

LAURENCE A. RICKELS

# WOODS

ON IDENTIFICATION  
WITH LOST CAUSES

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Appointed as Professor of Art and Theory at the Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe in 2011, I felt my third curatorial exercise coming on. In 1999 I listened to artists in Los Angeles complain about the quality of local review criticism and art journalism and proceeded to mount by their commission, as it were, a group exhibition, “Art/Journalism,” to document their side in the split. When Mandarin Gallery in Los Angeles invited me to organize a group exhibition for that venue in 2004 I selected for “alle-gory” works I had encountered during studio visits in the last six months prior to the invitation. For this show, “wood(s),” I came up with a title or topic I felt appropriate to the setting of my new appointment, but which was at the same time flexible enough, like a rebus, to reflect diverse juxtapositions. The artworks shown in “wood(s)” were selected from within two clearings or *Lichtungen*, the enrollment in my seminars in Karlsruhe and the Zwinger Galerie’s stable of artists.

I began to select from my reflections and fixed on the witches’ prophecy of Macbeth’s indestructibility until Birnam wood should advance against him. By this spirit guidance I was brought before the enigmatic problem of those Freud characterized as wrecked by success, which he largely illustrated through a reading of *Macbeth*. It is by the notion of identification with lost causes, for which a mobilized Birnam wood is but another vehicle or weapon, like the Trojan Horse or the V2 rocket, that I saw the opportunity for bringing it all within range of my ongoing work on unmourning.

Rather than offer commentary on the exhibition as fictional whole, then, I pursued another skewed relationship to the rebus title and joined the juxtaposition of individual works as another singularity. For this book my essay departs from its position within the assembly of exhibited works and assumes the foreground. That the images of the individual works have been included on their own, in their propensity for juxtaposition rather than as illustration, is the continuity shot with the exhibition.

Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until /  
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill /  
Shall come against him. (IV.1.91-93)

We are following out the trajectory of Birnam wood or woods, the immobility of which was the guarantee the witches gave Macbeth that he would remain inviolate – save for the impossible prospect of the wood(s) advancing. I take from the ambulatory timber my roaming charge, but begin along the two routes open through psychoanalysis: one, the symptom of being wrecked by success, which Freud introduced via his analysis of the Macbeth couple, and, two, the mass psychological tendency, corollary to the wreckage on center stage, to identify with lost causes, including those of thwarted villains like the Macbeths.

That Lady Macbeth can't "out" the damn spot confirms an internal reservation about the success of her power couple, a success upon which she is wrecked. For her husband the wreckage hides behind two impossibilities, which are reversed as forms of the possible. Macbeth can't be toppled by any man of woman born or by the immovable woods. But then Caesarian section cuts in as Macduff's unbirth, the right to life that sacrifices the mother, and the camouflage that can't be made out for the trees looks like Birnam wood is advancing upon Macbeth's stronghold.

The prospective mobility of the grounded wood as standing reserve offers an inside view of technologization in advance

of the externalities of a machine age. By Malcolm's command every soldier hews down a bough from Birnam wood to bear before him as camouflage that scrambles advance notice of the size of the army advancing to liberate Scotland, the other land of phantoms and inventions. Already in Shakespeare we find Scotland's lost cause on the secret agenda of preservation, circumvention, or reversal. That the Trojan side was the premier losing cause to excite identification is on record as Rome's reconstruction of its own epigonal history out of its Trojan circumvention of Ancient Greece. Troy fell to the horse made out of wood at a time when "wood" was the only meaning or instance of *hyle*, the term Aristotle later adapted to signify matter, the unchanging stuff that makes change or transformation possible. The wooden horse as preamble to technology's prospect, fabricated out of what modern physics would call more directly energy, continues to circulate in the digital archive and lexicon as a type of malware: while carrying out, it would appear, the helpful function it advertises, it in fact opens access to the user's computer system.

In the course of WWI even the German monopoly on the continent in the production of rubber contraceptives was busted and replaced by the U.S. brand that was not only named Trojan but was even identified by wooden horse icon. Can we stop short of the "safe" penetration of the stronghold by the Greeks or mustn't we admit what lies beyond, the prospect of the rubber tearing or otherwise leaking the carriers of impregnation or HIV? Something like truth in advertising, sponsored moreover by the death drive, subsumes the Trojan War as primal scene. By its deception or secret cargo the Trojan horse breached the impasse or no-man's land of the stuck war. But the victory obtained by the Greeks introduced the Trojan cause, carried out defeat first, as lost object of identification, reversal, and preservation.

In time for the unification of Germany Heinrich Schliemann



followed out the identification with the Trojan War from both sides. Already in childhood at the time of his mother's death he conceived, as he later claimed or recalled, the goal of Troy's excavation. He was not aided by his father, whose embezzlement of church funds made it impossible for the son to complete an academic approach to his goal. He had to fast-forward through the self-made-man test so as to retire early from the import/export business and apply the fortune he had amassed to his childhood investment in burial and unburial. But before getting down to business in Russia as supplier of raw materials needed for the artillery during the Crimean War the news of his brother's presumed death in California brought him to the gold rush where he also made a killing while devising for the prospectors and pioneers conserving cans to keep former food safe. At that time California became a state and citizenship was automatically conferred on Schliemann. Convinced that the epic accounts of Homer and Vergil were historical fact, the retired Californian located Troy's site by the evidence of the *Iliad* remediated by stopwatch. When he excavated what he took to be the graves of Priam and Hecuba he had to watch the perfectly preserved Trojans turn to dust. The destructiveness of archaeology is harder to admit than the desecration. In the course of elaboration of the meaning of the unconscious for his crypt-carrying patient, the so-called Ratman, while using the archeological finds cluttering his desk as show and tell, it was too much information when Freud pointed out that the contents of Pompeii which, entombed, were preserved against time like unconscious thought were only now disintegrating upon being raised up into consciousness (or light and air). Freud recognized that he had to rush to retract or deny the destruction and give his obsessional neurotic patient reassurance that everything was being done at the excavation site to contain and even restore the damage (176-77). The focus of Schliemann's archaeology never shifted away from the loss of the Trojan War, the mother of all that followed. But

he was also caught in a balancing act of commemoration, between Priam's Treasure and the Mask of Agamemnon, as though the fall of Troy had concluded a war of sibling unrest and rivalry.

Shakespeare, our first man at the scene of modernity's spectral transmissions, carried the Trojan identification forward as the advance of Birnam wood against Dunsinane castle. The mobility of wood dismantles the unity of the forest, which puts it in the line of production of the ship's hold on English empire. Shiver me timbers! The mobility of timber afloat that colonized the rest of the world and enslaved its populations also required an innovation in mass psychology closer to home, the reversal of possible setbacks through insurance.

According to Elias Canetti, the English crowd symbol is the sea. The German crowd symbol is the army, but as another *Macbeth* citation, the mobilization of the woods against all odds. "The mass symbol of the Germans was the army. But the army was always more than the army: it was the marching forest. ... In a forest in which trees of many of the same species are found, the bark of the trees, which may at first seem like armor, in fact resembles the uniforms of an army regiment. Army and forest were for the German, without his being aware of it, in every way merged together. What might appear to others stark and bleak in the army has for the German the life and radiance of the forest" (202).

Where there is wood there is fire. Birnam wood carries in its name the injunction to "burn them!" The mobility of the army of timber contains and ignites the spark of this command. It is by his theory of the open crowd that Canetti inscribes the inimical advance of the wooden army within the passage of conflagration. Gaston Bachelard invokes death in the flames as the least lonely way to go (28). "Burn'em" is

indeed a funeral direction. Fire destroys but also preserves. The phantasm of cremation reflects its genealogical introduction: preservation from desecration of the complete contents of a mummy's tomb. Already the wooden horse carried like the hollow reed of Prometheus the violent ignition that set fire to the towers of Ilium and preserved Troy's lost cause. According to Bachelard, animism imagines every forest fire as sacrifice offered now to the fire, now to the woods (46-7).

Fire not only destroys and preserves but also, as Bachelard underscores, cleanses. Fire purifies by consuming the excremental side effects of the fateful proximity between food and death. This applies as well to alcohol by the fermentation it both instills and distills. "The roasting of meat signifies victory over rot. Together with the fermented drink, it is the principle of the festive gathering; which is to say, it is the principle of primitive society" (135). That principle, according to Freud in *Totem and Taboo*, was the control release of murder as the special event of sacrifice whereby the clan could be kept on a schedule of mourning.

In Bachelard's account, by contrast, the cleansing aspect of fire is the variation on preservation that undoes the safe deposit. The flames of purgatory, Bachelard reminds us, cleanse the souls of their ghostly unfinished business. In the primitive society of Daniel Paul Schreber's delusional system, the souls of the departed bore the wrong identification to let the disposal service of cleansing pass over them: the so-called purified souls were the souls not yet purified or redeemed. Bachelard affirms the "brutal death" by fire, which leaves behind not a trace, as the "guarantee" of bodily entry into the Beyond (26). The inclusion of the body in this all-is-nothing scenario shows that Bachelard would have his pagan preservation and erase it, too. Bachelard generates his Jungian appreciation of the reception and application of fire,

which culminates in cleansing, not out of the unconscious of night dreams but out of daydream fantasy, which like the Fantasy genre in which it is incarnated remains within the loop of its ultimate “realization” as the Christian death of death.

What Canetti’s army contains is the spark of panic, exemplified in its uncontained state by the out-of-control crowd trying to exit the burning theater. Freud and Bachelard attribute this panic content to the same-sexual, onanistic, or perverse origin of fire reignited each time two sticks of wood are rubbed together. For Bachelard this is the dotted line of repression that turned fire into the biggest obstacle to its scientific understanding, a course of unknowing application carried forward as electricity’s subsequent illumination of the outer limits of spookulation in Spiritualism and psychosis.

## Exceptional Characters

Freud's essay, "Some Character-Types Met with in Psychoanalytic Work," folds out as a triptych, with the section "Those Wrecked by Success" occupying the central panel. But we commence with the notion of exception attending all the types, including the first type, the one, you know the one, who believes himself or herself to be an exception or *Ausnahme*, watched over by a kind of providence. Freud nominates Shakespeare's Richard III as exemplary. The sense of entitlement, as we say, arises over some defect or shortcoming that was inflicted early on or, the most preferable scenario, is congenital. The exceptional character, as one unjustly injured, expects from life something like a pension, that is, when not pursuing total world domination as his or her special share. The internal conviction that the exceptional character derives special rights from an early injustice sharpens every subsequent conflict, which leads to establishment of the neurosis.

While Freud declines to typify whole nations or ethnic groups according to this demand for exceptional status, a trend in the psychological study of national character this essay helped launch, he does suggest in 1916 that women are often in the exceptional position as daughters who feel that their mothers owe them for a shortcoming that is the maternal fault. At the same time Freud allows that just about everyone carries forward some sense of having been chosen from the beginning by narcissistic wounding. Just about everyone is the exception proving the rule of narcissistic injury. Only in this way can the narcissism of small differences function, indeed escalate.

In the other framing section at the end of the article we find the type who becomes criminal out of guilt. In a gesture warding

off paranoia already familiar to his readers from the conclusion of his study of Schreber's *Memoirs*, Freud notes that in the meantime a friend has brought to his attention that the criminal from a sense of guilt was known to Nietzsche (333). It's far from clear how Freud's analysis in fact connects with Nietzsche's passage on the "pale criminal" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Like the emplacement of the Eternal Return within Freud's reading of repetition compulsion as uncanny, we have here again a reference to the precursor whose coming before is worse even than coming late: it's a misfortune, Freud tended to conclude, that Nietzsche couldn't benefit from psychoanalysis.

Stanley Cavell nominates the pale criminal as the crux of Macbeth's profile, for which he otherwise follows out Freud's analysis of the melancholic's sense of egoic impoverishment in "Mourning and Melancholia." At the same time Cavell doesn't acknowledge Freud's *Macbeth* reading with its framing reference to Nietzsche's pale criminal. We are situated within the loop of melancholic delivery of the other's thesis perhaps as one's own but not as that of author borne and signed. "In a world of blood, to be pale, exceptional, exempt, without kin, without kind, is to want there to be no world, none outside of you, nothing to be or not to be yours, neither from nor not from your hand; but to be pale is to be drained and to demand blood, to absorb what is absorbing you" (248).

According to Freud, many adults remember delinquencies perpetrated in early adolescence or pre-adolescence because the infractions were committed deliberately to get someone's attention, certainly their own. They were committed, Freud argues, to obtain release from the pressure of consciousness of guilt, the cause of which remained obscure. Thus guilt often precedes the crime as the need for punishment. Freud would go beyond this "curious fact" in the hope of illuminating the considerable part it plays in human crime. But in this article Freud, rather exceptionally, tends

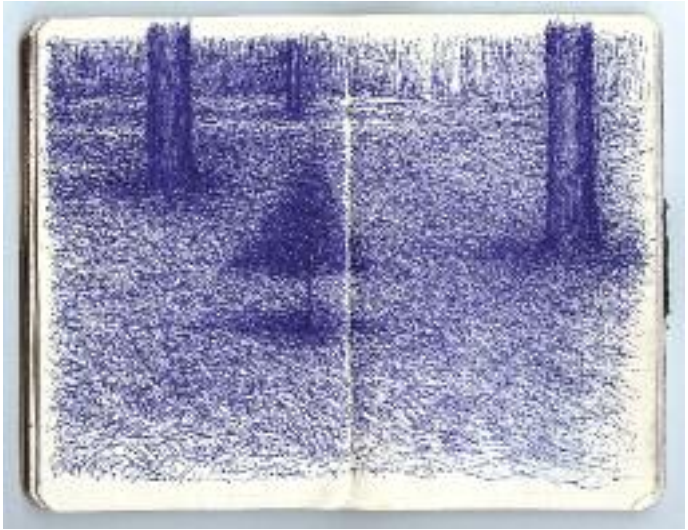
to hold store only in general application. Because he links the reverse causation to the “source of mankind’s sense of guilt in general” he can but take one more turn in the Oedipus complex (332). That he must bracket out from his consideration as beyond the pale those criminals who are without any sense of guilt, in other words the psychopaths, limits the applicability of Oedipal crime to the enigma of ruthless violence.

When the powers of conscience make the successful fall ill we are faced with an exception to the usual, namely that one becomes neurotic through *Versagung*, which is often translated as “frustration” but also means “failure” and more literally suggests something like “taking something back” or “unsaying” it. Most fall ill in consequence of *Versagung* of a real satisfaction when, for example, libido, robbed of the possibility of obtaining ideal ego-compatible satisfaction, nevertheless wants to make a move and tries to go where the ego says no, forever no. Indeed the very impulse to get satisfaction, which has already been overcome, is an option doubly despised by the ego. However, an external frustration is not pathogenic until an inner frustration joins it. This one is issued by the ego and revokes the right of libido’s passage to those other objects. Internal *Versagung* is always present but must be activated through its external counterpart.

Freud’s original formulation for “Those Wrecked by Success,” “Die am Erfolge scheitern,” reminds us that in both languages there is a sense of consequence that folds out of success, most significantly as “succession,” with all its parricidal implications. The issue of substitution in mourning is equally pressing here. As interpreted by Freud the Macbeth couple manifests a certain melancholic undertow whereby those erect by or for succession are wrecked by the implicit success of second death, the murder of the dead.

Those who fall ill through success are “exceptional cases” (“Ausnahmefällen”). Here the inner *Versagung*, the “refusal” or “failure,” is alone effective. It is rendered effective, however, only after the external *Versagung* has been lifted to make way for external wish fulfillment or success. The ego tends to be fantasy tolerant and is provoked only if fulfillment threatens. While even internal intensifications of the libidinal cathexis can render fantasy intolerable, in the case of this character type the illness breaks out only over a real external change.





UELI ETTER, „Waldstück, Kühles Tal“ (Forest Piece, Cool Valley), 2003, ballpoint pen on paper, 13.9 x 18 cm

In Etter's PARK, his ongoing project of imagining a utopian inverted world, THE WOODS can be found between REPEAT and REPENT, the two provinces of the SENTIMENTAL KINGDOM. Along the slopes of OLD TRUNK this forest extends from the WELL OF TEARS and WELL OF 2<sup>ND</sup> JOY, across the wide basin of REPENT, and then pulls up before or passes into the BIRTHDAY GARDENS. "Waldstück," sketched from nature in the setting of the artist's childhood, is the utopia mass media culture renders impossible. Beyond that there are the alternate histories and second natures belonging to the self portrait of the artist as a gay man and culminating in PARK, where Gay Pride meets Gay Humiliation. Here to memorialize is to forget that for all the assimilation and family values gayness is fundamentally perverse, in other words it extends into the world of others in fantasy by replication, in fact by recruitment.



JOACHIM GROMMEK, „o.T. (Entwurf für Hasengrab?)“ (Untitled [Sketch for Rabbit Grave?]), 1993, oil on canvas, 90.5 x 66.5 cm

That the varieties of wood veneer are available as samples in books so consumers can make their selection facilitated the close study of these surfaces by trompe l'oeuil painter, Joachim Grommek. Wood veneer is as old as Egypt: scarcity of wood led to slicing off thin layers from a block of quality wood and affixing them atop coarser, less attractive wood to great effect. But it's not just a chip off the old block. The appearance of grain and figure in wood can be heightened by slicing through the growth rings of the tree. While the sawing tools and techniques became increasingly precise the making of veneer has ever involved wasting much of the tree or block of wood. That also means that veneer is not without artistry or fabrication.

The artist trumps us with the illusion of veneer as found object upon which he has painted an unconscious gesture or signature. What completes the illusion is that, even though in fact painted as it appears to be painted, the glob of painterliness cannot be separated from the overriding simulation.



KÄTHE KRUSE, "Alexander von Humboldt in Südamerika", (Alexander von Humboldt in South America), 2000, oak board, dreadlocks, 70 x 60 cm

The artist chose a block of oak as backdrop for her map of Alexander von Humboldt's South American expedition, which extended German scientific discourse alongside the coordinates of colonial expansion by the more advanced and advancing European nations. The surname of the gay German scientist came to be a place name several times over in the new world. The other medium of this interweaving of potency and marginalization outlining the map upon the block of wood was the artist's own hair. She wrapped around the coordinates of the explorer's itinerary matted locks snipped off her dread hairdo, her signature look as lead singer of the 1980s counterculture band *Die Tödliche Doris* (Deadly Doris). Her use of her own hair for conceptual interweaving in fact borders on literal weaving, as in braiding, which Freud assigned to woman as her premier contribution to prosthetic technologies. While braiding ties a knot – not – in the place of castration, the matting together of split ends approximates anal birth, the Devil's due, and sets a spell with replication, not reproduction.

“Alexander von Humboldt in South America” was originally part of a three-trajectory exploration of transitions/translations among media: for each of the thirteen art pieces there was a corresponding song and a corresponding film, all of which came together as total works in the artist's performances. The project commenced with the artist's CD *Le Sexe Rouge*, which was produced in 1997. One of the thirteen songs, “Fettschwalm” (Oilbird), is a match. It tells the story of a bird that Alexander von Humboldt discovered, described, and drew while in Venezuela (after his French boyfriend was able to shoot two of them upon first blinding and disorienting them with a torch). The world's only night bird lives in colonies inhabiting caves deep in the earth where night vision no longer helps and orientation is possible only by a kind of radar similar to what bats use. The name that sticks to the birds refers to the use the locals find for them: annually the youngsters, just on the verge of flying, are hunted for their fat, which is released and used in cooking.



GUNTER RESKI, „Baum mit Bauch“ (Tree with Belly), 2002, oil paint on nettle fabric, 175 x 135 cm

The tree bearing a pregnant belly is on the cusp of the recoil of Macbeth's infernal guarantees. Birnam wood will move just as there will be a birth but not of woman. The artist is known for his forays into seeing writing and reading images always under the aegis of translation. "Unlike a work of literature, translation does not find itself in the center of the language forest but on the outside facing the wooded ridge; it calls into it without entering, aiming at that single spot where the echo is able to give, in its own language, the reverberation of the work in the alien one." (Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" [trans. Harry Zohn])

## MacDeath

In *Macbeth* the success to which the couple makes the jump cut would appear meaningless if in time there is no succession, no lineage, no continuity shot to carry that success into the future. A proviso that in the play however is more an afterthought suggests that with the murder the cart was before the horse. Succession was the goal but the couple was waylaid from aiming for it by a murderous shortcut addressed, ultimately, to their dead. It is the success of succession itself that as prospect paralyzes Lady Macbeth from the start, but which she postpones in effect by proceeding directly to the act of patricide.

In contrast to the source material, Shakespeare's drama transpires roughly within a week, not enough time for the revelation of the barrenness of the couple, the cessation of the succession, the reversal of the success. The other enigma Freud identifies concerns the couple dynamic. Lady Macbeth seems to swing from steely resolve to the illness of success, while her husband is paralyzed by guilt right out of the starting gate, but then by the end proves resolute. Freud turns to Ludwig Jekels, who argued that Shakespeare often splits apart one figure as two, who are after images or copies (*Nachbilder*) of one prototype (*Vorbild*).

Freud concludes his reading of the Macbeths with his summary hypothesis that husband and wife are the "two disunited parts of a single psychical individuality" (324). Both characters are "copied from a single prototype" and "together they exhaust the possibilities of reaction to the

crime” (ibid.). Between them, they split apart as a couple of identifications the ambivalence in grief that the single prototype couldn’t contain. When the survivor’s repertoire of mixed or messed-up feelings is projected onto the dead, who is then reanimated as vengeful revenant, the ambivalence of a solo mourner is not simply moved around but is lost, exchanged for open opposition. Although there is still a residual undertow of invitation to the dead reckoning, it is now desire and repression, submission and mastery that’s at issue and no longer the high ambivalence of the death wish.

Freud sets the stage with King James I’s succession to the throne of Elizabeth I, who had ordered his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, her cousin and guest, executed. Freud cites Elizabeth’s famous outcry bemoaning her barrenness in response to the news of James’s birth. Elizabeth’s childlessness was her punishment for the murder that secured her throne. According to Freud, James I’s succession demonstrated the “curse of infertility” and the “blessings of continuous generation” (298).

To add to Freud’s evidence, James I saw himself as descended from the historical Banquo. Carl Schmitt saw a closer fit between history and drama in *Hamlet*, where he read Gertrude’s protected status – Schmitt calls it, in defiance of the tradition of psychoanalytic *Hamlet* interpretations he attempted to put to rest in this monograph, “taboo” – as installing in the crossfire of incrimination King James I’s devotion to his mother to spite public knowledge in the face of a history of murderous intrigue.

And yet it was the resilience of the English monarchy that succession could always be secured independently of immediate family ties (and of ghosts). Killing and haunting were admitted to protect and project one’s quality span of time,



the other staging of the world and oeuvre. Thus *Hamlet* passes through the dying protagonist's identification with the ghost, which issues in his call to Horatio that his span of time be recorded. How the succession picks up where Hamlet leaves off is of no moment, is not of this moment.

Since it is clear, *klar*, that Macbeth must realize that he cannot live forever, Freud considers Macduff's outcry that Macbeth has no children the "key" to Macbeth's transformation (299). Macduff's outcry means, as Freud allows, that only a man without children could order children to be killed. But Freud overhears the curse of infertility upon Macbeth's success and succession. There could be more to hear along this line. Macbeth asks for male offspring in recognition of his wife's inspiring pledge of her own ruthlessness. In passing she makes reference to her having had children; it's the reason she knows of what she speaks. She declares that if she had vowed to kill her own infant as Macbeth vowed to kill Duncan she would and could commit even that murder. If Macduff's outcry touches a wound it is that the Macbeths, like Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Paul Schreber at the onset of the most famous psychotic breakdown in the annals of psychiatry and psychoanalysis, have no *living* children.

Lady Macbeth's own first response to the assassination plan was to steel herself through something like witchcraft: "Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood, / Stop up th' access and passage to remorse / .... Come to my woman's breasts, / And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers" (I, 5: 39). "Moth'ring" must be turned into "murth'ring." She takes up this theme again at the first pre-murder sign of her husband's qualms, in the passage Freud quoted in part: "I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me – / I would, while it was smiling in my

face, / Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums, / And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn / As you have done to this" (I, 7: 54). Like the image of a bloody child that the witches later show Macbeth, Lady Macbeth evokes with imagery of witchcraft her own bleeding child to present to her husband. The death of her infant is announced between the lines of the imagined murdering/mothering of a baby torn from her udder uttered to fortify the resolve to murder Duncan. As in *Hamlet*, murder is tied to the second death of the dead. Getting rid of Duncan is for Lady Macbeth aligned with losing the loss of her child and giving a wide berth/birth to the afterlife of successful mourning.

The other spot of hesitation, other than her inability to murder the man who in his sleep resembled her father, her dead father, appears after Duncan's murder (III, 2). Disappointment and deception cross her mind and she imagines that one might envy the security of those one has destroyed when compared to the eternal anxieties that attend the destroyers. She doesn't succumb to this mood swing but continues to hold up during the banquet scene that follows. She covers for her husband's confusion and finds an excuse to dismiss the guests. When in the showdown with Banquo's ghost Lady Macbeth again reproaches her husband as coward, Macbeth defends himself for a change and with resolution. If the ghost would come alive so he could fight it, and he then still showed his current fear, only then could one mock him as "the baby of a girl." When next he tells the ghost to go, the ghost indeed exits. With this scene Lady Macbeth also disappears. When she's reintroduced it's as somnambulist compelled to repeat not her former role as cheerleader but the very spot of hesitation, which she now cannot wash out. What she assured Macbeth before, "What's done cannot be undone," she now mutters to herself or the invisible parties to her encryption.

Her internal and suicidal course parallels Macbeth's reception

of Banquo's apparition, whose appearance was the quick consequence of murderous dispatch. The attempt to contain all consequence in the act of murder, Macbeth's fervent hope as he struggled with his designs on Duncan, is thwarted at close quarters, not by the act of yet another murder, but by the dead man's return as ghost. Macbeth now requires another dose of witchcraft, this time deliberately or consciously received as infernal assistance, and by the two impossibilities he is given he is able to secure a span of immortalized quality time. Macbeth gets what he initially asked for, the murderous career move against consequence in time, which crossed his mind early on as wish but has now been fixed in place by witchcraft.

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It  
were done quickly. If th' assassination / Could trammel  
up the consequence, and catch / With his surcease  
success: that but this blow / Might be the be-all and  
the end-all – here, / But here, upon this bank and  
shoal of time, / We'd jump the life to come. (I, 7: 1f)

An act without consequence or success is what Macbeth would achieve: succession is to be contained in the successful act of murder as be-all and end-all that risks the afterlife or circumvents it.

Hamlet's orbit lies between haunting and mourning because of the one instance of his famous indecision he is able to conclude. He accepts the ghost as his identifiable Dad and discounts the other possibility that crossed his mind that he is a demon sent from Hell. Macbeth's long-lost objects are encrypted. Otherwise he must deal with the vengeful dead against whose ghostly return he arms himself with infernal powers of omnipotence. It is a course that doesn't admit immortality neurotics, whether Christian believers in the Afterlife or secular mourners who postpone letting

go through reality testing or remembrance.

While it is true enough that he appears put off by the prospect of no succession of his own, namely that Banquo, though not to be king like Macbeth, will have sired a line of kings, at the end Macbeth proceeds according to the new forecasts as though immortal. While Macbeth is under infernal influence he is not literally under contract. Lady Macbeth volunteers from the start to act as his witch. But her powers of performance are not sustainable as what would be owed an infernal client. It is only Macbeth who at the end seems to derive the benefits of elided mourning he fell for in association with the actual witches. What the Devil may care about succession is very little – other than, perhaps, as replacement of the duty of substitution for lost losses with the sheer benefit of an upgrade in the span of one's own protected quality time (or "immortality"). The bleak view of finite existence as the last hurrah of an idiot, which Macbeth offers in lieu of grief or acknowledgment following the news of his wife's suicide, is corollary to the infernal management of his own quality time protected by two impossibilities.

Vacuum packed inside his immunity by the prophecy of witches, Macbeth doesn't even have time for the "word" of his wife's passing. But then the infernal guarantee that he is outside of time runs out with the time he is running out of. The Macbeths are not psychopaths. Instead they scoop out the spousal medium of mourning, scrub it down and detonate it. Against their nature they fill up with the black magic of ruthlessness and destroy forever the very prospect of successful mourning. Heroism lies here – in wait for identification that is untenable, undeclared, but ever so strong.



## Denial

Hegel introduced another guarantee or forecast – life’s indestructibility – into his staging of the banquet scene. The thought that one’s life is enlarged by destruction of the other’s life is the illusion of trespass. It is dispelled when “the disembodied spirit of the injured life comes on the scene against the trespass, just as Banquo ... took his seat, not as guest of the feast, but as an evil spirit” (342-43). You are injured by the injury you inflict upon the other’s life, which grows inimical and strange and releases its Erinyes (342). Macbeth only destroyed the “friendliness of life” (343) and armed the retribution that was consequently upon him.

Without forgiveness the equality of life means that to take the other’s life is in effect to take your own. If the meal had not been interrupted, the reconciliation that comes with internalization would have shifted the exchange toward Christian forgiveness. There is something else in the meal that was refused that goes beyond or below Banquo-within-Macbeth. The devouring of Banquo’s corpse, in which by its timing the banquet is implicated, would have shifted the rival for paternal authority and object of death wishes toward maternal association. In “Some Thoughts on *The Oresteia*,” Melanie Klein dismisses as denial the claim of the Erinyes that matricide is the most grievous crime. They acquit Clytemnestra of her act of murder because it didn’t involve a blood relation. “I think there is a great deal of denial in this argument. What is denied is that any murder derives ultimately from the destructive feelings against the parents and that no murder is permissible” (292). Every justification of violence, like the sacrifice of Iphigenie as justification for Agamemnon’s murder, is a “powerful

denial of guilt and destructive impulses” (294). With regard to the protocols that assign them the prosecution of matricide alone, it is the height of denial to make a value distinction between these dead and those other dead, between these victims and the other ones. It is a denial that by denying love to the internal good object raises vengeful ghosts and endangers the very lifeline of psychic integrity. Everyone who dies in our midst is the mother.

While Freud admits that he could not answer to his own satisfaction the question why Lady Macbeth collapsed after her success, he announces that with his next exemplary character, Rebecca West, the protagonist of Ibsen’s *Rosmersholm*, he will be able to penetrate the enigma of another mood swing. A split second after jubilating over the success of her plan to become Johannes Rosmer’s second wife, almost a double take upon his proposal to her, Rebecca proclaims that she can never accept and, what’s more, will kill herself if he should try to sway her sudden resolve.

What Rebecca almost succeeded at is the oldest family romance of class relations in one household. Following the death of her adoptive father Dr. West, Rebecca entered the employ of Johannes Rosmer and his invalid wife Beata. Hitler’s mother Klara was employed in the home of her future husband while he was still married to his invalid wife. It’s probably more than a rumor that Hitler’s father was himself the product of his own mother’s indiscretion in the home of her employer, which did not fulfill the fantasy to the point of her reentering the economy as second wife. In a sense Hitler’s father was compelled to make her by proxy an honest woman.

The only child of her unwed mother, a midwife, Rebecca was adopted by Dr. West, her mother’s colleague, following her mother’s passing. Now falling for a father figure who is



her employer, Rebecca contrives an extensive plan that approximates incest best, replacement of Beata as Rosmer's wife. Since what's missing in the home is offspring, Rebecca sets out a medical manual for Beata to find, opened up to the pages spelling out the rationale for marriage in terms of reproduction alone. When Rebecca gives her to understand that she will have to go away to conceal and carry to term the outcome of their illicit intercourse, Beata, now devoid of validity, drowns herself.

August Strindberg introduced the term soul murder specifically to diagnose the "modern" brand of violence exemplified by Rebecca's plot against Beata, and which in tandem with Hamlet's psychic suicide characterizes a new line of social acceptance and implementation of violence that is psychological. Just as the oubliette in the medieval fortress testifies to the former regime of violence so do certain phrases circulating in the modern world, like "you're driving me crazy," contain the truth of psychological torture.

The drama commences one year after the suicide, at the end of the happy period of Rebecca and Rosmer's cohabitation as ideal friends. Rosmer, however, has become aware of gossip about the status of their friendship at the same time that he has occasion to doubt that his wife's suicide was symptomatic of her chronic depression alone. It is to counter the uncertainty that besets them that Rosmer proposes marriage to Rebecca, whereupon she abruptly shows herself to be another example of one wrecked by success.

Rebecca's diffuse rationalization that, in coming under Rosmer's influence, her ruthless will was weakened is not so much wrong, Freud points out, as it is an elaboration of the hidden truth that turns on Rebecca's deceptive subtraction of one year from her true age. That she is in fact one

year older is her best defense against the claim of Beata's brother, Professor Kroll, that Dr. West was her biological father before he became her adoptive father. But Kroll knows better that the good doctor was in town for an extended visit the year before he moved in with Rebecca's mother. The literalness of her incestuous relationship with Dr. West, the illicit affair that no one has bothered to assume or interrogate, brings home the other primal Oedipal crime, the replacement of her mother unto death.

Rebecca became a free thinker like Dr. West as prelude to their affair just as she has become a person of conscience like Rosmer in the course of their ideal friendship. This is the elaboration of the Oedipal content covering the incest charge. But what turns success into wreckage is not the incest but what lies between the two stages of its elaboration: the repeated violence to her mother or, more precisely, to her dead mother and her remembrance.

*Rosmersholm* opens with Rebecca and the maid watching Rosmer return to the house by going around and avoiding the bridge that marks the spot of Beata's suicide. That Rebecca comments on this superstitious avoidance as a kind of observance is almost a slip: "They certainly cling to their dead at Rosmersholm." The maid recognizes the thought before Rebecca understands it, and extends its sense: "I think it's the dead that cling to Rosmersholm." In shock Rebecca looks at her: "How do you mean – the dead?" In what follows Rebecca will catch up with the delay in the rise to consciousness of the full significance of what slipped among her thoughts: the dead. She denies that the dead are still available for clinging.

Like the Macbeths Rebecca and Rosmer switch allegiances at the critical moment. Pure friendship can't withstand the static cling of the past, which grabs Rosmer more intensely

by the recently supplied surprise explanation that Beata killed herself on his account. We're near the end of Act II. Only through marriage can he rid himself "of these haunting memories – this loathsome, tragic past." Curiously, since this is the resolve she has sought to awaken in him all this time, Rebecca asks him to spell out how he would free himself of the past: "It must be stamped out, and replaced by something alive and real – ." Rebecca still has trouble filling in this blank. When he announces that "the empty place must remain empty no longer" and Rebecca does supply the meaning, namely, that she take Beata's place, it is the extent to which he confirms this that immediately precedes her new resolve never to be his wife: "Then it will be as though she'd never been."

Rebecca becomes suicidal just when she is most likely to succeed not only as substitute, but even as more-than-substitute, indeed as upgrade. Denial of love to her internal mother, as she recognizes in Rosmer's elevation of her alone to original object status beyond reference and deference to the lost object, compromises her very lifeline. What follows is the command performance of their *Liebestod*. Like Georg Bendemann at the end of Kafka's "The Judgment," they go take a flying leap into the live stream of their p-unitive haunting.



ANDERS DICKSON, “Study of Mobile Bird Houses”, 2010, pencil, watercolor, 50 x 40 cm

The artist was testing the possibility of a sculpture that would suggest the plan for a mobile bird home to accompany on parallel tracks Americans always on the move. As “secular” counterpart to the spirit house of Southeast Asia, the bird house is a miniature of the proper house to be kept outside the home, almost standing guard, but at the disposal of the bird population during the winter, not as container for the spirits kept from entering the house year round. And yet birds have regularly been identified as carriers of the dead: it is their migratory and ghostlike nature always to return rather than arrive.



ANDERS DICKSON, "The Creation of the World by Ducks", 2011, lithography, pencil, 54 x 40 cm

The work began as a city drawing, the view of Karlsruhe from the artist's window. But then as the abstraction process set in he also added elements from his home in Wisconsin. The meeting of the artist's two worlds triggered recollection of one of the Native American creation stories he knew from childhood. Two ducks are swimming on the watery surface that spans the entire globe. One says to the other, "There's land down there." But why then doesn't he dive down and retrieve the land, bring it up to the surface? The duck takes the dare and the plunge. Coming back up for air the earth he next spits out becomes North America.



ANDERS DICKSON, „The Search“, 2011, unique lithograph, 30 x 20 cm

This work began as a study of a Swiss mountain scene with cabin. The artist brought it to the verge of allegory, summoning the three kings seeking the babe beneath the star. Instead three turkeys approach an abandoned, dilapidated structure lost in the woods. For the American imaginary the film story of Heidi, Clara, and the grandfather is always along for references to Switzerland, also because it announces between the lines the prospect of “hiding” as its invitation to identify.

## Julius

When Freud speculates that poetic justice pays back the Macbeths for their crimes against generation by granting them childlessness, he decides to overlook the contradiction he himself mentioned in passing, namely that the infertility fulfills Lady Macbeth's express wish that she be unwomaned to steel her and her husband's resolve to proceed to the first act of murder. To succeed in the patricide she would first succeed in killing her dead child. Truth is she would rather be a murdering mother than a motherer of substitutes for her dead infant.

Macduff arrives in the fine print of the deadline to Macbeth's grant of quality time: he is the exception to the laws of generation. Macduff is not of woman born because delivered by C-section, the delivery of the unborn that meant the mother was dead or going to die. To add to the information Freud gives us: Robert II, the first Stuart to be king of Scotland, was born via C-section. His mother was thrown from her horse and survived her son's birth by only a few hours.

Like Athena's birth from the father's head, birth by Caesarian section, but out of the mother's death, reasserts the paternal order of succession that the Macbeths sought to bypass. The murder of Duncan, Freud emphasizes, qualifies as patricide (300). Without offspring the Macbeths cannot re-inscribe the murder within the paternal order of substitution and succession. But the murder must be repeated in lieu of succession, which the success of patricide failed to elide. Mourning is jettisoned by and from the acts of murder but along a trajectory ultimately of return. Macbeth kills Banquo, the father who will sire sires, but the son gets away. While unable to strike down Macduff he orders the murder of his wife and children. When Freud concludes the listing of ex-

amples of the father/child relationship as dominant in the play, we find that it is the mother who is missing (for example the mother of Macduff's children, who is not included in Freud's listing of the murder victims).

As Freud notes, Lady Macbeth's only early incapacity for action is that she cannot kill Duncan after she sees that sleeping he looks like her father (like her dead father). Often one recognizes a parent's likeness in one's own child. She reproaches her husband's weakness and fancy: "The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood / That fears a painted devil" (Act II, 2, 52f). After Duncan's murder, Macbeth says to the others: "from this instant / There's nothing serious in mortality: / All is but toys" (II, 3: 95f). That toys were reduced replicas of everyday objects knew one continuity shot: the scaled-down accoutrements of remembered life placed among the dead in mortuary palaces.

A heartbeat earlier Macbeth recalled a voice crying out: "Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder Sleep,' the innocent Sleep, / Sleep that knits up the ravel'd sleeve of care, / The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath, / Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, / Chief nourisher in life's feast" (II, 2, 33f). Sleep may look like death but it is the life of life: it is or engenders the next generation, the second course, whereby life is rejuvenated. It's the day's newborn and the life source for the day's recreation and renewal. To murder the life of life is a tall order. But its punch is packed inside the murder of the semblance of death in sleep. In *Hamlet* as in *Macbeth* every murder carries out the attempt to bring about the second death of the dead.

Freud cited Jekels's argument upon reading the unpublished manuscript or work in progress. If Jekels subsequently didn't elaborate the argument, let alone publish it, it was no doubt because Freud scooped him: scooped out his argument before he could carry it to term and release it as a body or cor-



pus. Freud reclaims the problem of conception, generation, succession as basic to *Macbeth* while eliding or incorporating Lady Macbeth's loss inside the missing thesis, not Freud's own, of two characters for one. And yet at their return engagement the witches respond to Macbeth's summons by showing him a bloody crowned child to announce the first impossibility of Macbeth's defeat. Lady Macbeth's dead child joins the mother from whose womb the unborn baby was untimely ripped. The missingness of motherhood enters the range of reference to Julius Caesar whereby Macbeth expresses what is spooking or undermining him, but which he projects onto Banquo: "under him my genius is rebuked, as it is said Mark Antony's was by Caesar" (III, 1, 55). Macduff joins Banquo on this line of identification with Caesar.

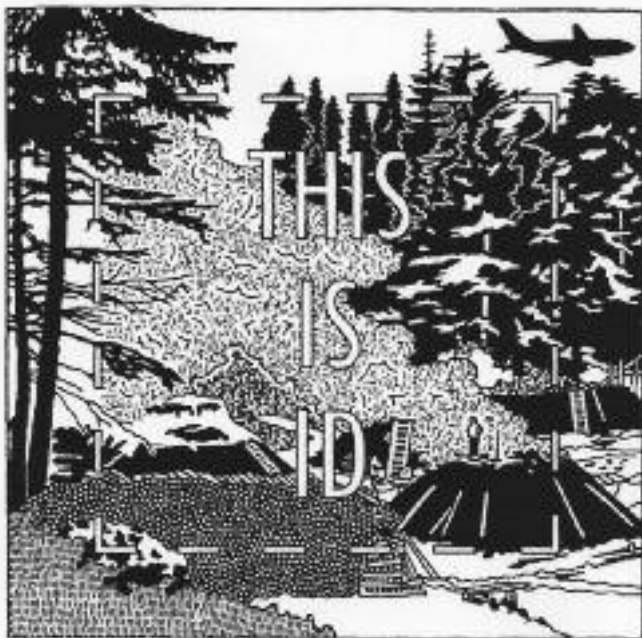
There is a Julius Caesar complex in Freud's corpus and science which commences, however, at the other end of the full name. While yet a child Freud survived his younger brother Julius, whose loss his mother deposited in her other son for safekeeping. In the correspondence with Fliess Freud identified Julius's death as depositing in him a "seed" of self-reproach, the fragment of encrypted dialogue with the missing other. Freud remembered in the course of his self-analysis in letters to Fliess that he succeeded together with his playmate John in staggering Julius's approach. Yet their acting out contained itself as the very label of the crypt's legibility when the duo performed *Julius Caesar*, Freud playing Brutus to John's Julius. In another letter to Fliess, however, Freud finds a place for the absence of "Julius" in an unambivalent summons or citation he knew by heart as a child: "My heart is in the coffin here with Caesar." John was at the front of Freud's same-sex line of diversions from direct contact with Julius's improper burial or birth, indirectly transmitted as the recurring charge of plagiarism. Fliess and Jung followed as ghosts in the transference, going the gambit from best friends forever to public enemies.



SARA WAHL, "Vogelfrei" (Fair Game), 2010/2013, Format 16.9, Color, Audio Dolby Digital

Out of a sojourn in two woods, one the primal forest of Bialowieza, the other a maintained ecosystem, which was planted by the artist's great grandfather, Sara Wahl conceived one film that commences its boundary-blending by interweaving the footage taken of both forests and running the commentary of the guide in Poland throughout the video record. In broken German the guide tells of his experiences with the wolves of the wild forest, the age of the living and dead trees, and the centuries-old traces of bee keeping in the trees. The artist punctuates the documentary footage with fleeting fictional scenes that refer to forest myths, beliefs, and rituals, the history of the hermits, and the inverted world of fairytales. In a choreographed sequence, situated within a faux storm generated by fog machine and stroboscope, the natural soundtrack gives way to a disturbing and destructive composition of animal sounds. The camera POV also shifts between the human and the creaturely perspective.

In the sixteenth century "Vogelfrei" received its pejorative meaning as condition of the outlaw banished without property and rights, to whom hospitality and burial were no longer owed. While earlier it meant what it says, "free as a bird," modern German preserves the expression as synonym of "jemanden Preis geben," in which the "Preis" that is right is tantamount to loot. To give someone up for a price, as loot, is the lot of someone deemed so dangerous that the hunting license of fair or free game applies. And yet this souvenir of legal conditions obtaining during the Thirty Years War also has topical application, in accordance with the logic of allegory developed by Walter Benjamin, in the current global war against terrorism. Sara Wahl gives shelter to the figure of the outlaw as dropout within a phantasmagoria of the woods buoyed up by the perspective of the creature, suspended as Hannah Arendt argued in her dissertation on Augustine, between the no longer and the not yet.



HEINZ EMIGHOLZ, Die Basis des Make-Up. No. 341 and No. 578, 2007,  
b&w photography, 69 x 50 cm each



“A square in a square marked off by thick white lines as the index of a ‘natural drive substance’ – the Id. To implode inside a focus is the Id’s act of transformation. To designate this event as ‘unhinging’ would be a euphemism. It concerns inner riddance, unconscious digestion. Processes of that which has been invisibly buried deep inside the density of matter – preparation of charcoal according to a secret formula. A charcoal burner, whose job description gave me my surname, stands in a forest clearing on the banks of the Weser river on one of four charcoal piles und observes the distribution of the smoke clouds in the inner square. Qualitative jumps through active condensation and obscuration of matter. In the periphery of the gaze, a black, windowless, unidentified plane flies under the radar over the forest, which stands black and silent. An experimentally dressed-up past, as naïve as it is shifty, which passes death on. A hard-boiled future, which by logical consequence can only kill.” (Heinz Emigholz, “The End,” *Disko* 22, 2011; translated by Laurence A. Rickels)



ERAN SCHAERF, „Wanderblog (Rotkäppchen im *Vaterland*)“ (Hiking Blog [Little Red Riding Hood in the *Fatherland*]), 2008/2012, rope, laces, ribbons, perforated catalog pages (offset) and photocopies, hoes, dimensions variable. Photo credit: Stefan Altenburger Zürich, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein

In *Walden; or Life in the Woods*, one of the intertexts of Eran Schaerf's „Wanderblog“, Henry Thoreau writes: „I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too.“ The nicking and notching in wood that register time's meaningful passage sketch the notion of family tree or *Stamm*, primally inscribed in the flesh by the rite of circumcision. As inoculative reduction of the threat of castration to the very mark of guarantee that annihilation will pass over the one standing at the front of the family line, circumcision was, according to Freud, the „fossil“ rite that imbued the Jew with uncanniness. In turn the gentiles had to deny the castration and its control release as circumcision. This dread is reflected in European folklore from Robin Hood to Little Red Riding Hood.

In German where there are woods there is *Wandern*, which counts among the untranslatables. „Hiking“ is probably too concerted and specific, although it picks up on the *sportif* aspect of *Wandern*, otherwise lost in the cognate and etymon „wandering.“ In prehistory we speak of the migration of peoples or groups, which in German is *Wanderung*. The root meaning of „wandering“ and *Wandern*, which is “winding,” also like the turn in a phrase, underwent a change in attitude in the course of the nineteenth century. The flâneur in Paris is in some sense the counterpart of the *Wanderer* in the German woods; both move from point A to point B, which contradicts sheer wandering and winding, but at the leisurely pace of reading.

The wandering near-miss approximations of *Wandern* can be set off by the thirteenth-century mythic figure of the Wandering Jew, in German *der ewige Jude*, in French *le juif errant*. For taunting Christ on his way to the Crucifixion, the Wandering Jew was cursed to walk the earth until the Second Coming. The ambivalence of his position applies not only to his status as witness but also to his inheritance of aspects of the Eternal Hunter derived from Wotan mythology. Farmers in the Germanic-languages world would arrange special rows in their fields for the Sunday rest of the Eternal/Internal Jew. In „The Hunter Gracchus“ Kafka entered this allegorical intersection, which also has a more modern history. Wagner lifted the story of *The Flying Dutchman* from Heinrich Heine's retelling of the seventeenth-century ghost story. In Heine's version the Flying Dutchman can set foot on land and woo a wife every seven years. If this one turns out to be truly devoted, and not just another seven-year bitch, he will be redeemed from undeath. Heine transferred the curse from the ghost ship (christened *The Flying Dutchman*), which figured as portent of doom, to the figure of the eternal Dutchman, and the setting of the story from the Cape of Good Hope to the North Sea off Scotland.





## The Ambivalent Introject

The Macbeths are America's favorite villains of all time – which we can overhear each time “tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow” is quoted more by repetition compulsion than sense. Since Abraham Lincoln identified *Macbeth* as his favorite play, even quoting only days before his assassination Macbeth's despairing envy of dead Duncan's respite from fitful betrayal, *Macbeth* has been the main prop of ambivalence toward the power invested in presidents. After Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* any future author in the German-language world had to be initiated into the theater of his talent by his mother's gift. After Lincoln made his choice, future US presidents have had to memorize lines from *Macbeth* in adolescence. Lincoln found the text for that dark side he tried to disown as his property or responsibility, the American Civil War. He found it a “wonderful” play that was without equal. But the wound had to be carried forward.

The reversal of lost causes basic to the poetic historiography of nations came to ply its trade between popular culture and art beginning in the 1960s when reenactment of historical battles and the SF genre of alternate history were reflected in the art world as cite-specific or openly skewed reenactments of non-archival happening events or performances. The popular culture industry of modern reenactment was applied first to the American Civil War. The divergence in reenactment that yields alternate history was already in place, in theory, via Ward Moore's 1953 novel, *Bring the Jubilee*, about a parallel world in which the Confederacy had won the war. For the twentieth century this victory meant inside the novel's alternate world that the Confederate States and the German Union were the two world powers (76).

In *We Can Build You* Philip K. Dick resituated the culture industry of reenactment within range of android production.

Android designer Maury Rock extols the new market: "This Nation is obsessed with the War Between the States. I'll tell you why. It was the only and first national epic in which we Americans participated" (11). Android reenactment of the Civil War will substitute for actual war, which will be abolished (20). But the financial backer quickly drops the android production of reenactment figures for a new purpose, congruent with Dick's other android novels, production of a supply of fake neighbors for outer-space colonists to take with them to counter the psychoticizing effects of isolation on the new frontier. Dick was inspired both by the animatronic robots on display in Disneyland, with President Lincoln at the front of the line, and by the novel *Logan's Run*, in which the Civil War and President Lincoln provide the only historical props in the twenty-third-century youth culture, which came to world power in the 1960s.

A pointless exchange in Washington D.C. between a seventeen-year-old protester from Missouri and a "paunchy middle-aged heckler" sparked the so-called Little War that within two weeks placed the government "in the hands of youth" (121-22). One result is that "the age of government by computer began" (123). A sixteen-year-old proposed as solution to the ongoing population crisis a maximum age limit. When five years later his plan was inaugurated, the now twenty-one-year-old "proved his dedication by becoming the first to publicly embrace Sleep" (*ibid.*). The new order of eugenics was introduced as suicide.

The issue of eugenics in support of youthful vitality doesn't trigger inside the novel or its future world any associations with the Nazi era (or with California). The one thing the young of the 1960s in the United States "were sure of" was that "they would never again place their fate in the hands of an older generation" (*ibid.*). After a couple of centuries the result is oblivion of historical reference between the ongo-

ing now and the Civil War. There is an annual gala of reenactment in place featuring the battle of Fredericksburg, using android soldiers in the field. Why is this battle that the Confederacy won selected? The pointlessness of General Burnside's charge delivers the point of instruction, the necessity to die young, as broadcast by loudspeaker to the crowds: "The Civil War was fought by seventeen-and-eighteen-year-olds, men willing to die for their cause" (102). In the living units of this future world entertainment consoles project 3-D holograms of "young Abe Lincoln ..., splitting logs in the center of the room" (22). But the overturning of the youth culture and its government by computer can begin to be conceived via the only historical figure available. "There was an *old* Lincoln after the young one" (146).

When in *The Man in the High Castle* Dick threw into the breach of alternate history the reversal of Axis defeat in WWII he filled in the blank of repression of the recent past. And yet the open invitation to imagine Nazi victory was readily issued. Allied mass psychology or psychological warfare dictated that to win as a winner was the prerogative of the Nazis. Instead only a slapdash assembly of losers can defeat the Death Star against all odds. While only the Death Star foe threatens to win out of mastery, those gathered together on the good side shall overcome but only as potential victims and losers, never as outright winners.

In the contest between versions of the outcome of WWII internal to *The Man in the High Castle* it is in the details that we recognize that the reversal of history cannot be set right once and for all. The fictional novel inside Dick's novel that would reverse the reversal lies skewed between the official record and its denial. A paradox related to the notion of time travel, the notion that is SF's concession to mourning, dictates that once there is one alternate history there can be any number more of them. The displacement

of the historical record in *The Man in the High Castle* does not serve revisionism or denial. The trail of near-miss accuracies catches up with the reversal by giving lateral extension to the finite recording surface of remembrance. Mourning becomes history when alternate histories enter the breach of reversal of loss and dislodge the opposition. The science fantasy of alternate history follows identification with lost causes. Like Macbeth's resolve to commit murder as the murder of consequence itself the reversal cannot contain itself. Alternate history's alternative alterations pile up in the damn spot of Lady Macbeth's repetition compulsion. At the same time the endless relay of alternate histories applies integration to the impasse of traumatic history.

Gertrude Stein announced that the USA was the most ancient culture of the twentieth century because of the advance preview of techno mass modernity it absorbed through the Civil War. But the Civil War also invested the United States as techno modern by its deposit of the lost war to be carried forward. When in the late nineteenth century Julian Green's parents had to choose the site for the European headquarters of his father's export-import firm and their new home they selected Paris over Berlin because they felt the French, owing to the recent loss of the war with Prussia, would know what it meant to carry a lost war. The decision was no doubt in the long run a wise business move, but premature in finding a match for their encrypted war. For it was the World War that picked up where the Civil War had left off. And this "lost war," also ambiguously the "last" war, would prove basic to German techno modernity. Following the loss of WWI and flying into the loss of the Second one, Germany aimed the crypto fetish of rocket flight toward a "final victory" in a future beyond the massive evidence of the loss of the air war in Germany's devastation.

The crypto fetish is the plain text of gadget love, including

what this dissociation belies. In his 1927 essay “Fetishism” Freud turns to the non-sexological example of two sons who lost their fathers and apparently disavow the loss. And yet they are not psychotic. Thus Freud extends the structure of dissociation basic to the sexual perversion of fetishism to project a new norm at the border to psychosis adapted to the technological relation. A son who both knows and doesn’t know or acknowledge that his father is dead enters an oscillating orbit between neurosis and psychosis (inside psychosis). From the phantasmagoria of the Axis to the extensive psycho-technical research and training (already in the 1920s) that made the German pilot over as the first cyborg or “auto pilot” ever in the ready position (of dissociation) to merge with the machine in flight, the investment in air power as the ultimate total war front was all along, without knowing it, building up to its byproduct, the crypto fetish of rocket flight.

While Mr. and Mrs. Green “chose” not to bind their lost war to the future of loss in German history, Julian Green would later reflect the pull of the German contest. His 1947 *Si j’étais vous* (translated in 1950 as *If I Were You*) was a Faust novel, in which his intended quarrel was with Nietzsche on religious grounds. It was picked up by Melanie Klein (in “On Identification”) as her main prop for staging what she called projective identification, a secular corrective to the counsel that you should become who you are.

The infant’s sadistic fantasies directed against the mother – which the good breast, as the prototype of good internal objects, can escape only by hunkering down in internalization – are all about entering her breasts and body and scooping them out completely. “Concurrently, the infant experiences impulses and phantasies of attacking the mother by putting excrements into her. In such phantasies, products of the body and parts of the self are felt to have been split off, projected

into the mother, and to be continuing their existence within her” (142). By the same trajectory, parts of the self that are felt to be good and valuable can also be split off and projected into another person. “The process by which the mother is invested with libido is bound up with the mechanism of projecting good feelings and good parts of the self into her” (ibid.).

Green’s corpus switching between the Faustian striving to lose like a winner – the German destiny of dissociation – and the Christian determination to win as loser (the redemptive ending of Green’s Faust novel) was brought through Klein’s reading into proximity to what I prefer to address as the ambivalent introject, which on Klein’s turf and terms can be situated between projective identification and integration. Klein reclaimed “integration” from positive thinking first in her 1940 essay on mourning, finally in her posthumously published essay on loneliness. In the latter work Klein concludes that integration must pull up short before the sense or direction of “irretrievable loss” (301). For, as Klein continues, if the “lost parts” “are felt to be lonely” too (302), then it is no longer possible to deliver a transitive sentencing of loss. Not to know who lost whom also means that both parties to the loss are lost to the other.

Another example of the ambivalent introject is the underworld organization and genealogy of SPECTRE, which Ian Fleming introduced belatedly into the world of James Bond while preparing for the crossover into film. *Doctor No*, for example, which had formerly firmly situated its agon inside the Cold War opposition, gave priority on screen to the enigmatic third party of SPECTRE, which secretly manipulated the opposition, ultimately unto mutual destruction, to promote its own super survival. The organization Fleming at once introduced and projected belonged to the recent past of the Cold War, specifically the era of Nazi Germany, but reconfigured beyond the former opposition, as is the case in

most underworlds. In the mix or mess of SPECTRE's constitution its agents were recycled Nazis and/or European Jews. The risk thus taken, the mixing of perpetrators and victims in the case of SPECTRE's inner world, is an inevitable side effect of entering upon the ambivalent introject. Out of its mess the impasse of traumatic history shifts toward integration and the onset of the ability to mourn.

The after-the-fact reconstruction of Nazi Germany as the first realized science fiction guaranteed that the long "haul" of *Wiederholung* (repetition) and its compulsions would stagger indefinitely for both the recovering psychopaths and their heirs the onset of the capacity for mourning. What the streamlining of science fiction had deferred for German history was nevertheless assembled as ambivalent introject in the course of Thomas Pynchon's fabulation of the rocket in *Gravity's Rainbow*. When in his 2003 preface to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Pynchon commented on its bracketing out of the Holocaust as Orwell's requirement for thinking his way through in 1948 to the post-war period he was also identifying his 1973 novel as on schedule with this requisite staggering.

*Gravity's Rainbow* hitched its status as great American novel and new *Moby Dick* to the pursuit of the V2 rocket and its continuity shots, which at or as the end of the *Rainbow*, almost as 9/11 forecast, detonated the movie theater in Los Angeles in which Pynchon assembled his readership. But before the Nazi rocket enters American history it is re-assembled on the track of its future development as V to the nth power in the meeting of otherwise opposed or repressed contingencies. In South-West Africa Germany routed the Herero rebellion and sent the vanquished nation into the desert to perish. In Pynchon's fiction the surviving Hereros, "the Empty Ones," follow out their trauma-enforced suicide drive in voluntary service to the rocket. Pynchon's *Schwarzkommando*, the mystical blue flower in the no-

man's land of technologization and death, which guards and guides the super version of the V2 all the way to its strike against LA, has its recognition value in the racism of the GIs, who may have conquered Germany but are wary of Blacks equipped with rockets. The unlikely fiction of the Nazi African-German brigade meets the fact of unlikelihood on the other side: for the WWII effort no African American was admitted into the US air force. It is by the continuity shots of racism that Pynchon conjoins the inscrutable mass murder in the foreground of the Nazi war with the crypto fetishism of the rocket, which must be read as trying to out-fly it. Somewhere over the positivism of machine histories for which the Holocaust did not compute there is the techno war revalorized as continuing beyond both the mass death and the opposition. This view begins as one rocket mystic's interpretation of the ruins of the air war as site modified for the future by the bombing, waiting to be switched on. This was all along the "real Text," not the rocket. "Its symmetries, its latencies, the *cuteness* of it enchanted and seduced us while the real Text persisted, somewhere else, in its darkness, our darkness" (520). The war of political differences or even that of competition between special interests was a diversion: "secretly, it was being dictated instead by the needs of technology. ... The real crises were crises of allocation and priority, not among firms – it was only staged to look that way – but among the different Technologies, Plastics, Electronics, Aircraft, and their needs" (521).

Pynchon's cultivation of the rocket derives its plain text not only from the flight trajectories looping the American Cold War through the German side of WWII but also from the mass psychological tendency to carry loss forward through the prospect of its reversal. Among the risks that Pynchon takes in *Gravity's Rainbow* is that the story of rocket engineer Pökler begins to read like *Gone with the Wind* set on modern German history.





ANA NAVAS, "1. Mai" (May 1), 2011, two color photographs, 70 x 50 cm each



On May 1 the workers in the cities unite while in the sticks spring is in the air and the townspeople perform fertility rites around the Maypole. Rather than serenade their women the village men woo them by placing birch trees decorated with colored crepe paper in front of their homes. The artist took the Maypole and put it into the foreground of the big picture of a May Day demonstration. Contrariwise the artist placed before the Maypole a protest banner that extolled folk wisdom, but in the language of sound and fury evocative of protest. "When the first day of May arrives with a bang, it ushers in the cookoo and nightingale." The artist's Maypole in the first temporary installation was also modified. She used a lime tree, which is excessively significant of Germanicity. Already the ancient courts convened under lime trees to pronounce judgment. Freud refers to the court proceedings under German wood to underscore the impasse of judgment through the doubling of testimony always as counter-testimony, like the two photographs, which testify in each case to two versions of May Day. Freud finds comparison between the wooden thought process of his OCD patient, the so-called Ratman, and "the old German courts of justice, in which the suits were usually brought to an end, before judgment had been given, by the death of the parties to the dispute."



POLA SPERBER, “Am blauen Zaun” (At the Blue Fence), 2012, in two parts: pinewood, blue-grey, used, variable

The title evokes a place to remember, a memorial niche, or even a temple. The fence belongs to the Before and After. What awaited you at the blue fence was perhaps a tryst. But the fence object isn't as grownup as the title. As miniaturization, seen from above, it contains a feeling of *Heimat* – like the stuffed animal the teen carries forward from childhood.

The blue beauty of the wooden sculpture contrasts with the size, which is aesthetically awkward and withdrawn, asking to be overlooked, while too large for that. It's the post-minimalist format that brings up the uncomfortable relationship to the body in puberty, which can daunt or haunt one's membership in the group –the group conceived, that is, as the other body one grows into and out of.

By its size and flexibility the accordion fence can be aimed and applied as a weapon in close combat. It supplies a possible game: Birnam wood. The fence can be opened and alternatively compressed; with each contraction and expansion the triffid creature moves closer and closer unto the stronghold. If you compress the suffixal parenthesis holding the s, you can propel "wood" forward.



POLA SPERBER, "Apotropäon", 2012, b&w analog photographs, framed in ash wood; ash wood baseboard, 26 x 34 cm each; variable



A simple trick in photography (extended exposure) makes the portraits of awkward adolescents ghostly. The hangout of teens trying to fit in, via their in and out groups, is known as a haunt. The ash wood out of which the artist made the frames flexes a mythic ability to banish or contain spirits while highlighting the superstition of all framing. Mike Kelley, the master artist-thinker of the Teen Age, prized Spiritualist photography for the sleights of hand that raised the question of haunting not as evidence of the senses but as internal to the photographic medium (as medium). It was the first photography that qualified as art.



MARGARETE HAHNER, “turnabout sisters”, 2007/2012, super 8 loop

The artist prefers painting on recycled or found surfaces. At first she used pieces of wood. But then she discovered that records, which in the meantime were worthless and in large supply, were suitable for painting. On wood even the traces of earlier or lost attempts add up to one work. With the records a false start lets the artist reach for the next record, thereby initiating a series. Picasso wanted to be filmed while painting (and he was, several times) because the final painting tended to obscure, even destroy the earlier formulations that, even while rejected, belong to the work’s unconscious. Thus by recording the stages of a painting film serializes where otherwise one ends up with the new-and-improved image superimposed upon all the rest. Around this time she commenced filming her recurring reformulations of a certain scene as an animated scene of unfolding. Since the records were a standard size the paintings on these surfaces were particularly available for filming. No longer guiding the needle through the recording groove to follow the music, the defunct surface of a record shows markings of time, like the growth rings of a felled tree. The painted sisters, caught with the wooden table in the act of metamorphosis, allegorize Hahner’s painting film at the surface junction between a defunct function and its literalization: “turntable sisters.”



## Loss of the First Time

Projective identification belongs to the earliest roots/routes of formation of the self always already within networks of intrapsychic outsourcing. “Identification by projection implies a combination of splitting off parts of the self and projecting them on to (or rather into) another person” (143). With “a securely established good object, implying a securely established love for it,” the ego is richly endowed, “which allows for an outpouring of libido and projection of good parts of the self into the external world without a sense of depletion arising” (144). The ego feels that it can also reintroject the love it has given out, take in goodness from diverse sources, and thus be “enriched by the whole process” (ibid.). The more intact good parts there are inside the self (along with the inevitable devoured objects that are in bits) the less splitting and projecting are directly and immediately related to fragmented parts of the personality. The ego can thus repeatedly undo splitting and achieve integration in its relation to objects (144-45). The internalized good breast “acts as a focal point in the ego, from which good feelings can be projected on to external objects” (144), a grounded trajectory that “counteracts the processes of splitting and dispersal and enhances the capacity for integration and synthesis” (ibid.). The fear of annihilation by the destructive forces is the deepest fear of all. Splitting is only effective as primal defense against this fear “to the extent that it brings about a dispersal of anxiety and a cutting off of emotions. But it fails in another sense because it results in a feeling akin to death” (ibid.).

*If I Were You* is the narrative of a Devil’s compact according

to the terms of what Schreber called “soul murder,” the violation he claimed to have endured for generations. The only example of what Schreber meant by soul murder that was left after his family censored the section in *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* devoted to its documentation was the Faustian pact with the Devil. Schreber’s understanding of this pact as the extension of life at the expense of another’s life is closer to Green’s fable of body theft than to Goethe’s main text.

In “On Identification,” Klein allows that although a patient might anxiously feel that he doesn’t know where the parts went that he dispersed into the external world, this sensation belongs to the defensive function of splitting itself, which has the effect of rendering estranged parts of the self as inaccessible both to the patient and to the analyst. Now it seems that more is retained and carried over than annihilated in the splitting called projective identification. Julian Green demonstrates as much in the course of his protagonist Fabian’s infernal body switching. “We should conclude therefore (in keeping with the author’s very concrete conception of the projective process), that Fabian’s memories and other aspects of his personality are left behind in the discarded Fabian who must have retained a good deal of his ego when the split occurred” (166). This retention of “a good deal” replaces the infernal compact of soul murder inside the metabolism of the inner world.

With each switch Fabian retains memory traces of his previous visitations. “It shows most clearly at the end of the story, for his experiences in the characters into whom he had turned himself are all present in his mind before he dies and he is concerned about their fate. This would imply that he introjects his objects, as well as projects himself into them” (170). The life that flashes before his eyes belongs to the introjected egos of his various station stops in projective iden-

tification. While the process is described as staggered – for example, between identification of common ground and identification with someone on that basis – in the analytic work in session the process is not so divided. “For the individual to feel that he has a good deal in common with another person is concurrent with projecting himself into that person (and the same applies to introjecting him)” (ibid.). The Devil cuts a deal with our controlling interest in the great deal in common we share with our objects of identification and carries over through the double dealing of body switching an ideal or encrypted object.

Enter Julian Green.

“Welcome to the South,” Julian Green said, receiving a visitor to his apartment in the heart of Paris. A Confederate flag hung at the end of a narrow corridor. ... “This is the American South in France,” he added. ... His father had been sent to Europe in 1895 by the Southern Cotton Oil Company. Given a choice of living in France or Germany, his mother insisted on France because, she said, “The French had been defeated in 1870 and would understand the Southerners.” Julian was the youngest of her eight children, and he listened to her stories of the South with wonder. “She told us all about the splendid victories we had,” he recalled, “but she was always bursting into tears. She didn’t tell us until very late in the day that we lost the war.” (Riding)

The out-of-body experience – or experiment – of identification central to *If I Were You* marked the onset of Green’s published work, which happened to be in English. While a student at the University of Virginia, Green wrote and published the story “The Apprentice Psychiatrist.” The protagonist is a student of mental illness who must accept a post as

tutor when his father proves no longer able to support him. The boy in his care strikes him as a case. While the guardians are away he exaggerates certain aggravating conditions to observe the signs of breakdown in his charge. But as the protagonist looks forward to the outbreak of madness he would study up close he alone goes mad. He charges upstairs with a gun. When we follow its report inside the boy's room we are suspended between expectations: will we find the undead of suicide or the gun dead of murder? Although it ends up being murder, the protagonist, beside himself, also shot himself in the pupil.

The opening enfolding of selves was repeated and rehearsed as Green's internalization of his mother tongue inside his other first language, French. In his 1941 essay, "My first book in English," which refers to *Memories of Happy Days*, Green identifies French as his first and only language – and only reality. But then he cannot help overhear the other mother tongue: "What bothered me more than I can say was that my mother spoke to me in English, and I had great trouble in learning that language. ... I felt that in teaching me these new words, my mother was trying to make a sort of duplicate of the universe, which, I thought, was a French universe" (81). In writing his first book in English he relied on "the everyday words which my mother taught me as a child" (86). In another 1941 essay, "An Experiment in English," Green presents his early relationship to the English spoken by his parents as part of the mysterious behavior of grown-ups that wasn't available for his understanding because it was designed to cover something up with its secret handshake. "To my mother's shame it was a certain time before I could understand English perfectly. As a child I could not bring myself to believe that English was a real language, rather did I take it to be a jumble of meaningless sounds which grown-ups made to pretend they were carrying on a conversation" (55). But his mother wanted him

to understand what she spelled out: "Spelling too was the cause of much grief to both of us" (57).

In *Memories of Happy Days* Green remembers those days of his childhood as irretrievable loss of first time, first contact, happiness itself.

Above all, I could never again feel happy for the *first time*: happiness would become more and more something I would crave because I had tasted of it and wanted more; the element of surprise was taken away from it forever. I could no longer stand like a tiny Faustus in a black apron and all of a sudden discover that the old world I happened to be in was a place of inexpressible beauty, that the clouds above my head were as lovely as anything I could see, and that the cool air of an October morning filled one's heart with a desire to live forever. (16)

The writing method Green followed for his first literary work he recognized upon reflection as borrowed from storytelling in childhood. As he was proceeding he discovered that he had installed in the process the surprise of forgetting or remembering as the surprise of the first time. We're in Chapter 11 of his memoirs.

Among the unfinished stories which filled my desk-drawer there was one to which I added half a page or so from time to time, simply because I was anxious to know what would happen to the characters. ... My method was to begin to tell the story and make it up as I went along, much in the fashion of a nurse who tells children stories at bedtime. (264)

By this method the exquisite corpse yielded his first tale, "The Pilgrim on the Earth," which is set in Virginia. Like the other story that was his first, "The Apprentice Psychia-

trist," it gradually admitted in the course of composition a "supernatural element" (*ibid.*).

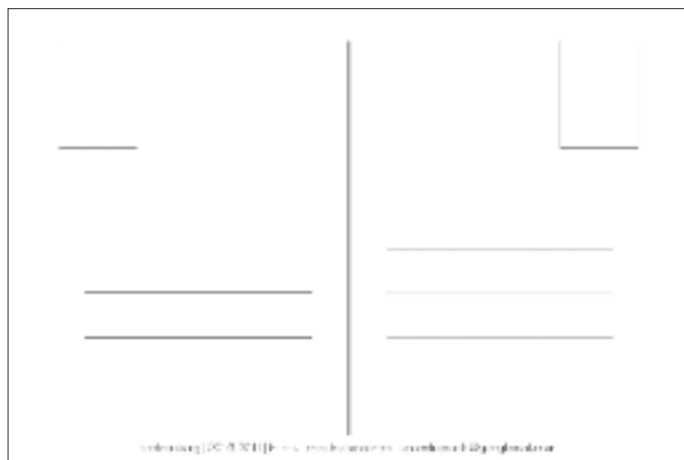
It was like losing one's way in a wood and realizing by slow degrees that the wood is haunted. I suppose there is no harm in admitting that I was frightened, particularly on one occasion when I understood that I was describing a case of what theologians call possession. This came as a shock, yet acted as an incentive, for I now wrote large portions of the story at one sitting and kept up at this pace until I had actually reached the conclusion. (265)

While in his native French he identified the apparitions he summoned as infernal, his mother tongue was not only a foreign body in the nativity of the author-to-be but also the carrier of the "secrecy" Green identified as the most salient feature of childhood (17). The language the child addressed to himself or to his imaginary interlocutor was his own secret invention, though, upon retrospection, "it was merely an imitation of what my elders' conversation sounded like to my ear" (*ibid.*). The transmission of the mother's secret at once takes place and is omitted. To reinforce proper English pronunciation Green's mother would read the Bible out loud to him while he sat at her feet. The reading passed over or through him until one day he understood a verse: "one day ... something new and exciting happened: my mother read a verse and I understood it" (20). When he tried to say something his mother wouldn't be interrupted. By the end of the reading he had forgotten which verse was the first to enter his understanding. It's another first that's lost forever in the present, though otherwise preserved: "Yet I still hope that, as I grow older and my memory goes back further, I shall find it gleaming in the dark" (21). His sisters, who liked to read along over the mother's shoulder, read in the margins of the Bible her repeated notations to herself to

remember or never to forget. They wanted to know what these admonishments and self-recriminations signified: mother didn't remember. When in New York City attending a play Green again entered this scene of transmission, which in turn recalled the other transmission scene from childhood internal to it.

Never having heard English spoken on the stage, I missed almost all of the first act, when suddenly I was able to understand every word. This was a strange experience which reminded me of the day when, having pondered for months over the alphabet, I realized that I could read. (203)

When next he glimpsed the South for the first time he was raised to the word power of identification that raised him: "Words spoken by my mother came back to me after many years; it was as if the world she had loved stood before me in a kind of simplified picture, and in a curious way I recognized this picture because I was looking at it through her eyes" (204). In *If I Were You* the first name is assigned to the magic formula to be whispered into the ear of the person to be displaced and possessed. The first name, the name not yet finding completion in the surname, the name whereby little one is called and known by mother, is part of the magic spell that fills the mouth (and ear) like baby formula. The conjuring power the mother's voice retains is closely linked to Julian's name, which brings home the ingredients of the infernal formula. "I remember it as distinctly as if she had just now called me by my name" (11-12). By the end of his memoirs in the other mother tongue he has come to realize that there need be no more parting of the ways. "I wished that in some way a part of me might remain in America while another part returned to Paris, and strange to say that is what happened, our wildest prayers being sometimes answered" (216).





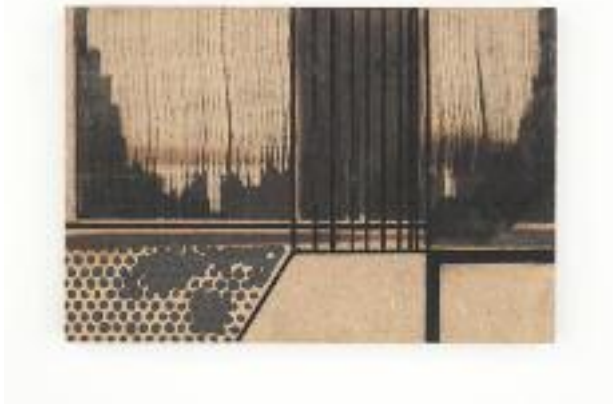
On a quest for a place that would correspond to an originary image, which he would mark with the blank canvases he carried with him, and then photograph as a whole scene, the artist hiked through the wintery Black Forest in 2010 from Freiburg to Todtnauberg. The *Lichtung*/clearing on the ridge of Stübenwasen was chosen for the primal scene: he arranged the canvases and took the first picture. In summer 2011 he was back to take another photograph of the trees in the clearing, but in the meantime only one canvas remained. The artist titled the two photographs together „Zeitfenster“ (Windows of Time).

For cinephiles the double take in a clearing cites or summons Hitchcock's *The Trouble with Harry*, which loops the trouble with commemoration, framing, and burying a placeholder for absence through the death wish as social bond (just about everyone thinks he or she killed Harry). Give emphasis to the „Tod“ (death) in the placename Todtnauberg and the locals will correct your mispronunciation. „Tod“ is lost in the difference in sound a „t“ makes, can't be seen for the „t“'s.

The question of documentation of the photographs, of the artist's quest, and of their temporal mediation or medium, continued to throw the artist for a loop, which a subsequent occasion to exhibit in China brought into perspective. Unable to attend the exhibition he posted his photographs to the museum in China return to sender, primalizing the images within the round trip of their dispatch. By linking the two cases of crypt management in Freud's stable, the case studies of the Wolfman and of the Ratman, he opened up the deposit of the crypt to its transmission and circulation.

„Todtnauberg“ also inscribes Heidegger's own clearing or plain text of the end of metaphysics within the sendings of the loss of metaphysics, or rather of its final deposit, in psychoanalysis, which Derrida bundled together as *La Carte postale*. There is an alley or way in Todtnauberg named after its most famous citizen: Martin Heidegger Weg. But the „Weg“ that signals, like *Holzwege* (path through the woods), the very pathway or method of his thought is also the rude imperative: Martin Heidegger go away, away there, get lost, or get moving.





SASCHA BROSAMER, „Incunabala“, 2011, coal, india ink, burned on MDF, diptych, 12.5 x 19 cm each

While his foray into photo documentation made the artist a messenger of time, he otherwise encounters space both in his music installations and performances and in his burn paintings. But while music resounds in physical space, painting is his place for poetic space, an in-between or internal place. While the work with sound makes endlessness manifest, the burn paintings bring nothingness before the artist's inner world.

“Incunabulum” meant “cradle” and “swaddling clothes” and transferred a sense of “beginnings” to the new sense of the first printed books, for which sense it tends to be plural, incunabula, which began to be collected and archived after one hundred years. An earlier term that came and went, fifteener, in reference to the fifteenth century, shows that while childhood was on the verge of invention, through the spread of literacy as social requirement, adolescence would wait for its introduction as special age until the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, when paper began to be harvested out of wood. The first books were printed either typographically with moveable metal type or in the manner of the woodcut as block books. The diptych was Brosamer's first experimental burn painting, which opened one hundred years of production.





CLAUDIA DE LA TORRE, selections from the artist's collection of found photographs

The artist came to the Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe from Mexico with an eye for the look of Germanicity. One result is her archive of found photographs made in Germany. She has also been collecting German books, fascinated in particular by the words that accrue by combination to a single German noun, like „Wald.“ The work the artist assembled for *Wood(s)* is based on found books bearing „Wald“ in their titles, which she manipulated, both in message and appearance, using found photographs on the covers.



RODRIGO HERNANDEZ, „Norwegian Wood“, 2011, wood, paper, paint, other materials, dimensions variable

The background story the artist is prepared to give for this work qualifies as “too much information” – like the retelling at length of one’s dream. His intention was to represent the dissemination of the gaze/gays he participated in and then observed himself subsumed by during a Mexican beach season of mornings after (the setting of the Beatles song). Even the best intention succumbs to structure. Had he sought to reclaim his former sense of being a player in control of the glancing game? Instead we are left with a sense of the exhaustion of the possibilities of wood, having wood (a hard on) or the question whether the Norwegian would.

At the original installation there was a poster on the wall (“Carl Iver Wang and Endre Rosie, thanks for the idea of the prism”) and a smiley painted on the floor. The typed one-liners piled high on the floor occupied this span of attention between premature teen insight and the discourse of happy faces, but alternating in this incarnation with explicitly unreadable pages.

## Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

The astral projection that released in Edgar Rice Burroughs the drive to write or serialize prequel corpora – and sent his first protagonist Carter to Mars – is another grand instance of projective identification. It also carried forward melancholic fealty to the lost cause of the Confederacy, which covered in Burroughs's case for his mother's deposit inside him of dead/undead brothers. In his writing Burroughs penetrated the primeval forest to find a clearing for burial.

In 1923 the author of the Tarzan series became one of the first writers to incorporate himself: Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. Before Disney for example, Burroughs embraced the marketing approach of what would come to be known as multimedia (he even compiled an “Ape—English/English—Ape” dictionary). Before the Mickey Mouse Club refined the concept, Burroughs revalorized the Boy Scouts of America as Tarzan Clans of America.

Ed was the fifth son; the fourth, Arthur, had lived only twelve days. When Ed was six, a younger brother, Charles Stuart, died at five months. The image of the lifeless infant in his mother's arms can be seen again when Tarzan's ape mother Kala won't let go of her dead baby – not until she finds in baby Tarzan the reanimation she lifts up while dropping the loss into the crib or crypt.

Ed was the shiftless, short-attention-span child, something of a perennial loser. But it was the loss of siblings that was being protected or pushed back. He was regularly sent away

because an epidemic was going the rounds. His motility in the family he jokingly ascribed to yet another epidemic in town. It's clear that there was over-concern that his early passing not be the third that bad fortune brings. As he wrote in his unfinished autobiography of 1929: "Unquestionably my destiny is closely interwoven with pestilences, which may or may not account for my having become a writer" (in Taliaferro, 30).

The ancestry of his mother would be Burroughs's pride and disavowal, which together spell shame. Through his mother he identified with (and idealized) distant relations from Virginia while the more immediate family circle, on both sides, was Union all the way. But the Union his veteran father embodied had to be mediated for Burroughs by the lost sibling war. His mother, whose maiden name was German, was more directly related to her Pennsylvania Dutch father. Ed preferred to cut the race to Virginia, where a certain English strain could be lost and found.

He wrote a first novel that lifts off into fantasy from the map of his fraternity in Utah that he kept rejoining, working with his brothers as ranch hand and panhandler when he wasn't working for his father in Chicago. The title, "Minidoka," also the name of the eponymous hero, was the name of one of the towns on this map. He never showed it around, even in the family circle. He filed it away with his souvenirs of school, army, and the West, where it remained undiscovered until after his death. It had been time to pack up the mementos: the fraternity was returning to Chicago after all ventures, including a store in Minidoka, had failed. Looking back on this adventure map of the fraternity, which had supplied a first foundation for his found and lost ability to sustain a narrative at novel length, Burroughs characterized its size as that of a territory "into which could have been dumped the former German Empire and all of Greece" (in



Taliaferro, 42). At times, it seems, he was taking dictation.

Now commenced for Burroughs a period, between 1905 and 1911, in which the pattern of jobs he pursued, lost, or let go might be considered as premeditated. In the outline for his 1929 autobiography he attached one sentence to this period: "I am a Flop" (in Taliaferro, 55). From stenography to pencil sharpeners, from Alcola (a cure for alcoholism) to correspondence courses, Burroughs sought his niche in the new markets of gadget love. In the course of this long haul of unemployment, he began to suffer nightmares, in which, as he confided to the Boston Society of Psychic Research, he "would see figures standing beside" the "bed, usually shrouded" (in Taliaferro, 61). Waiting around he had consumed countless stories in the cheap magazines on the back pages of which he advertised the latest device he was trying to sell. Shifting from background to foreground, a serialized narrative in one of the leading pulp magazines was one more invention he would pitch for sale.

In July 1911 he commenced writing *A Princess of Mars*, the success story that allowed him to be a proper son and father. His innovation was to add to the science-fiction setting a love story or, as he knew from his supervision of the stenography department at Sears, Roebuck in 1907, heterosexuality, the new ingredient in the metabolic mix of institutions and work places. But he skipped technical media to get from here to there. Instead the paranormal power of astral projection is how protagonist Carter suddenly finds himself on Mars. A stranger on a strange planet, one that differs from home by a new relationship to gravity (and the grave), Carter can leap buildings in a single bound (like Superman a couple decades later). In transition to a newly adapted coordination on these terms he first finds, through "a series of evolutions," that he must first "learn to walk all over again" (21). The first "structure" the new-found toddler encoun-

ters is a massively fortified incubator for the eggs of future generation on Mars. The first adult Martians he meets were mobilized to defend the hatching children and siblings against the unidentified hopping-and-falling stranger.

Protagonist Carter, who enters a kind of psy-fi limbo at the loss of the Civil War, was a “Southern gentleman of the highest type” (v). He entrusts to “Burroughs,” another Virginian who is also the author of the foreword, his corpus for safe keeping and scheduling. The manuscript must remain “unread” for eleven years. The single massive door to Carter’s well-ventilated tomb opens only from the inside (vii). Carter opens his narrative with the declaration that he is undead but also fears death. It’s because he’s so afraid of death (even though he has died twice to date and yet survives) that he is convinced that he is mortal (11). He has always been a man of about thirty, which was about the age of Burroughs (or of his first lost sibling if he could have kept real time) at the time of this breakthrough. Though Carter still appears as he did over forty years ago, he senses that he cannot go on living forever. Some day he will “die the real death from which there is no resurrection” (ibid.). This real death would be the real second death that alone, in a secular setting of denied resurrection, ends haunting and undeath. The crypt that can be opened only from the inside is not subsequently explored or integrated within the narrative of his adventures on Mars. We don’t really even return to it at the end, when by some reversal of astral projection he finds himself back on earth, a jump cut away from knowing whether his last-minute intervention to restore the air flow saved his adopted people from suffocation. The question of the heir remains up in the air.

But since serialization was Burroughs’s business Carter would keep on returning. In the first sequel, *The Gods of Mars*, Carter meets “Burroughs” again (as recorded in the

foreword) after twelve years have passed, and hands over his notes for the next installment (which “Burroughs” this time writes or ghost-writes): “I have come now because my affection for you prompted me to see you once more before you pass over for ever into that other life that I shall never know, and which though I have died thrice and shall die again tonight, as you know death, I am as unable to fathom as are you.” (vi)

Though he has learned the secret of traversing “the trackless void” at will, he has determined that, upon returning to Mars, he will never again “leave the dying world” that is his life (*ibid.*). Once again he enters the vault. This sequel, written by “Burroughs,” appeared in 1913, the year of the death of the author’s father.

Into the revolving door of this crypt Burroughs inserted the new fiction (and series) dedicated to Tarzan. *Tarzan of the Apes*, which first appeared as magazine fare in 1912 and then as book two years later, spans the time of publication of Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*. There is a rhyme in time between Burroughs’s consideration of the superhuman on the terms and turf of primal man and Freud’s legend of the primal father.

For around two years a certain professor at the University of California searched for the roots of Tarzan. In reply to the academic’s diplomatic letter of inquiry, Burroughs wrote:

I have tried to search my memory for some clue to the suggestions that gave me the idea, and as close as I can come to it I believe that it may have originated in my interest in Mythology and the story of Romulus and Remus. I also recall having read many years ago the story of the sailor who was shipwrecked on the Coast of Africa and who was adopted by and con-

sorted with great apes to such an extent that when he was rescued a she-ape followed him into the surf and threw a baby after him. (in Taliaferro, 85)

In *Tarzan of the Apes*, Kala is Tarzan's ape mother not by evolutionary sex but, to the same effect, by dint of mourning (or unmourning): "She had a great capacity for mother love and mother sorrow" (31). It should be clear, it certainly is to Tarzan, that the other conditions of Burroughs's experiment (the novel opens as breeding assignment), like the boy's real pedigree as noble-born, are eclipsed by the combo of support Kala gives him. She is the only object he has – to lose. Hence her epitaph inscribed inside Tarzan's inner world: "To lose the only creature in all his world who ever had manifested love and affection for him was the greatest tragedy he had ever known" (75-76).

The Carter vault is replaced by the cabin of Tarzan's birth, which, though it houses the dead, serves mainly as self-storage unit through which Tarzan, beginning in adolescence, comes into his inheritance. It is his epistemophilia that the cabin of reason supplies. Before avenging Kala's murder, he pauses to study the African tribesman, who was the culprit. Based on the primer he has been studying in the cabin, he recognizes him as "Negro" but even more so as "Archer" (77). "Tarzan was an interested spectator. His desire to kill burned fiercely in his wild breast, but the desire to learn was even greater" (78). When he observes that the African can make fire (which he only knows as lightning or "Ara" in ape-speak) he can't follow why the man cooks the meat. "Possibly Ara was a friend with whom the Archer was sharing his food" (96). He learns that the arrow is but the "messenger" delivering the poison that kills.

The ultimate tally of differences between humans and animals leads Tarzan "to hold his own kind in low esteem"

(91). Tarzan allows himself the distinction of animal nobility: “when he killed for revenge, or in self-defense, he did that also without hysteria, for it was a very business-like proceeding which admitted of no levity” (83). Tarzan “realized ... without malice or hatred” that “all things outside his own tribe were his deadly enemies” (with a few exceptions, like Tantor the elephant). But because he is good at it, “the greatest” among his few “primitive pleasures” is “to hunt and kill:”

That he joyed in killing, and that he killed with a joyous laugh upon his handsome lips betokened no innate cruelty. He killed for food most often, but, being a man, he sometimes killed for pleasure, a thing which no other animal does; for it has remained for man alone among all creatures to kill senselessly and wantonly for the mere pleasure of inflicting suffering and death. (82-83)

One of Tarzan’s character traits is his delight in playing pranks, often in the setting of his great interest in learning. After studying the interior of a tribal habitation, he piles up a still life of their possessions, with one of the skulls on top: “he stood back, surveyed his work, and grinned. Tarzan of the Apes enjoyed a joke” (85). Then he observes the response: “There was much in their demeanor which he could not understand, for of superstition he was ignorant, and of fear of any kind he had but a vague conception” (87).

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, the work in which Freud revisited the legend of the primal father he had introduced in *Totem and Taboo*, we learn in passing that a joke implements a focusing of attention reminiscent of the indirect method of hypnosis, which yields the same result as the direct method. Freud calls hypnosis “a group of two” because it taps into the group dynamic grounded in

the primal father as “group ideal, which governs the ego in the place of the ego ideal” (*SE* 18: 127).

Freud underscored that what Nietzsche sought in the future belongs in the past: the superman was the primal father, the feared and hated figure of uninhibited self fulfilment (the only true individual, Freud suggests, thus underscoring that in his science there is no other “individual” to be found) (123). But this superhuman father, once gone, proved to be good and gone. Not only did his adolescent children find that they also had to mourn him, but in time the dead primal father also came to be installed as the model of mourning (which is successful to the extent that it allows succession). At a time when ideologues (and psychos like Leopold and Loeb) were claiming to see or be the future now of Nietzsche’s forecast of the superhuman, Freud rescued the open-ended trajectory of Nietzsche’s thought by preserving it in everyone’s prehistory as the predestination to mourn. Tarzan comes after the death of the primal father as second-generation superhuman.

After killing the leader in self-defense, Tarzan becomes king of the apes. But when the dead king’s son challenges Tarzan, he defeats the more powerful ape not by strength but by reason (namely his impromptu invention of a wrestling hold). That Tarzan accepts surrender from his rival, whom he then spares, is an innovation that further distinguishes Tarzan as king of the apes (106). More interested in pursuing his solitary studies in and around the cabin, Tarzan steps down as ruler and enjoins the apes to choose his replacement. He issues one law, that of the group bond, which gives or takes away the fundamental support on which the leader or father depends. There is both a crowd and the father. “If you have a chief who is cruel, do not do as the other apes do, and attempt, any one of you, to pit yourself against him alone. But, instead, let two or three or four of you attack him together. Then, if

you will do this, no chief will dare to be other than he should be, for four of you can kill any chief who may ever be over you.” (170)

After Tarzan comes the law of succession to be carried out by the fraternity. But before this law Tarzan was not alone in his success. Freud identified critters and insects as the diminished siblings whose bond supported the hero, who only appeared to proceed solo:

We often find ... that the hero who has to carry out some difficult task ... can carry out his task only by the help of a crowd of small animals, such as bees or ants. These would be the brothers in the primal horde, just as in the same way in dream symbolism insects or vermin signify brothers and sisters (contemptuously, considered as babies). (*SE* 18: 136)

When Tarzan was learning to read in the parental cabin and crypt, the letters first appeared to him as “bugs.” The knife Tarzan also discovers in the cabin, which serves him as single prosthesis putting Tarzan over the top of the primary narcissism of bodily conflict, is also the tool for getting to know all about the bugs: “Pieces of bark and flat leaves and even smooth stretches of bare earth provided him with copy books whereon to scratch with the point of his hunting knife the lessons he was learning” (57). He learns to supplement the proper names of the ape language with bug-words that introduce a larger frame of difference, one that allows Tarzan a race of his own on the basis of which he can affirm his secondary narcissism. Only the “slow and backward” child (37), from the perspective of animals, who tend to be instant teenagers, has the running start (or the “promise” to be kept in time) that allows him to be hoisted by his prosthesis and group bond to kingship. Animals don’t share with us the promise land.

To complete the conditions for his experiment, Burroughs renders Tarzan's apes as a fantasy species related to the gorilla but more intelligent, with Kala at the front of the line: with her round high forehead she is the most intelligent. The "Dum-Dum" of these apes is "the first meeting place" from which "has arisen ... all the forms and ceremonials of modern church and state" (59). These fantasy apes of increased intelligence are, more so than usual with apes, the "awe-inspiring progenitors of man" (31). They embody a missing link. The link with the missing is established when Kala was able to reanimate her dead baby by taking Tarzan to carry the first child forward beyond mourning or substitution. When he begins growing facial hair in adolescence he quickly invents shaving with his father's knife to hide the evidence of his ape nature on the inside (109-10).

When Jane and her party find shelter in the cabin their first task is to inter the skeletal remains found inside. Tarzan again receives instruction via the cabin, this time in burial and proper mourning. But stay away from Jane – that way civilization lies. The lie of this land is given in Nietzschean shorthand: money, giving only in exchange, and the promise. Jane represents to herself – and represses – her love for Tarzan as primeval. Promises, promises allow her twice in swift succession – the tempo of repression – to block consummation of her love. And yet what she calls primeval is maternal. Her mother died a year ago. Her father addresses his missing wife as ghostly partner with whom he counts on being reunited. The unsettling effects of the loss, rather than senility or life-long eccentricity, determine his oblivious treatment of Jane and, indeed, of reality (the reality of loss). Father is off to Africa in search of treasure for which he has obtained a loan with his daughter's hand in marriage as security. She's along to protect him. But then she finds herself projecting in her mother's missing place Tarzan's bosom body.



Johnny Weissmuller's incarnation of the superhero, beginning in 1932, enters Tarzan in the contest between American and German interpretations of and identifications with the superhuman. Second-generation animators of heroism (after Leopold and Loeb) countered the interpretation of Nietzsche's superman as master-race mascot with the introduction of Superman and Batman, whose superheroism originates in trauma, which divides them from themselves, but which ongoing conflict with the evil masterminds doubles and contains. Weissmuller embodies the aesthetic athleticism that Riefenstahl would instrumentalize. While in *Olympia* she cynically intercuts the athletes in action with assorted animals in motion, Tarzan-Weissmuller shares ontology with the beasts of the jungle: the elephant is his neighbor and a chimp his adopted child or partner.

Tarzan-Weissmuller doesn't say much. But he doesn't need to. These projections are all about Jane. The first film opens with reunion with her father at his encampment in Africa. Right before she enters we see the old man gazing longingly at Jane's photograph. (Someone is gone without saying, without commemoration.) She in turn plays coy with the possibilities of his love, which suggests that this isn't the first time she's been overstimulated by his needs. Then she starts freshening up and getting changed in front of her discomfited father without any show of modesty of her own. She talks about how fascinating Africa is, while he says that he hates Africa, which she can't accept. When he takes her out to witness the natives gathering for market, father and daughter are up against the studio walls. Screen-thin projections of found footage of African tribesmen are on the walls closing in. Jane takes her departure from the close quarters of Oedipal incest and finds her way back to the double-breasted body of noble or pre-Oedipal valuation. Jane separates out the double-backed parental body and inaugurates their integration.

Jane “jokingly” refers to the high-fidelity performance she can expect from marriage in Africa as the only white-skinned ape woman for miles. Thus she coyly asks uncomprehending Tarzan-Weissmuller when they awake together where he has been: was he at the club all night? The maternal group of pals, buddies, guys, or other women has no push or pull for her to fight or fend off – even as she is always drawing a line for laughs in the “and” of matrimony. That’s why the ape bond that is associated with Tarzan’s position in the jungle takes the form, in the film franchise, of the adoptive chimp whose very name joins in Jane’s aping of fears that cannot hold her but which she cannot let go. “Cheetah” is therefore the one epithet she will never fling into Tarzan’s face (above the breast).

## Trees Walking

Are the walking trees inheriting the earth in John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* another fulfillment of the prophecy of the witches in *Macbeth*? If it is conceded it is not by direct citation but by non sequitur. In response to the evidence of the post-Apocalyptic spread of untended nature – and in the very place where the development of instant neighborhoods not so long ago was criticized for erasing the natural setting – the protagonist-narrator, William Mason, touches on the notion of revenge and then spills the blood in the *Macbeth* citation, but as uncanny harbinger of survival, regrowth, and other return engagements. “The countryside is having its revenge all right,” I said. “Nature seemed about finished then – ‘Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?’” (202). The vengeful return of defeated, finished nature overflows from the murdered father’s unstoppable lifeblood. The walking trees are the advance guard of this development.

Like the Martian tripod-like war machine in *War of the Worlds*, a triffid advances by the limping, lurching momentum of its three-pronged root that otherwise rests in the earth but can also move above ground: “When it ‘walked’ it moved rather like a man on crutches. Two of the blunt ‘legs’ slid forward, then the whole thing lurched as the rear one drew almost level with them, then the two in front slid forward again” (27). The mobile forest of injured father figures can be stopped, if only for the time being, by electricity or fire. And yet triffids also continuously rub their front twigs together or against the stem, which produces not sparks, however, but a kind of communication among them.

A triffid packs a tendril it whips out to sting its victim with a

dose of poison. It turns out that triffids belong to the sideshow of plants that eat flesh. They sting not to protect themselves but to hunt their quarry, which you can follow and understand as consequence of the stinging only if you wait and watch as long as they do around the victims.

“The stinging tendril did not have the muscular power to tear firm flesh, but it had strength enough to pull shreds from a decomposing body and lift them to the cup on its stem” (31).

The triffids make short shrift of the evidence of an end that is final, which reaches the narrator as stench at once unforgettable and indescribable. “When I woke to it that morning it convinced me beyond doubt that the end had come. Death is just the shocking end of animation; it is dissolution that is final” (125). The triffids administer a return to nature that proceeds more swiftly than history to lift the depressive effect from the sites of the end. “And, curiously, as the living things increasingly took charge, the effect of the place became less oppressive. As it passed beyond the scope of any magic wand, most of the ghosts were going with it, withdrawing slowly into history” (192).

Mason was one of the lucky few to survive a triffid’s sting, which struck his eyes. He was in the hospital with his eyes covered up for treatment on the night that was the night almost everyone else watched a bright cloud of comet debris fill the sky, the light show that left them by the next morning blind. Mankind is largely wiped out by the consequences of general blindness. The triffids benefit by the evolutionary advantage they now hold. Mason, too, benefits. The catastrophe has turned around his schizoid retirement from life toward a new opening:

My way of life, my plans, ambitions, every expectation I had had, they were all wiped out at a stroke,

along with the conditions that had formed them. I suppose that had I had any relatives or close attachments to mourn I should have felt suicidally derelict at that moment. But what had seemed at times a rather empty existence turned out now to be lucky. My mother and father were dead, my one attempt to marry had miscarried some years before, and there was no particular person dependent upon me. And, curiously, what I found that I did feel – with a consciousness that it was against what I ought to be feeling – was release.... (46)

The three dots that follow the “release” introduce into the open ending, the uncontainment of his illicit feeling, the three-pronged advance of the triffids. But they can also be connected up with the other series of reversals leading to the protagonist’s own triangulation. In the new world order Mason finds that he has changed places with everyone else who can still see his way to survival. “Curiously I realized that in all this I had met no other person who was searching for someone else. Every one of them had been ... snapped clean away from friends or relatives to link them with the past, and was beginning a new life with people who were strangers. Only I, as far as I could see, had promptly formed a new link” (163-4).

Before the end of the world Mason thought of loneliness as a negative that could be supplied as something temporary, like the absence of company.

That day I learned that it was much more. It was something which could press and oppress, could distort the ordinary and play tricks with the mind. Something which lurked inimically all around, stretching the nerves and twanging them with alarms, never letting one forget that there was no

one to help, no one to care. It showed one as an atom adrift in vastness, and it waited all the time its chance to frighten and frighten horribly (169-70).

This drifting atom is the bouncing ball to follow in the reception or interpretation of the disaster, which entails a key elision. The speech of hope another seeing-eye leader delivers to his pack, which reiterates the survivor ideology that is the consensus by the end of the novel, that the catastrophe at least – at last! – spared the earth the traumatic history (or rather the ongoing prospect) of nuclear warfare, fits a timeline of denial:

From August 6, 1945, the margin of survival has narrowed appallingly. Indeed, two days ago it was narrower than it is at this moment. If you need to dramatize, you could well take for your material the years succeeding 1945, when the path of safety started to shrink to a tightrope along which we had to walk with our eyes deliberately closed to the depths beneath us. (95-96)

In a 1951 novel in which the future seems no more remote or timeless than the next day, the evacuation of German science fiction and the history of its realizations in the course of WWII is particularly pressing. There is one explicit reference to WWII as part of the novel's prehistory, which is embedded in Mason's one intact souvenir of his own past, specifically of his father: "My father once told me that before Hitler's war he used to go round London with his eyes more widely open than ever before, seeing the beauties of buildings that he had never noticed before – and saying good-by to them" (70). But then when he next admits that he has a similar feeling Mason abruptly interrupts himself and, by the force of the catastrophe upon his world now, subsumes and displaces his father's earlier forecast as pre-

mature. “Much more than anyone could have hoped for had survived that war – but this was an enemy they would not survive. It was not wanton smashing and willful burning that they waited for this time: it was simply the long, slow, inevitable course of decay and collapse” (ibid.).

The paternal tour of London in anticipation of destruction is revisited and erased by the son’s later London visit on a mission to remember the past, which concludes this loop of exclusion of the traumatic history of WWII.

Once – not that year, not the next, but later on – I stood in Piccadilly Circus again, looking round at the desolation and trying to re-create in my mind’s eye the crowds that once swarmed there. I could no longer do it. Even in my memory they lacked reality. There was no tincture of them now. They had become as much a back cloth of history as the audiences in the Roman Colosseum or the army of the Assyrians, and, somehow, just as far removed from me. (192)

The reversal of the relationship to the recent past, to one’s dead, folds inside the back cloth a reference not only to the “poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage” but also to photographic practice. The satellites orbiting the future world on the eve of blindness convey photography of a new POV that isn’t human. The *Whole Earth Catalog* promoted the ecological identification with the earth, the rescue of nature from the prospect of earth’s nuclear devastation, as effect of or afterthought to the first satellite photo of the “whole earth,” which was the catalog’s first and iconic cover. Before proceeding with the product placement of ecological consumerism as new mode of adaptation to the alternate prospect of the end of the world, Stewart Brand mounted a public campaign to get NASA to confirm by its release the

rumor of this SF POV. The encyclopedic catalog looked forward to the Web; but it also projected a half-empty frontier zone, presumably post-Apocalyptic, in which pioneers were starting over from scratch, ecologically, but with the help of a handbook. The inspiration for *Star Trek* was the Western, which was to be projected onto the conquest of space.

In *The Day of the Triffids* the interception of the rocket by the satellite, which reroutes the evil in human history, already blocks reception of the Nazi era. "Sustained research in rocketry had at last succeeded in attaining one of its objectives. It had sent up a missile which stayed up. It was, in fact, possible to fire a rocket far enough up for it to fall into an orbit" (22). It was known as early as 1945, when Arthur C. Clarke published "Extra-Terrestrial Relays" in *Wireless World*, that communications satellites were technically possible. Beginning in 1951 Clark's science fiction made the attainment of the Outer Space perspective upon the earth the precondition for contact between earthlings and sentient beings from other planets.

In 1957 the first successfully launched satellite, *Sputnik 1*, escalated the space race as Cold War exclusive. But that only the rocket to the moon counted as ultimate victory reaches back into the prehistory of Nazi German realization of German science fiction. Science fiction as the positing of hypotheses in advance of their possible realization came to an end with the takeoff of the V2 rocket, which drew a Before and After line through SF reckoning. Henceforward the future address of science fiction would bear relation by denial and integration to the Nazi era of realization of first contact.

The 1962 film adaptation, *The Day of the Triffids*, keeps WWII close: survival is secured through an alliance between a French woman and the American protagonist, Bill Masen, who has to abandon London to get to the turning point. He



addresses his French partner's depressed mood following the loss of her fellow survivors. Yes, he knows: "You survive: Why?" He knows all about it: "from the war." For Masen, an American Naval officer who by the end helps his group join by submarine waiting at Gibraltar the greater group of the sighted, the path to survival is across the sea.

With Masen in London we witness the consequence of the morning blindness as a series of interruptions of the ability to bring voyage by machines to a successful close. A ship is lost at sea, doubly so without 24-7 radio assistance. A plane's blind pilot and co-pilot can't be guided down for emergency landing by the abandoned tower. At closer range the scene of botched arrival at the end station shows a train entering without slowing down or stopping – like the legendary film shot of a train moving toward the camera and thus into the audience. According to these scenes of catastrophic nonarrival it is the coupling of eyesight as system that has been withdrawn by the general blindness. The few remaining eye witnesses must restore the system of coupled sight.

While en route the loner Masen acquires by the selection process of catastrophic shock and aftershocks a prefab family of French woman and English girl. At the train station Masen saved the girl from a blind man's attempt to use her as his seeing-eye slave or prosthesis. Together they cross the sea to France, where they encounter a community of the "See French." Masen wants to keep moving – to yet another naval base – but the woman in charge wants to keep her group in place and intact. But then a sighted group on another plane of reaction to trauma party-crashes the community from on high, driving all boundaries apart, until all that remains is at the disposal of the triffids. Only the woman in charge gets away with the Anglo-American unit. The members of this new family unit fall into place without tension or complication.

To make it to the rescue by submarine the best weapon against the triffids turns out to be diversion. Masen tries gunfire, electrification of the fence, then flame throwing. The little girl figures out that the ambulatory wood follows the sound of the generator. Sound, according to the final strategy, can lead the triffids far away, “like the Pied Piper of Hamelin.” They get this far because the girl can identify with the triffids. While the wood is off advancing to the bait of the sound like the lost children of Hamelin, the family system gets away.

The couples therapy/theory Wyndham inherited from H.G. Wells is limited in the film adaptation to a couple of scientists, who through the epidemic blindness end up stranded on an island. Ensnared within their research lab in the crypt of a tower they missed the blinding night lightshow. Now the husband’s science gets a restart and the marriage is saved through the struggle to survive the locally proliferating carnivorous trees. The triffids are ready for their close-up around and inside the *Frankenstein*-style research tower. The scientist kills a specimen for lab experimentation. Nothing seems to destroy the tissue samples cut out of the tree that otherwise lacks circulatory and nervous systems. When the cut-up dead tree on the gurney is briefly left unattended it reanimates, reattaches its severed parts, and gets away to rally the wood for the final assault on the couple inside the tower. But when the triffids corner the couple, the scientist in hopeless desperation aims seawater at them from the emergency hose. But he thus scores a first victory. Triffids cannot withstand contact with seawater, indeed they go up in smoke as might fire put out by water, a roundabout reference to the UK as emergency island, over which the first postponement of the German Blitz was secured.

Before the meteorite-sparked blindness takes over, Masen, who is bound to see, exchanges goodbye with his doctor:

“See you in the morning, I hope.” “I hope so.” The first blind man Masen encounters next morning is the doctor, who asks his healed patient to test his eyes for any reflex at all, any hope. That’s a negative. Then the doctor asks Masen to get the black bag from the office next door. While he is alone he chooses death by defenestration. This Latin term isn’t used. That there is no other word in English for crashing and falling through the window to death below has to do with its relatively recent coinage. It originated like the golem-as-superhero in Prague and around that time to describe specific murders leading to the Thirty Years War. It was this devastating war as civil or sibling conflict that launched, not only according to Philip K. Dick in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, the modern German chapter of the history of loss reversal. For Dick there was a black hole in history through which the Thirty Years War and WWII were in direct communication.

In the movie’s carefully mapped setting of Allies-only survival the advance of the triffids carries forward a certain modern German compulsion to roll over losses into reversal or denial of the end as “final victory.” Salty sea-water also signifies tears of grief, which, though they may not reverse blindness, bring down the triffids, otherwise the unbeatable prospect of a lost cause not given up as lost.



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