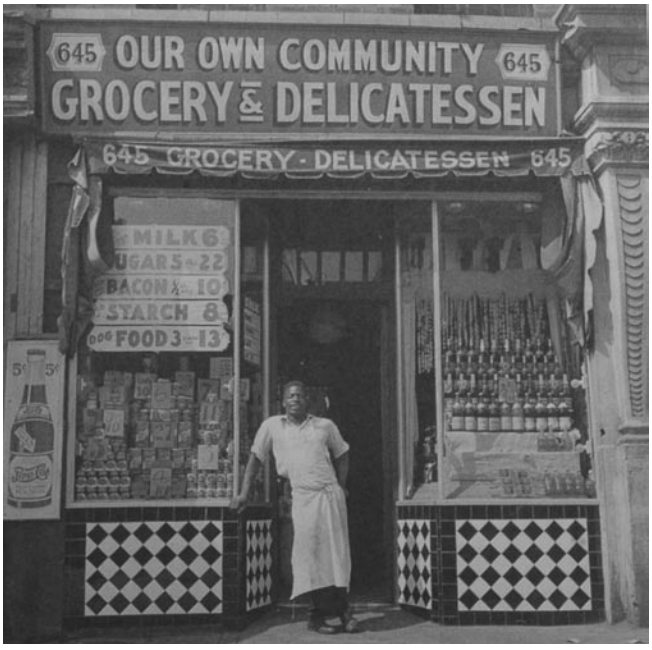
Although "Harlem Document" was never published in full, its images circulated widely, and, according to Blair, helped inaugurate a series of crossroads engagements with post-Renaissance Harlem. Literary figures such as Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison would admire the representational and expressive possibilities they saw in it and follow them up in their own work. The importance of photography for both writers is underlined by the fact that Ellison carried in his wallet, along with his card—"Ralph Ellison, Photographer"—the scrap of a photo of Wright cradling his twin-lens reflex camera. Blair examines what she calls the "crossings" of literary and photographic interests in their work as well as in that of the man who introduced them to each other, Langston Hughes.

A strong connecting thread among Harlem-associated figures is the photo-text—the combination of word and image in a book. In 1941 Wright produced, with Edwin Rosskam as photographic editor, the photo-text *Black Voices* (full title: *Twelve Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States*). This book drew heavily on the documentary files of the FSA but, because Wright reads the images differently, may be seen as a critical response to James Agee's and Walker Evans' *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, published several months earlier to popular acclaim. Wright would use his own photographs for a 1954 photo essay on blacks in Ghana, *Black Power*. Ellison too was a photographer, supporting himself with his camera work during the mid-1940s to the early 1950s while writing *Invisible Man*. He did not publish the photojournalistic essay on Harlem which he composed in collaboration with Gordon Parks ("Harlem is Nowhere"), but his large archive of images indicates clearly that photography was for him an important means of critical reflection on American culture. As for Hughes, not only did he accompany Henri Cartier-Bresson on photographic forays in Mexico, but, with Roy DeCarava, brought out a best-selling photo-text, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, in 1955.

The list goes on. James Baldwin collaborated with his old high-school classmate Richard Avedon on the photo-text *Nothing Personal* (1964), a

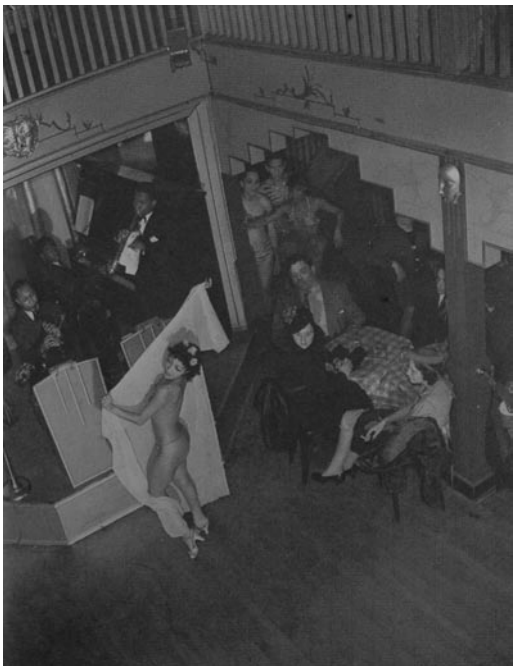
controversial volume that directly engages the documentary tradition handed down through Evans, Agee, and Wright. While not directly concerned with Harlem, it is informed, in Blair's words, by Baldwin's status as a "Harlem icon" and Harlem's own "mobility as a signifier for racial experience" (196). The playwright Lorraine Hansberry wrote and organized a photo-text on the civil-rights struggle called *The Movement* (again 1964), based largely on Danny Lyons' documentary work. Chester Himes, though not a photographer, uses the topic of photomontage in his novels, especially *Cotton Comes to Harlem*. Even Toni Morrison became involved with a photo-text project while working as an editor at Random House: *The Black Book*, published in 1974. Blair contends that much of Morrison's fiction, *Jazz* in particular, is a concerted effort to wrest photographic history away from the grip of a racial iconography rooted in the legacy of the Harlem documentary.

Except for rare cases of nigh-impenetrable jargon—"at the threshold of the oneiric, where alterity and self-knowledge are entangled and inevitably racialized," to give an example (page 56)—*Harlem Crossroads* is an admirably well-organized, thoughtful, and readable book. It may well, as one of its jacket blurbs claims, go down as "a major work of criticism and cultural history." In any event there is no doubt that it makes a compelling case for the crucial role played by photography and Harlem in the "self-imagination, cultural politics, and literary work" of African-American writers of the twentieth century.



Aaron Siskind, Untitled. [Our Ourn Community], from "The Most Crowded Block in the World", Ca.1940. George Eastman House.

Aaron Siskind, Untitled, from "Harlem Document", Ca.1937-40. Center for Creative Photography.



Aaron Siskind, Untitled, from "Harlem Document", Ca.1937. George Eastman House.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 91-98

Walker Evans, *Many Are Called*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 2004. 208pp.

Serhan Oksay

"Stare. It is the way to educate your eye, and more. Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long." This oft-repeated quotation by Walker Evans could hardly be better illustrated than by this new edition of a book that was first published in 1966—twenty-five years after the photographs in it were taken.

Before reading a book, I usually try to explore the writer. Knowing something about an author's life can help throw light on his work. In this case, we have a photographer rather than a writer, or perhaps a writer who expresses himself through photography. In fact, it was because he was frustrated in his attempts to become a professional writer that Walker Evans turned to photography in the first place. He first began to photograph in the late 1920s on a trip to Paris. On his return to New York, he published his first images. Then, during the Great Depression, he began to photograph for the Resettlement Administration, which later became the Farm Security Administration (FSA), documenting workers and vernacular architecture in the southeastern United States. In 1936 he traveled the South with writer James Agee, shooting pictures to illustrate an article on tenant farmers and their families for *Fortune* magazine. This collaboration was the project out of which grew the landmark book, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941).

Those who remember the portraits in that book may nod in agreement with Luc Santé's remarks that "Evans regarded his subjects in much the same way he looked upon signboards and assemblages or folk architecture." Santé goes on to say, in a foreword to this edition of *Many Are Called*, that Evans "liked types, departures from type, sui generis examples, archaisms, sullen ruins; he could savor presumption, classical pathos, self-taught avidity, entropic improvisation, extravagant wrong-headedness, prosaic solemnity. Such qualities can be found in faces and in styles of self-presentation as much as vernacular public displays, although you seldom saw them in the work of the major photographic portraitists

. . . and even less in the output of ordinary studio photographers, who endlessly issued interchangeable portraits of wooden middle-class propriety" (13).

A good place to find and photograph subjects with such qualities might be a place where they were enclosed in a normal context, yet free of self-consciousness, perhaps even seated (for the photographer's convenience) against a dark background under impersonal lighting—in short, a subway car, where, by convention, one does not stare at one's fellow passengers.

Between 1938 and 1941 Evans descended into New York City's subway system three times in pursuit of images—of faces unmasked, of images that would reveal beneath their surfaces the gritty reality of the modern moment. Deep underground, Evans shot hundreds of pictures of people who had no idea they were the objects of a photographic stare. He managed this by hiding his camera (a 35mm Contax) beneath his winter coat, its lens peeking out between the buttons, and a shutter-release cable running down his sleeve to a bulb in his hand. The results were, in his mind, what a portrait ought to be: "anonymous and documentary and a straightforward picture of mankind" (198). From more than six hundred exposures he chose eighty-nine for publication—hence the title, from Matthew 22: "Many are called, but few are chosen."

It was 1966, however, before the book was published, even though Evans's friend Agee had already drafted an introductory essay in 1940. It is the 1966 edition (dedicated to Agee) that is reprinted here. It includes Agee's introduction, the foreword by Santé, and an afterword by Jeff Rosenheim. Interestingly, all the photographs but two have been reproduced by digital scanning of the original negatives; those two, like the reproductions in the first edition, were made from Evans's gelatin silver prints. No difference in quality is discernible.

On first seeing the photographs, we realize that most of them are slightly out of focus and the composition is far from ideal. This is owing to the above-mentioned hidden-camera trick, which enabled Evans to reach his goal: his subjects are completely unaware of the photography session. Yet there seems to be a few exceptions. One could swear that the man in Plate 66 is posing for the camera, or that the workingman in Plate 4 is more than suspicious. There are other examples in which subjects appear to be staring at us with, if not suspicion, at least curiosity.

This book is like a novel without words. We could even free-associate from "novel" to "novelty." In fact you could make a board game out of the book, named possibly "Guess the Mood." Throw the dice and move your token; land on, say, Plate 54 and guess at the man's mood. Is he engrossed in the subway

advertisements or is he working out a mathematics calculation? How about the couple in Plate 68? Are they on the verge of a kiss or an argument? There's another couple in Plate 81: the man appears to be reading a magazine; but is he really, or is he just trying to avoid contact with his unhappy wife?

From a photographer's point of view, my favorite prints are Plates 49, 83, and 89. Plate 49 shows a well-dressed, even dapper, black man staring off into space; it makes me think of Charlie Chaplin in disguise. Plate 83 is remarkable for the interplay between the sailor's profile and the pin-up girl in a Chesterfield ad behind him. Plate 89 is a work of perspective. In it an accordion player stands between rows of passengers, singing his song in transit although nobody else seems to listen or to care. It represents Evans at his story-telling best.

In eighty-nine plates Evans created a new chapter in documentary photography by taking the ordinary and common and raising it to the remarkable and interesting. Agee compares Evans's accomplishment here to that of Charlie Chaplin's in *City Lights*: perceiving and revealing the naked, unguarded human soul through the signature of its precise and unique time and place in the world.

In 1965 Evans left *Fortune*, where he had been a staff photographer for 20 years, to become a professor of photography at Yale University. He taught there until 1974, a year before his death. Evans never became a popular photographer. Popular photographs are for decorating big houses; by comparison, Evans's work lives in the homes of ordinary people.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1941. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1941. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1941. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1941. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1941. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1941. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1938. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Walker Evans, Untitled, 1989. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 99-101

Into the Wild (Sean Penn 2007)

Mark Bousquet

Hollywood has had a long love affair with the American landscape. Typically focused on the open expanses of the American West (evidenced most prominently in the westerns of John Ford, Clint Eastwood, and Kevin Costner), directors have seemingly operated on the principle that intrinsic to any story set against nature is to highlight the bigness and beauty of the land. Sean Penn's approach (seen through the cinematography of Eric Gautier) to shooting the landscape in *Into the Wild* operates largely antithetically to the western. Instead of focusing on the largeness of the American wilderness, Penn's approach owes a stylistic debt to Terence Malick (whom Penn worked with on *The Thin Red Line* 1998), crafting an intimate relationship with the natural world.

Into the Wild is an excellent and effective adaptation of Jon Krakauer's book by the same name, relating the true journey of Christopher McCandless (Emile Hirsch), who left American civilization behind to seek a romanticized relationship to the wilderness of his literary heroes Jack London and Henry David Thoreau. After graduating from Emory University, McCandless donates the bulk of his savings ($24,000) to Oxfam America and severs his ties with civilization, both official (destroying his identification and credit cards) and personal (deliberately misleading his family about his plans). Chris heads out on the road in search of his ultimate destination of Alaska. Along the way, McCandless recreates himself as Alexander Supertramp and has a series of meandering adventures with Jan (Catherine Keener) and Rainey (Brian Dierker), a pair of "rubbertramps" in California, working on a South Dakotan farm, kayaking down the Colorado River and into Mexico, reconnecting with Jan and Rainey at an RV community called Slab City in California, engaging in a non-consummated romance with an underage singer, Tracy Tatro (Kristen Stewart), and staying with Ron Franz (Hal Holbrook), an elderly widower who teaches him how to work leather just prior to Chris' ultimate journey to Alaska.

With the notable exception of his time working the farm of Wayne Westerberg (Vince Vaughn), Chris/Alex's most striking relationships are soaked in loss and tragic contemplation. His complete break from his parents (William Hurt, Marcia Gay Harden) and sister (Jena Malone) causes mostly pain in the

former and confusion in the latter. Jan sees her own runaway son in Chris, and Ron sees in him the grandson he will never have due to the death of his wife and child 35 years ago. It speaks highly of Penn's increasing skill as a storyteller (and Keener and Holbrook's work as actors) that while Jan and Ron's connections to Chris are fairly obvious to the audience, the slow-building admission of Jan and Ron to Chris about his role as a substitute for actual family still carries a strong, emotional impact. Chris, for his part, doesn't vocally reciprocate the void that Jan and Ron fill in his own life, yet when he is in his final moments of life in Alaska it isn't the past that flashes before Chris' eyes, but the hypothetical future, as he has a flash-forward fantasy of a happy reconciliation with his parents.

Penn sympathizes with McCandless without over-romanticizing him. The decision to have Chris' adoring sister, Carine, narrate the repercussions Chris causes in his family is key to this treatment; Penn willingly shows the harm Chris causes his parents, but it is Carine McCandless' understanding, loving voice that keeps the treatment of him sympathetic. While Penn downplays Chris' lack of experience in the Alaskan wilderness, he doesn't shy away from the damage Chris causes to the people who care for him. Wherever Chris goes and whomever he encounters (again, with the notable exception of Westerberg), he leaves them hurting and often without explanation. It is telling that the first time Chris disconnects himself from Jan and Rainey is after he has helped them reconcile their differences, as if merely being in the presence of a happy family unit is enough to drive him away. Penn allows Chris a moment of honor when he declines to consummate his burgeoning relationship with Tracy Tatro after she sexually offers herself to him at Slab City (on a bed and in her underwear), but Penn's sympathy for McCandless shines through as he doesn't interrogate Chris for leading an underage girl to think the relationship could reach that ultimate sexual destination. Yet Penn deserves credit for showing the damage Chris causes, even if he won't press McCandless to recognize his role (deliberate or not) in that damage. Chris moves on; others are left to pick up the pieces.

Perhaps the greatest singular achievement Penn accomplishes is the wide range of excellent performances he pulls from such a diverse cast. That veteran actors like William Hurt, Marcia Gay Harden, Catherine Keener and Hal Holbrook (in the finest screen performance of his fifty-plus year career) deliver at this high level is not surprising, but Penn also manages to garner engaging turns from comedians (Vaughn and Zach Galifianakis), younger actors still searching for their signature roles (Hirsch, Malone, and Stewart), and a crew member with no previous screen experience (Dierker). However, it is Emile Hirsch's open, energetic performance which carries the film. Portraying Chris as full of life and

largely non-conflicted about his journey from Emory to Alaska, Hirsch delivers the career-making performance only hinted at in even the best of his previous work (*Lords of Dogtown* 2005). Hirsch manages to portray Chris as both likeable and destructive, determined yet searching, knowledgeable and naive.

Ultimately, the core strength of Penn's film rests in its characters struggling to understand who or what they love: the McCandlesses to Chris, Chris to the wilderness, Rainey to Jan, and Jan to her runaway son. *Into the Wild* is certainly a film about Wilderness vs. Civilization, but that formulation is the back-drop to understanding why those we love can cause us such personal pain. It's the wilderness that Chris loves and it's his inability to understand the wilderness that leads to his death, first by failing to recognize that the changing seasons would make the river he needs to cross to get back out of the wild too dangerous to cross, thus shutting off his only known exit, and secondly by failing to recognize that one of the flora he'd been subsisting on was, in actuality, poisoning him from the inside, literally starving him to death. Chris may escape into the wild but he's still a product of civilization, a fact made clear by Penn in his most dramatic shot of the wilderness. After Chris dies, Penn pulls his camera out from a close-up of the bus, showing the largeness of wild Alaska. The further the camera moves away, the more of the landscape we see and the smaller Chris' bus (and thus Chris) actually become. That Chris chose to live in the wild in such a clear symbol of civilization as a bus reinforces his position as a piece of civilization isolated in the Alaskan wilderness. Chris learns the deadly lesson that while anyone may romanticize the wilderness, the wilderness does not romanticize you back.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 103-104

Signs Made Flesh: *Crime Scene Investigation* and the Realm of Necrosemiosis

Matthew Gumpert

It would seem at first glance, that we are living in the age of the semiotic; a world super-saturated with meaning, a world in which everything is a sign, demanding to be read. The problem with that analysis, of course, is that all the signs seem to be pointing in the same direction, towards the same terrifying and transcendent truth. All the signs, that is to say, have already been read in advance. Thus, the more one observes the current state of contemporary American culture, the more it begins to look like the apocalypse *has already happened*; or if it hasn't yet, the wait is a mere formality. Which means that all these hermeneutic exercises are, quite simply, a farce. Meaning is no longer something to pursue, or something we are willing to wait for; for the answer has arrived, the mystery has unveiled itself. Signs, in effect, have become obsolete, for they have become the very things they pointed to. This is the fantasy of a post-semiotic world, a world without ambiguity, composed entirely of self-evident truths (and which therefore do not need to be read). This is the realm of *necrosemiosis*.

Among the highest-rated television series in America, aired in countless countries across the globe, is the police drama *Crime Scene Investigation*. *CSI* seems to represent the very apotheosis of hermeneutics itself: the heroes of the series are forensic scientists who spend most of their time examining fabric under microscopes, trying to identify the origin of mysterious stains. Everything here would appear to be tied to the reading of signs. But here, too, hermeneutics is a cynical farce. The scientific objectivity of the technician makes him the perfect, effortless reader, for whom there are no mysteries. Hermeneutics is now a formality, a mechanical process carried out by technologies beyond human understanding. No crime goes unsolved, no murderer goes unpunished, and no sign survives, at least not for long, in this realm of the techno-reader (a realm in which science and ethics coincide; when Good triumphs over Evil, Certainty triumphs over Ambiguity).

In fact, signs in *CSI* are mostly human corpses, or pieces thereof. And all of this elaborate show of interpretation is a pretence for the display of naked,

eviscerated, tormented bodies. Death here is not the real catastrophe (on *CSI* death is an event that has already occurred). The true catastrophe here would seem to be the violation of the body that occurs after death. The sign has indeed become naked, become flesh. In *CSI* we can see America's new pornography, a kind of obscene semiotics: the naked truth itself, on display. (Compare this to the gruesome tableaux of martyred bodies that traditionally brought the classical tragedy to a close; here the display of death is something ritual, formalized, and sacred.)

We are not so far, in fact, from the traditional genre of sexual pornography. In both genres, the mysteries of the body are unveiled to reveal the purely finite and completely readable contours and kinetics of flesh; in both, there is absolutely no ambiguity about the end of the exercise. But violence is more economical, and more efficient, than sex; in today's America, there is no time for seduction, or foreplay. Death is the new sex in today's America. (Here I would pair with *CSI* the astonishingly pornographic parade of violence in another film of Mel Gibson's, *The Passion of Christ*; here, too, the naked body is the sign, whose violation and death is displayed for our delectation.)

Information on *CSI*

By *CSI* in this article I am, in fact, referring to a CBS franchise of three distinct television series:

1. *CSI* (Syndication title: *CSI: Las Vegas*). The original series, of which the following two are "spin-offs." Starring William Petersen as CSI Head Investigator Gilbert 'Gil' Grissom. Airing 2000-2007. Creator: Anthony E. Zuiker. From Jerry Bruckheimer Television and CBS Productions.

2. *CSI: Miami*. Starring David Caruso as Lieutenant Horatio Caine. Airing 2002-2007. Creators: Ann Donahue, Carol Mendelsohn, Anthony E. Zuiker. From CBS Productions.

3. *CSI*: *New York*. Starring Gary Sinise as Detective Mac Taylor. Airing 2004-2007. Creators: Ann Donahue, Carol Mendelsohn, Anthony E. Zuiker. From Alliance Atlantis Communications.

Journal of American Studies of Turkey
25 (2007) : 105-110

Reflections on Movement: New Installations in Historical Dervish Sites of İstanbul

Jeffrey Baykal Rollins

"Travel is not a new phenomenon in the history of dervishes rather it can be understood as a continuing practice where movement in itself is central."
Bente Nikolaisen

Considerable attention has been given of late to many Asian, Middle Eastern, and Near Eastern artists such as Shazia Sikander, Cai Guo-Qiang, and Shirin Neshat, who have brought to the United States art forms rooted in distinctly Eastern traditions. Numerous articles, exhibitions, panels, and documentaries have highlighted these artists' integration of traditional techniques such as miniature painting, calligraphy, and ukiyo-e prints into contemporary American art-making practices. By focusing however, on what these Eastern artists have brought to the United States, this attention has overlooked that which is being sought by an equally significant migration of American artists going in the opposite direction.

I am among these contemporary American artists who have sought to connect to a traditional art making practice beyond the borders of my own country. My current series of multimedia projects are site-specific to historical sacred spaces in Istanbul, including the two oldest Sufi dervish lodges in the city: the Kadirihane and the Galata Mevlevihane Museum. As it has been for many pilgrims over the centuries, my arrival at these sites is also a form of pilgrimage, and the projects I am creating are reflections of that particular response.

This work is something I could not do in the same way in the United States, for I create from within these spaces themselves, installations that are intimately bound to the iconographies and shifting functions of those sites throughout their histories. Furthermore, having traveled from my own county to work in Turkey has offered me a distinct point of view not rooted in any particular construction of locality, but rather in movement itself.

There are many other contemporary American artists including, Bill Viola, Scott Ludwig, Philip Taaffe and Jackie Tileston, whose art is intrinsicly bound to

their having traveled or lived abroad. It could even be argued that whatever form of pilgrimage it was that brought various peoples to America in the first place, has remained in many Americans' perpetual need to continue that pilgrimage on to some other place as well.

Nevertheless, to travel abroad certainly does not in and of itself constitute an act of pilgrimage. The recent book *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion* makes an important distinction: "Pilgrimage and tourism differ in terms of the direction of the journey undertaken . . . The pilgrim, and the 'pilgrim-tourist' peregrinate [travel or wander from place to place] toward their sociocultural center, while the traveler and the 'traveler-tourist' move in the opposite direction." Furthermore, the contributors, whom are all social anthropologists, argue that pilgrimage is defined by and always involves a process of sacralization of movement, persons and/or places. (Coleman and Eade 18)

The Sufi image of the wandering dervish, whose patchwork cloak is comprised of various pieces of fabric from the many different places they have visited, holds a direct connection to the way I view my own art making practice. Having spent the last six years in Turkey, this country is also the fourth country in which I have lived, and one of twenty countries that I have traveled to. My years abroad have defined my art as much if not more than the time I spent in the United States. Constantly trying to synthesize my often disparate experiences, everything I do is an attempt to create unity from multiplicity.

As utterly foreign as these spaces are to me as an American, the dervish lodges provide a context perfectly suited to the nature of the work I do. The dervish's home is truly in movement, and these architectural settings comply with that need for impermanence. In a world that is constantly in a state of flux, the Sufi never seeks a fixed resting place. Dervish architecture is more often than not constructed with wood and highly prone to fire, so the structures have been constantly altered, reconfigured, and rebuilt again and again according to prevailing styles, tastes, political ideologies, and the needs of daily usage. What I create in these spaces are simply further impermanent layers in the ongoing process of reconstruction.

Kadirihane

Kadirihane is an early seventeenth century dervish lodge in the Tophane district of Istanbul. The site consists of a mosque and residence facing onto

a graveyard built over what was originally a Byzantine church. In 1996 the leader of this lodge or sheikh, spoke out on television for freedom of expression. Literally drawing fire from religious extremists who view Sufis as heretical for their use of images, dance, and music, the mosque and countless sacred art treasures were burned to the ground the very next day.

Today, caught between the fury of religious fanaticism and the disinterest, if not scorn of cultural institutions that view sacred sites as outside their domain, the mosque remains in total ruin. Large Arabic calligraphies still adorn the barely standing walls. Grape vines hang down from the few charred beams that once supported the roof. Water continuously flows from a broken fountain across the tiled floor.

Within this roofless structure, *The Geometry of Fire* project has been installed in Kadirihane's remains. Thirty of the pieces created for this installation are drawings made entirely of smoke on mirrors. The working process used is one of effacement and removal. As soot from the smoke is wiped away from the glass mirrors it forms and reveals two kinds of image: one drawn and one reflected. Placed to reflect directly onto the cemetery, the images themselves are derived entirely from archived photographs of the structure taken before the fire and from elements found amongst the graves. Positioned on the walls in and around the calligraphies, the drawings on mirrors are materially inseparable from the writing—soot being the basic ingredient in the lampblack ink from which the words were formed hundreds of years earlier.

The viewer in this space perceives themself within the dynamic play of countless relationships. For myself personally, as well as the viewer this is precisely the state of tension that *Reframing Pilgrimage* defines as kinetic ritual "Pilgrimage is woven out of the structural opposition of stasis/movement". The viewer sees themself ephemerally moving within a series of fixed images: smoke within smoke, reflection within reflection. Between what is lost and what is present, the viewer participates by becoming that threshold between these (Coleman and Eade 15).

Admittedly, there is something exclusive about the dependence of the installation on this kind of active participation, when the fact remains that most people will never get to visit it in person. In addition to geographical proximity, gender and religion often play a defining role in determining who is given access to sacred sites in Turkey, and who is not. A parallel web-based project has been created to not only document the installation, but in fact to challenge preconceptions of what it means to experience this place in person.

As *Reframing Pilgrimage* points out, even defining the notion of journey is often problematic, for "some Sufis have developed a concept of the inner pilgrimage by which the person visits sacred places within the microcosm of the mind and body." The virtual space of the website offers access to certain experiences and information that are not even available when visiting the Kadirihane in person, such as text, images and sound recordings of ceremonies made there before the fire (Coleman and Eade 14).

Galata Mevlevihane Museum

If the installation at Kadirihane addresses problems of geographical proximity in experiencing a place, my project at Galata Mevlevihane raises questions about what kind of limited access is granted to people who can in fact experience the place in person.

Built in 1491, Galata Mevlevihane was the first dervish lodge located in the newly conquered city of Istanbul. With a stunning view of much of the city, the hilltop location would have been a "choice site for the dervishes, who considered heights to be sacred, the places where heaven met earth, their coming together respectfully veiled by low-lying clouds". Centuries of urban development around the lodge however has progressively limited this "coming together" of earth and sky to something no longer visible. My project there has sought to reestablish that long-lost connection by bringing the sky back into that space (Lifchez).

The word *sema* in Turkish means sky, but also refers to the ritual dance of the Mevlevis, or whirling dervishes, the followers of Jelaleddin Rumi. With the exception of Rumi's Mausoleum in Konya, Galata Mevlevihane was for hundreds of years the longest functioning site in the world for the performing of the *sema*, and the cultural apex for the production of Sufi art in Turkey. Countless masterpieces of calligraphy, miniature painting, volumes of poetry, and sacred music created at Galata, had an enormous impact on Sufi and Islamic art throughout the Ottoman territories. However in 1925, after the founding of the secular Turkish Republic, the lodge was stripped of its original function and converted into a government-run "literature" museum. Performance of the *sema* was strictly prohibited and the production of Sufi art in that space ultimately came to an end. Today as tourists and pilgrims from all over the world continue to flock to the site, the government has tolerated Sufi-related events only to the extent that they are presented solely for their "cultural" value.

My project addresses many of this space's restrictions on multiple levels. The pieces I am creating for this work are all being made from within the confines of the space itself. Comprised of drawings, photographs and video, the installation utilizes Mevlevi imagery from historical archives in relation to a specific solar eclipse that I documented in Galata Mevlevihane on March 29, 2006.

In the center of the Galata complex is a cistern that formerly served as the lodge's *çilehane* or underground prayer cell, where male dervishes would spend solitary periods of forty days in silent retreat. Projected into this space will be a video showing a dervish turning unceasingly above the Mevlevihane's gardens and graves. Shot during the peak of the solar eclipse, the video was filmed on the roof of the complex with seven cameras simultaneously.

The dervish in the video is Didem Edman, who in 1993 became the very first woman in Turkey to publicly perform the sema in modern times. Despite the well-documented fact that women had performed the sema together with men since the earliest of times, over the centuries the role of women became eventually restricted to viewing the ritual from behind a screen in a separate room called the *bacılar*.

The video not only documents an actual performance of the sema in Galata Mevelevihane, its projection in the çilehane places the image of a woman in a space where no woman has ever been. Filled with water, the room behind an iron gate remains a darkened chamber that the viewer can only look into, where light from the eclipse illuminates and sound and music reverberate. The sound too, created for this project by Mercan Dede, is that of a female voice, Azam Ali, recorded in Galata Mevlevihane singing in Persian a poem by Rumi. By means of an imagined journey, both image and sound function to draw the viewer, male and female alike, into a space in which they are otherwise physically prohibited from entering.

In Reframing Pilgrimage, Bente Nikolaisen explains in the chapter *Embedded motion: Sacred travel among Mevlevi dervishes,* that "Situated at the heart of Mevlevi theology is not only travel through geography, i.e. traveling to, but also travel of the mind—traveling through." Taking the idea of the "inner pilgrimage" even further, Nikolaisen points out that "the journey of the mind or the soul to reach God is intimately linked to bodily movement through ritual. Therefore, movement through geography, the soul's journey through bodily movement, as well as the process of passing the various stages of your training as a dervish all contribute to the higher goal of seeking knowledge" (Coleman and Eade 91).

Installation art draws attention to the way we experience a particular space or environment. Although an installation temporarily alters a space itself, it changes the way we move through that environment even more. The pilgrim's sacralization of movement and space certainly corresponds to installation art's visceral transformation of the place it exists in. *Reframing Pilgrimage* notes that pilgrimage as ritual and performance involves "sometimes unpredictable encounters between liturgical forms, personal imagination and memory translated into acts of the body." The confines of the çilehane function profoundly as a place devoted to the "journey of the mind", while the installation itself physically embodies this journey by making memory palpably present. In the installation, as well as the original usage of the çilehane, this place's extreme physical limitations are exactly that which enabled first the dervishes, and now the viewer to journey inwardly through active imagination (Coleman and Eade 17).

I do not expect every viewer who comes to either the Kadirihane or the Galata Mevlevihane installations to approach these sites as pilgrims do. Nevertheless, that which often characterizes a pilgrim's encounter with their destination is some form of cognitive transformation, and ideally this can apply to the viewer of art as well. In deed, memory translated into acts of the body challenges the very notion of "viewer" by including each person as performative participant instead.

(Note: *The Geometry of Fire* was created for the Kadirihane during Winter 2006. The Galata Mevlevihane installation continues to be postponed due to ongoing restoration work on the entire museum complex.)

Works Cited

Coleman, Simon and John Eade. *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion.* London: Routledge, 2004.

Lifchez, Raymond. *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Society*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1992.

The Editors welcome submission of material for consideration as an article, as a review, as a comment on articles previously published in *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* or as a note about past events, announcing coming ones, or constituting calls for papers. The articles should be approximately 3000-5000 words in length (12-20 double-spaced pages); the reviews should not exceed 500 words (two double-spaced typed pages). The articles should be consistent with the objectives and scope of *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*. All articles are subject to stylistic editing.

No material will be considered for publication if it is currently under consideration by another journal or press or if it has been published or is soon to be published elsewhere. Both restrictions apply to the substance as well as to the exact wording of the manuscript. If the manuscript is accepted, the editorial board expects that its appearance in *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* will precede republication of the essay, or any significant part thereof, in any other work.

Authors should allow three to six months for a reply after the submission of the manuscript. Manuscripts should be arranged in the format of articles printed in this issue. The text should be organized under appropriate section headings where possible. Notes, limited to explanatory ones, should be included only when absolutely necessary, and preferably in parenthetical form. The MLA author-page style of documentation should be strictly observed. (See Gibaldi, Joseph. *The MLA Manual for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2000.)

Book reviews should include a brief description of the subjects covered in the book; an evaluation of the book's strength and weaknesses; and the kind(s) of audiences to whom the book might appeal. The heading of the review should include the following information:

a. Title.

b. Author(s) or editor(s) names(s).

c. Publication date.

d. Number of pages.

e. Price of book and postage and handling charges (if known).

f. Name and address of publisher.

Manuscripts should be prepared on a word processor and printed double-spaced (including notes and works cited) with wide margins, on one side of the paper only. They should be sent in hard copy (making sure you retain one of your files), along with their rich text format (RTF) or MS-Word (DOC) files on a 3.5 inch HD diskette or CD-Rom in IBM-compatible format, or by attachment of these files to e-mail.

The copyright of all material published will be vested in *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* unless otherwise specifically agreed. This copyright covers exclusive rights of publication on printed or electronic media, including the World Wide Web.

All correspondence for *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* should be addressed to:

Nur Gökalp Akkerman & Barış Gümüşbaş
Department of American Culture and Literature
Faculty of Letters, Hacettepe University
Beytepe - Ankara / Turkey
e-mail: jasteditor@yahoo.com

IN THIS ISSUE

Contents

ISSN 1300-6606

ALP OFSET
ANKARA, 2009