

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

"Rift"

A Written Accompaniment to the Thesis Exhibition

by

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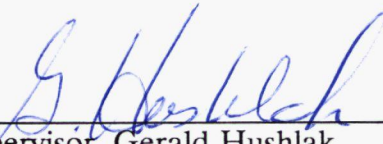
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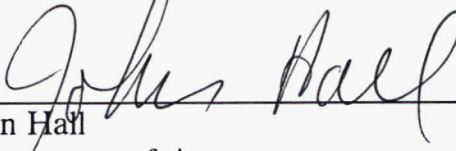
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have viewed and read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, respectively, a Thesis Exhibition and a supporting written paper entitled "Rift": An Accompaniment to the Thesis Exhibition, submitted by Duane Nickerson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.



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## ABSTRACT

My art is the product of desire to affirm a sense of Self, to, in effect, establish a centre. I also view my activity as a producer of art to be part of a tradition in Western culture predicated on the assumption that certain images are more valuable than others. This tradition however, has, of late, been challenged by changes in technologies of image reproduction and the de-authorization of positions held by certain image producers.

I view my production as residing in the rift between legitimate images and methodologies found within the text of art history and illegitimate images and strategies found within mass culture. My aspiration is not new - for many years now artists have been grappling with a so-called Postmodern circumstance wherein their claim to authorship has been usurped by an empowered audience and the destabilization of a prominent ideological paradigm. This paradigm is often described as one based on a metaphysics of presence (and absence) by those attempting to challenge it through the application of parody, pastiche and violence.

My challenge to the said paradigm leads to the production of what I describe as an intentionally failed image. The position that leads me to produce such an

implicitly contradictory product (realised intention seemingly cancels the potential for failure) is one that I describe as comically absurd. My motives for wishing to sustain such a position arise from a perspective I have of my Self as a divided entity existing within a culture that denies my physical presence. The position I describe in the following pages is one that I believe serves to reveal the cultural moment that is currently shaping our reality.

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## INTRODUCTION

Having spent six years studying visual art within an institutional context I am aware of the fact that my understanding of art as both a historical and social phenomena has been shaped by a specific account that, when presented to me, did not divulge its specificity. This account, commonly referred to as *the* history of art, was the authoritative and hence true illustration of what had happened and what was currently happening in places where, apparently, all artists of any consequence worked and lived.

It was in the studio, not the lecture hall, that I first developed serious doubts about the authority of the information I was being given concerning art. Through the activity of moving paint around on canvas, of collecting materials and assembling them, of spending hours just looking at half completed images I realised that art was, to me, more of an exercise in living than a collection of materials gathered together in museums and textbooks. As self-evident as this realization may seem now, I was for a time disenchanted with my art school experience due to the discrepancy I observed in a system that on one hand advocated freedom of expression and, on the other, enforced an economy of production and assessment that I was expected to apply to my work and the work of others.

At this point in my development as an artist I have yet to settle the conflict between my production of legitimate art and my productive activity that creates a by-product but primarily serves as a means for me to expend time in a pleasurable manner. The latter source of motivation lacks the context available through the official document of art history and its official progeny: art theory. In an attempt to resolve the above conflict of intention, at least to the point of unobtrusiveness, I have chosen to present a position in this paper that exists between socio-historical discourse and pleasure theory as I have discovered it within psychoanalytical discourse. This position is reflected in the manner in which I have constructed the text (Section I: History; Section II: Psychology) and in which I have used the narrative position within the construction.

The gap, or rift that characterizes my position of a student of images is also host to a type of image found within popular media which functions neither as art or experience but contains characteristics endemic to both phenomena. Through the application and deliberate manipulation of media images within a traditional painting context I have found a means to continue the production of art in spite of my awareness of the contradictory intentions that reside within such an activity.

In the following paper it is my wish to communicate a sense of my circumstance as a producer of images and as a producer in general who is aware of the emptiness that surrounds his activity.



## SECTION I

*Truth is out of Style*

- MC 900 Ft. Jesus

The above quote heads this discussion of art as it serves to connote a crisis state in relation to standard methods of legitimacy attribution. Processes of legitimation that served to verify art as Art before this crisis state will be described in the following pages. This description is intended to illustrate how the loss of truth in art does not really constitute a crisis.

MC 900 Ft. Jesus is a contemporary musical group that utilizes the now popular strategy know as *retro* (short for retrogressive) to compose pop music. The retro tactic involves a method of appropriation know as sampling wherein a variety of authored sounds and images from an array of stylistic idioms are combined to create a single composition. Of interest here is the fact that the new, *created* composition reveals its sources in an overt manner that calls attention to its assembled quality and its lack of autonomous présence. As a cohesive form however, the composition is a fake and MC 900 Ft. Jesus makes this clear in their music video by placing a ventriloquist's puppet in the position usually reserved for

the author of the composition (the band members).

Looking back at the history of art serves to clarify the fact that there existed among artists and art patrons an aversion for things faked. The art object was a vessel for meaning (and, by extension, truth) and as such was expected to endure through time and space. This criterion of permanence and universality remained central to the process of legitimation up until the latter half of the Twentieth Century. Such a process stems from a strain of ideology that continues to run deep within Western culture.

The etymology of the word *classic* goes back to Ancient Rome where the term *classici* was used to signify citizens of The First Order (in today's terms: the ruling class). *Classicus* was an adjective derived from the noun *classici* and it was used to signify a quality of things distinguished by their association with the ruling class.<sup>1</sup> During the Eighteenth Century in England and France the term *classic* signified a written work produced during the Greco-Roman era and contemporary works imitating qualities indigenous to the ancient texts were described as works composed in the classical tradition.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the Eighteenth Century painters such as David produced Neo-Classical work that was endorsed and highly publicized by the then ruling class.<sup>3</sup>

The word *classic* today invokes qualities such as universality, permanence and

goodness, and is used in discussions on art to describe work that is highly legitimate. In his contribution to the ideology of classicism, Plato implemented the notion of ideal forms. Such forms, Plato claimed, enabled one to judge the quality (truthfulness) of things existing in the material world.<sup>4</sup>

In his now famous description of the bed in Book X of *The Republic*, Plato describes the painter of images as "a simple-minded individual...[who]...could not distinguish between knowledge, ignorance, and imitation."<sup>5</sup> Plato places the product of the painter's effort at the furthest distance from truth relative to other images because of its imitative quality - the image created by the constructed wooden bed was truer than an image made of the image of the bed which, in effect, was a copy of a copy. Given such an illegitimate status by an influential member of the ruling class, artists naturally sought a means to overcome their deception and hence established their images not so much as other specific images (objects in space) but rather according to mathematical principles of proportion and balance.

Plato's theory of ideas was a process of legitimation based on a strategy of forced discipline. In Book VII of *The Republic* Plato describes a dream wherein his concept of the ideal is displayed allegorically. In the dream a man ascends to a state of enlightenment (truth) through leaving behind his fellow citizens who continue to suffer total physical restraint: "... with their neck and legs in fetters, so that they remain in the same place and can only see ahead of them, as their bonds

prevent them from turning their heads."<sup>6</sup> Although Plato describes the image as the product of a dream, the detailed description of the cave dwellers' physical circumstances alludes to a desire on the part of the author to condemn the foil (the unenlightened majority) of his hero (the enlightened philosopher/ruler).<sup>7</sup>

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault describes a transition in the strategy of forced public discipline that occurred at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. In this transition the spectacle of torture and execution was replaced by the spectacle of trial and condemnation - the thud of the axe was transferred into a verbal pronouncement. The new punishment became effective as an institution of public discipline due to the spectators' awareness of its "inevitability" and the fact that the "visual intensity" of the public execution, which implicated both the punished and the executioner in the violence of a crime, was replaced by the unilateral mark of conviction. The executives of social order became aware of the fact that they could increase their power by instituting a "double system of protection... between itself [justice] and the punishment it imposed."<sup>8</sup>

Foucault's assessment of legal punishment is pertinent to the description of punished individuals in Plato's cave. First, it can be established that the occupants of the cave were confined by a natural law that awarded restraint to those individuals who were unable to perceive legitimate reality - their ignorance created the fetters that bound them. The *true* reality observed outside the cave was

contingent upon the confinement of individuals to a less-than-true reality, and the punishment of the confined majority was veiled in the proposed inevitability of the existence of higher and lower realities, the former of which was exclusive to the minority of philosophers/rulers that Plato envisioned in his Utopia.<sup>9</sup>

Foucault's assessment of the "rite of purification and exclusion" practised on lepers at the end of the Middle Ages applies to the above structure of truth.<sup>10</sup> At the time lepers acquired a role in the community as outcasts and such a role served in turn to reinforce the privileged position (purity) of those not afflicted by the disease. Such a practice of exclusion also applies to Plato's concept of natural forms because the natural quality they possessed was contingent upon the presence of a less-than-natural and hence excluded quality (one has only to recall the production of the simple-minded painter). Ironically, the imposition of such an artificial process of legitimation to sustain the naturalness of certain ideal forms contravenes the very quality of naturalness. The unity of style extant within the official record of art produced during the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C. in Greece that caused it to be labelled under the single heading *classic* attests to the effectiveness of an imposed process of legitimation.<sup>11</sup> The strategic enforcement of a standard formal idiom by those in power (both then and now) was successful due to the fact that their strategies of exclusion were veiled by the ruse of a potential state of purity.<sup>12</sup>

The reign of classical style as a means to produce pure (true) form persisted well into the Modern era. The basic premise behind classical thought was that truth, naturalness, beauty, etcetera was found in forms that corresponded with those produced in Classical Greece - the past served to verify the present. During the Middle Ages however, an alternative system of legitimation began to appear. "It was during the Middle Ages that the word *modernus*, an adjective and noun, was coined from the adverb *modo* (meaning *recently, just now*), in the same fashion as *hodiernus* had been derived from *hodie* (today)."<sup>13</sup> It is believed that the word was used as a means to distinguish between things of antiquity and things of the present which, according to a Twelfth Century scholar, were "ahead" of those possessed by "forefathers" and were the product of "know[ing] more" and the ability to "see more and farther than our predecessors... because we are lifted up and born aloft on their gigantic stature."<sup>14</sup>

With the introduction of a concept distinguishing current achievements as "ahead" of those attained in the past a heightened awareness of the present and its future potential ensued. Such an awareness manifested itself in painting in a noticeable way during the Renaissance when painters such as Masaccio and Da Vinci applied theoretical methods to the process of translating the image of reality into paint on canvas. Techniques such as scientific perspective, chiaroscuro and sfumato all served to focus the emphasis of the translation on the details extant within empirical reality - details the ancients would have considered unworthy of depiction

due to their specificity and present-ness. Another sign of the Moderns' desire for progress was the new status artists and their production acquired within society. The "cult of genius" was a product of a newly developed interest in manifestations of the material world, including those created by the special abilities of painters capable of forging ahead into the depths of unknown and bringing truth to the surface for the "ordinary" citizen to see.<sup>15</sup> Such a high degree of personal autonomy and social esteem granted to the artist due to his (not her) divine creative abilities caused the process of product identification now known as style to acquire an important status within production. Michelangelo described his desire for personal liberty in his craft by advocating freedom in his method of visual transcription:

I shall be glad to tell you why it is the custom to paint things that have never existed and how reasonable is this license and how it accords with truth... whenever a great painter makes a work which seems artificial and fake, this falseness is truth; and greater truth in that place would be a lie.<sup>16</sup>

Through the establishment of transgression and idiosyncrasy as a means to validate production in the visual arts, the Renaissance *genius* planted the seed for what, in the Nineteenth Century, became known as the avant-garde artist. This cult of genius issued in the concept of the authored image which conveniently endorsed the practice of ownership that, during the Renaissance, was in full bloom.<sup>17</sup> The avant-garde was, as a cultural term, used first in 1825 by Olinde Rodrigues to describe art's power to efface the cult of ownership that had overtaken society in

the form of industrial capitalism.

It is we, artists, that will serve as your avant-garde; the power of art is indeed the most immediate and the fastest. We have weapons of all sorts: when we want to spread new ideas among people, we carve them in marble or paint them on canvas....<sup>18</sup>

In one sense the artists were condemned to serve the socialist cause and were thus restricted in their position as autonomous creators but, in another, the avant-garde artist was granted the ability to create representations of a better, truer reality than that which existed materially. The latter liberty reflected the creative authority that, since the Renaissance, had provided artists with the ability to pursue alternative modes of representation due to their inside connection with truth.

By the late Nineteenth Century artists were pursuing alternative methods of representation in order to establish themselves as avant-garde and, by extension, geniuses. Transgression became a means of validation within a culture of commodities because the culture could not readily absorb it. Thus the artist, through his isolation, retained a position closer to truth than his colleagues who produced sellable (commodified) pictures. Style became a sign of legitimacy because it connoted a degree of conviction on the artist's part - his artistic vision was important because it signified the presence of a force of legitimation beyond bourgeois culture.

Capitalism is an extremely versatile process of exchange however, and it did not



take long for the avant-garde concept of culture to be absorbed into the commodified bourgeois culture. One of the earliest movements to confront this middle-class diffusion of the avant-garde's artistic agenda was Dada. Richard Huelsenbeck, a key member in both Zurich and Berlin Dada succinctly described the political mandate implicit in Dada's anti-art aesthetic: "The bourgeois must be deprived of the opportunity to buy up art for his justification. Art should altogether get a sound thrashing..."<sup>19</sup> Such a statement reflects the artist's allegiance to Communist ideology that, during the most virile years (1918 - 1919) of the Berlin movement, was common currency among young intellectuals. George Grosz and John Heartfield, both founding members of Berlin Dada, were active members in the Union of Communist Artists. The Malik Printing Press (run by Heartfield's brother) was, during the apogee of the Dadaist revolt, making public words and images that directly condemned the institution that was then in power and which represented the interests of the ruling class.<sup>20</sup>

The bellicose nature of Berlin Dada however, exceeded that required for political activism. It was within Huelsenbeck's statement, made in 1918 during a "Dadarede," that the nihilist stance, developed for the Dadaists' initial political activism, is revealed: "... to be a Dadaist means to let oneself be thrown by things, to oppose all sedimentation: to sit in a chair for a single moment is to risk one's life."<sup>21</sup> It is within this final phase of Dada that one can observe an overthrow of the Modernist, avant-garde agenda in favour of a perpetual delay of ideological

stasis. The agenda however was fuelled by the presence of a complacent bourgeoisie that served as the antithesis - the Other - of their position.

In 1919 the Other was dissolved by an economic disaster which enveloped Germany and hence the anti-bourgeois gesture maintained by the Dadaists was rendered redundant. The post-avant-garde absolute cynicism extant within the theoretical position outlined in the Dada Manifesto of 1920 with such statements as: "To be against this Manifesto is to be a Dadaist!",<sup>22</sup> was sustained by a context of imposed order and thus it would appear that the advocates of the nihilist position were not really "supermen" in the sense that Nietzsche advocated.<sup>23</sup> At best, one could say that the Dadaists suffered from a Sartrean "nausea" brought on by rather brutal conditions which they, of course, attributed to the actions and mere presence of the ruling class.<sup>24</sup> After the first International Dada Fair that was held in Berlin in 1920 the movement subsided as a vital productive force and was absorbed into the mute vaults of art history.

Dada is significant within the story of Modernism and, more specifically, the avant-garde because it did not match the primary characteristic required of components in such a story. The desire for progress through formal innovation was contrary to the Dadaist desire to overthrow any idea or action that remained stable enough to evolve into coherent form. It was through the use of impure, ready-made materials that the artists were able to justify the production of what is now

considered art while at the same time denouncing the validity of such a thing. Through this apparent contradiction it is possible to see how Modernism, by accepting corrupted materials into its arsenal under the guise of bruitism, assimilated the Dada productions as yet another formal precedent for Modern artists to draw upon when making art images. Despite such assimilation however, the Dadaists' nihilist aspirations remain as an example of one possible alternative to art production as image making in the name of God the author (the representative of higher standards of legitimation).

Modernism, or, faith in the future, culminated as a theoretical position in the visual arts with what is today referred to as Greenbergian Modernism. By 1939, when Clement Greenberg wrote the essay *Avant-Garde and Kitsch*, he positioned himself ideologically as a disillusioned Marxist using a platonic concept of quality and the avant-garde to sustain the idea of art as Art within a degenerate, kitsch-producing capitalist mode of production: "The avant-garde poet or artist tries in effect to imitate God by creating something valid solely on its own terms, in the way nature itself is valid... something given, increate, independent of meanings, similars or originals."<sup>25</sup>

Such an idea of autonomous form existing on its own terms (form for form's sake) can be traced back to a development in painting that occurred in the Nineteenth Century when painters such as Turner and Whistler began emphasizing the material

qualities of paint on canvas. The now famous statement made in 1890 by Maurice Denise succinctly described the new vision of painting that accompanied the change of emphasis: "... the picture, before being a horse, a nude or some kind of anecdote is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order..."<sup>26</sup> Following such a change in focus were aesthetic theories that described form itself as the fundamental component of an aesthetic experience. In 1910 Clive Bell, an English philosopher, coined the term "significant form" to describe that facet of the art object which contained aesthetic meaning.<sup>27</sup> Due to its readily accessible (sensual) quality and its inevitability within works of art, significant form was something available to everyone. This trans-cultural, trans-historical and trans-class aspect of art that existed in its visible form suited well the democratic aspirations of both Capitalists and Marxists.

The politically androgenous quality of formal aesthetics was a refuge that many artists sought after the politically tumultuous years of the late 1930's when Stalin's totalitarianism was revealed by, among others, Trotsky in *Partisan Review* (the same magazine that Greenberg's *Avant-garde and Kitsch* essay appeared in). Faced with the apparent dead-end extant in both right and left wing political positions the avant-garde was faced with discovering a new means of battling cultural complacency. Greenberg later wrote about the period: "... some day it will have to be told how anti-Stalinism which started out more or less as Trotskyism turned into art for art's sake, and thereby cleared the way, heroically, for what was to

come."<sup>28</sup> The "heroic" progression that Greenberg cited as the critical factor in the avant-garde's triumph over politics was, in painting, the implementation of a purifying process wherein the artist pursued significant form through an analysis of the qualities of his or her medium. In his 1960 essay *Modernist Painting* Greenberg sets down the basic principle which, he believed, allowed artists to pursue quality in the face of bourgeois "Alexandrianism."<sup>29</sup> The basic principle was that artists, if they wished to be Modern (and hence legitimate), must maintain a reflexive manner of working wherein any extraneous elements within their production would be cast aside in the name of purity. Such reflexivity would, according to Greenberg, "narrow its [the particular medium's] area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of this area all the more secure."<sup>30</sup> Within the medium of painting Greenberg deduced that such an area of competence resided in flatness which "remained most fundamental in the processes by which pictorial art criticized and defined itself under Modernism."<sup>31</sup>

It is at this stage in the so-called development of painting that iconoclasm became entrenched in the very process of image production as a means of legitimation. Plato's condemnation of the imitator - the image maker - was, through Greenbergian Modernism, re-instituted as a veiled strategy wherein all artists except those adopting his (Greenberg's) criterion for quality were "using art to conceal art."<sup>32</sup> They were, in short, "fettered" by the illusions that they produced. Painting had evolved into a flat object and it was imperative for artists to maintain the

continuity inherent in the evolutionary process and to recognize the primary position evolution had in the establishment of truth. In the final paragraph of *Modernist Painting* Greenberg wrote: "Nothing could be further from the authentic art of our time than the idea of a rupture of continuity. Art is among many other things continuity."<sup>33</sup>

The moral imperative implicit in Greenberg's continuity through the purification of means was, by the late 1950's, an object that was played upon by second generation abstract painters such as Rauschenberg and Johns. While other, more *serious* painters were refining the painted image out of existence, Johns and Rauschenberg were introducing the painted object into their work. Their playfulness however, was based on the Modern desire for progress and continuity.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, many other painters were attempting to decide what to do since image painting had hit a blank wall of object-ness and subsequently died as a legitimate art practice.<sup>35</sup>

The so-called dematerialization of the art object that occurred in the 1960's and 1970's (now referred to as Conceptualism) served as witness to the fact that the Greenbergian desire to ascend the ladder of purification was still alive and active. Susan Sonntag, an eloquent and astute cultural observer of the period, described the project of dematerialized art as being the reinvention of spirituality. In her essay *The Aesthetics of Silence* Sonntag describes the cause of the non-materiality

of artwork produced in such a project:

As the activity of the mystic must end in 'via negativae,' a theology of God's absence, a craving for a cloud of unknowing beyond knowledge and beyond speech, so art must end toward anti-art, the elimination of the 'subject' (the 'object,' the 'image'), the substitution by chance for intention and the pursuit of silence.<sup>36</sup>

Such a description brings to light Marcel Duchamp, the father of Conceptualism. Duchamp's insistence on aesthetic indifference, chance occurrence, and his renunciation of art generally in favour of chess, all fit Sonntag's description of the mystic's approach to legitimacy through negation.<sup>37</sup> Implicit in such a rigorous negation of intention and materiality however, was a desire for purity and truth as powerful as that held by the iconoclasts in the Middle Ages and more intense than that expressed by Greenberg in his defence of quality and form. Sonntag suggests that such a desire was in fact the result of a need for general superiority:

For, to be a victim of the craving for silence is to be, in still a further sense, superior to everyone else. It suggests that the artist has had the wit to ask more questions than other people, and that he possesses stronger nerves and higher standards of excellence.<sup>38</sup>

Once again, one is left to conjure up the vision of masses chained from head to toe with ignorance while the enlightened one, the true Modern, ascends into the realm of truth. The presence of Conceptualism's lack-of-form strategy marked a turning point in the Modernist strategy wherein the inevitability of progress granted legitimacy to any work that manifested formal innovation. Once the lack-of-form *move* was made a rethinking of strategy had to occur. Kim Levin summed up the formal climax of Greenbergian Modernism rather well: "In a sense, it was the

ultimate god-like act of Modernism: creating a work out of nothing. In another sense it was obvious that something was over."<sup>39</sup>

The dilemma that accompanied the overthrow of the last bastion of Modernist ideology in art was caused by a conflict between the artist's desire to produce, to affirm a sense of self, and his or her awareness of the obsolescence of the concept of progress as a means of validation. In the 1970's the dilemma was challenged by artists who claimed to have overthrown the criterion of authenticity within the process of artistic legitimation. Such a claim was, of course, contradictory since the very concept of legitimacy relied upon the presence of authenticity or truthfulness but, despite the contradiction, the claim persisted under the label of Postmodernism. Ironically, the loss of such an essential criterion that had for so many years sustained the practice of art making caused an upsurge, at least in painting, in production and variety within the product. Levin, an art observer working in New York at the time, described the revival of painting as follows:

In the art world, the '80's began in the wake of a proliferating array of simultaneous art movements. Including Narrative Art, 'Bad Painting,' Pattern and Decoration, New Imagism, New Wave, Naive Nouveau, and any number of personal 'retro' revivals spontaneously generated and often instantly obsolete....<sup>40</sup>

The spontaneous generation and instant obsolescence endemic to the refreshed practice of image production brings to mind the ideal circumstances sought by the Berlin Dadaists. The difference between the two historical periods resides in the fact that the Postmodern image makers harboured no revolutionary agenda aimed



at toppling institutions of power. One could say that the Postmodern (after-Modern) painters were content to philander within the illusory reality of the "cave" and that the "fetters" were accepted as a kind of inevitability to be dealt with in terms of dramatic irony. The alternative to a playful approach was one based on violence for the sake of violence. Although the latter served as a means of self-affirmation in the same manner as the first, it also led to a dead-end - a vacuum - that Umberto Eco described as silence: "The postmodern reply [to Modernism] ... consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently."<sup>41</sup>

Irony attacks the implicit assertion of truth found in strategies of legitimation. By asserting more than one discourse in order to confront the authority of a legitimate statement or gesture, an incidence of irony creates a polysemous arena wherein assertions based on confirmation through a single discourse become inherently suspect. The potential for a Postmodern reversion to Classical ideals disappeared along with the innocence that accompanied the omnipotent discourse endemic to Western colonial ideology - all that was left was the interior of the "cave." The Postmodern artist was one attempting to produce images when: "Truth is out of style." Such images consist of style entirely as the loss of truth has caused the artist to lose his or her ability to create images by any means except through combining manifestations of past art (products of innocence) and present imitations (products of lost innocence).

## SECTION II

*Life, as we find it, is too hard for us, it brings us too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks. In order to bear it we cannot dispense with palliative measures.<sup>42</sup>*

I delegate meanings for my art making activity through examining the effects that psychological and social forces have on my actions when I am engaged in the activity. In the above quote Freud cites the necessity of "palliative measures" within one's life due to the harshness of so-called reality. Freud labels one type of such measures "powerful deflections" and claims that art making activity serves as an example of such a deflection.<sup>43</sup> As a result of the significant role that palliative measures play (according to Freud's theory) in the maintenance of the individual's psychological health, it is possible to concede that activities pursued in the drive to palliate the pain of life share a status equal to that held by food and sex in relation to the general conception of the human hierarchy of needs. As an artist, it is my view that such implications of Freud's theoretical understanding of the art making process as a palliative measure do correspond with my experience.

Since I have chosen to pursue the activity of an artist it would seem a reasonable gesture to now ascertain why I have chosen such a role as my primary means of sustaining psychological health. Freud's explanation for my choice involves what I

describe as the "marked individual" scenario. This scenario applies the idea of a natural disability to explain the cause of the artist's choice to be an artist and to maintain the distinctive quality of the artist's activity.<sup>44</sup> I do not accept the "marked individual" scenario because it is based on the popular conception that artists are more insane than the average individual in our society - such a line of reasoning does little to clarify the cause of my desire to produce images.<sup>45</sup> It is my belief that my desire stems from a childhood situation wherein I was expected to consume time and energy without adult assistance. Such imposed privacy allowed me to discover the satisfaction inherent in the activity of manipulation images and imaginary narratives. Furthermore, I also discovered the pleasure of attracting an audience through engaging them with my visual images.

I am aware that most children pass through a stage wherein they find access to fantasy through image production and ego reinforcement by attention gained from adults who view image production as good for their children. In my case, the desire for visual fantasy and adult attention was sufficiently powerful to persist through childhood to adolescence and further on to adulthood. Today, I refer to the cause of my desire as residing in: 1) my sex instinct; and 2) my ego instinct.

In his essay *Leonardo da Vinci: A Study in Psychosexuality* Freud describes the famous Renaissance artist as an individual who "transmuted his passion into inquisitiveness."<sup>46</sup> Freud's thesis in this work is based on the observation that Da

Vinci left behind a legacy that attests to a higher than average prolificacy and a lower than average sexual drive. The latter characteristic is manifested in written evidence that reveals what could be described as a rather frigid disposition: "The act of procreation and everything that has any relation to it is so disgusting that human beings would soon die out if it were not a traditional custom, and if there were no pretty faces and sensuous dispositions."<sup>47</sup> The implication that is central to Freud's assessment of Da Vinci is that there exists a direct connection between the sex instinct (the libido) and the desire to acquire knowledge and produce art. I find the evidence of such a connection very convincing both as it applies to Da Vinci's life and to my own experience.

Anyone who has mixed oil paint on a palette understands the sensuous quality of such material and its resemblance to body fluids such as semen and saliva. This material correspondence could serve to, in part, explain the sublimation of the need for certain key sensory stimulus found within a sexual encounter. Another example of correspondence between the experience of sex and act of painting is the visual component which is endemic to both phenomena. The manner in which I look at images as a painter differs from the manner in which I look at images in common experience. As a painter my look is engaged by the visual information which is present before my eye, which is absent from my eye and which is anticipated by my eye. In short, my look is active, it penetrates the field in which my painting exists. Freud labelled the desire to look for the purposes of sexual gratification

"scotophilia." Such a sexual look, Freud claimed, is characterized by the manner in which it acts upon an "extraneous object" within the viewing subject's field.<sup>48</sup>

The look I expend on a painting however, differs from the type extant within the sexual gaze because the focus of my vision is not a gendered subject but rather a composition of material components such as tone, colour and texture. I describe the incident of this focus on the material syntax of a painting as a sublimated sexual gaze and it is my belief that this specific incidence of sublimation constitutes the core of the exchange between my libido and the act of painting.

The manner in which the painting act serves to support my ego instinct further endorses Freud's conception of the necessity of palliative measures and it also undermines the common belief that visual artists speak through their images. According to Freud, it is not until a child becomes aware of his or her Self as a distinct entity, as separate from the mother, that it is possible to really discuss ego development. During the pre-Oedipal stage wherein a child encounters no distinction between the realm of the subjective and objective orders there exists no division of Self, no identity anxiety stimulus for the ego instincts to act against. Lacan describes this state of wholeness as the "imaginary order" wherein meaning and experience are integrated into a pre-linguistic event.<sup>49</sup> Through the act of painting I find that it is possible to retrieve a vestige of this lost unity of experience.

From the position of the Other my paintings could read as hand-crafted objects; produced in an era obsessed with technology and mechanized productivity.<sup>50</sup> From the position of the Self however, my paintings can read as extensions of my body, as objects that reflect my presence and hence affirm my position at the centre of my universe. Merleau-Ponty describes this regression back to the imaginary order through the very act of looking as an enigma:

The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the 'other side' of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing, it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensible for itself.<sup>51</sup>

From the position of the painter, the producer of the reflecting image, the "other side" of the look is so evident that I often succumb to the pleasure inherent in a visual dialogue wherein I exert apparent control as creator of the looking circuit.

Ego reinforcement through control of the dialogue between look and image return is illusory and subject to the intrusion of the Other. The anxiety of a decentred Self is never so remote that I can ignore the circumstances wherein my image production takes place because the presence of the Other most readily manifests itself in the look cast by other bodies. Such susceptibility to the presence of others is perhaps one reason why many visual artists who seek ego reinforcement through their activity prefer to work in isolation. Also, visual artists are not alone in possessing a look that is fragile. Sartre, a contemporary of Merleau-Ponty, gives this description of his awareness of the weakness inherent in a centred vision of the

world:

The Other is first the permanent flight of things toward a goal which I apprehend as an object at a certain distance from me but which escapes me inasmuch as it unfolds about itself its own distance... I apprehend the relation of the green [Sartre is sitting in a park] to the Other as an objective relation, but I can not apprehend the green 'as' it appears to the Other. Thus suddenly an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me.<sup>52</sup>

It appears that, once having passed from the imaginary order in my development as a conscious being, it is futile to attempt in my art practice a reintegration of Self and the universe. As long as the Other persists through the presence of conscious objects my aspiration to maintain an ego, to establish a centre, will remain unfulfilled. It is only in the act of painting that I can achieve the illusion of a solitary dialogue with my world and thus temporarily sublimate my ego instinct which is appeased only when "I" control the visual universe. Such sublimation allows me to exist as a subject in the presence of the Other without succumbing to anxiety caused by the Other's threat to my illusion of Self.

In returning to the position of the Other, my paintings read as social objects which are consumed by discourse. I have observed that discourse appropriates my paintings regardless of whether or not my intentions as a producer correspond with the agenda manifest within the folds of the discourse. There are many types of discourse and each comes complete with an agenda and an ideological root. Due to its inherent connection with ideology, discourse tends to colonize the experience

of the bodies it inhabits and hence a painter's relationship to his or her paintings' can be rendered irrelevant in terms of the paintings' potential meanings. As a carrier of ideology myself, it is possible to claim that my action as a painter precedes my presence and that the product of my action precedes the intentional gesture of the action itself. Such a view of ideology smacks of determinism but it is my belief that the polysemous potential of an object of discourse is confirmed by the multiplicity of discourses which can act upon it - such potential undermines the unitary implications of a deterministic perspective. The means by which determinism acquires credence as an outcome of ideology is through the application of power. As long as power is contained I am free to choose and change my discourses as I wish but once I consent to the body of a certain discourse I am limited by its ideological parameters in the same manner that a community of speakers is confined to its semantic lexicon. Saussure described the latter confinement as follows:

The signifier, though to all appearances freely chosen with respect to the idea that it represents, is fixed, not free, with respect to the linguistic community that uses it. The masses have no voice in the matter, and the signifier chosen by language could be replaced by no other.<sup>53</sup>

So, along with discourse, a viewer's perception is also conditioned by language itself. Lacan uses the term "symbolic order" to describe the relationship between an individual's awareness and the world around him or her.<sup>54</sup> Unlike the at-one-with-the-world state endemic to a child's awareness within the imaginary order, the symbolic order is distinguished by the fact that an individual within it does not have



access to experience that is not mediated by language. Terry Eagleton describes a child's entry into the symbolic order in a manner that reflects the loss of what could be viewed as the *authentic* experience of the imaginary order:

The child must now resign itself to the fact that it can never have any direct access to reality, in particular to the now prohibited body of the mother. It has been banished from this 'full' imaginary possession into the 'empty' world of language. Language is empty because it is just an endless process of difference and absence: instead of being able to possess anything in its fullness, the child will now simply move from one signifier to another, along a linguistic chain which is potentially infinite.<sup>55</sup>

As a participant in the symbolic order my actions are also subject to the conditions of language, therefore my production as an artist operates beyond my control. My power of awareness is curtailed by the limits of my language and thus even my claim to possession of an image according to the ideological parameters of a specific discourse is subsumed by the omnificent power of language. Under these conditions, any claim on my part to authority over the meanings of my paintings would constitute a delusion of a rather large order.

Traditionally, the meaning of artwork is considered to be the responsibility of the artist because it is assumed that the motive for production resides in a desire, on the part of the artist, to communicate. In his essay *The Death of the Author*, Barthes provides a succinct interpretation of this traditional expectation that the audience has of its performer: "The explanation of a work of art is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the

transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author, confiding in us."<sup>56</sup> As can be ascertained from the title, Barthes' intent in the above essay is to overthrow the said tradition as it is used in the interpretation of works of art. An alternative and more appropriate means of interpreting artwork, Barthes suggests, is available through an empowered (as opposed to passive) reader (although Barthes structures his argument around the written artwork it is possible, I believe, to apply his observations to visual media due to the previously discussed nature of all post-imaginary experience).

The reader is the space on which all quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted.<sup>57</sup>

Barthes' observation that the reader retains no personal identity in his or her encounter with an artwork serves to compliment the previous observations I have made concerning the linguistic mediation of experience. This aspect of experience serves to prevent the reading subject from participating in the text as an outsider because it is through the reading that the participating subject is constituted along with the meaning of the text. As a producer of visual texts I see my situation as susceptible to the same limitations as the reader of texts. What I do as a producer is essentially play with the infinite array of visual signifiers in an attempt to assert my autonomy as a subject through containing incidents of the surface reality that, in fact, contains me. Such an explanation of my activity suggests the cause of my

desire to paint images that already exist within popular media - it is this type of image that best exemplifies the visual circumstance in this "Age of Anxiety."<sup>58</sup>

In his description of today's electronically generated reality, Baudrillard emphasizes its distinct quality of depthlessness:

There is no longer any transcendence or depth, but only the immanent surface of operations unfolding, the smooth and functional surface of communication. In the image of television, the most beautiful prototypical object of this new era, the surrounding universe and our very bodies become monitoring screens.<sup>59</sup>

Reminiscent of McLuhan's concept of media as "extensions of man," Baudrillard's image of bodies as monitoring screens serves to express a state of technology that has rendered our bodies redundant. Having embraced this technology we have become what McLuhan describes as "servomechanisms": we serve the technology that is presumed to serve us. Our body systems adjust to the new stimulus created by technology and in the process of the adjustment, they lose their sensitivity to stimulus from the less technological environment. Our bodies, in effect, become "monitoring screens" for the evolution of technology.

One difference between experiencing reality mediated by language and experiencing reality as a servomechanism lies in the fact that the two different experience granting media (language and electronics) rely on two different types of syntax. Within language, meaning is constituted through difference and similarity and the

surface instances of this meaning are observable and flexible in their formation of experience. Within electronic media the formation of meaning occurs above my threshold of observation and therefore the reality experience provided by it is lacking an observable syntax. Described by McLuhan as the "net of rationality" syntax provides me with a means to glimpse a presence of Self - when I can observe the process by which meaning is constructed I can see my presence as preceding meaning and hence as the factor that facilitates meaning.<sup>60</sup> This residual awareness of Self that remains accessible through my awareness of syntax lends a sense of depth, of three dimensions, to my linguistic experience.

As in language, the experience of observing a painting also provides me with the rather antiquarian sense of syntactical arrangement. In the encounter with a painting I am aware of the material components that were arranged to create the illusion of a single image and I am aware of my awareness of this arrangement. With a photograph or television image I am condemned to the role of a passive observer because the material arrangement that constitutes such an image exists beyond my perceptual limitations. The lack of depth or two dimensional quality of current communication that Baudrillard speaks of is a result of the said invisible syntax which does not probe my scope of depth experience.

The surface interface between my body and the new media does allow for an extended capacity, on my part, to access information but it also robs me of the

ability to discern dimensional difference in the conveyed information. My body compensates for the increase in information intake by performing on itself what McLuhan describes as "autoamputation": its increase in intake ability displaces (amputates) its ability to discriminate between the real and simulacrum.<sup>61</sup> The result of this loss of discriminatory sense manifests itself in a type of narcosis I suffer when I am engaged with the new media. Baudrillard describes this narcosis as obscene:

The obscenity of our culture resides in the confusion of desire and its equivalent materialized in the image; not only for sexual desire, but in the desire for knowledge and its equivalent materialized in 'information,' the desire for fantasy and its equivalent materialized in the Disneylands of the world, the desire for space and its equivalent programmed into vacation itineraries, the desire for play and its equivalent programmed into private telematics.<sup>62</sup>

According to myth, Narcissus became so enraptured by his own image that he was unable to interact with the world beyond it. The narcosis I suffer as a servomechanism of current communications media resembles that which overtook Narcissus because I have lost the sensitivity required for interaction with information that has now been processed electronically and which therefore is both reality and a representation of reality simultaneously. The characteristic of simultaneity is a product of the transparent syntax discussed earlier and it produces a type of vital experience that is self-verified and thus has the power to transport me into an imaginary order that consists of simulacra. Such an experience of vitality, despite its lack of association with so-called empirical reality, resembles

what Nietzsche described as Dionysian ecstasy:

In song in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and to speak; he is about to take a dancing flight into the air. His very gestures bespeak enchantment... He feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like the gods whom he saw walking about in his dreams. He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art....<sup>63</sup>

Certainly there exists a difference between the physical agitation described above and the state of physical stasis I experience when engaged by current media. The similarity between the two states resides in the mind of the *enchanted* individual where Self and Other meet. In dance and in visual narcosis the ego instinct is overpowered by the sheer volume of stimuli and the body is entranced by the rhythm that leaks through the apparent chaos and speaks of what Nietzsche describes as "Primordial Unity."<sup>64</sup>

Losing subjective orientation is a means of experiencing the so-called ecstasy of enchantment but is also, according to Nietzsche, a means to "true knowledge" wherein one sees "everywhere only the terror or the absurdity of existence" due to the awareness that one's "action cannot change the eternal nature of things."<sup>65</sup> As a producer of images I am acutely aware of the insignificance of my actions and this awareness does cause me to feel a certain existential terror which I usually describe as fear. This fear threatens my ability to palliate reality with my image making process because it saps the power of my will and, due to the significance of the palliative component within my activity, I am obliged to counter this fear

with strategies that I build into my process. One such strategy is found in my choice of a medium and style that require a substantial amount of time and attention in the mere rendering of images - such rendering serves as a distraction from the said fear. A second strategy involves my choice of images which usually serve to amplify the anachronistic quality of my chosen medium which is, for the most part, oil on canvas. This second strategy is very important because it provides me with a certain comic relief that allows me to persist as an active individual despite the pressure of the said fear.

The pursuit of the comic is itself a palliative measure. Nietzsche described the origin of the comic response with typical eloquence:

If we consider that for many thousands of years man was an animal that was susceptible in the highest degree to fear, and that everything sudden and unexpected had to find him ready for battle, perhaps even ready for death; that even later, in social relations, all security was based on the expected, on custom in thought and action, we need not be surprised that at everything sudden and unexpected in word and deed, if it occurs without danger or injury, man becomes exuberant and passes over into the very opposite of fear - the terrified, trembling, crouching being shoots upward, stretches itself: man laughs.<sup>66</sup>

It is the liberating quality of the comic and its affirmative response to the rigors of existence that attract me. As an artist I feel that my activity is inherently comic and my intention, if I have one at all, could perhaps be described as an attempt to manifest through my failed images the larger failed image (extent within current media) that I believe serves to best characterize our condition as a species at this moment.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the theme of indeterminacy predominates in my work. In terms of the historical discourse dealt with in Section I of this paper, the awareness I share with other artists who describe their production as Postmodern serves to position my work within an idiom that is characterized by hypertrophy. I persist in my production despite the inherent ideological chaos of this idiom through adopting a strategy based upon irony. Such a strategy runs contrary to the traditional structure of art historical discourse because it defies the principle method of legitimation extant within such a discourse. Such a method, which utilizes forced exclusion of conflicting positions, can be discovered in the formal and ideological paradigms extant within the historical traditions of Classicism and Modernism.

In terms of my personal motives for production, indeterminacy is revealed through an analysis rooted in psychoanalytic discourse. The conflict between Self and Other, that in many respects serves to fuel my continued production, is perpetual due to the fact that both phenomena are fictional constructs that cannot solve the *sense* of conflict within my mind. Through my production I am reminded of my lack of position as a subject and my ability to veil this lack through production causes me to produce simply for the sake of production. Without the capacity to



sustain a personal motive for my activity I am left to simply affirm my absence with a comic gesture.

The indeterminacy that marks my art making activity reflects a phenomenon that affects all activity despite influence perpetrated by context. I describe this phenomenon as the condition which precedes all action and serves as the root of one of the most illusive of human traits: curiosity. I respect this condition by admitting to indeterminacy.

## NOTES

1. Micheal Greehalgh, The Classical Tradition in Art (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1978), p. 11.
2. The division of history into three periods occurred in the early Renaissance. These periods were titled: Antiquity, The Middle Ages and Modernity. Antiquity referred to the Classical era and was generally considered to be an example of enlightenment especially by individuals wishing to break with the traditions of the Dark Ages. Such individuals were labelled as Neo Classicist due to their allegiance to the standards of Antiquity.

Matei Calinescu, The Five Faces of Modernity (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 20.

3. David's paintings were repeatedly exhibited at State funded salons in Paris. In 1795 the Government Committee for Public Instruction ordered an engraving done of a David painting so that the image could be widely distributed to the masses who would, apparently, benefit from seeing its virtuous qualities.

Greenhalgh, p. 210.

4. In Book V of *The Republic* Plato describes philosophers as individuals "who love the spectacle of truth" and are able to distinguish it by means of knowledge that allows him to distinguish "what is" (the Platonic Forms) from "what is not." Access to truth therefore was permitted through the presence of Platonic Forms.

Plato, The Republic, trans., G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 135-137.

5. Ibid. p. 243.
6. Ibid. p. 168.

7. In Book III of *The Republic* Plato describes the "golden nature" required of those who rule. Due to the importance of the element of wisdom in the constitution of this "golden nature" it is possible to deduce, given the philosopher's stake in wisdom, that the prime candidate for leadership of Plato's republic would be Plato himself.

Ibid., p. 81.

8. Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), p. 10.
9. Grube, p. 170.
10. Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), p. 3.

11. The following is an example of statements commonly made by scholars of Greek art:

The greeks, by the universal confession of artists and students, bore the message... to men in all ages. Their art was classical, that is, it conformed to what is permanent and above criticism in human life.

Percy Gardner, A Grammar of Greek Art (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1905), p. 16.

12. The Greek polis (city-state) was characterized by a rigid power structure that denied women, slaves and all men who were not born within the polis they inhabited the right to vote or own property. Those who participated in the Athenian democracy constituted approximately ten percent of the local populace. Most large scale works of the period were commissioned by this privileged minority.

Walter A. Agard, What Democracy Meant to the Greeks (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin, 1960), pp. 70, 103.

13. Calinescu, p. 13.

14. Ibid., p. 14.

15. Janson cites that before the year 1500 the act of creation was commonly considered to be available only to God.

H.W. Janson, History of Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1963), p. 348.

16. Robert Goldwater and Marco Treaves, eds., Artists on Art (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 70.

17. By the Twelfth Century money again became a means of exchange in the West and by the Fifteenth Century cities such as Florence, Italy were thriving due to a highly developed monetary economy.

Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, Volume II (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1962), pp. 1 - 9.

18. Calinescu, p. 103.

19. Robert Motherwell, ed., The Dada Painters and Poets (New York: George Wittenborn Inc., 1951), p. 44.

20. Wieland Hertzfeld, the owner of the Malik Printing Press, was briefly imprisoned due to the subversive content of the Dada publications he helped produce. These publications were usually banned after first issues thus the producers were forced to re-title their periodical for every issue.

Hans Richter, Dada Art and Anti-Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1965), p. 112.

21. Ibid., p. 107.

22. Motherwell, p. 246.

23. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche describes the "superman" as one who acts according to will, not according to a standard set by God or by tradition. Through acting against the bourgeois order the Dadaists could be described as acting according to the standard of the social revolutionary.

Freidrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961), pp. 214-232.

24. Sartre used the term *nausea* to describe the response felt by one experiencing the world from an existential point of view.

Jean-Paul Sartre, Nausea, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1964).

25. Clement Greenberg, Art and Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 7.

26. Howard Risatti, Postmodern Perspectives: Issues in Contemporary Art (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1990), p. 1.

27. Clive Bell, Art (London: Chatto & Windus, 1914), p. 14.

28. Greenberg, p. 230.

29. Greenberg used the term *Alexandrianism* to describe artwork that fit within the parameters of a status quo extant within the aesthetic taste of a given population at a given time. This type of art did not challenge formal standards and therefore was characterized by its conventional quality.

Greenberg, p. 8.

30. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," Art and Literature, no. 4 (1965), rpt. in Modern Art and Modernism, eds. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison (New York: Harper Row, Publishers, 1982), p. 5.

31. Ibid., p. 6.
32. Ibid., p. 6.
33. Ibid., p. 10.
34. In an interview with Barbara Rose published in 1987 Rauschenberg stated:  
"... I thought that my friends [Johns was a close acquaintance at the time] and I were inventing art. The exhilaration of the idea of invention is missing today."  
  
Elizabeth Avedon, ed., Rauschenberg (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 49.
35. Although it was, among the American painters, Rauschenberg who anticipated Minimalist painting with his *White Painting* of 1951, artists such as Stella, Marden, Ryman and Mangold pursued the aesthetic agenda implicit in Greenbergian Modernism. All of the above artists made paintings during the fifties and sixties that are now described as monochromatic and resemble painted objects more than painted images.
36. Susan Sonntag, "The Aesthetics of Silence," Twentieth Century Criticism, eds. William J. Handy and Max Westbrook (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1974), p. 454.
37. In an interview Duchamp stated that his reason for not following the traditional approach to art production was due to laziness: "I would have wanted to work, but deep down I'm enormously lazy. I like living, breathing, better than working... my art would be that of living...."  
  
Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues With Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), p. 72.
38. Sonntag, p. 455.
39. Kim Levin, Beyond Modernism: Essays on Art from the 70's and 80's (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p. 5.

40. Ibid., p. 162.
41. Calinescu, p. 277.
42. Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1961), p. 22.
43. Ibid., p. 26.
44. In his essay *Formulations Regarding the Two Principles of Mental Functioning*, Freud describes the artist as an individual endowed with "special gifts" that allow him to become "the hero, king, creator, favourite he desired to be, without pursuing the circuitous path of creating real alterations in the other world."
- Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers Volume IV, trans. Joan Riviere (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925), p. 19.
45. By stating that "The artist is originally a man who turns from reality because he cannot come to terms with the demand for the renunciation of the instinctual satisfaction..." Freud implies that the artist is distinct through this characteristic. In his own theory however Freud concedes that all men suffer disenchantment from the reality principle.
- Ibid., p. 19.
46. Sigmund Freud, Leonardo da Vinci: A Study in Psychosexuality, trans. A.A. Brill (New York: Random House Inc., 1947), p. 20.
47. Ibid., p. 15.
48. Freud, Collected Papers Volume IV, p. 72.

49. In 1953 Lacan introduced the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real Orders of experience into the psychoanalytic "topography." The Imaginary is described as "phantasies in the technique of the psychoanalytic experience and in the constitution of the object at various stages of psychic development." I used the preverbal stage of development as an example of the Imaginary because it is at this stage that the distinction between the Symbolic and the Imaginary is highly accessible conceptually.

Jacques Lacan, La Psychoanalyse, Vol. I (1956), rpt. in The Language of Self, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 3.

50. The term Other is used in a variety of ways in psychoanalytical discourse to signify the unconscious in its various forms. In this section of the paper I use the term to signify the transsubjective form of the unconscious.

51. Alden L. Fisher, ed., The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1969), p. 256.

52. Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Books Inc., 1968), p. 343.

53. Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, eds. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehage, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Owen Publishers, 1961), p. 71.

54. Lacan, p. 6.

55. Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1983), p. 71.

56. Roland Barthes, "The Death of The Author" Mentela V, 1968, rpt. in Image/Music/Text, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1977), p. 143.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 148.



58. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 20.
59. Jean Baudrillard, The Ecstasy of Communication, trans. Bernard and Caroline Schutze (New York: Autonomedia, 1988), p. 12.
60. McLuhan, p. 170.
61. McLuhan views the process of autoamputation as analogous to the narcosis suffered by Narcissus when he focused his attention on his own image and subsequently lost his sensitivity to surrounding reality. In his analogy McLuhan compares the water surface which reflected Narcissus' image with the current technology we presently use to represent reality.
- Ibid., pp. 51-52.
62. Baudrillard, p. 35.
63. Freidrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, rpt. in Philosophies of Art and Beauty, eds. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 501.
64. Ibid., p. 501.
65. Ibid., p. 521.
66. Freidrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human, Vol. I*, rpt. in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, ed. Geoffrey Clive (New York: The New American Library, 1965), p. 520.

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