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THE VIRTUAL MUSEUM

by

MICHELE WHITE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1999

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was written with the intellectual and emotional support of my professors, peers, and family. They have provided countless suggestions and indispensable criticisms. They were also readily available to listen. I am touched that so many of my colleagues were familiar with the time that such a large and interdisciplinary project requires and never asked me "aren't you done yet?" It is with great pleasure that I can now thank them for their understanding and support.

My adviser, Professor Carol Armstrong, provided me with invaluable assistance and advice throughout the conceptualization, research stage, writing, and editing of this dissertation. It is rare to find an adviser who encourages interdisciplinary scholarship in new areas. Her theoretical questions and challenges to my assumptions have allowed me to clarify my ideas and strengthen my arguments. Her continued careful reading of these chapters, through a number of revisions, has also improved the organization of this dissertation. I am forever indebted to her rigorous critiques of my work. I am also grateful to the many critical and organizational suggestions from my other readers, Professors Rosemarie Haag Bletter, William Boddy, and Jane Roos. Their support began long before they read this dissertation on the virtual museum.

My interest in museums and collections was encouraged by my curatorial work with Professor William Agee. I am particularly indebted to the lively conversations that we had with Malama Maron-Bersin and Sara Rosenfeld while driving to The Parrish Art Museum to view Fairfield Porter's work. My engagement in the critical debates about the museum was further stimulated by courses that Professors Rosemarie Haag Bletter, Setha Low, and Sharon Zukin taught on this subject. Indeed, the research for a number of the chapters in this dissertation began while I was doing my coursework at The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

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My first chapter on photographically illustrated versions of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* was derived from a series of research projects that I undertook while attending Professor Carol Armstrong's photography classes. My third chapter on museums in text-based chat spaces evolved from my research project in Professor Rosemarie Haag Bletter's museum course. An earlier version of this chapter appeared in the Autumn 1997 issue of *Convergence: The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*. The editors, Julia Knight and Alexis Weedon, were very supportive and their many suggestions have been incorporated into my work about computer-mediated communication.

My interest in on-line communication and critical considerations of new technology began while I was pursuing an MFA in Combined Media at Hunter College. During this period, Professors Andrea Blum and Jane Roos encouraged my interdisciplinary scholarly interests and introduced me to a number of the theoretical models that I employ in this dissertation. My understanding of on-line technologies and the critical writing about computer-mediated communication most clearly stems from Professor William Boddy's courses in this area. I am indebted to his broad knowledge of media technologies, bountiful citations, and encouragement. My familiarity with critical considerations of technology is also informed by the courses that Professors Patricia Clough, Peter Hitchcock, Stuart Liebman, Ella Shohat, and Chris Strayer taught in this area. The important feminist theories that Professors Linda Nochlin and Michele Wallace covered in their classes also provided an important grounding for this work.

My dissertation is also indebted to the many stimulating conversations about art objects, feminism, literature, media, museums, photography, technology, and theory that I have had with my peers. The Graduate Center has provided a lively environment in which to explore the interdisciplinary issues that my dissertation considers. I am particularly indebted to Debbie Wacks for the many long conversations that we had about feminism and the media. Katharine Kahn and Astrid Miano have provided an animated and informed view of technology. Louise Harter and Marg Suarez have always been willing to discuss

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the relationship between gender and technology. Some of the most stimulating conversations about technology have occurred on-line with Steve Shaviro as well as a series of other people who remain largely nameless. John Bump has provided invaluable electronic and editing assistance. I appreciate the time that he took to write some code for my research. Sometimes such virtual expressions are the most caring gifts. I must also acknowledge the invaluable support and assistance of Monica Amor, Fernando Azevedo, Jennifer Burns, Diana Bush, Sean Carey, Daniell Cornell, Alan Rosenberg, Ellen Tepfer, and David Vallilee.

The Graduate Center community has also supported this dissertation economically. Invaluable assistance was provided by the Rewald Dissertation Fellowship that the Executive Committee of the Art History Department awarded me. The Graduate School and University Center's Geoffrey Marshall Dissertation Fellowship allowed me to finish editing my dissertation without interruption.

I am also indebted to the support of my family. My mother, Stephanie White, and grandmother, Pauline Farbman, have provided me with invaluable models as teachers and scholars. I feel particularly lucky to have discovered a common interest that links my own work in Art History and Media Studies to my mother's work in Mathematics and Computer Science. It is perhaps not surprising that we are both considering the computer in this technologically fixated society. While not technically family, I also want to thank my mother's partner, Bill Pallack. He has cheerfully endured our many heady conversations about computers and academia. Bill was always there to provide technological and pragmatic advice.

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INTRODUCTION

> Collecting is the desire of the Museum. The museum seeks to be a static hold-all, largely a finished piece (although with blurry edges caused by de-accessioning and new acquisitions), a mausoleum of previous collections; collecting is the dynamic that brought it into being. While the museum is a kind of entombment, a display of once lived activity (the activity whereby real people collected objects associated with other real people or living beings), collecting is the process of the museum's creation, the living act that the museum embalms.[1]

> In a virtual museum digital images of paintings, videos of living organisms, or three-dimensional simulations of sculptures and works of architecture (perhaps destroyed or unbuilt ones) stand in for physical objects, and a temporal sequence on the display plays the role of a spatial sequence along a circulation path. This yields tremendous spatial compression; a huge collection can be viewed, exhibit by exhibit, on a personal computer or in a small video theater. Sprawling gallery spaces become unnecessary.[2]

This dissertation examines three "virtual" museums. The virtual museum, like traditional museum structures, displays scientific, artistic, historical, and other collections. In the traditional museum, viewers walk through a physical site in order to look at discrete objects. A virtual museum presents a view or account of a museum rather than offering the beholder a physical structure. The virtual museum participates in a reflexive representation of its own parts because it oscillates between representing and being a museum. This self-depiction can reveal the ideological underpinnings of the museum or it can give the illusion of greatness, facilitate easy access, and itemize the elements of the museum. The virtual museum can propose new museum configurations or reify the operations of the physical museum.

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[1]John Elsner, "A Collector's Model of Desire: The House and Museum of Sir John Soane," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1994), 155.

[2]William J. Mitchell, "Recombinant Architecture," in *City of Bits*. (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1995). http://www-mitpress.mit.edu:80/City_of_Bits/Recombinant_Architecture/GalleriesVirtualMuseums.html (19 January 1997). All dates in parenthesis that follow a URL, or uniform resource locator, indicate the last date that the information was checked by the author.

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This introduction considers the relationship between the traditional physical museum and the virtual museum. The key concepts that are employed in subsequent chapters are described. A discussion of the different types of traditional museum models, collecting practices, and histories demonstrates that the physical museum, like the virtual museum, isn't organized around one principle and that it can't be uniformly defined. The critical scholarship about the museum, which is outlined in this introduction, provides the basis for my consideration of the virtual museum. These critiques of the traditional museum are essential to this dissertation because scholarship about the virtual museum is still being formulated.

My use of the term "traditional museum" is meant to evoke Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach's discussion of the "Universal Survey Museum." The term "traditional" marks the institutionalized purpose of the museum and its association with older aura-imbued collections of objects and physical structures. According to Duncan and Wallach, the museum shares essential architectural and institutional characteristics with temples, churches, and shrines because it is designed to tutor, or even indoctrinate, viewers in "society's most revered beliefs and values."[3] They emphasize the commanding place that the museum holds in contemporary society.[4]

The virtual museum may quote the traditional museum because of its powerful position. The virtual museum's reflexive strategies of cataloguing holdings, mapping the virtual structure, and describing the edifice's style and furnishings connect the virtual museum to its absent physical configuration. This tendency to render the museum in physical terms is contrary to the potential of on-line museums where objects don't have to maintain a material aspect. All museums can be viewed as containing a virtual

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[3]Carol Duncan and Allan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History* 3 (December 1980), 449.

[4]"For over a century the museum has been the most prestigious and authoritative place for seeing original works of art. Today, for most people in Western society, the very notion of art itself is inconceivable without the museum. No other institution claims greater importance as a treasure house of material and spiritual wealth." Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," 448.

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component because these structures are shaped through such mediations as cataloguing, labeling, and displaying that are not inherently part of the objects or the building. When visitors engage with the museum's physical structure it is quite likely that they are also addressing its virtual design, which is imparted through such devices as directional signs and floor plans. The visitor's engagement with the virtual aspects of the physical museum, which include an understanding of the term "museum," is justified by the presence of "real" rooms and material objects.

The conventional physical museum, a socially mediated nexus of space, subject, and object, is disordered by virtual settings where, as Allucquère Roseanne Stone suggests, "'body,' 'meeting,' 'place,' and even 'space' mean things quite different from our accustomed understanding."[5] For example, users often arrange to "meet" on-line but this doesn't mean that they will share a physical space; their bodies remain in different geographic locations. Virtual settings can't support the spatial or object-oriented structures of the physical museum because the virtual is "simulated;" it performs "the functions of something that isn't really there."[6] It is the antithesis of the "real" or physical.[7] The virtual museum utilizes the conventional museum's vernacular without reason. The virtual museum can't adequately employ such necessary organizational concepts as wall, floor, and door because there are no physical dimensions. This means that there can't be any fixed arrangement with a distinct distance between objects. The traditional museum's reliance on the process of viewing and its production of a regulated viewer, with its presumption that there is a difference between subject and object, is

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[5]Allucquère Roseanne Stone, "Virtual Systems," in *Incorporations*, eds. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 610.

[6]Jargon File Resources, "The New Hacker's Dictionary," http://sagan.earthspace.net/jargon/jargon_37.html#SEC44 (8 July 1998). Definitions of "virtual" are available from a number of on-line sources as well as traditional dictionaries. I will be using the more general definitions of the term virtual rather than exploring its specialized use within the field of Computer Science.

[7]Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing, "Virtual from FOLDOC," http://wombat.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/foldoc.cgi?query=virtual&action=Search (8 July 1998).

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problematized by this loss of position and distance. Techniques of museum display such as hanging and framing, which have traditionally structured the way that viewers encounter objects, must be retheorized in the virtual museum. There is no need for bases, cases, or vitrines to present three-dimensional objects because thickness has been changed into the impossible-to-measure ultra-thinness of computer-generated representations of photographic and diagrammatic images. The practices of the traditional museum are disabled in virtual settings because objects, particularly three-dimensional objects, can't be fully delineated or geographically located.

The traditional museum is usually believed to be an object-oriented institution despite the high level of simulation that is employed in many exhibitions.[8] Michael Baxandall equates the traditional exhibition with the display of objects:

> The objects are presented in vitrines, on stands, or on the walls and are accompanied by labels, leaflets or a catalog. There may be additional elements-video displays or films, theatrical or musical performances, perhaps even cuisine-but the center of the exhibition consists of objects offered for inspection and to some extent expounded.[9]

Dictionary definitions also focus on the object-oriented state of the museum. The on-line version of the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* describes the museum as "an institution devoted to the procurement, care, study, and display of objects of lasting interest or value; also: a place where objects are exhibited."[10] The International Council of Museums, or

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[8]John Berger questions the museum's production of aura-imbued objects in *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972), 30. Ludmilla Jordonova and Umberto Eco discuss the ways that the museum constructs past cultures as a visible commodity. Ludmilla Jordonova, "Objects of Knowledge: A Historical Perspective on Museums," in *The New Museology*, ed. Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion Books, 1989) and Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986).

[9]Michael Baxandall, "Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 33. Stephen E. Weil analyzes the many roles of the museum in his essay "An Inventory of Art Museum Roles," in *Beauty and the Beast: On Museum, Art, The Law, and the Market* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press: 1983).

[10]Merriam Webster, "WWWebster Dictionary," http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/netdict (8 July 1998).

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ICOM, more carefully defines the role of the "institution," but it still describes museums as repositories for physical objects or "material evidence":

> [A] non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.[11]

Traditional museums are invested in possessing, rightfully owning, and displaying "real" and "original" objects. This investment in the aura of objects can be a problem for virtual museums that quote traditional museums, because the term "virtual" is usually associated with the copy. "Virtual means the quality of effecting something without actually being that something."[12]

Virtual museums may reproduce aura-imbued works of art but André Malraux suggests that these copies aren't the same as the original:

> [R]eproduction (like the art of fiction, which subdues reality to the imagination) has created what might be called "fictitious" arts, by systematically falsifying the scale of objects; by presenting oriental seals the same size as the decorative reliefs on pillars, and amulets like statues.[13]

Malraux presents this theory in *Les Voix du Silence* which was published in the early 1950s.[14] He argues that a series of photographic reproductions of art works are an interrelated collection or a "Museum without Walls." The "Museum without Walls" is produced by such things as the virtual collections in photographically illustrated art books. The organizational structure of the traditional museum and its limited holdings can be replaced by a very different view of culture and system of knowledge because the

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[11]ICOM, "Code of Ethics," http://www.cs.reading.ac.uk/icom/ethics.html (11 July 1998). An almost identical definition of the museum was written in 1974 by ICOM. See Kenneth Hudson, introduction to *Museums for the 1980s: A Survey of World Trends* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1977), 1.

[12]Whatis, "whatis.com," http://www.whatis.com/ (8 July 1998).

[13]André Malraux, "Museum Without Walls," *The Voices of Silence: Man and His Art*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1953), 24.

[14]André Malraux, *Les Voix du Silence* (Paris: NRF, 1951).

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"Museum without Walls" can theoretically consist of all photographic images. I will be using Malraux's theory to consider the various case studies in this dissertation because the "Museum without Walls" is a kind of virtual museum. The virtual museum and Malraux's photographic museum can represent a vast array of cultural components without concern for their size, condition, and physical location. These spatial and geographic distortions aren't inherently rewritten into a seamless narrative. The "Museum without Walls" provides a clearly mediated view by framing and "falsifying" parts of civilization for the spectator. Malraux's museum illustrates the constructed state of the traditional museum through such visible ruptures.

Virtual views and spectatorial positions are a key component of the virtual museum. Virtual museums produce a "virtual mobile view" because the viewer's spectatorial positions are not limited by the geography or architecture of a particular environment. Anne Friedberg argues that the "*virtual gaze* is not a direct perception but a *received* perception mediated through representation."[15] This suggests that the virtual gaze is firmly tied to photography and the spectatorial positions that it produces.[16] Friedberg links the mobile gaze to walking, travel, World Fairs and Exhibitions, panoramas, dioramas, and department stores.[17] The virtual mobile photographic view provides a bodily position that is not confined by the architectural limits of the city. The reader's body floats freely over a series of divergent representations through the simultaneous availability of photographic and diagrammatic images.

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[15]Anne Friedberg, introduction to *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 2. All perception may be described as mediated but certain forms of representation, such as photography and film, provide the viewer with a lens or frame through which the world is viewed and then copied. These forms of representation, which Friedberg specifically ties to the virtual gaze, foreground the ways that perception is mediated.

[16] Friedberg argues that the cinematic apparatus is the key technology which links the mobile with the virtual.

[17]The nineteenth-century viewer's changing perception of space and time, mitigated by the development of train travel, is considered in Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

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The virtual museum may seem to provide viewers with a site that they can touch, view, and possess. This is contrary to the structure of the virtual museum which presents a view or account of a museum rather than offering the beholder a physical structure, "real" exhibits, and material artifacts. This distinction between "reproduction" and "real," which is implicit in most discussions of the term "virtual," is intensified in the virtual museum because most museums are invested in possessing, rightfully owning, and displaying "real" and "original" objects. William J. Mitchell expresses a commonly held belief when he argues that virtual museums will cause a change in the role of the physical museum. "As virtual museums develop, the role of actual museums will shift; they will increasingly be seen as places for going back to the originals."[18] The case studies in this dissertation show that the physical museum's focus on "originals" is brought into most virtual museum structures.

The physical museum appears to be a stable category but its definition is impeded by the seemingly infinite variety of museum models. An incomplete list of museum types would include anthropology, archaeology, architecture, art, astronomy, botany, crafts, design, ethnography, folk culture, historic houses, history, indigenous cultures, natural history, photography, science, space, and technology museums. Such categories as the "technology museum" could be further broken down into museums focusing on aeronautics, communication, computers, film, industrialization, medical technologies, radio, television, and transportation. A "maritime museum" might incorporate information on astronomy, boat construction, botany, economic factors, fishing, navigation, period living conditions, shipping, weather patterns, and whaling. Such museum types as the "open air museum" are defined by the way that the collection is sited out of doors instead of the type of collection displayed. Collections may be organized according to a taxonomy such as Linnean binomial classification, by material,

[18]Mitchell, "Recombinant Architecture," in *City of Bits*. http://www-mitpress.mit.edu:80/City_of_Bits/Recombinant_Architecture/ GalleriesVirtualMuseums.html (19 January 1997).

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period, style, shape, or some other aesthetic criteria. Groups of animals and plants are sometimes arranged in full scale habitat groups in natural history museums. Historical events may be depicted through such simulations as contextualizing objects and wall panels, on-site reenactments, and theatrical waxwork tableaus. Many of these museum structures have their own disciplinary discourses and terms. Such specific entities as botanic gardens and zoos are sometimes included in the museum category while also retaining claims to being distinct institutions. Archives and libraries may contain museums, be contained by museums, or provide objects for museum exhibitions. This suggests that the categories of the museum are constantly being rearranged and that the museum is a hybrid.

The concept of hybridity is being used in contemporary theory to rethink restrictive national, cultural, and identity categories. Such terms as "identity" often fail to incorporate the contradictory and discontinuous self-constructs with which we navigate society.[19] Homi K. Bhabha relates hybridity to "the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the one . . . nor the Other . . . but something else besides*, which contests the terms and territories of both."[20] The enunciation of cultural difference necessitates the expression of an emphatic "I" and "you." Yet, the continual shifting of these positions shows that there is no simple dualistic relationship between Self and Other. Bhabha describes this liminal position, never fully or permanently being "I" or "you," as a "Third Space." According to him, all "cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space."[21] So, the term "hybrid" never merely represents the space in between or even a synthesis of two competing discourses. The hybrid embodies an ambivalent relationship that unsettles customary boundaries.

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[19]These conflicting elements of identity are discussed in the work of Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

[20]Homi K. Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 28.

[21]Ibid. , 37.

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Bhabha's arguments about hybridity can be used to talk about the recontextualization of museum structures and objects. Bhabha argues that it is with "the intervention of the Third Space of enunciation," or the "disruptive temporality of enunciation," that we can "begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to the empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity."[22] The traditional museum structure relies on the inherent originality of cultures and objects, and a differentiation between "I" and "you," in order to make its role as a depository and exhibitor viable. The disruption of such value-laden terms as "originality" and "purity" through a "Third Space" should also destabilize the traditional museum structure. This "Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew," is perhaps most clearly articulated through virtual realities.[23] For certainly in these anti-environments, or spaces which have no physical materiality, the signs and objects of the museum are co-opted, recoded, and reproduced through photographs or as part of the world wide web's mark-up language. The model of the unified virtual spectator is disordered by the continual shifting between material self and virtual self or a kind of "I" and "you." The virtual reader can embody multiple authorial positions and write into the text. The hybrid formation of the museum, when visible, should work against the cultural belief that the museum provides a singular and powerful truth that is untinged by ideology or bias. The traditional script of the museum, with its implied standard and series of conventions, still prevails despite these definitional problems.

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the historical application of the word museum, or musaeum, includes the "university building erected at Alexandria by

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

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Ptolemy Soter."[24] This use of the term to describe a "building or apartment dedicated to the pursuit of learning or the arts; a 'home of the Muses'; a 'scholar's study,'" was expanded to include "a building or portion of a building used as a repository for the preservation and exhibition of objects." A reference was made in 1683 to "Ashmole's Musaeum" and in 1706 to "The Museum of Ashmole's Museum." The history of the museum has often been traced to *cabinets de curiosités* and *Wunderkammern*. These earlier strategies of collecting in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century, which are considered to be the prototypes for modern museums, incorporated an array of curiosities rather than only assembling objects with intrinsic "artistic value."[25] More familiar museum types only began to appear in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century. The Ashmolean Museum was established in 1683, the Dresden Museum in 1744, the Vatican Museum in 1784, and the Louvre in 1793.[26] In America, the origins of the museum are usually traced to a series of privately run collections such as Charles Wilson Peale's Philadelphia Museum, which opened fully in 1786 and included natural history displays and patriotic paintings.[27] The American museum was often associated with popular entertainment such as Gardiner Baker's American Museum that opened in 1789. Museum-like exhibits were often part of side shows. In fact, P. T. Barnum purchased part of Peale's collection.[28]

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[24]*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. , vol. 10 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 123. Paula Young Lee describes how "the French term *muséum* directly refered to the Helenistic Musaeum of Alexandria." Paula Young Lee, "The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-Century France," *The Art Bulletin* 79 (September 1997), 385-412.

[25]A discussion of this phenomenon occurs in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds. *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1985).

[26]The Louvre web site identifies its own date of establishment as well as these other dates. Louvre Museum, "The Louvre Palace and Museum," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/musee.htm (10 July 1998).

[27]Edward P. Alexander discusses the Peale Museum in some depth in *Museum Masters: Their Museums and Their Influence* (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1983).

[28]Allan Wallach briefly mentions Gardiner Baker's American Museum as well as the purchase by P. T. Barnum of parts of Peale's collection in "Long Term Visions, Short Term Failures: Art Institutions in

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The history of the traditional museum and the problems of these institutions have been researched by a wide variety of scholars. Paul Valéry and Theodor Adorno have argued against museums in which the simultaneity of dissonant works of art, viewed in extremely close quarters, overwhelms the viewer and denies them the ability to contemplate individual works. In the modernist gallery space that Brian O'Doherty critiques, this presentation style was replaced by a large, white, and airy space in which art objects are placed at some distance from other works. However, Valéry, Adorno, and O'Doherty all resist the sealed and mausoleum-like gallery space.[29] Jean Baudrillard has considered a similar deadening effect that the museum has on society.[30] Tony Bennett, Carol Duncan, and Alan Wallach have critiqued the way that the museum orders the visitor's movement through space, standardizes social routines, and reforms manners.[31] Ludmilla Jordonova has considered the ways that historical reconstructions, despite their high level of simulation, convince viewers to accept the historical accuracy of what they see.[32] Rosalind Krauss, Svetlana Alpers, and James Clifford have analyzed the ideological performance of museum displays and their architectural features.[33] Such

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the United States, 1800-1860," in *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 24. See also Andrea Stulman Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997) and David Nassaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusement* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

[29]Paul Valéry, "The Problem of Museums," in *Degas, Manet, Morisot*. Bollingen Series, 12 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960); Theodor W. Adorno, Valéry Proust Museum," in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1981); and Brian O'Doherty, "Notes on the Gallery Space," in *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica and San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986).

[30]Jean Baudrillard, "The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence," in *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 61.

[31]Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum;" Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); and Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

[32]Jordonova, "Objects of Knowledge," in *The New Museology*.

[33]Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Fall 1990), 3-17; Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures;* and James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1988).

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authors as Charles Saumarez Smith and Michael M. Ames have considered the museum's tendency to remove cultural artifacts from their cultural context and redisplay them in a way that produces a distinctly different meaning.[34] The museum's role in the production of nation states and its system of classification which enforces mapped boundaries and class structures has been analyzed by Carol Duncan, Sharon Macdonald, and Gordon Fyfe.[35] Donna Haraway has critiqued the museum's reinforcement of gender stereotypes through the construction of inaccurate animal habitat groups.[36] A number of artists in the 1970s and 1980s have critiqued the museum by intervening in it or reconstructing it in various forms.[37] Douglas Crimp has written on these interventions into the museum. (Indeed, Crimp's work could itself be viewed as a proposal for a virtual museum; he theorizes a new museum structure that is facilitated by photography).[38]

These concerns and critiques have been largely ignored by the producers of many on-line virtual museums so that the predicaments of physical museums are often brought into these new structures. In this dissertation, critical considerations of traditional museums are employed in order to evaluate virtual museums. For instance, I employ the work of Bennett, Duncan, and Wallach to reveal how ordering and standardization function in virtual museums. Baudrillard and Jordonova's critique of simulation can uncover the ways that virtual museums use immersion to reproduce realism. New

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[34]Charles Saumarez Smith, "Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings," in *The New Museology* and Michael M. Ames, "How Anthropologists Stereotype Other People," in *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 53.

[35]Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*; Sharon Macdonald, introduction to *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, eds. Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass. : Blackwell Publishers, 1996); and Gordon Fyfe, "A Trojan Horse at the Tate: Theorizing the Museum as Agency and Structure," in *Theorizing Museums.*

[36]Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936," in *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).

[37]These artists include Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Spoerri, Hans Haacke, Louise Lawler, Fred Wilson, and Andrea Fraser.

[38]Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1993).

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methodologies, which are based on the developing critiques of new technology, are also a necessary aspect of this dissertation because virtual settings don't always function in the same ways as physical environments. This dissertation includes historical information about these new technologies as well as a close visual and textual reading of each particular site. When appropriate, a kind of ethnography of virtual users and settings is also provided. These interdisciplinary practices are necessary because there isn't a unified collection of scholarship about the virtual museum.

The term "virtual museum" isn't defined in specialized computer and internet dictionaries. The ArtLex - Dictionary of Visual Art is "working on a definition."[39] The on-line version of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* emphasizes the electronic aspects of the virtual museum in its definition. It is a "collection of digitally recorded images, sound files, text documents, and other data of historical, scientific, or cultural interest that are accessed through electronic media."[40] Such diverse groups as internet users, museum staff, and the popular press use the term to describe web sites that recreate physical museums. "Virtual museums in the fullest sense of the term consist of collections that take full advantage of the easy access, loose structure, hyperlinking capacity, interactivity, and multimedia capabilities of the World Wide Web."[41] "Virtual museum" is also used to describe "a museum existing only in virtuality, on the WWW without any

[39]ArtLex - Dictionary of Visual Art, http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/UV.html (26 March 1999).

[40]Encyclopedia Britannica Online, "Virtual Museum," http://members.eb.com/bol/topic?tmap_id=222637000&tmap_typ=dx#Index or http://www.eb.com/bol/search?type=topic&query=virtual+museum&DBase=Articles&I3.x=36&I3.y=6 (27 March 1999).

[41]Ibid.

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physical ties to any museum."[42] The term is rarely applied to off-line museums and museums that are available through other internet systems.[43]

In this dissertation, these other immaterial structures and photographic museums are reincorporated into the virtual museum. This expanded set of virtual museums has a number of theoretical and structural antecedents. The inclusion of this complex lineage can demonstrate that virtual museums are more than a set of discrete web museums and that these hybrid museums can be developed in different ways. This expanded understanding of the virtual museum, like Malraux's "Museum without Walls," can also facilitate a philosophical model for perceiving existing material and digital collections. The following three case studies consider the relationship between the traditional and the virtual museum as well as the ways that virtual museums function.

The first case study is Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*. The nineteenth-century extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* acts as a precursor to the twentieth-century examples of the virtual museum.[44] It links the virtual mobile view, which is often employed in virtual museums, to travel and tourism. Hawthorne based this "novel" on his travel journals about Rome. Travelers collaborated with binderies to extra-illustrate the text. They selected photographs of art objects, renderings, monuments, scenic views,

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[42]Danielle Dugas, "The Concept of a Virtual Museum," MusWeb-L, 8 December 1998. Archived at http://listserv.nrm.se/archives/musweb-l.html (26 March 1999). The acronym "WWW" is commonly used to abbreviate the term "world wide web."

[43] The idea that all virtual museums are web based may be part of the contemporary tendency to collapse all internet systems into the term "web."

[44]Extra-illustration, in this instance, would be defined as the insertion of photographic material by someone other than the publisher of the text. In this project it may be useful to requote John Carter's definition of extra-illustration. "In 1769 James Granger Published a *Bibliographic History of England* with blank Leaves for the addition of portraits, etc. , to the taste of the purchaser. Hence Grangerising, for the practice which he formalized and promoted. Grangerised, or extra-illustrated books as they are now commonly called, are copies which have added to them either by a private owner or professionally, engraved portraits, prints, etc. usually cut out of other books, and sometimes also autograph letters, documents or drawings . . . Sometimes two or three volumes will be 'extended' to as many as eight or ten. There is no hard-and-fast border-line between a modestly extra-illustrated book and a book which could equally well be described as having a number of interesting portraits inserted. But one might say that, for a copy to qualify the additional matter would have to be sufficiently ample to necessitate rebinding, with extra leaves." John Carter, *ABC for Book Collectors* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), 81.

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posed figures, and museum interiors for their copy and used *The Marble Faun* as a travel guide; this composite production offers multiple versions of the city that are not based on the city's geography. The extra-illustrated book produces a version of Rome, enhanced by the canonical voice of Hawthorne, that is like a "Museum without Walls." If the museum is a "place devoted to the acquisition, study, and exhibition of objects of scientific, historical, or artistic value" then the virtual museum, including the extra-illustrated text, generates this museum with reproductions by acquiring a series of representations and forming a "collection" out of them.[45] A virtual museum is produced by the combined effect of the tipped-in photographs and Hawthorne's illustrative descriptions of art works. The text turns Rome into a virtual museum by offering different points of entry into a "collection" and by critiquing Rome's archaeological sites, artistic masterpieces, and street denizens. The extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*, like all virtual museums, is a hybrid. It is difficult to categorize this composite form as a novel, photographic essay, scrapbook, or guidebook.

The second case study is the world wide web version of the Louvre. The on-line Louvre is a virtual version of a physical structure. Like most museums on the WWW the Louvre relies on plans, such as those that might be available in a guide to the museum, as a way of reinforcing the relationship between the visual representation and the museum's physical location in Paris. Schematics show users how to interact with the physical museum space. The experience of virtually traveling from site to site on the WWW, which should negate the ability to speak about physical place, is reattached to proximal space by virtual museums which map locations. Problems with the conceptual structure of the virtual Louvre are echoed by the museum's difficulty in asserting an on-line identity. The Louvre's contentious relationship with an earlier on-line museum designed by Nicolas Pioch, which was called "Le Louvre," is investigated.

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[45]*The American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (New York: Dell Publishing, 1994), 549.

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The third case study is the LambdaMOO museum. Multi-user object-oriented world or MOO museums also rely on schematics and processional representations of space in order to convey a traditional museum experience. The LambdaMOO museum is one of the many examples of museums that function in virtual communities. LambdaMOO, which was maintained by Pavel Curtis at Xerox and is now supported by Stanford University and Placeware Incorporated, is one of the oldest examples of MOOs. The museum functions as both a history and design museum within these virtual communities. These structures are related to *cabinets de curiosités* and *Wunderkammern* because of the eccentricity of much of the material presented in the museum and the diversity of virtual objects, including types of rooms, articles on LambdaMOO's history, weapons, manipulable monsters, maps of LambdaMOO, and a dictionary. Of course, the MOO museum contains no material objects. As in other communities, the MOO museum functions as a legitimizing force for the population's activities and as a way of producing aesthetic values on-line. The critique of the object-based organization of museums and the aura-driven character of these structures needs to be refigured in relationship to the text-based structure of virtual communities.

This dissertation questions the object-based focus of the physical museum and its investment in exhibiting valuable and original objects. The virtual museum, in which the presumptions of the physical museum are both undermined and employed, can offer an alternative model and highlight some of museum's conceptual failures. My employment of aesthetic and museum critiques is intended to provide a model for the further application of these studies to virtual structures. This dissertation also sets out a critical framework for defining and critiquing virtual settings by describing the virtual museum's structural and spectatorial differences from the traditional museum.

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CHAPTER 1

WHY REPRODUCE *THE MARBLE FAUN*?

> If we consider the present city as at all connected with the famous one of old, it is only because we find it built over its grave. A depth of thirty feet of soil has covered up the Rome of ancient days; so that it lies like the dead corpse of a giant, decaying for centuries, with no survivor mighty enough to bury it, until the dust of all those years has gathered slowly over its recumbent form and made a casual sepulchre.
>
> We know not how to characterize, in any accordant and compatible terms, the Rome that lies before us; its sunless alleys, and streets and palaces; its churches, lined with gorgeous marbles that were originally polished for the adornment of pagan temples; its thousands of evil smells, mixed up with the fragrance of rich incense, diffused from as many censers; its little life, deriving feeble nutriment from what has long been dead. Everywhere, some fragment of ruin, suggesting the magnificence of a former epoch; everywhere, moreover, a Cross-and nastiness at the foot of it. As the sum of all, there are recollections that kindle the soul, and a gloom and languor that depress it beyond any depth of melancholic sentiment that can be elsewhere known.[46]

> In suggesting that Rome Italy was constructed as the all-plentiful provider and the Ur-collection, I wish to address a dream lying wistfully *behind* the collecting impulse: namely, the urge to evoke, even sometimes to fulfil, that myth of completion, a complete ancient world, which was once itself *collected* in the imperial splendor of Rome. For ancient Rome is more than the supreme paradigm of collectors (its collections were and are our canon) and the ultimate exemplar for empires. It was these things not just because of its priority in the past of Europe but because (in the myth that it told to glorify itself) it *succeeded*. That myth, which brought fulfilment in the act of accumulation together with the supremacy in the arts of government, may have only been propagated by the Romans and without total faith, but it was believed (and needed to be believed) by the myth-making collectors from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment whose activities have generated our cultural institutions, above all the museum.[47]

It has become my habit to collect extra-illustrated versions of *The Marble Faun*. I also began to collect other extra-illustrated Tauchnitz texts, texts extra-illustrated with scenes from Italy, and other Italian photographic ephemera. I could add a range of related categories, expand my collection, and change the museum. This suggests that the virtual museum is open to change and perhaps even more arbitrary than the physical museum in its

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[46]Nathaniel Hawthorne, "A Stroll on the Pincian," in *Transformation: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1860), 130-131.

[47]Elsner, *The Culture of Collecting*, 156.

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"acquisition policy" but I haven't tried adding disparate material. The virtual museum seems to be an endless collection that can include anything; however, it is possible that the virtual museum has borders. What "collector" has the strength to find its limit?[48]

Introduction

This chapter considers Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, in its nineteenth-century extra-illustrated form, as a forerunner of twentieth-century virtual museums. The purpose of this case study is to interpret one of the many histories of the virtual museum and to thereby refute the contemporary belief that virtual museum representations are a computer-facilitated phenomenon.[49] Like on-line virtual museums, the extra-illustrated virtual museum is produced from reproductions, encases conflicting hybrid narratives, shapes disparate texts and representations into a collection, and provides the reader with a virtual view that may appear "real" even though it is not based on physical geography.

Hawthorne presents *The Marble Faun* as a novel but it is actually a fictionalized account of touring Rome. *The Marble Faun*, which was published by Bernhard Tauchnitz in 1860, was often used as a travel guide. Travelers collaborated with binderies to photographically extra-illustrate the text with souvenir views of street scenes, costumed peasants, architecture, and art. This composite offers multiple itineraries of the city because Hawthorne's narrative, the different photographic views, and other forms of travel literature don't always correlate.[50] In this instance of extra-illustration, different

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[48]Michele White, Unpublished Manuscript, 1998.

[49]Other instances of the virtual museum during this period might include Charles Blanc's "Musée des Copies," which he started during his second term as director of the *Beaux-Arts*. It was opened to the public in 1873. For a brief discussion of this see Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 210 and Misook Song, *Art Theories of Charles Blanc, 1813-1882* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), 15 and 124-126.

[50]The Tauchnitz editions were part of a long history of guidebooks and other travel accounts. "Rome has always drawn tourists like a magnet, and for centuries a dutiful herd of harassed visitors has been nudged and prodded through her labyrinthine streets, from classical ruin to Christian monument and

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photographs were tipped into each volume, thus mitigating or even canceling out the interchangeable characteristics of the mass-produced text.[51] Yet, the thematic of reproduction is prominently figured in Hawthorne's text as well as in the tipped-in photographic extra-illustrations which both reproduce and disfigure aspects of the story.

Through the process of extra-illustration, the book functions as a personal virtual view of Rome that is not inherently based on the physical layout of the city.[52] Some aspects of the extra-illustrated text make it more virtual than other stereotypical guidebooks. Hawthorne's narrative provides a virtual setting, which most other guidebooks don't, because there is a grippingly "real" version of Rome that comes complete with characters. The narrative is complicated by the addition of numerous textual and imagistic representations of Rome. The combination of the narrative and images forms a kind of museum of the city that appears to be particularly open to further interventions because of its fractured state. So, The extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* provides what appears to be a grippingly real setting, a visual as well as narrative version of the city, through which the viewer can access a virtual mobile view. This virtual position is not as fixed to real architectural facts as a more familiar guidebook-like list of

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back again, by tireless guides and implacable guidebooks. The inescapable web of instruction was spun early. In the 12th century it was possible, on setting foot in the city, to buy a copy of *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*, or *Wonders of Rome*, a book so popular that in the next two or three hundred years it ran into innumerable Latin and vernacular editions . . . When Boswell visited Rome in 1765, he not only kept under his arm *The Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* by the essayist Addison, published in 1711, but enrolled in a six-day 'Course in Antiquities and Arts' specially designed for the serious tourist. By the early 19th century, every English-speaking traveller clutched either a *Murray's Guide Book* or a *Travels on the Continent* by Mrs. Mariana Starke." Ann Wilsher, "The Tauchnitz 'Marble Faun,'" *History of Photography* 4 (January 1980), 61.

[51]Many of the extra-illustrated versions of *The Marble Faun* contain similar images. Some of the texts even incorporate these views on the same page. However, I have still not located two volumes that consistently use the same photographic views. Two versions of the extra-illustrated *Romola* do have similar views situated on the same pages but the photographs are sometimes taken from slightly different positions and the binding is also slightly different. George Eliot, *Romola* (London: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1888).

[52]The city is always virtual, in that is formed through diverse perceptions and the possibility of alternate routes, but the extra-illustrated text further detaches the viewer from the order and rules of the physical environment. The virtual position allows the viewer to move through the city's architecture in ways that the physical city can't facilitate. The virtual viewer doesn't have to use the city's thoroughfares when moving between distant sites, enter through doors, or obey timetables.

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places. Other nineteenth-century materials which will be discussed in this chapter, such as photographically illustrated art books, travelogues, and travel novels without illustrations, present a more uniform structure, are more easily categorized, and establish a dependence between text and image which *The Marble Faun* does not. Thus, *The Marble Faun* is a particularly useful precursor, because it suggests the hybrid structure that is integral to the virtual museum's refashioning of the "real" museum, and because it frames a mobile view of Rome as a locationless collection.[53]

This chapter is divided into several sections that consider specific aspects of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* as a virtual museum. The chapter begins with a consideration of the ways that the text functioned for nineteenth-century writers, readers, and tourists. In the next section, the distinct qualities of the extra-illustrated text are considered. As this chapter progresses, there will be a move from an accounting of nineteenth-century readers towards a late-twentieth-century reading that is facilitated by a deliberate examination and access to multiple versions of the text. For instance, the process of extra-illustration is related to contemporary theories about hypertext and the book; some of these ideas will be expanded on in later sections and chapters of this dissertation. The fragmented qualities of books, the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*, and the virtual museum are then linked to some nineteenth-century writers' and photographers' perceptions that photography only presents an incomplete and fragmented view. After this contextualizing material, the particular ways that the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* functions as a virtual museum, including reproduction, reflexivity, and fragmentation, are described and interpreted. The final section on the "copy with difference," which isn't either an original or a copy, illustrates my thesis that the virtual

[53]This mobile tourist view is considered in the work of Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures*; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976; and John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London, Newbury Park, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990).

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museum can provide a kind of critique of the traditional museum and other perceptual structures.

The Marble Faun in the Nineteenth-Century

The Marble Faun introduces the reader to a group of English-speaking expatriates, as well as their Italian friend Donatello, and provides a view of Rome by describing their journeys. Many of the text's descriptions are based on the journals Hawthorne kept while he was touring Italy.[54] Readers of this novel/travelogue encounter Rome "with" Hawthorne and "own" a version of his experiential vision. By acting out the literary map that the author sets forth, readers could receive impressions of the city with a "master" of American Literature and receive a "factual" as well as fictional Rome.

Magazine articles and other writings from the latter part of the nineteenth-century highlight the important role that *The Marble Faun* played in producing a culturally sanctioned version of Rome for the English and American tourist market.[55] *The Nation* advised its readers that "[t]here are few books put so often into hands of English and American visitors to Rome as Hawthorne's 'Marble Faun,' or, as it is more generally known here, 'Transformation,' from the cheap and widely circulated Tauchnitz edition."[56] *The Saturday Evening Post* recommended the book because beyond "the merit of the work as a romance, it has the added merit of being a transcript of Rome and Roman life in almost all their aspects. It is equivalent to a tourist's book on Rome."[57] *The*

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[54]These journals have also been published. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The French and Italian Notebooks* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), 53.

[55]The two most significant sources of information for this chapter are Gary Scharnhorst *Nathaniel Hawthorne: An Annotated Bibliography of Comment and Criticism before 1900* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Author Bibliographies, 1988) and Susan S. Williams, "The Photography of Travel: Reading the Marble Faun," in *Confounding Images: Photography and Portraiture in Antebellum American Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

[56]E. S. "The Italy of Hawthorne," *The Nation* 49 (11 July 1889), 31.

[57]"Notes on Books," *Saturday Evening Post* 17 (March 1860), 2.

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Knickerbocker magazine even tried to produce a more finished ending for "the best guide-book for Italy."[58] Some critics resisted the canonization of *The Marble Faun* and the use of the text as a "guidebook" that made a particular version of Rome available to tourists. The *Andover Review* advised its readers that "one vital mistake has been made by many. They have taken the 'Marble Faun' as a guide to Rome: almost as a picture of Italy."[59] Annie L. MacGregor also questioned the book's function by writing an "autobiographical" account of the way that *The Marble Faun* "nearly wrecked my sister's happiness for life."[60] Such resistances, rewritings, and fictions about *The Marble Faun* were in reaction to the book's inextricable conflation with the process of understanding Rome. According to Henry James, the book "is part of the intellectual equipment of the Anglo-saxon visitor to Rome, and is read by every English-speaking traveler who arrives there, who has been there, or who expects to go."[61] More recently, Richard H. Brodhead has argued that "*The Marble Faun* became an agent of the civilizing process it had taken as its theme. It became a book Americans going to Rome had to have read, and so formed part of a cultural apparatus telling others how they should see the sites of Rome."[62] *The Marble Faun* produced a culturally agreed-upon version of Rome. This virtual representation may even have been privileged over the physical space of Rome so that "seeing" Rome meant reading *The Marble Faun.* It is also quite likely that touring Rome was viewed as the equivalent of reading *The Marble Faun.*

The article in *The Nation* states that tourists to Rome often read Bernhard Tauchnitz versions of *The Marble Faun.* Tauchnitz was one of many publishers in

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[58]"The Marble Faun: Completed," *The Knickerbocker* 56 (July 1860), 65.

[59]Jessie Kingsley Curtis, "The Marble Faun," *Andover Review* 18 (August 1892), 139.

[60]Annie L. MacGregor, "Marble Faun-ing," *Lippincott's* 5 (March 1870), 311.

[61]Henry James as quoted by Wilsher, "The Tauchnitz 'Marble Faun'," 64.

[62]Richard H. Brodhead, introduction to *The Marble Faun,* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), xxvii.

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Leipzig, Germany, that began to prosper during the mid nineteenth-century. According to Ann Wilsher, the firm's success was in part produced by its realization that small, light, portable, and inexpensive English editions of best-selling works would be marketable.[63] By 1860, the Tauchnitz *Collection of British Authors* had over five hundred titles.[64] Books with an Italian theme, such as *The Marble Faun* and *Romola*, were particularly popular among Tauchnitz's clientele and were often extra-illustrated in Italy. Tauchnitz versions of Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1851), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860), George Eliot's *Romola* (1863), George Gordon Byron's *Works* (1866), "Ouida's" *Ariadne* (1877), Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1879), Frances Elliot's *Pictures of Old Rome* (1882), John Addington Symonds's *Sketches in Italy* (1883), Dean Howell's *Italian Journeys* (1883) and *Venetian Life* (1883), Henry James's *Poets and Novelists* (1883), and Maurice Hewlett's *Little Novels of Italy* (1899) were all extra-illustrated.[65]

Tauchnitz's popularity among English and American tourists suggests that its editions played a key part in shaping continental travel. In a *Pall Mall Magazine* article on Tauchnitz, "A literary wanderer, listening to praises of Europe, slid in the comment: 'But you must not leave out Tauchnitz. Would the Continent be quite what it is without the "Tauchnitz Edition"?'"[66] Anne Thackeray Ritchie's memories of traveling through Europe as a child in *Chapters from Some Unwritten Memoirs* support this *Pall Mall* pronouncement. She describes her family riding in a "jolting old carriage . . . reading our

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[63]Wilsher, "The Tauchnitz 'Marble Faun'," 62.

[64]Ibid.

[65]William B. Todd, "Firma Tauchnitz: A Further Investigation," *Publishing History* 2 (1977), 14-15. Todd's list has been supplemented through my research on extra-illustrated Tauchnitz editions. One example of a Tauchnitz title that has been subsequently extra-illustrated in another publisher's text is the Smith, Elder, and Company version of George Eliot's *Romola* (1888). It is also quite likely that other publishers' versions were also extra-illustrated.

[66]Tighe Hopkins, "The 'Tauchnitz' Edition: The Story of a Popular Publisher," *Pall Mall Magazine* 25 (1901), 197.

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Tauchnitz books, being tired of watching the flat horizons."[67] The literary narratives supplied by Bernhard Tauchnitz colored-in and made legible the otherwise "flat" and troubling European landscape.

These books produced a framed and controlled way of seeing the Continent. This sight is as controlled by writers' descriptions of the setting as it is by any geographically specific experience of the environment. William W. Stowe suggests that "American Travelers in Europe made their way through a landscape already heavily inscribed by poets, travel writers, and even novelists. Mme de Staël's *Corinne, ou de l'Italie* was a popular vade mecum early in the century, supplemented later by Hawthorne's *Marble Faun* and James's international fiction."[68] Travel literature, including works by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, William Wetmore Story, and, of course, Nathaniel Hawthorne, produces a composite rendering of Rome by quoting or evoking other works of poetry, travelogues, and novels about the Continent.[69] In *Roba di Roma*, William Wetmore Story foregrounds this multi-layered production through his observation that "every Englishman carries a Murray for information and a Byron for sentiment" when touring Rome.[70]

The Marble Faun's virtual version of Rome is described in a number of travelogues and travel novels from this period. The authors of these works access Hawthorne's prestige and substantiate their descriptions of Rome by revisualizing the sites and events that Hawthorne chronicled. Thomas Bailey Aldrich uses Hawthorne's voice when he describes his visit to the Capuchin burial site in his travelogue *From Ponkapog to Pesth*: "'There is no disagreeable scent,' says the author of The Marble

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[67]Anne Thackeray Ritchie, *Chapters from Some Unwritten Memoirs* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1895), 174-175.

[68]William W. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 14.

[69]Thomas Bailey Aldrich, *From Ponkapog to Pesth* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1883) and William Wetmore Story, *Roba di Roma* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891).

[70]Story, *Roba di Roma*, 6-7.

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Faun, describing this place, 'such as might have been expected from the decay of so many holy persons, in whatever odor of sanctity they may have taken their departure.'"[71] Howells discovers Hawthorne as well as the sculptor Gibson during a visit to the artist's studio. Gibson comes "back to his theme with that self-corroborative 'Yes!!' of his, which Hawthorne has immortalized."[72] This "discovery" of Hawthorne provides a pleasure that otherwise escapes many travelers.

W. D. Howells found that "the first view of the ruins in the Forum brought a keen sense of disappointment" and that "Modern Rome appeared, first and last, hideous."[73] Like Hawthorne, he could not find any coherence in Rome's classical past. Howells found that the "part of the city where some of the most memorable relics of antiquity are to be found is unimaginably vile." Yet, he spent some time "looking for the Tarpeian Rock, less for Tarpeia's sake than for the sake of Miriam and Donatello and the Model."[74] This view of the literary elements of Rome is valued by authors and writers.

Louise Chandler Moulton produces a composite view of Rome by continually comparing physical sites to literary narratives. She wonders if her view replicates what Shelley and Keats saw, instead of seeing the sites for herself, when she first exits her hotel in Rome.[75] She has a vision of Hawthorne's characters while in the Borghese Garden that establishes *The Marble Faun's* narrative as one of the few permanent aspects of Rome. "Sometimes I seem to see them where the sun sifts through the young green

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[71]Aldrich, *From Ponkapog to Pesth*, 27.

[72]W. D. Howells, "Roman Pearls," in *Italian Journeys* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1874), 169.

[73]Ibid. , 151-152. Hawthorne's version of Rome screens the travel writer from the "unimaginably vile" by producing it as a romance and substantiating the writers own impressions. After all, Hawthorne also balked at the Roman environment and sites. Hawthorne states, after a fortnight in Rome, "I have seldom or never spent so wretched a time anywhere." Hawthorne, *The French and Italian Notebooks*, 53.

[74]Howells, "Roman Pearls," *Italian Journeys*, 162.

[75]Louise Chandler Moulton, "In and About Rome," in *Lazy Tours in Spain and Elsewhere* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1896), 97.

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leaves, and her beauty-and his fantastic grace are the only things here that cannot change."[76] Moulton also makes Hawthorne a part of the Capitol Museum by directing the reader's attention to the "'Faun' of Praxiteles which suggested to Hawthorne his immortal novel 'The Marble Faun.'"[77] Thus Moulton's readers encounter Rome through a series of textual frames. Aldrich's *From Ponkapog to Pesth*, Howells's *Italian Journeys*, and Moulton's *Lazy Tours in Spain and Elsewhere* provide readers with a view of Hawthorne and his version of Rome. These citations and adulations reinscribe the role that literary texts like *The Marble Faun* play in producing Rome for a tourist market.

An article on the "Literary Landmarks of Rome" in *Harper's Magazine* highlights this impulse to produce Rome from literary narratives.[78] This article provides the reader with information on the Roman residences and burial places of writers, quotations from their texts, and descriptions of the physical sites that they captured in their books. Not only authors' residences, but also the physical sites that they describe in their novels, become "landmarks" that are a necessary part of the Grand Tour. It is clear from *Harper's* "Literary Landmarks of Rome," as well as other travel writings, that tourists visited sites from Hawthorne's novel with some regularity. Parts of Rome are recontextualized by these pilgrimages. For example, the Roman building which Hawthorne used as the basis for Hilda's residence is called "Hilda's Tower."

The transcription of Hawthorne's virtual sites onto the "real" geography of Rome is the subject of a *Scribner's Monthly* article:

> Passing one day along a narrow Roman street leading from the neighborhood of the Palazzo Borghese to the city post-office, I noticed the name 'Via Portoghese' painted on the corner of a street stretching at right

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[76]Ibid. , 103.

[77]Ibid. , 109.

[78]Laurence Hutton, "Literary Landmarks of Rome," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 94 (January 1897), 281-302. There are of course more contemporary examples of this desire to reinscribe works back onto the landscape. Fans of Andrew Wyeth's work make pilgrimages to the "real" house that is depicted in the painting *Christina's World*. Some ardent visitors even fall to the ground to mimic Christina's pose while visiting the Olson House. Vance Muse, *The New York Times Magazine* (5 July 1998), 30.

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> angles to the one along which I was lounging. Hawthorne's *Marble Faun* had been published but a few months previously, and fresh from its perusal, I at once thought of the 'Via Portoghese' in which the author had located his 'Hilda's Tower.' Looking up, I was surprised and delighted to find the tower standing close before me."[79]

In the *Scribner's* passage, the writer's and presumably the reader's "discovery" is induced by familiar literary passages from *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne's virtual production of Rome is layered over a physical encounter with the city. This constructed view, which was grippingly "real" to many readers and visitors, produces an "architecture of belief," or a uniform world outlook that doesn't have to be attached to any "real" geography. This virtual construction of the city, or production of an "architecture of belief" that presents a cohesive world view of Rome, is so complex that the book generates visual, tactile, and olfactory expectations among its readers:

> Pilgrimages are made to what is now generally known as Hilda's Tower; and when young ladies go to the Capuchin church to see the picture of Guido they almost dread to find a dead monk laid out and bleeding from the nostrils. The book gives a strong impression of local color.[80]

These passages support my argument that *The Marble Faun* came to embody Rome for many readers. *Scribner's* describes Hawthorne's use of "Hilda's Tower" as "an instance of his peculiar method of blending the most conscientious realism with the most poetic romanticism."[81] The blending of Hawthorne's composite views into the aforementioned travelogues justifies the writers' own revisions and virtual views of Rome. These texts continue to make it difficult to locate a "real" version of the city. Instead, these travel writers produce a personal view that doesn't inherently have to image Rome as a geographically exacting landscape. It is this process of producing Rome as a personal or virtual mobile view that is suggested by the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*.

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[79] "Scenes from *The Marble Faun,*" *Scribner's Monthly* 2 (September 1871), 493.

[80] E. S. "The Italy of Hawthorne," 31.

[81] "Scenes from *The Marble Faun,*" 494.

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The Extra-Illustrated The Marble Faun

The literature about Hawthorne's text usually refers to the work as "*The Marble Faun.*" The Bernhard Tauchnitz edition is titled "*Transformation: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni.*" American editions appeared under the name "*The Marble Faun,*" while English editions were published under the title "*Transformation: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni.*" This continued "transformation" of the text was also generated by Hawthorne. In March 1860, he added a postscript to his work in order to appease readers because they felt that the book had no conclusion.[82] So, the Tauchnitz version, which includes the postscript, offers the reader a different book and experience than other publications of the text. According to William B. Todd, who has written extensively about Tauchnitz's publications, even the Tauchnitz printing is not the same.[83] *The Marble Faun* was reprinted a number of times so that the different Tauchnitz versions span a period of at least forty-six years. Todd states that these differences remain difficult to distinguish although "the issues in question actually here involve at least five different editions, different settings, all indistinguishable by colophon (since all five over this long period of time are still within the period covered by the imprint)." All copies of the Tauchnitz edition are dated 1860 despite these drastic differences in the publication dates.

There are also drastic differences in the appearance of the extra-illustrated version. The book is usually bound in white vellum but it also occasionally appears in split-calf. The spine often has the title of the book printed in gold but this title may be "The Marble Faun" or "Transformation." The spine may also bear Hawthorne's name, the volume number, and decorative patterns which are all gold tooled. The front and back covers are more simply decorated than the spine although they may also be decorated

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[82]William L. Vance, "Reading the Campagna: 'Silence Made Visible'," in *America's Rome*, vol. 1, *Classical Rome* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 114.

[83]Todd, "Firma Tauchnitz," 11.

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with linear patterns in maroon or dark blue in addition to bands of gold decoration. The book may be bound in one or two volumes. The decision to bind the text into two volumes doesn't appear to be determined by the number of photographs inserted since there are many extra-illustrated versions that are bound in one volume even though they contain more than sixty photographs.

The process of extra-illustration, or tipping photographs into the Hawthorne text, is briefly described in a number of reviews of the Houghton, Mifflin, and Company version of *The Marble Faun*, which is illustrated by photogravures:

> The interleaving of the book with photographs of the statues, buildings, and paintings which Hawthorne has there named or described, has long been a custom with travelers in Italy. Roman and Florentine dealers keep on hand such collections.[84]

The *Publisher's Advertisement* for the Houghton, Mifflin, and Company version of *The Marble Faun* also describes this process of extra-illustration:

> Ever since the first publication of *The Marble Faun,* travellers and lovers of Rome have used the book as a souvenir, and have found in its pages a most agreeable record of impressions created by the Eternal City and by the works of art preserved there. So satisfactory is the book in this regard that it early became the custom of visitors to Italy to collect photographs of the statues, paintings, and buildings referred to in the romance, and to interleave the book with them; and this has become so common that dealers in Rome and Florence make it their practice to keep such photographs arranged and ready for the traveller.[85]

The publisher continues on to suggest that extra-illustration produces an unacceptable view of Rome because of its inconsistencies. They make a concerted effort, in their version, to resolve the extra-illustrated text's varied representations into a unified vision.[86]

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[84]"The Marble Faun Illustrated," *The Literary World* (23 November 1889), 414.

[85]"Publishers' Advertisement," in Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, vol. 1 (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1889), i.

[86]The Houghton, Mifflin, and Company version suggests that it is a closer approximation of the "real" because it establishes a fixed time and a place through mass printed photogravures. The standardization produces a very different kind of reading, and presumably purchasing, experience than the Tauchnitz edition. The text would seem to shift from a virtual version of the city, a city which is mapped out by a collaborative process of purchaser, photographer, and bindery, to an illustrated story which would

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Houghton, Mifflin, and Company assures purchasers that their photographs are "made directly from the objects themselves" and offer a more reliable representation than the extra-illustrated text.[87] There are other nineteenth-century sources that discuss the veracity of photography. Daniel M. Tredwell, in a study of the personally extra-illustrated book, advises his readers that photography is invaluable when a faithful representation is desired.[88] However, guidebook publishers like John Murray warn readers that photographic images, at least those produced for the tourist market, are often unreliable representations:

> Photography has of late years been very successfully applied in representing not only the ancient and modern monuments of Rome, but sculpture, and in copying the original drawings of the old masters. A less legitimate application of it perhaps has been the reproduction of the *chefs-d' oeuvre* of the old masters from engravings. For it is scarcely necessary to remark that to the present time photography has imperfectly succeeded in copying oil pictures from the originals. The purchaser will therefore do well to bear in mind that what may be sold to him as a photographic copy of a painting has been in reality made from an engraving in the greater number of instances, or from a drawing.[89]

The goal of the Houghton, Mifflin, and Company version of *The Marble Faun*, at least as a marketing strategy, is the production of a consistent and verifiable representation of Roman sites, art works, and monuments. The extra-illustrated version cannot supply this consistency. Instead, as suggested by these critiques of photography, the extra-illustrated versions produce a series of conflicting representations of Rome and its environs.

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have less personal meaning, or a more authoritative relationship, to the owner. This switch in imagery and production methods is justified by the need for "quality."

[87]"Publishers' Advertisement," in Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, ii.

[88]Daniel M. Tredwell advises the reader that "among illustrators strong prejudice against photographs, and they certainly are not the most desirable illustrations for books, for the reasons-first, their liability to fade; secondly, they are not works of art. But when faithful representation is the great object to be obtained, the photograph is invaluable." Daniel M. Tredwell, *A Monograph on Privately Illustrated Books; A Plea for Biblomania* (Flatbush: Privately Printed, 1892), 34.

[89]John Murray, *A Handbook of Rome and Its Environs; Forming Part II of the Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy*, 6th ed. (London: John Murray, 1862), xx.

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Ann Wilsher seems to suggest that tourists used extra-illustration as a way of changing their simple view of the Roman landscape into a complex and personally produced "architecture of belief":

> [I]t became fashionable to spend some time in Rome or Florence, choosing not only a custom-made binding for a favourite Tauchnitz but also a personal selection of suitable illustrations from a larger number of photographs offered for inspection. Indeed, the bookseller was quite prepared to bind into the copy photographs brought from other sources by the customer himself, although it was probably more usual for the latter to make his choice from the selection spread out for him in the shop.[90]

Tourists gazed onto a series of photographs that were "spread out" for their view. They regarded these representations as a series of possible reconstructions of the city. The reader of the extra-illustrated text, while in Rome, had a number of different interactions with the city's sites and geography. The tourist engaged with physical sites, read the text and images, and conceived of a series of further rearrangements that could be produced from the photographs that were available at booksellers and binderies.

Murray's guide to Rome lists the kinds of services that were available to travelers at these shops:

> Monaldini bookseller and stationer, also in the Piazza di Spagna, 79 and 80, founded in 1786. English and Continental papers and reviews in the reading-rooms and sent out, or for sale. Terms similar to preceding ones. Guide-books and works of Modern literature, and the latest illustrated books on Rome in vellum binding. Books bound in the same style to order or illuminated by skillful hands.[91]

Murray's description once again suggests that such processes as reading literature, touring Rome via guidebook, and producing extra-illustrated texts were interrelated if not conflated. In the case of Monaldini Bookseller and Stationery, they are also literally bound together within the same shop. The pricing of the extra-illustrated text at the bookseller also suggests that the book combines a series of objects and activities. Lucien Goldschmidt and Weston J. Naef note that the cost of producing an extra-illustrated copy

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[90] Wilsher, "The Tauchnitz 'Marble Faun'," 63.

[91] John Murray, *A Handbook of Rome and Its Environs*, 13th ed. (London: John Murray, 1881), 31-32.

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of *The Marble Faun* was written into one volume. "The book cost 4 lire, the bindings 20 and the 100 photographs 25 lire, totaling 49 lire."[92] My reading of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* is informed by this process of binding contradictory views, prices, and activities together.

The hand-binding of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* problematizes the ability to read it as a mass-produced text. Since this binding process is also a rebinding of the already produced Tauchnitz version, the extra-illustrated text can be read as either a re-production of the mass-produced text or as a unique work that is produced by a collaborative process of bindery, photographer, and purchaser. There is no attempt by the binders to make these books look like mass-produced copies of each other. If anything, there appears to be some attempt by the binder and owner to emphasize the individuality of each text. The books are bound in slightly different styles. The quality of the binding, appearance of the cover design, style and size of the tooled font, type of end papers, and selection of photographs vary. Each book bears unique markings inside the text that might include the owner's name or a series of owners' names, book plates, bindery and bookseller stickers, dedications and other hand-written notes, penned in titles on the photographs, and underlined passages. The thickness of the book is unique and dependent on the number of photographs that are inserted and the kind of paper used for the photograph and the mount. These photographic documents are usually mounted on separate leaves of paper, the book is taken apart so that these pages can be inserted, and then the book is bound back together by the bindery.[93] The dimensions of the photographs glued onto the blank pages also vary from version to version. A photographic subject may be duplicated from text to text but the effect is still dissimilar.

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[92]Lucien Goldschmidt and Weston J. Naef, *The Truthful Lens: A Survey of the Photographically Illustrated Book, 1844-1914* (NY: The Grolier Club, 1980), 204.

[93]There are some versions of the Tauchnitz *The Marble Faun*, as well as other Tauchnitz books, in which the photographs were sewn directly into the book. These photographs have a very different effect since they are smaller than the printed pages.

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In instances where the photograph seems "duplicated," a closer examination will usually reveal that the angle of the photograph has been shifted, the composition offers different elements, the lighting has changed, the quality of the printing has varied, or the image is tipped-in on a different page.

From my own position as a careful late-twentieth-century reader, with access to multiple versions of the extra-illustrated text, these variations suggest the possibility of further writing into these books. It also seems likely that nineteenth-century tourists had access to a number of versions of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* but their reading practices aren't the same as my own.[94] Even the "ideal" reader doesn't have a completely unique virtual mobile view. The text's invocation of a fixed list of sites insures that both nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers would have an experience of the city that incorporates necessary views. The reader moves inside a virtual Rome that is still circumscribed by the vision of the author and the photographer. Hawthorne certainly wanted to produce a specific view that his readers would experience:

> We glance hastily at these things-at this bright sky, and those blue, distant mountains, and at the ruins, Etruscan, Roman, Christian, venerable with a threefold antiquity, and at the company of world-famous statues in the saloon-in the hope of putting the reader into that state of feeling which is experienced oftenest at Rome. It is a vague sense of ponderous remembrances; a perception of such weight and density in a by-gone life, of which this spot was the centre, that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are but half as real here as elsewhere.[95]

Hawthorne's textual invocation of Rome acts as more than a "feeling" when it is authenticated by a series of photographic documents. However, it is unlikely that even

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[94]Nineteenth-century travelers would have encountered samples and other versions of the extra-illustrated text at binderies while they were collaboratively producing their version. These readers may also have had access to the copies of other tourists and traveling companions. Inscriptions in some volumes document the circulation of these texts through society. Extra-illustrated versions, given as gifts, allowed the original owner to share the text's descriptions and views with friends and family members that hadn't visited the Continent.

[95]Hawthorne, "Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, Donatello," in *Transformation*, vol. 1, 2-3.

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these photographic documents could make the composite parts of Rome, as typified by Hawthorne's list of divergent antiquities, cohere into a single narrative.

Instead of a uniform stance, the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* offers the ideal reader a number of temporal positions. Changing temporal positions are produced by the time lapse effect that occurs in some of the photographs of figures and vehicles, the shifting time periods which are made visible by the different fashions of dress in various photographs and discrepancies between the architecture that Hawthorne textually describes and that photographs record, and by the "*this will be* and *this has been*" effect that Roland Barthes ascribes to photography in *Camera Lucida*.[96] Barthes argues that historical photographs contain "a defeat of Time in them: *That* is dead and *that* is going to die." The undeniable "past of the pose," that is verified by the photographic trace of photography, tells the ideal viewer of a "death in the future." Barthes views a photograph of his mother as a child and tells himself that "she is going to die . . . Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe." This photographic effect, where the viewer is torn between reading the photograph as a vision of the past and believing it points to an inevitable future, is intensified by Hawthorne's desire to find a classical Rome. Hawthorne rarely attains this vision. He finds a fragmented present and future instead.

The fragmented views and multiple versions of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*, which disable the ability to speak about the text as singular and fixed, epitomize Michel Foucault's argument that in all books the "frontiers of a book are never clear-cut" because "it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences."[97] The extra-illustrated texts also evoke Barthes's "writerly" model in which

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[96]Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 96.

[97]Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 23.

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reading is an active process of "writing" into the text.[98] The publisher, binder and bookseller, photographer, and purchaser have a writerly relationship to Hawthorne's text because they take an active part in its reproduction. These interventions suggest that any reader can also write into the text through such practices as changing the physical book, its narrative, or ideological meaning.

More recently, the agency of such readers has been related to the promise of emergent hypertextual technologies like virtual web museums. George Landow uses the work of Foucault and Barthes in his argument that hypertextual systems, such as those available on the web, have numerous precursors:

> Within the individual volume of the traditional book we may find such *internal* hypertextual functions as tables of contents, page-numbers, chapters, verses, rubrications, footnotes, and indexes. Some of these may be assigned by the original author, others by specialists in textual organization such as indexes or printers, or by later generations of scholars.[99]

Hypertext is a nonsequential form of electronic writing where links provide readers with a menu of pre-established choices about the way that they can move through the text. These texts allow users to "simply touch the page where the symbol of a note, reference, or annotation appeared, and thus instantly bring into view the material contained in a note or even the entire other text."[100] In the traditional book, these hypertextual functions may

[98]"Let us first posit the image of a triumphant plural, unimpoverished by any constraint of representation (of imitation). In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach*, they are indeterminable (meaning here is never subject to a principle of determination, unless by throwing dice); the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text." Roland Barthes, *S/Z : An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974). For a discussion of the rereading of texts in "writerly" and nonlinear ways see Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975).

[99]George P. Landow and Paul Delany, "Hypertext, Hypermedia and Literary Studies: the State of the Art," in *Hypermedia and Literary Studies*, eds. George Landow and Paul Delany (Cambridge, MA. : MIT Press, 1991), 4.

[100]George P. Landow. *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 5.

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encourage the reader to rewrite the text by resisting the traditional linear narrative and substituting an organization of their own choosing.

Hawthorne uses many of these hypertextual functions in his construction of *The Marble Faun*. The insertion of photographs into the text increases the writerly possibilities of the book by adding other systems of numbering and labeling. Many of the photographs contain a brief description of place that becomes linked to Hawthorne's descriptions. Numbers on the border or image surface of the photograph conflict with page and chapter numbers from the printed book. The extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun's* virtual mobile view evokes hypertextual systems but it doesn't facilitate the instantaneous availability of an unlimited series of other texts. The extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* is related to a series of other texts and producers but these references are not instantly obvious to all readers and they certainly are not all equally available.

The intertextual qualities of most of the travel literature about Rome suggest that the city is always produced from fragments and that these representations remain fissured within the extra-illustrated text. For instance, Hawthorne notes about his visit to the Forum that "the essential elements of the old Rome are there; columns, single, or in groups of two or three, still erect, but battered and bruised, at some forgotten time, with infinite pains and labor, fragments of other columns lying prostrate."[101] In Hawthorne's description, as well as in accounts by other travel writers like W. D. Howells, Rome is a series of architectural bits that refuse to cohere into a satisfying image. This reading of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* as a fragmented text is further supported by considerations of photography during this period. Nineteenth-century writings about photography often mention that photographic processes and objects were rudimentary. This suggests that the production of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* is, at least in part, a process of linking the fragments of Rome to a series of incomplete and disjointed photographic representations.

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[101]Hawthorne, *The French and Italian Notebooks*, 166.

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Nineteenth-Century Perceptions of Photography

There was a considerable amount of writing produced during the nineteenth-century, from photographers as well as critics and writers, about the technological and ideological problems with photography.[102] It is perhaps not surprising that the writer Henry James questions the role of photography, as well as the quality of reproductions, in the photographically illustrated collection of his work, which was titled *The Novels and Tales of Henry James.* "The series of frontispieces contribute less to ornament, I recognise, than if Mr. Alvin Langdon Coburn's beautiful photographs, which they reproduce, had to suffer less reproduction."[103] James describes the inherent combative relationship between photographic illustrations and literary texts. James's writing and Coburn's photogravures are involved in similar processes of reproduction. James's comments suggest that there is an equally disruptive relationship between Hawthorne's descriptive prose and the tipped-in photographs.[104] For James, the question at large is that of "the general acceptability of illustration . . . for the author of any text putting forward illustrative claims (that is producing an effect of illustration) by its own intrinsic virtue and so finding itself elbowed, on the ground, by another and competitive process."[105]

The photographer Francis Frith, like Henry James, describes a contestation between writing and photography. However, Frith's description in *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described* suggests that the camera offers greater possibilities as an

[102]Carol Armstrong provided me with an in-depth introduction to this material in her photography courses. Some of the material that she presented in those classes is included in her study of nineteenth-century illustrated books. Carol Armstrong, *Scenes in a Library: Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843-1875* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1998).

[103]Henry James, *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, vol 23, *The Golden Bowl* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1907-1917), ix.

[104]I am not distinguishing here between the photogravures in James's text and the tipped-in photographs in the Tauchnitz version of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun.* A more detailed consideration of these representations might need to take into account the differences in these forms of photography.

[105]James, *The Novels and Tales*, vol 23, *The Golden Bowl*, ix.

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"illustrative" form. "Were but the Pen for severe truthfulness, as unimpeachable as that of the Camera, what graphic pictures might they together paint!"[106] Despite Frith's belief in his camera, there are some views that he finds "perfectly hopeless to attempt to do it justice either by camera or the pen . . . I am even ashamed of my view, it so thoroughly inadequate to the subject."[107] Francis Frith also articulates an ambivalence about his illustrative journey in his photographically elaborated version of Henry W. Longfellow's *Hyperion*.[108] Frith believes in the "singular fitness of this beautiful matter-of-fact Romance for Photographic Illustration" but he also notes that "even under the most favourable circumstances, -how greatly the rigid influence of the Camera mars the pleasure and the probable success of such an undertaking."[109]

Earlier, William Henry Fox Talbot had written about the flaws in the photographic process. In *The Pencil of Nature,* he apologizes for "the imperfections necessarily incident to a first attempt to exhibit an Art of so great singularity." The ability to describe photography as well as the art of photography is impeded because "the Art can hardly be said to have advanced beyond its infancy-at any rate, it is yet in a very early stage-and its practice is often impeded by doubts and difficulties."[110] His discussion of "A Fruit Piece" acknowledges that the reproducibility of photographs is not guaranteed or even completely desired. Since it is "only on paper, it is exposed to various accidents: and should it be casually torn or defaced, of course no more copies can be made." The "Notice" in Francis Frith's *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described* highlights the issues involved when a photographic illustration must be replaced. The text informs

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[106]Francis Frith, introduction to *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described*, part 1 (New York: Virtue, Emmins and Company, 1858-1859), n.p.

[107]Frith, "The Hall of Columns, Karnak," in *Egypt and Palestine.*

[108]Francis Frith, "The Artist's Preface," in Henry W. Longfellow, *Hyperion: A Romance* (London: Alfred William Bennett, 1865), 6.

[109]Ibid. , 3.

[110]William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), n.p.

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the owner that there is an alteration in the table of contents' list of photos. The "Notice" provides the purchaser with assurances that "Great care was however taken to supply a corresponding descriptive text; and, as the altered Prints are in every respect equal to those originally given, this slight variation-a result of the unavoidable delays attendant to the photographic process-cannot in any way depreciate the value of the Work."[111] Comments by Talbot, Frith's publisher, and others suggest that the photographically illustrated book, at least in the nineteenth-century, could not always provide each reader with an exacting reproduction. This distinguished photography from other forms of reproductive illustration.

These texts do more than focus the reader's attention on the imperfect features of the photographic process and the photographer's mental and physical travails. Photographers ennoble their individual skills by showing that they succeeded in producing "Art" and satisfying effects despite the many difficulties that photography presents.[112] The underlying intention may be to elevate the photographer's skills but these writings produce a very detailed view of photographic practice. These nineteenth-century texts present a photography that has extreme difficulties rendering cohesive realistic views.[113] The incomplete and irregular state of the photographic view makes it easier to write into such books as the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* and to produce a personal version of the text.

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[111]Publisher, "Notice" in Frith, *Egypt and Palestine* , part 1, n.p.

[112] The self promoting effects of these narratives are most clearly present in Francis Frith's conclusion to *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described.* "My labours, as regards the publication, are now at an end, I regret many imperfections, of which I am fully conscious. I regret, especially, that I was so grievously hurried whilst taking my views: most undoubtedly I might have done more justice to my subjects-yet, when I reflect upon the circumstances under which many of the photographs were taken, I marvel greatly that they turned out so well. Now in a smothering little tent, with my collodion fizzing-boiling up all over the glass the instant that it touched, -and again, pushing my way backwards upon my hands and knees, into a damp, slimy, rock-tomb, to manipulate, -it is truly marvelous that the results should be presentable at all." Frith, *Egypt and Palestine*, part 2, n.p.

[113]This representation of photography would change as its technologies improved.

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The Extra-Illustrated The Marble Faun and the Museum

The extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun's* collection isn't that different than the museums that nineteenth-century American readers visited at home. Alan Wallach states that between 1874 and 1914 a visit to an American museum "involved the perusal of a collection of casts and reproductions."[114] The core of many American museum collections, during this period, was composed of "casts of antique and Renaissance sculpture . . . architectural casts, casts of Assyrian, Egyptian, and medieval sculpture, electrotype reproductions of coins and metal work, and photographs of paintings and other works of art."[115] The extra-illustrated book is an "exhibit" of the city that allows the spectator a virtual view of objects that, like museums, have historical and artistic value.

The relationship between "originals" and "reproductions is often the subject of *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne's detailed, although not always accurate, descriptions allow readers to have a virtual tour of the Roman landscape. The reader's investment in the accuracy and nuanced ambiance of Hawthorne's Rome is indicated by many nineteenth-century reviews. *The Illustrated Review* states that the relics and art works are "described with the fidelity which only love can teach."[116] *The Marble Faun's* virtual tour produces a spectatorial position that is like the constructed ways of viewing in the museum where everything "is put under the pressure of a way of seeing. A serial display, be it of painting or masks, stools or pitchforks . . . establishes certain parameters of visual interest, whether these parameters are known to have been intended by the objects' producers or not."[117] The extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*, with the support of

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[114]Wallach, "The American Cast Museum: An Episode in the History of the Institutional Definition of Art," in *Exhibiting Contradiction*, 38.

[115]Ibid. , 39.

[116]"Reviews," *Illustrated Review* (15 April 1871), 446.

[117]Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, 29.

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supplementary texts about the book, also produces a "way of seeing." The text provides a script of the appropriate way to view Rome that is like the recontextualization of objects in the traditional museum. However, the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* may make it possible for viewers to insert their own visions into the text as a way of resisting the pressure of an institutional way of seeing.

This reading of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* as a museum could also be applied, perhaps with less success, to the art book. André Malraux seemed to have the art book in mind when he wrote about the "Museum without Walls."[118] However, art books usually provide viewers with a structure that is preset and controlled by the publisher while the extra-illustrated text has a more fragmented series of productions. The views of Hawthorne, numerous photographers, bookseller, binder, publisher, and purchaser are all bound together so that the many copies of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* become an endless collection that encases multiple conflicting views. The multiple production practices of the extra-illustrated text may encourage further insertions, rewritings, and misreadings.

Reflexively Reproducing The Marble Faun

The Marble Faun incorporated reproductions, even before it was extra-illustrated, because Hawthorne often reproduced passages from his own travel journals. Hawthorne also uses fictional characters in *The Marble Faun* to replicate many of his own experiences in Rome.[119] This process of reproduction is foregrounded because Hawthorne turns his copying of the journals into a reflexive consideration of rewriting. Hilda and other fictional characters copy "master" works of art. Hawthorne also

[118]Malraux, "Museum Without Walls," *The Voices of Silence*.

[119]In this way, travel writers like Moulton were literally reinvoking Hawthorne's bodily movement and visceral experiences when they saw his characters in the Roman landscape.

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reproduces textual versions of nineteenth-century artists and their works. These descriptions, or reproductions, become more "real" for the reader because Hawthorne suggests that he has actually taken these works. He describes his use of these art pieces as "felonious" acquisitions.[120]

Hawthorne's copying from artists is recontextualized by his description of Hilda's copying:

> It has probably happened in many other instances, as it did in Hilda's case, that she ceased to aim at original achievement in consequence of the very gifts which so exquisitely fitted her to profit by familiarity with the works of the mighty old masters . . . So Hilda became a copyist.[121]

> It strikes us that there is something far higher and nobler in all this, in her thus sacrificing herself to the devout recognition of the highest excellence in art, than there would have been in cultivating her not inconsiderable share of talent for the production of works from her own ideas.[122]

Hawthorne's own "devout" duplications through textual description are coded as valuable because Hilda achieves something "far higher and nobler" through her copying. The readers of *The Marble Faun* can also gain some prestige by copying. Tourists copy Hawthorne's novel by inscribing "Hilda's Tower" onto the Roman landscape. The extra-illustrators of *The Marble Faun* participate in Hilda's and Hawthorne's copying by their

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[120]"Having imagined a sculptor in this romance, it was necessary to provide him with such works in marble as should be in keeping with the artistic ability which he was supposed to possess. With this view, the Author laid felonious hands upon a certain bust of Milton, and a statue of a Pearl-diver, which he found in the studio of Mr. Paul Akers, and secretly conveyed them to the premises of his imaginary friend, in the Via Frezza. Not content even with these spoils, he committed a further robbery upon a magnificent statue of Cleopatra, the production of Mr. William W. Story, an artist whom his country and the world will not long fail to appreciate. He had thoughts of appropriating, likewise, a certain door of bronze, by Mr. Randolph Rogers, representing the history of Columbus in a series of bas-reliefs, but was deterred by an unwillingness to meddle with public property. Were he capable of stealing from a lady, he would certainly have made free with Miss Hosmer's noble statue of Zenobia." Hawthorne, Preface to *Transformation*, vol. 1, ix. It is my intent to link this discussion of appropriating with the extra-illustrators' adoption of images for their uses in the Hawthorne text. The extra-illustrator makes use of pre-produced material to form their portable Rome, their virtual version of the city, in the same way as Hawthorne makes a literary appropriation of contemporary sculpture to form his text. Carol Armstrong has suggested to me that a concern with the rightful ownership of property and its potential theft has accompanied photography from its beginnings. The construction of the Rome in *The Marble Faun* could be compared to Eco's discussions in *Travels in Hyperreality*. Eco compares the differences between Disney World's Frontierland and the remains of frontier towns.

[121]Hawthorne, "The Virgin's Shrine," in *Transformation*, vol. 1, 64-65.

[122]Ibid. , 68.

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"devout recognition of the highest excellence in art" which they acknowledge by tipping photographs into the text and transforming physical museum objects into a virtual museum. This copying associates the extra-illustrators with Hawthorne without ever bringing them to his level. The tipped-in photographs have a place in the text because they copy Hawthorne's mastery as Hilda copies artistic masterpieces. The photographs and the extra-illustrators' project are imbued with an importance because of Hawthorne's insistence that "copying" has a value.

Hawthorne's textual reproductions of art works are one of the many copies within the extra-illustrated text. Staged photographs, which attempt to capture scenes from the novel, are another form of reproduction that appears in many editions. Some of these images, such as an image of an artist in the studio, appear to have been produced to correspond with Hawthorne's narrative while other photographs of models have been chosen for their coincidental alignment with specific scenes. Copying moments from the novel may allow the buyer, photographer, and binder an even more literal ability to "write" into the story since these scenes are visual transcriptions of the narrative. The staged photographs help produce *The Marble Faun's* "architecture of belief" because the repetition of the studio allows these views to produce a more cohesive vision than single shots of Roman sites.

A photograph of a young couple posing appears in the chapter "The Peasant and Contadina" across from page 229 of the New York Public Library version of *The Marble Faun* [fig. 1]. The photograph is meant to depict Donatello and Miriam, in disguise as a peasant and contadina, meeting Kenyon near an excavation. In the photograph, the couple stands stiffly while looking out at camera, photographer, and viewer. Hawthorne describes them walking "hand in hand."[123] The photograph depicts them clasping right hands, the peasant's left hand rests lightly on the contadina's right shoulder, and their bodies are turned inward slightly as if they were about to dance but there is no evidence

[123]Hawthorne, "The Peasant and Contadina," in *Transformation*, vol. 2, 229.

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that this movement will happen. The photographer has not learned how to, or does not want to, capture them in movement.

The stilted qualities of this pose are repeated in many other studio shots in the extra-illustrated text. Figures often appeared to be stiff and graceless in studio photographs during this period because armatures were used as a support for the body during lengthy exposures. For the twentieth-century reader, these armatures, the narrative that these photographs copied, and the stilted poses produce another structure, or script, for the body. Purchasers, photographers, and binders performed versions of this script by the part that they played in producing the extra-illustrated text. This performance, like many of the set-up photographs, expresses Barthes's self-conscious statement that "I pose, I know I am posing, I want you to know that I am posing."[124] The photograph is transformed from a studio shot into a work that reflexively considers the process of producing a studio shot because the models seem to be hyperconscious of their pose.

A series of discordant studio props emphasize the constructed state of this photograph. The contadina's creased skirt appears to be just pulled out of a costume bin and donned without ironing. The painted backdrop's flatness is emphasized by a series of darks and lights. Trees, bushes, dirt road, and sky are not easily distinguished in the backdrop because the photograph has blurred the "landscape." White marks, which could have been flowers, don't sit properly on the plane of the backdrop. Instead, they fall like bread crumbs or confetti from the clasped hands of the couple. The backdrop bulges out and creates a cut between the figures and their "landscape" when it meets the floor. This unnaturally dark line may direct the viewer's attention to a white vertical line in the fabric on the studio floor. This seam splits apart the two figures and divides the photograph. Near this seam, in the lower right quadrant of the image, a white 10 floats above the studio floor. The 10 separates the photograph from its referent. It dissolves the representation and in its place leaves a hole which Roland Barthes refers to as

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[124]Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* 11.

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"punctum."[125] It is these spots, these sore points, that fragment the image and reveal the photograph's methods of production by calling our attention to the disruptive detail.

In this chapter, Hawthorne describes a visual disruption that is generated from Donatello's costume, which is "one of the ugliest dresses ever worn by man."[126] A similar visual disruption occurs in the photograph of the peasant and the contadina because their clothes appear to be studio props. The dated quality of the studio set-up, the period feel of the characters' costumes, and the fixity of the models' pose produces a deadness that is contrary to the implied movement of the peasant and the contadina. The photograph embodies Barthes's "catastrophe" in which the photograph encases what will be and what has been. The twentieth-century viewer knows that the models are going to die and have already died. They are "living" and yet petrified exhibits that join with other set up studio shots and classical sculptures to form a hardened, almost brittle, museum of the studio performance and of Rome's culture. The extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* evokes Baudrillard's "open" museum in which everything is "museumified in situ":

> [E]ntire working-class neighborhoods, living metallurgic zones, an entire culture, men, women, and children included-gestures, languages, customs fossilized alive as in a snapshot. The museum, instead of being circumscribed as a geometric site, is everywhere now, like a dimension of life.[127]

The elements of Rome are literally "fossilized alive" by photography in the virtual museum of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*.

The studio images in the extra-illustrated text are both "real" photographically fossilized Romans and forgeries. These photographs meld with images of classical sculptures, architectural sites, and paintings in an attempt to visualize and make "real" Hawthorne's semi-fictional version of Roman culture. These studio set-ups evoke the nineteenth-century fascination with forgeries and composites:

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[125]Ibid.

[126]Hawthorne, "The Peasant and Contadina," in *Transformation*, vol. 2, 229.

[127]Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," *Simulacra and Simulation*, 8.

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> From the period of the Grand Tour until the present day there has been a demand by travellers for souvenir copies of antiquities; museums and collectors have also wished to acquire replicas of well-known objects. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries especially foundries and electroplating firms produced huge numbers of copies, many of which, their origins having been forgotten, appear as antiquities in collections, dealers' stock and museums.[128]

The images and text in the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* are part of the nineteenth-century travelers' desire to obtain copies of artistic works and other objects from sites on the Grand Tour. The resizing and reimaging, which occurs in these photographs of Rome, was already being provided by lithography, etching, and casting that made works available in different sizes and surfaces. Photographically extra-illustrated versions of *The Marble Faun* appear to provide a different option than the many souvenir copies and forgeries that were foisted on tourists because they contain traces of Rome. Views, famous art works, and difficult to transport structures are readily available for consumption through the process of photography. However, the warnings in guidebooks about unscrupulous dealers, who sold photographs of reproductions rather than photographs of original works of art, suggest that the photograph is part of a vast system of fakes and copies. Photography has been associated with the fake since its invention.

The nineteenth-century practice of producing antiquities, which were sometimes conflations of different original objects, is related to the reproduction of the *Faun of Praxiteles* within the extra-illustrated text. A number of sources suggest that the image in the extra-illustrated text was of another statue:

> You will not find any photograph nor (so far as I am aware) any engraving of the Faun of Praxiteles. There are photographs, stereoscopic and otherwise of another Faun which is almost identical with the hero of my romance, although only an inferior repetition of it. My Faun is in the Capitol; the other in the Vatican. The genuine statue has never been photographed, on account I suppose of its standing in a bad light. The

[128]Donald Bailey, "Replicas of Greek and Roman Objects," in *Fake? The Art of Deception*, ed. Mark Jones (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 46.

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> photographs of the Vatican Faun supply its place very well, except to the face which is very inferior.[129]

According to Susan S. Williams, "the Capitoline Faun was not photographed in the nineteenth-century, the photographs added to the Tauchnitz *Marble Faun* were of the Vatican Faun."[130] If the illustrators' intent was to represent the "original," or the statue discussed by Hawthorne, then the "version" of the "Faun" in the extra-illustrated text produces a personal view in which the location and identification of the object are distorted. The photographic view, which presents the sculpture against a dark ground that provides the viewer with no details of the site, helps to remove this work from its contextualizing location.

The *Faun of Praxiteles* becomes a hybrid in the extra-illustrated text because of the intermingling of different representations of "Faun." The "Faun" is a copy but it doesn't fully represent the Capitol Faun or the Vatican Faun. The illustration is a copy without a singular original or referent. The extra-illustrated virtual museum usually produces a locationless collection because the physically sited objects of Rome are reconfigured by the text. In this case, the virtual museum is also a locationless collection because the object represented can't be traced back to one sited source. It is possible that the lack of an identificatory label on most photographs of the "Faun" is an attempt to avoid a hybridization of the "real" statues. However, the photographs of the "Faun" all illustrate the first chapter of the text which introduces the character Donatello and relates his demeanor to that of the Capitol Museum's *Faun of Praxiteles*.

Donatello is alternately believed to be a Faun, a living copy of the *Faun of Praxiteles*, and the model from which the *Faun of Praxiteles* was sculpted. Hawthorne reflexively considers his own process of writing and reproducing Rome with these

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[129]Nathaniel Hawthorne as quoted by Laurence Hutton, "Literary Landmarks of Rome," 301.

[130]Williams, "The Photography of Travel," in *Confounding Images*, 174. Hawthorne's and William's statements, as well as Murray's warnings about photography, problematize the identification of the Faun's location as "Capitolino" in the New York Public Library version. Instead, this label only further compounds the inability to locate an original.

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different constructions of the Faun. The Italian Donatello's name evokes a famous sculptor but he does not produce sculpture. Instead, he reproduces sculpture through his physicality. His physiognomy is in turn reproduced by the sculptor Kenyon. Hawthorne reproduces a living version of the marble Faun which elevates his own version of the classical over "The Classical." Donatello, the Hawthornian Faun, is marked as unique and privileged over its sculpted counterparts because Kenyon leaves his sculpture of Donatello incomplete and Hilda has a negative reaction to the *Faun of Praxiteles.*[131]

The book's focus on the uniqueness of copies problematizes the expected link between photographs and their referents. The many sites and objects that the "Faun" encompasses become intermingled, or hybridized, so that the image can be read as a copy without an original. This problemitization of the terms "original" and "copy" is a key function of the virtual museum. *The Marble Faun* becomes a virtual museum because it encases a contestatory relationship between these different representations. The extra-illustrated virtual museum destabilizes the borders of the *Faun of Praxiteles* and produces a very different "Faun" in its place.

Hawthorne also produces a very different version of the museum than the one he encountered in Rome because his Faun, the character Donatello, is living art. Susan S. Williams argues that "Hawthorne imagines what it would mean for these works not to be exhibited in a cold museum but rather to live in walking replicas of their originals."[132] Hawthorne "proposes an alternate history for the work of art."[133] Walking art works, such as Donatello, have a complicated relationship with their museum counterparts within Hawthorne's text. The constant reworking of Donatello's relationship to the Capitol Faun, the production by Kenyon of a statue of Donatello, and the extra-illustrated text's

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[131]"'Ah, the Faun!' cried Hilda, with a little gesture of impatience; 'I have been looking at him too long; and now, instead of a beautiful statue, immortally young, I see only a corroded and discoloured stone. This change is very apt to occur in statues.'" Hawthorne, "The Faun," in *Transformation*, vol. 1, 15.

[132]Williams, "The Photography of Travel," in *Confounding Images*, 160.

[133]Ibid. , 162.

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quotation of the Vatican Faun create a series of likenesses that are never fixed into a hierarchy of original and reproduction. Hawthorne's virtual museum detaches the "works of art" from their contextualizing frame and allows the reader some freedom in "seeing" the works in countless arrangements. In this way, Hawthorne's "alternate history" appears very similar to one version of Malraux's "Museum without Walls" in which countless versions of a work can be set into visual conversation with each other.

Fragmenting the Referent in the Virtual Museum

The countless works of the virtual museum can't be linked to one sited referent because they form an intermeshed object where meaning is produced from their visual conversation. This suggests that the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* has a series of elusive traces that don't point to a solid referent.[134] The trace-like nature of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* is figured by Hawthorne's descriptions that don't always cohere into "real" sites and by the fugitive state of the photographs. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between photographs of sites and photographs of representations, which render sites through such media as lithography or watercolor, because the images don't provide the details that would allow viewers to make these distinctions.

In *The Marble Faun*, the virtual tourist may gaze at Rome by looking at a photograph of a painting of a Roman site. Murray's warning about the tendency among photographers to copy copies and then present them as images of the "master works" suggests that the virtual tourist may be gazing at a photograph of a copy of a painting that depicts a Roman site. These photographs give the reader an image of Rome that is cycled through the collapsing frames of such processes as painting, printmaking, and

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[134]Traces, such as footprints, smoke, and photographs, act as a kind of record, or index, of objects. However, I am arguing that the direct link between photographic trace and object is destabilized in the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*. These photographs obviously record something that has been, and are thus a trace, but the source of this object or event is obscured by the lack of clarity in the photographs, the multiple referents which the images evoke, and the texts alternate depictions of these objects and events.

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photography. Rome is "seen" through a series of productions that may not be visible to the viewer because the divergent practices become conflated with constant reproduction and reimaging.

I am going to refer to these varied works as "paintings" because it is often impossible to determine the medium of these works. Photographs of paintings and other forms of rendering function differently than photographs of such spatial structures as buildings, sculptures, and landscapes.[135] These photographs of "paintings" deny the viewer an understanding of surface facture. The photographic process does not precisely trace the original register of marks across the "painting's" surface. The photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional surface onto another two-dimensional surface melds the two construction processes together. The facture of the "painting" may be elided but the photographic process is also invisible. These photographs produce a way to slip into the image rather than admiring the photographic surface. Barthes argues that a "photograph is always invisible; it is not it that we see."[136]

The work titled *Roma-Catacombe di S. Caliesto Sutta Via Appia Capella di Cornelia Veso*, which appears in the chapter "Subterranean Reminiscences" across from page twenty-five of the New York Public Library version of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*, typifies many of these "problems" with photographs of "paintings" [fig. 2]. It is hard to tell if the photograph is derived from an ink drawing, a watercolor, an oil painting, or some other means of two-dimensional rendering, since it difficult to read the

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[135]I am using sweeping generalizations to distinguish photographs of paintings from photographs of spatial landscapes. Obviously distinguishing between two- and three-dimensionality means creating two categorical sets. It is of course true that the paintings, because of their facture, their appearance on framed or wooden supports, and their tendency to warp aren't really two-dimensional. It is difficult to describe the photograph of a painting in different terms than the painting itself. An evaluation of their different visual and ideological properties is made difficult if the original, or painted, document isn't available as a means of comparison. Discourses about works of art that are presented in reproduced form are most often about the work itself. If the photograph, or the photographic process is discussed at all it is to discuss the slight discrepancies between "original" and "reproduction." An obvious source for discussions on reproductions would be Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1983).

[136]Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 6.

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original details of the work's surface. As in many of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun's* photographs of "paintings," the photographic process and most of the surface facture of the "original" representation are invisible. The viewer is left with the subject of the "painting" that the photograph represents. The photograph depicts some kind of "painting" but the subject is not painting since we do not "see" the photograph and can't identify the "painting's" medium. The subject of this photographed work is the catacombs. Through a photographic scrim, which can not be separated from the painted image, we see the catacombs. The photograph's referent, which is the "painting," is subjugated to the painting's referent which is the catacombs.[137]

The view of the catacombs is seen through an arched doorway. The viewer looks through this arch and into a lighter area. This interior cavity glows from some unseen luminescent source. The rest of the catacombs are only dimly articulated beyond this first room. A path cuts diagonally upwards and links a succession of rooms until it dissolves into darkness. Arched doorways recede in size as they move back into thc space. Between these passages the walls are unevenly punctuated with niches.

The slightly tilted verticals of the niches respond to the paragraph blocks on the opposite page. Slab-covered recesses and paragraphs are delineated by a series of words. The texts on the niche tablets have been partially obscured, or rather, the "painting" represents these texts as fragmentary. Hawthorne's collage of his journal quotations and character descriptions is aligned with the fragmented letters on these re-presentations of grave markers.[138] The texts on the tombs start and stop. Fragments of these markers are

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[137]One buyer of an extra-illustrated version of George Eliot's *Romola*, which was produced from a Smith, Elder, and Company (1888) version, partially resolves this invisibility of the photograph by the way that the images are titled. Most of the photographs of Florence are identified with simple hand written titles such as "Palazzo Pitti," "Gilded Bronze Door of Baptistery," and "Ponte Vecchio." A representation of Savonarola is typically labeled "Savonarola" as if this was a photograph of the man. However, the last image is labeled "Copy of painting now hanging in Savonarola's cell." This title points to the process of photography that acts as an intermediary between referent and subject. The reader is also pointed towards the problem of "copying" that Murray discusses in *A Handbook of Rome and Its Environs*. Before closing the book, the viewer sees the reproduction processes through which meaning is conveyed.

[138] This textual and visual display of fragmentation is a key element of Romanticism. The tablets convey this Romantic sense of loss because they can no longer speak in a unified and coherent voice. The

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stacked on the floor and lie in the path of the "traveler" through the catacomb interior. The words on these grave markers are no longer aligned with the rest of the text; or the stones are rendered so that the words don't align with the orientation of the image. This re-orientation of the text, and of the appropriate reading position, can be compared to other places in the text where the direction of the photographs' titles doesn't align with the book's printed text.

Two religious paintings appear on the "catacomb" walls. Reading these works means looking through the photograph, into the "painting," and then into these paintings. The painted religious icons within the painting are cruder and have a more abbreviated vocabulary of marks than the larger "painting" of the catacombs. The religious icons are flat and frontal while the catacomb "painting" uses perspective to articulate a three-dimensional space. The two icons have a similar organization but they are rendered in a distinct manner because of their different spatial organization within the view. We "see" one icon almost straight on. The other icon is obscured by light and skewed by the angle at which we "view" it. Two saints stand side by side in each icon so that four saints hold tablets out to be read. Language is represented on the face of these tablets. Lines across the tablets suggest writing without revealing meaning. Language is represented but its abbreviated description does not allow for any understanding of the mark's meaning. These tablets contain writing without a code.

In the extra-illustrated text, the photographs' continued splintering of the written word is conflated with Hawthorne's reflexive consideration of fragmented writing. Hawthorne foregrounds this writing in the "Fragmentary Sentences" chapter:

> In weaving these mystic utterances into a continuous scene, we undertake a task resembling in its perplexity that of gathering up and piecing together the fragments of a letter which has been torn and scattered to the winds. Many words of deep significance, many entire sentences, and those

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"pervasive longing of the Romantics for an absent reality was at the same time an index to a prevailing sense of incompleteness, fragmentation, and ruin." Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 11.

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> possibly the most important ones, have flown too far on the winged breeze to be recovered. If we insert our own conjectural amendments, we perhaps give a purport utterly at variance with the true one.[139]

William L. Vance argues that "the medium of language itself becomes a heap of ruins, of broken and failed communications between both Miriam and the Model and Hawthorne and the Reader" in this chapter.[140] Hawthorne's fragmented writing, which produces a meaning that is "utterly at variance" with the original and the author's intentions, turns the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* into a virtual museum. Hawthorne and the virtual museum destabilize the relationship between the original and its copy through the reorganization of these fragments into a hybrid.

The photographic process of cropping, or cutting things out from some larger "whole," is also an aspect of the virtual museum because it produces and recontextualizes fragments. In *Roma-Catacombe*, which appears in the New York Public Library version, cropping is emphasized by the awkward relationship between the cropped edge and the overall composition of the painting. The top of the image cuts across the arch of the doorway and forces a disturbing horizontal to bear down upon the otherwise curving forms. Certain details suggest that the image's cropping is particular to the photographic process. The photograph is at least minutely smaller than the "painting" from which it derives because no blank parts or edges of the image show at the borders of the photographic plane. Similar images of the catacombs, which appear in other versions of *The Marble Faun*, have different borders.

The photograph's sharply angled perspective and the abrupt crop disturbs perceptual understanding on the left side of the image in the New York Public Library version. Viewers can't decode this passage because the photograph crops the necessary information. The cut fragments and serrates meaning at the work's edges. There is a missing R in the photograph's title so that the text reads "OMA" when it should read

[139]Hawthorne, "Fragmentary Sentences," in *Transformation*, vol. 1, 107-108.

[140]William L. Vance, *America's Rome*, vol. 1, *Classical Rome*, 122.

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"ROMA." This shows that the photograph has been cropped down from its original size, or the negative did not fit properly on the paper. Such photographic cutting destabilizes the photograph's larger field of perception and offers the viewer fragments.[141] These parts may be organized back into an "architecture of belief" but the seamlessness of the ideal viewer's reality has already been destabilized by the crop's amputations that literally cut out part of the meaning.

The cut may be one of the few places where the photograph is visible since the cut marks a difference. "When a photograph is cropped, the rest of the world is cut *out*. The implied presence of the rest of the world, and its explicit rejection, are as essential in the experience of a photograph as what it explicitly presents."[142] The cut simultaneously divides and contains the photographic plane. The photograph is distinguished from its referent and the concept of the copy is problematized because the cut produces a difference at the work's edge.

Conclusion: The Virtual Museum and Its "Copy with Difference"

The "copy with difference," a reproduction that significantly deviates from the original because it fails to copy properly, is produced by Hawthorne's text and the accompanying photographs of hands. Writings from this period, which bemoan the demanding and imprecise methods of photography, indicate that the "copy with difference" was prevalent in nineteenth-century photography. In the late-twentieth-

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[141]The act of photographic cutting, whether produced by a scissors, a paper-cutter, or a camera, creates a different edge than that made by painting, drawing, or printmaking. The photographic cut takes a piece away; it selects a trace from a larger "reality." In painting the edge is finessed; the brush may move across this line and leave a quivering excess of paint at the border. The brush may also pause before it reaches over the edge and slides into the void of not-canvas. In this case, the brush leaves a sliver of canvas between paint and edge. The painted edge is figured as a cessation point. Photography gives the impression that the "outside" has been amputated away.

[142]Stanley Cavell as quoted in Rosalind Krauss, "Steiglitz/Equivalents," *October* 11 (Winter 1979), 133-134.

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century, copies that don't align with their original may once again be widespread, this time in digital photography, because of low resolution and other reproduction problems.

Hawthorne's narrative about hands and the photographs that are tipped-in to illustrate the chapter "A Sculptor's Studio" present a number of problems concerning "reproductions" and continuity. In this chapter, Kenyon opens a coffer to reveal his carving of Hilda's hand to Miriam. He has rendered Hilda's hand so that it appears to be living flesh rather than a stone copy:

> Lifting the lid, however, no blaze of diamonds was disclosed, but only, lapt in fleecy cotton, a small, beautifully shaped hand, most delicately sculptured in marble. Such loving care and nicest art had been lavished here, that the palm really seemed to have a tenderness in its very substance. Touching those lovely fingers-had the jealous sculptor allowed you to touch-you could hardly believe that a virgin warmth would not steal from them into your heart.[143]

This almost "real" work is compared by Miriam to the work of nineteenth-century sculptors. She favorably compares this sculpture to *Loulie's Hand* by Hiram Powers and to *Clasped Hands of Elizabeth and Robert Browning* by Harriet Hosmer.[144] Hawthorne conflates the virtual products of his narrative with the physical works of "real" artists through Miriam's comparison of these hands.

A photograph of two hands appears in the chapter "A Sculptor's Studio" across from page 143 in a one volume version of the Tauchnitz text [fig. 3].[145] The photograph

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[143]Hawthorne, "A Sculptor's Studio," in *Transformation*, vol. 1, 143.

[144]Both these works are still existent. A version of the bronze *Clasped Hands of Elizabeth and Robert Browning* (1853) is owned by Baylor University in Waco Texas. The version in the Gerdts collection is from 1839. See Susan Danly and Bruce Weber, *For Beauty and for Truth: The William and Abigail Gerdts Collection of American Still Life* (Amherst: Mead Art Museum, 1998), 98.

[145]This version of the Tauchnitz text is owned by the author of this dissertation. The photograph also appears in some other versions of the extra-illustrated text. The chapter has also been illustrated by carvings of hands. A photograph of two sculpted hands resting on a fabric pillow appears across from page one hundred and forty-three in a two volume version which is now owned by this author. It has J. R. Flinn's bookplate and is signed by Mary M. Hunter and dated "Rome 1873" In this photograph, a rectangular moiré silk pillow, which is edged in an alternating dark and light braid, takes up most of the image. The top-lit sculpted hands produce an awkward knot of darks and lights in the center of the pillow. It is difficult to tell if the sculpture is carved or cast because the photograph's muddied shadows and the overexposure of the hand on the right causes many of the identifying details to be lost. The bottom hand is turned palm up with the knuckles jutting towards the lower left of the image and the fingers curled around the other hand. The other hand is rendered with fingers extended and firmly pressed together so that the dark marks between the

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of hands is compositionally organized around the sinuous pale downward curve that is produced from the clasping of two right hands. A hand, with bent fingers and upturned palm, gently holds another palm. The arms of these models resemble marble because the extreme whiteness of fingers, wrists, and forearms is accented by the dark on dark jacquard pattern of the pillow that these arms rest on, the even darker velvety black of the underlying furniture, and the dark lace cuff of one of the models.

This photograph functions as a "copy with difference" because of the loss of an identifiable referent in the bottom right corner. An unidentifiable and overexposed form, which could be a portion of a carved hand, is just visible. This representation, like that of the catacombs, destabilizes the ability to read the photograph at the work's edges. The illegibility of parts of the photograph is emphasized by the way that this horizontal photograph is tipped into the text vertically. The reader must turn the text away from its legible vertical orientation in order to look at the photograph properly.

The photograph also produces a "copy with difference" when it misinterprets and transforms the textual passage by Hawthorne in a number of significant ways. The photograph, which depicts two hands, appears to stand-in for Harriet Hosmer's sculpture of the Brownings's clasped hands. This depiction causes a strange shift in the book's narrative because Hosmer's sculpture is completely peripheral to the story. However, this photograph doesn't act as a proper stand-in for Hosmer's sculpture of a husband's and wife's hand either. The depiction of decorative cuffs, languid arm gestures, and small hands indicate that the models for this photograph were women and that the photographer was depicting feminine "friendship" rather than heterosexual "courtship." The photograph functions as a "copy with difference" when narrative and image are correlated. The photograph's performance occurs because it stands in for a number of things which it does not directly or correctly represent. The photograph seems most

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fingers extend out into shadowed tendons. The hand appears withered because of these striations which almost reach the wrist where the sculpture ends.

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aligned with Hosmer's sculpture but the subject of the text is Kenyon's sculpture of Hilda's hand. The narrative suggests that Kenyon's sculpture is almost real and the photograph represents "real" arms that perform as a sculpture. The extra-illustrated text transforms fictional constructions into realities and carved sculptures into real, if photographed, flesh. These differences support my argument that the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* is virtual but not an exact copy.

This problematizes the association of the virtual, including such structures as Malraux's "Museum without Walls," with the copy. It is usually assumed that the virtual is technologically facilitated and mass-produced. However, as I have illustrated here, the virtual museum may actually problematize the concept of the original and the copy by rendering a "copy with difference." The virtual museum may necessitate the replacement of these hierarchic terms with the concept of the hybrid. "Hybridity is indeed an intervention into the smooth assumption of authority."[146] By reperforming Hawthorne's narratives and images, the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun* problematizes the unitary authorial voice and allows others some agency in the construction of the text. The text becomes a series of "copies with difference" because of these rewritings. It is up to individual readers and viewers to use these repetitions, or the "copy with difference," as a way to review the traditional museum and other perceptual structures.

[146]Jennifer Natalya Fink, "Preface: Why A Double Issue?" *New Hybrid Identities* issue, *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 7, 2-8, 1 (1995), 1.

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CHAPTER 2

WHERE IS THE LOUVRE?

It isn't easy to describe "where" I am when I look at the Louvre museum on the world wide web. I can't describe my spatial relationship to the web museum because there are no material objects or corporeal bodies to use as indices. When I "appear" at another Louvre, which isn't sponsored by the Paris museum, it is impossible to describe my movement or the spatial relationship between these two museums. Both Louvres use texts and images to convince me that I am "in" the museum "space" but my body is also still in front of the computer terminal. Habit tells me that if I am in front of the computer then I am writing, struggling to describe the ways that virtual museums and other web pages function without resorting to a spatial vocabulary. I sift through such phrases as "cyberspace," "virtual reality," "home page," "on-line community," and "virtual environment," but each of these descriptions turns the web museum into a kind of physical place. The conventions that are used on the web appear to be the natural result of this "spatial" environment.[147]

Do you believe that space can give life, or take it away, that space has power?[148]

Introduction

This chapter considers the reproduction of the Louvre museum on the world wide web. The on-line Louvre, which has been available to the public since 14 July 1995, exhibits many of the common representational strategies that museums employ on the web.[149] Like other web museums, this virtual museum produces a visitor that "touches" material objects, contrasts paintings in any desired configuration, and views the structure from aerial, vertical, and horizontal positions.[150] Virtually traveling from site to site on

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[147]Michele White, Unpublished Manuscript, 1997.

[148]bell hooks, "An Aesthetic of Blackness: Strange and Oppositional," in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 103.

[149]Louvre, "Instruction Concerning the Louvre Server," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/serveur/notice.htm (23 July 1997).

[150]In the web museum, the experience of touching objects is rendered in a number of ways. Different views, facilitated by clicking on links or through other means, suggests that the viewer is

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the WWW should negate the ability to speak about physical place. However, this virtual mobile view is reattached to proximal space by virtual museums which map actual locations. Virtual museums are invested in producing a cyberspace realism that is activated by quotations and performances of the material museum. This attempt to inscribe a material reality in a system where its production is not possible highlights a contradiction in the reality of the virtual museum as well as in the practices of the traditional museum.

This problem with the conceptual structure of the virtual Louvre is echoed by the museum's difficulty in asserting an on-line identity. The Louvre has a contentious relationship with an earlier on-line museum designed by Nicolas Pioch that was once also known as "Le Louvre" and is now called the "WebMuseum."[151] This Louvre opened on the web on 20 March 1994.[152] The 1995 Louvre site, which is associated with the Paris museum and is often referred to as the "official" Louvre, took legal action against Nicolas Pioch because his virtual museum was named "Le Louvre." To avoid confusion between the various Louvres, henceforward the 1995 Louvre site will be referred to as the "official" Louvre.

The "official" Louvre's standing as a museum, and its reinforcement of its identity within the physical museum's narrative, is contested by the WebMuseum's earlier presence on the web. Most web museums are invested in demonstrating their relationship to physical museum entities. This investment is highlighted in the contentious relationship between the "official" Louvre and Le Louvre. The "official" Louvre's interest in producing a version of its "real" structure on the web appears to be

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manipulating an "object." The illusion of touch is also rendered by the user's manipulation of the hand-pointer over images of objects.

[151] Nicolas Pioch's museum is a collaborative effort that credits the many people that have contributed photographs of art works.

[152]Nicolas Pioch, "WebMuseum: What's New Around?" http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/about/whatsnew.html (28 May 1997).

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related to its need to maintain its unique claim to the name Louvre. On the web, the name Louvre continually slips out of alignment with the physical museum despite the "official" web Louvre's and the real physical Louvre's actions. For instance, on-line guides to virtual museums list the WebMuseum as a European art museum.[153] The site itself is titled the "WebMuseum, Paris" even though many of the servers that provide access to the structure are in the Americas and there is currently no French site for the WebMuseum. Nicolas Pioch's Louvre, or WebMuseum, was once available through a hypertextual link from within the on-line version of the Musée des arts et métiers. This made Nicolas Pioch's Louvre seem like a part of a Parisian museum since the physical museum that is associated with the on-line Musée des arts et métiers is also located in Paris.[154] These contextualizing devices produce a WebMuseum that appears to be sited even though it has no physical location or material collection.

The various readings of the on-line Louvres in this chapter make it apparent that the term "official" actually works as a pointer towards the multiple, fragmented, and unofficial state of all the web Louvres. The virtual museum is a hyperreal structure or a synthetic "space" in which the borders between illusion and reality are obscured; it is produced from the hybrid view of many museums.[155] These web structures are always in a provisional state because they are continually growing, changing, and disappearing. There can be no stable compendium of web museums at this time.

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[153]See for instance the Lycos search engine. Lycos, "Arts & Humanities: Art: Museums: Europe," http://a2z.srv.lycos.com/Arts_and_Humanities/Art/Museums/Europe/popular.html (23 July 1997).

[154]This is noted in an old version of The World Wide Web Virtual Library: Museums, http://www.comlab.ox.ac.uk/archive/other/museums/old-index.html#France (23 July 1997). The Musée des arts et métiers is located at http://web.cnam.fr/museum/ (23 July 1997).

[155]Umberto Eco takes his "journey into hyperreality, in search of instances where the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake; where the boundaries between game and illusion are blurred, the art museum is contaminated by the freak show, and falsehoods enjoyed in situation of 'fullness,' of *horror vacui*." Eco, "Travels in Hyperreality," in *Travels in Hyperreality*, 8.

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This chapter is subdivided into a number of sections that consider specific aspects of the Louvre museum on the web. Basic material about the virtual Louvre museum is conceptually linked to the theoretical implications of the virtual, or reproduced, museum and such concepts as hyperreality and hybridity. A consideration of immersion and variability on the web facilitates a discussion about the ways that web museums function. This introductory material about the web and its museums provides a necessary background for a more detailed analysis of the web Louvre, including its vernacular of stylistic and architectural devices. The web museum vernacular can be traced back to Nicholas Pioch's Louvre, which was one of the earliest web museums. This chapter focuses on this expanding web museum vernacular, including the specific aspects of the "official" Louvre, with sections on the user's "entrance" into the virtual museum, the mapping tendencies in web environments and web museums, the identity and spectatorial positions that these structures offer, and the virtual museum's production of "objects" and "collections" in order to show how spatial motifs and reality effects collapse. The quotation of the physical museum's spatial effects and rituals suggests that virtual museums are invested in reperforming the aura-infused function and boundary patrolling behavior of many off-line universal survey museums. These examples provide additional material for my argument that the web museum's project of reproducing reality fails. The destabilization of such terms as "subject," "object," and "collection" also deconstructs similar ritual practices in the traditional museum.

The "Official" Louvre and the WebMuseum

The "official" Louvre contains many of the same features as other web museums. In this way the on-line museum, like the traditional museum, maintains an order and a stable vocabulary from site to site. The "official" Louvre provides information on the museum's hours, a calendar of tours and public programs, a brief history of the museum,

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data about the building, gallery plans and directions to the museum, a small example of works from its collections, a list of the museum's publications, contact e-mail addresses to obtain additional information, and a questionnaire for virtual visitors. The "official" Louvre does not include a virtual gift shop, which may be the most common element among web museums, although it does include a list of museum publications and media productions.

Virtual museums like the "official" Louvre allow the viewer to obtain an intimate view of famous art and renowned institutions. Visitors virtually possess the museum by capturing it within their computer screens and reimaging its contents within their homes. It is often difficult to distinguish between the virtual museum's display of a copy of an object in its "gift shop," which is for sale, and the display of a copy, which is produced by the digitalization of a photograph of the "real" object. The virtual museum, which seeks to maintain the aura of its material objects, still struggles with the issues introduced in such articles as Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Benjamin suggests that the authority of the object dissipates in the age of mechanical reproduction:

> One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition.[156]

The shattering of tradition that Benjamin describes is only intensified in the virtual web environment where the material basis of the museum is continually challenged. The "official" Louvre may not contain a gift shop within its virtual structure because these products challenge the authenticity of the museum's objects. Other virtual web museums are almost completely constituted by a virtual gift shop.[157] The user's intimate connection

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[156]Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, 221.

[157]This phenomenon was much more prevalent in the early web museums. Many of these museums now have on-line information and exhibitions as well as gift shops.

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with the museum can be confirmed by purchasing replicated parts of the museum to display at home.

Nicolas Pioch's WebMuseum shatters tradition in a different way. His structure reconfigures the replicated parts of many museums into a meta-museum. The WebMuseum forms a view of the museum that incorporates copies from many different museum sites.[158] Most virtual museums that are associated with physical institutions only present works from their collections or from traveling exhibitions. The WebMuseum currently offers the visitor links to an exhibition of the work of Paul Cézanne, a show on the *Book of Hours* of the Duke of Berry, a tour of Paris, the "auditorium" where visitors can download classical music, and the "General Exhibitions" link which allows viewers to see the WebMuseum's collection of paintings. The WebMuseum configures its views of copies into a series of different arrangements. The "Famous Paintings exhibition" provides images of works that are arranged into an index of artists, a glossary of "painting styles," and a list of periods in the "Theme Index." The index of artists provides hypertextual links to information about the work of over one hundred and sixty artists. Each artist's name links the user to a brief bibliography and images of the artist's work.

Unlike the traditional museum, the WebMuseum doesn't own a collection and the viewer accesses reproductions rather than material objects. The WebMuseum, like the "official" Louvre and other web museums, tends to revisualize its web pages as a place in which viewers can gain access to unique works. The WebMuseum attempts to produce itself as a "real" museum that owns material objects by consistently referring to its exhibition of reproductions as a "collection." The WebMuseum also insistently attempts to enforce the exclusivity of its exhibitions. The Cézanne exhibition is described as "a unique set of over 100 artworks, exclusively on the WebMuseum!" Yet, these Cézanne "artworks" are not "unique" because they are reproduced. So, in the end, the

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[158]Pioch's museum is conceptually related to Malraux's "Museum without Walls" but Pioch rescripts his copies so that they appear to be unique and original.

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WebMuseum is in many ways like the "official" Louvre; they both work to reestablish aura on the web.

Virtual museums like the "official" Louvre and the WebMuseum offer viewers a vision of the real work by insisting that they exhibit the "original copy." Without such contextualizing brackets, web viewers can't have an aura-infused experience with individual and authentic material art works. Images on the web remain at the level of reproduction rather than becoming invisible screens that allow users virtual access to the original because of the low resolution of most of these copies. The desire to find the original copy fails in the web setting where "famous works" can be found in web museums, gift shops, home pages, and advertisements. Most users lose interest in looking for visual cues that will allow them to distinguish between digital reproductions of works of art, digital reproductions of copies of works of art, and digital reproductions that are produced from some nth generation copy of a reproduction. The virtual loss of the original may lead the viewer to seek out the work in a physical museum but virtual viewers are not offered a substantive difference between copies.

As I have already suggested, the production of the virtual museum's "reality" is both supported and undermined by the persistent use of copies and of other forms of visual and textual illusionism. The "official" Louvre attempts to reproduce the "real" by providing the visitor with views of material artifacts and physical environments. A cultural tendency towards simulacra, as discussed by such theorists as Jean Baudrillard, is related to the "official" Louvre's reuse of representations. Ludmilla Jordonova locates this move towards simulacra inside the museum. "There is currently a general trend in museums towards models, dioramas and simulation . . . The search for verisimilitude, like the acquisition of more 'information,' only reinforces the dissonance between the illusion of exactitude and the recognition of artificiality."[159] This conflict between the viewer's commitment to immersive simulation and the viewer's detection of the unreal detachment

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[159]Jordonova, "Objects of Knowledge," in *The New Museology*, 31.

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that it generates also occurs in virtual web museums. Jordonova states that people have confidence in the accuracy of these reconstructions despite the use of fragmentary evidence and a tendency towards the arbitrary selection of artifacts. A "powerful fiction is constructed and perpetuated" through these museum practices.[160] It is the production and ideological functions of this "powerful fiction" that concern me here.

In Jean Baudrillard's terms, the "official" Louvre's construction of a "real" museum in a virtual domain is an attempt to "mask the absence of a profound reality."[161] The virtual web museum's tendency towards enforcing its identity is, at least in part, triggered by the "problem" of labeling on the web. Anything can be called a museum on the WWW. The brochure-like structures that many physical museums have posted on the web provide less information, smaller and less interactive exhibitions, and fewer chances to achieve virtual museum tours than other sites that call themselves museums but have no link to physical structures.[162] The virtual web museum lays claim to a stable name and origin that it can't support. The "official" Louvre, which is consistently proved to be inauthentic and unoriginal, ambivalently reproduces spatiality and reality as a reaction against the existence of a series of divergent realities or hyperrealities. For instance, the "profound reality" of the Louvre is consistently challenged by a string of Louvre web realities.

When interrogated, the "official" Louvre web site also appears as a series of virtual reproductions of itself. The site is available in French, English, Spanish, and Japanese. The "official" Louvre web museum can't be viewed as having a stable site since a version is available on the French Ministry of Culture's web server in France and on the Shiseido server in Japan.[163] I will be discussing the English version of the

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[160]Ibid.

[161]Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," in *Simulacra and Simulation*, 6.

[162]A brief article about this issue was written by David W. Chen, "On-line Museum Raises Questions," *The New York Times*, 15 May 1997, B8.

[163]Louvre, "Louvre W3," http://www.louvre.or.jp/ (9 August 1998).

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"official" Louvre web site that is on the French Ministry of Culture's web server. My analysis is in part determined by the version that I have chosen. Other readings would be generated by the other versions. These dislocations suggest that there can be no one answer to "Where is the Louvre?" The inability to find any one "real" web Louvre suggests that there are Louvre copies but there is no on-line original. Baudrillard points to a motivating reason for the fact that culture, and the Paris Louvre, insistently reinscribes the "real":

> What every society looks for in continuing to produce, and to overproduce, is to restore the real that escapes it. That is why *today this 'material' production is that of the hyperreal itself.* It retains all the features, the whole discourse of traditional production, but it is no longer anything but its scaled down refraction (thus hyperrealists fix a real from which all meaning and charm, all depth and energy of representation have vanished in a hallucinatory resemblance).[164]

The Paris Louvre produces a web museum but can't enforce its authenticity. The "official" Louvre attempts to maintain its cohesion, as Baudrillard suggests, it attempts to "restore the real that escapes it."

The Immersive Virtual Museum

The web museum attempts to restore the "real" by claiming to provide an immersive museum reality. The virtual museums of the late-twentieth-century, which emphasize their complete collections, often promise the viewer a vision of the museum that has not yet been achieved. These virtual museums do not provide a totally immersive virtual reality, defined by authors like Howard Rheingold as an accessible, realistically rendered, and believable environment that is fluidly navigable.[165] Most critics of virtual

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[164]Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," in *Simulacra and Simulation,* 21. There are obviously some differences between Baudrillard's position and my own. Baudrillard critiques the depletion of the real as well as its constant reinscription, whereas I view the virtual as a real but question the reinscription of material conventions onto virtual settings.

[165]Howard Rheingold, *Virtual Reality* (New York: Summit Books, 1991).

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reality believe that this vision of computer-mediated environments is out of the reach of current technology. Despite these technological impediments, web museums often claim that their visitors will be able to achieve a highly complex and holistic interface with individual objects:

> [O]ne day emerging technologies will allow on-line visitors to look at 3D images and, in essence, hold an object in their hands, turning it through all its dimensions . . . that day has come.[166]

The Smithsonian Institution's introduction to its Digital Darwins web site promises a revolutionary concept in web interface design that it can't fully deliver. The museum's claims about the innovative and revolutionary aspects of this project, that supersede other contemporaneous technologies, are highlighted by naming this site after Charles Darwin.[167] The text renders a utopian image of the web where all viewers can achieve a tactile and individualistic experience with three dimensional material objects. It is not incidental that the viewer's ability to access and manipulate fragile objects can't be achieved in the traditional museum. The Digital Darwins site may try to supersede the traditional museum but it can't deliver tactility or material objects.

The Smithsonian Institution's Digital Darwins site and the web museum reinforce the virtual web viewer's investment in aura by insisting that the virtual museum's reproductions can bring the viewer to an interaction with authentic objects and specific sites. The extra-illustrated virtual museum of *The Marble Faun* presents photography as a way of receiving information about objects through reproductions. These texts foreground the imperfect details of photography. The extra-illustrated versions of *The Marble Faun* focus the reader's attention on the text's ability to render only fragmentary,

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[166]Michael Heyman, "Digital Darwins Introduction," http://www.digitaldarwins.sarc.msstate.edu/ and http://www.digitaldarwins.sarc.msstate.edu/intro1.html (17 December 1996).

[167]The Digital Darwins site is implying that the rise of computers will stimulate further human evolution. This site relates the museum to an evolutionary concept of perception and technology by invoking Darwin. Ludmilla Jordonova suggests that museums become a place where people expect to acquire knowledge because of this trope about the museum and discovery. Jordonova, "Objects of Knowledge," in *The New Museology*, 22.

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partial virtual views, and incomplete subjects. Such nineteenth-century texts highlight their inability to render cohesive realistic views or to provide a completely navigable access to the "original" site. The Publishers' Advertisement to the Houghton Mifflin and Company version of *The Marble Faun* suggests that a greater amount of verisimilitude and stability may have been desirable in nineteenth-century photography but period technologies and individual photographer's practices often made this impossible. Conversely, contemporary world wide web virtual museums are presented as a cohesive and authoritative apparatus even though these museums are still fragmentary, unstable, and visually illegible.

The Variability of Views on the Web

The virtual web museum is constructed in such a way as to suggest that it has a stable and authorial voice but individuals often encounter very different views of the museum. This oscillation between authority and variability suggests one of the web museum's many contested representations. The stability of the web museum is disturbed by the variability of experiences that different viewers are likely to encounter. Sites are partially or totally inaccessible, without a particular browser version or software plug-in, when high-end technologies are used. Many web museums present a different face to low- and high-end technology users. Some sites provide text-only versions of their museums for Lynx users. These users, who have a text-only interface, are not able to enter some virtual museums because they can't view or manipulate the "buttons," pictographic signs, and digitized photographs that the museum has provided as navigational tools. A technologically handicapped person, with a prosthetic body that is marked as dysfunctional and unwieldy, is produced when the door to the museum as well as other sites on-line remains closed to some users.[168] Technological variability works as

[168]Paul Virilio argues that the abled and the disabled have been renegotiated by a variety of technologies. "The urbanization of real time is in fact first the urbanization of *one's own body* plugged into

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a kind of discriminatory practice when access is consistently denied to some users but other less disruptive types of variability can point to difference rather than denying access.

User variability can illustrate the subjective nature of all viewing positions. Differences in web views may make a specific virtual view even more subjective than visual experiences in the physical museum.[169] System crashes, unreadable pages, and disordered elements occur because of a variety of technological problems. A range of user-end variabilities makes it difficult to speak about the graphical arrangements of the web museum. The colors of a site, text size, quality of images, and the way that elements on a page are arranged is dependent on the user's browser configuration, the monitor, and the type of computer used. For instance, Macintosh machines have a tendency to display web site colors as brighter than PCs. Variability points to the virtualness of sites by reducing the constancy of the web museum's rendering of physicality and presence.

Cathy Young describes the world wide web as a polysemous spree of representations in which society at large has produced a kind of Bakhtinian fair. Her description is just one of the narratives about the web's purpose:

> This is the whole universe of hypertext documents, and it spans the globe. When you're on the Web, you can access information (graphics and sound, too) about almost anything under the sun, from body piercing to home schooling. You can find product information, travel tips, love advice, and the latest issues of your favorite magazines -- all online. Along the way, you'll also run across terrific web sites put together by plain old

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various interfaces (keyboard, cathode screen, DataGlove, or DataSuit), prosthesis that make the superequipped able-bodied person almost the exact equivalent of the motorized and wired disabled person." Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, trans. Julie Rose (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 11.

[169]Visitors to the virtual museum will discover pages that have been designed for a different browser than the one that they use. HTML, the mark up language that is used to order texts and images on the web, was originally designed so that the tags that marked the different elements of a document were standardized. These tags were adopted from the SGML database standard. Company's like Netscape and Microsoft Internet Explorer have more recently improved the look of web pages by providing additional tags that allow a web author to have more control over their documents. Pages authored using these new tags don't appear the same when viewed with other browsers because they aren't part of the standard. HTML standards are periodically updated, but web authors usually design their pages for a particular browser because of the desire for visually complex web pages. A discussion on "user-variability" occurred on the listserv Musweb-L, 23 and 24 January 1997. Archived at http://www.nrm.se/cgi-bin/lwgate/musweb-l/archives (25 January 1997).

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> janes and joes -- people who publish pictures of their poodles and girlfriends, people who share their favorite recipes for clam sauce, people who write about their hopes and dreams and strange hobbies for all the world to see. The Web will knock your socks off.[170]

Young's description reproduces the often expressed utopian belief that the web facilitates unlimited free access to information and the ability for anyone to be published. Her description is informed by the unexpected directions that the web has taken and its ever-growing popularity in alternative communities and commercial enterprises. But it is sometimes difficult to correlate the original web concept with descriptions like Cathy Young's, especially since her description privileges the web's market function.

The world wide web, or WWW, was originally designed to provide easier and wider access to on-line material. Tim Berners-Lee began the conceptual work on what is now known as the world wide web in early 1989. In 1990, while working at the European Particle Physics Laboratory, which is known as CERN and is located in Geneva Switzerland, Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau began the practical development of a system for distributing research through CERN's global computer network. They wanted to design a system that would allow users to access a wide variety of data types with a single interface. Previous to their work the binary files, in which most data were encoded, required specific protocols and applications in order to be decoded.[171] By contrast, in order to move through the hypertextual or hypermedia nodes of the web the user simply needs an application called a browser. CERN's text-only web browser, called WWW, was made available for general release in January 1992. Marc Andreessen and his

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[170]Cathy Young, "A Kinder, Gentler Glossary for Net Neophytes -- And Others" *Sexuality and Cyberspace* issue, *Women and Performance*, 17, eds. Theresa M. Senft and Stacy Horn. http://www.echonyc.com/~women/Issue17/glossary.html (18 August 1997). Young defines hyperlink as, "When browsing through a hypertext document, you may find that certain words appear in a different color or are underlined. By clicking on these words, you'll be taken in a new direction -- to a different part of the document that explains or expands on the term, or to a destination elsewhere on the Net. Images can be hyperlinked, too." Hypertext is defined by Cathy Young as, "This is an information space which can be explored in a nonlinear way. Users navigate through the space by clicking on hyperlinks. Web pages are hypertext documents, and they are created with HTML."

[171]Atlas of the World Wide Web, "Chapter One," http://www.rhythm.com/~bpowell/Atlas/Ch1.htm#BEFORE (18 December 1996).

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colleagues at the National Center for Supercomputering Applications at the University of Illinois developed a graphical browser known as Mosaic which was released in September 1993. With the introduction of this web browser, which allowed users a point and click navigation that was similar to the interface that had been available in personal computers for a number of years, the web became increasingly popular. The company that Marc Andreessen cofounded released Netscape Navigator in December 1994. Netscape and Microsoft Explorer are currently the most popular browsers. Text-only browsers such as Lynx, which was available for several operating systems by mid-1993, provide low-bandwidth access to the web.[172]

The web currently stands, at least in the popular imagination, for slick graphics, new trends in television, personal homepages, and commercial schemes to "make money fast." Corporations are increasingly translating their advertising campaigns and desire for increased presence into web sites. A growing number of URLs, or uniform resource locator addresses, which direct browsers to particular documents on the web, are being marketed to the consumer through television commercials, mailings, and print campaigns. Part of this trend towards "webisizing" may be that the WWW, as described by Young and theorized by such early hypertext enthusiasts as George Landow, seems to offer the user interactivity and accessibility.[173] Some theorists have already begun to critique the problematic of this utopian notion of universal accessibility but the myth persists that on-line sites offer users an escape from their off-line conditions.

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[172]The term bandwidth is used to describe the amount of data that a system is capable of delivering. The history of the web is available in such documents as the On-line Encyclopedia Britannica, "World Wide Web," http://www.eb.com/bol/search?type=topic&query=world+wide+web&DBase=Articles (25 February 1997). Listserv discussion lists such as MusWeb-L, which deals with web authorship and museums, and CYHIST, or the "Community Memory: Discussion List on the History of Cyberspace" often cover material related to this topic. See for instance, Cary Karp, "Re: Standards - background." MusWeb-L, 27 February 1997. MusWeb-L is archived at http://www.musweb.org/archives/musweb-l.html (21 March 1997). CYHIST is archived at http://memex.org/community-memory.html (21 March 1997).

[173]Landow, *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*.

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Commercial enterprises, universities, net denizens, and art institutions seem to agree that having a presence on the web is imperative. The purpose, voice, or targeted user for a particular web site often remain unexamined. Few web museums have a statement of purpose that explains the web site's mission or development strategies. The mission statements that are present in on-line museums are usually copies of the physical museum's goals. Such diverse institutions as Good Vibrations and the Smithsonian have on-line museums. As the web is flooded by an endless array of representations, with each web author vying to reach as many users as possible, it is not surprising that web producers seek to individuate and privilege their sites by quoting cultural institutions.

The construction of web museums, like the construction of earlier museum types, may be an attempt at social reclamation and urban renewal. The on-line museum changes the virtual neighborhood and lends an air of culture and order to the polyglot nature of virtual environments. Baudrillard describes the Beaubourg museum in Paris as an "incinerator" that consumes all cultural energy. "All around, the neighborhood is nothing but a protective zone-remodeling, disinfection, a snobbish and hygienic design-but above all in a fugitive sense: it is a machine for making emptiness."[174] The needs of the virtual museum have also produced a disinfected zone on and off the web. Curators, in museums that offer visitors net access, are confronted with the self-imposed "problem" of preventing access to "inappropriate" or "explicit" material. Web museum administrators worry that their sites are only perused by users who have become lost while searching for their favorite sex site.[175] The virtual web museum frequently attempts to diffuse the

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[174]Baudrillard, "The Beaubourg Effect," in *Simulacra and Simulations*, 61.

[175] The attempt to legislate internet content in the United States through The Communications Decency Act was found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. "With as many as 8, 000 sexually explicit sites on the World Wide Web alone at the time of the hearing, and the number estimated to double every 9 months, the Internet threatens to render irrelevant all prior efforts to protect children from indecent material." Seth P. Waxman, Esq. "Janet Reno, Attorney General: Of United States, Et Al. v. American Civil Liberties Union, Et Al. ," CNN Interactive, "CNN Supreme Court Transcript," 19 March 1997. http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/cda.scotus/transcript.html (26 June 1997). Congress has continued their attempts to legislate internet content with the Child Online Protection Act which is often refered to as "CDA II." The new legislation is web specific and targets "communication for commercial purposes that is available to any minor and that includes any material that is harmful to minors." Time Digital, "Will the

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unruly body of the net that the press has associated with low bodily acts rather than high culture. Thus, there is a danger that the web museum will produce only one version of culture.

The stability of the web museum is challenged by the quickly shifting arrangement of web materials and the astronomical growth of the web.[176] Countless museums have gone on-line since my research on virtual museums began in 1994. The Museum Computer Network had approximately 1, 100 "Museums and Museum-related urls" by 12 March 1997.[177] The World Wide Web Virtual Library listing of museum pages adds at least one museum to their list and 2, 500 visitors access their pages every day.[178] The rapid growth of museums on the world wide web is related to the general growth of museums since the post war period.[179] Sharon Macdonald suggests that the growth in the number of physical museums may actually lead to anxiety about the role and continued community need for a particular museum.[180] The uniqueness and specificity of a museum

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Latest Net Porn Law Pass Constitutional Muster?" 23 October 1998. http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/digital/daily/0,2822,15411,00.html (28 March 1999). COPA was signed into law by President Clinton in December 1999. District Court Judge Lowell Reed issued a preliminary injunction against prosecution and fines in February 1999. The Electronic Frontier Foundation, "Netizens Safe from Prosecution Under Net Censorship Law" http://www.eff.org/pub/Legal/Cases/ACLU_v_Reno_II/HTML/19990201_eff_pressrel.html (28 March 1999).

[176] Atlas of the World Wide Web states that there were approximately 500 web sites in late 1993. A year later that number had already grown to over 11, 500 sites. The Atlas of the World Wide Web, "Chapter One," http://www.rhythm.com/~bpowell/Atlas/Ch1.htm#BEFORE (25 April 1997).

[177] There were a similar number of museums and related sites listed on 13 August 1998. It is not clear if the growth of web museums is tapering off or if this site hasn't been kept up to date. The Museum Computer Network, "Museum Sites On-line," http://www.mcn.edu/resources.html (13 August 1998).

[178] Personal e-mail between Jonathan Bowen and Michele White, 5 June 1997.

[179] "According to a recent study commissioned by the federal government's Institute of Museum services, more than half the museums in the United States were founded after 1950. During the thirty years ending in 1980, a period of some 1, 566 weeks, nearly 2, 500 new museums opened their doors. The rate was better than one each week. (For the United Kingdom, with a smaller population, the growth rate for the 1970s was equally impressive: A new museum opened every other week.)" Stephen E. Weil. "Fighting off some Dry Rot, Woodworm, and Damp," in *Rethinking the Museum and Other Meditations* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 3.

[180] Sharon Macdonald, introduction to *Theorizing Museums*, 1.

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may be challenged by a proliferating series of museums that present similar collections and narratives. Recent challenges to the traditional museum model are a response to the continued institutionalization of the museum as the voice of our collective past. The consistent appearance of new web museum representations and additional physical museums suggests that we need a critical inquiry into the function of these institutions.

The proliferation of museums as well as other sites on the web has made it difficult to locate individual web museums without the help of an address or locational tool. Specialized lists and search engines, which are programs that help the user to locate data, can provide users with ways to locate museums.[181] Users can be left with very different perceptions of the virtual museum because the various search engines and museum lists contain disparate material. The relation between "unique" web museums is revised by the way that these lists provide navigation through the virtual museum. The individual and scattered museum sites that are available on the WWW are organized into a linked plan in which users continually return to a list site in order to access other museums. These lists construct a meta-museum that is built from countless museum pages. This meta-museum seems to offer an unlimited collection or a "Museum Without Walls." This list-facilitated virtual museum provides a very different structure or even an antithetical view to the one planned by an individual web museum. The traditional identity formation of the many web museums, which are invested in presenting their unique and specialized collections, is disordered by the list's process of eradicating the structuring "walls" of the museum.[182]

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[181] Search engines allow users to search a database of internet sites by using keywords. Users can also select from the search engine's pre-formed lists of sites that are hierarchically organized by category. All these lists provide direct access to the sites through hypertextual links which can be "clicked" on.

[182] This vision of the museum, which is produced by search engines and specialized lists, should not be underestimated. CommerceNet and Nielsen Media estimated in their spring 1997 study that seventy-one percent of frequent web users in Canada and America located sites by using search engines. CommerceNet and Nielsen Media as cited by NUA Internet Surveys, "What's New," http://www.nua.ie/surveys/WhatsNew.html (11 May 1997).

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The Many Virtual Louvres

The WWW Virtual Library's museum page describes the "official" virtual Louvre as, "Information from the (real!) Louvre. (In French, in English soon.)"[183] The Yahoo arts guide to "Museums and Galleries" describes the "official" Louvre as the "official site of this famous museum; home of the Mona Lisa."[184] These descriptions distinguish the "official" Louvre from other on-line museums and sites. Yet, visitors may have problems choosing the correct link to the museum despite attempts to highlight and authorize the uniqueness of the Louvre. A web page that lists "Art Resources on the Web" provides a link to the "Louvre Museum."[185] The description that accompanies this link relates the "Louvre Museum" link to the Paris Louvre but when users click on this link they will access Paris Pages, an on-line tourist guide, rather than the "official" Louvre Museum web site. The many search services available on the web also tend to replace one Louvre museum site with another. The list of "Museums and Galleries" on the Excite search site also includes a link to the "Musée du Louvre" that brings the user to the Paris Pages' Louvre site.[186] The term "Louvre Museum" begins to describe a generic type of web structure.

There is a special page devoted to Louvre links on the Yahoo search site's museum page. There are links to: "Department of Egyptian Antiquities," "Le Grand Louvre [Paul Smith] - a brief history," "Le Louvre - official site of this famous museum;

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[183]Jonathan Bowen, "The World Wide Web Virtual Library: Museums," http://www.comlab.ox.ac.uk/archive/other/museums/#virtual.html (25 February 1997).

[184]Yahoo, "Arts: Museums and Galleries," http://www.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/France/Regions/Ile_de_France/Departments/Paris/Entertainment_and_Arts/Museums_and_Galleries/Le_Louvre/ (24 June 1997).

[185]Usama, "Art Resources on the Web," http://jarl.cs.uop.edu/~ubnsalim/html_docs/art.html (18 August 1997). One of the many ways that users can find this page is by searching for "Louvre museum" in the Infoseek search engine.

[186]Excite, "Home > Arts & Entertainment Channel > Arts & Humanities > Museums & Galleries," http://www.excite.com/xdr/Arts_and_Humanities/Museums_and_Galleries/ (4 August 1997).

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home of the Mona Lisa," "Musée du Louvre [Paris Pages] - includes directions, a map of the museum, and images from the collection."[187] When confronted with this array, the viewer may have problems separating out the "real" on-line Louvre museum from other sites that present material about the museum. The sites listed under Yahoo's "Louvre" subject heading all produce different views of the museum. The link to the "Department of Egyptian Antiquities" doesn't link to the Louvre's "official" website, as the visitor might expect, but instead brings the viewer to information about the department from Paris Pages.[188] There is nothing on "Le Grand Louvre [Paul Smith] - a brief history" site that marks its unofficial state.[189] Smith's site even includes a history of the Louvre that is more detailed than the historical information provided on the "official" web Louvre. The dispersion of the Louvre's location, with the resultant dissolution of the "real" museum's voice, image, and identity, is further distorted by information about this site's author, which can be accessed by following a link from "Le Grand Louvre" main page.[190] Smith presents his site as a creative art work that has an identified author. "I don't seem to be very artistically gifted as far as painting or sculpting, but I believe that the Internet can be a medium for art as any canvas or large raw piece of marble, and that a personal home page is an expression of one's self."[191] This description suggests, quite intriguingly, that

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[187]Yahoo, "Regional:Countries:France:Regions:Ile-de-France:Departments:Paris:Entertainment and Arts:Museums and Galleries:Le Louvre," http://www.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/France/Regions/Ile_de_France/Departments/Paris/Entertainment_and_Arts/Museums_and_Galleries/Le_Louvre/ (12 March 1997). Other random images and information about the Louvre are also generated by using a search engine to find the word "Louvre." For instance, the Lycos search engine located a quite striking image of fountains spurting in front of I. M. Pei's pyramid that Hendrick Booz had taken on his vacation and published on his web pages. This image is also titled "Le Louvre." http://fermi.clas.virginia.edu/~whb5a/home.html (12 March 1997).

[188]Paris Pages "Les Pages de Paris/The Paris Pages," http://paris.org/ (12 March 1997).

[189]Paul Smith, "Le Grand Louvre" http://www.atlcom.net/~psmith/Louvre/ (12 March 1997).

[190] The author of this Louvre page identifies himself as "a senior Electrical Engineering Technology student at the Southern College of Technology in Marietta, Georgia, and I anticipate to graduate in the Fall of 1996." Paul Smith, "The Home Page of Paul Smith," http://www.atlcom.net/~psmith/ (12 March, 1997).

[191]Paul Smith, "The Home Page of Paul Smith," http://www.atlcom.net/~psmith/ (15 March 1997).

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"homepages" are the "real" artistic project on the web. This idea challenges the purpose of web museums and indeed these structures have never explained or justified their project. Smith sets up a tension between artistic production and generalized informational presentations. The most interesting thing about this site may be that this conflict privileges Smith's voice in the production of the virtual museum while the site appears to be quite similar to the other Louvres.

The use of the Louvre's name continues to be of value even while the "official" Louvre's virtual presence is destabilized or de-hierarchalized. For instance, the main English language page of the P@riscope on-line tourist guide describes the Gallery of Zoology in The Museum of Natural History as "The Louvre of Natural History."[192] The article in the P@riscope Magazine intimates that Parisians use the name Louvre to refer to the Gallery of Zoology. The term "Louvre," like the use of museum, museumy, and museum-quality, works to mark an institution's worth. It names a quality rather than a place. Obviously, the value of this appellation is one reason that the Paris museum's name is continually used on web pages.

Contesting the Louvre

Nicholas Pioch's virtual museum was one of the first museums on the web. The WebMuseum, which was originally called "Le Louvre," was initiated in March 1994, well before the appearance of the "official" Louvre on the web. Pioch probably settled on the name "Louvre" for his web museum because it provided this virtual collection of images and art historical notes with a legitimacy that was not accorded most early web pages. The Best of The Web Awards, for 1994, granted Pioch's site "Best Use of Multiple Media" and described this structure as, "Two exhibits in one. The first is an

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[192]Raphaëlle Barreaud, "Pariscope: This Week in Paris," http://pariscope.fr/Welcome.E.html (13 March 1997).

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exhibit from the world-famous art museum, including many well-known works from famous artists, the other is a tour of Paris."[193] This suggests that the site was envisioned, from its earliest days, as a virtual Louvre that provided the visitor with a view of the "real" museum's exhibitions. The culturally shared idea that Nicolas Pioch's web museum was a virtual version of the Paris Louvre created a problem for the physical Paris Louvre and the French Ministry of Culture. These entities were producing and anticipating continued sales from their own multi-media representations of the museum.[194]

The Paris Louvre challenged Nicolas Pioch's legal right to use the name "Le Louvre." Pioch renamed the Louvre exhibit to "Le WebLouvre" on 6 June 1994 because of these legal inquiries.[195] The Louvre's lawyers contacted Pioch even before the "official" Louvre had a web site. Pioch again renamed his museum, this time switching from "Le WebLouvre" to the "WebMuseum," because of the ongoing dispute. His entry about the name changes, in a calendar of the museum's events, reveals his resistance towards implementing these revisions throughout the site's structure.[196] Pioch was certainly invested in retaining the name with which he had already established a presence on the web:

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[193] The Best of the Web, "BoWeb 94 - Best Use of Multi Media." http://botw.org/1994/awards/media.html (24 June 1997).

[194] "Created in 1988, the aim of the Louvre audiovisual production unit is to offer the public a new vision of the collections and of the museum. It allies itself with coproducers, selects a director and a film structure, associating with them wherever possible a distributor and an editor. The unit is also involved in some multimedia productions. Productions are available on video cassette, and some are also available on CD-ROM." Louvre, "Audiovisual and Interactive Productions," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/publicat/audio.htm (4 August 1997).

[195] Nicolas Pioch, "WebMuseum: What's New Around?" http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/about/whatsnew.html (23 July 1997).

[196] His letters to the author consistently emphasize that the Paris Louvre had no claim to the name on-line. "I don't think I was forced to change, since only the term 'Musée du Louvre' is copyrighted whereas 'Louvre' refers to a monument. However, you never really know until you've gone to court to verify it, and I certainly wasn't willing to take the challenge, so I decided to switch names." Personal e-mail between Nicolas Pioch and Michele White, 12 July 1997.

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> I have renamed the Louvre exhibit for "Le WebLouvre". This is to please the bureaucrats of the French Ministry of Culture, since "Le Louvre" may be copyrighted. Please read "WebLouvre" each time it's written "Louvre" from now on, simply because I am hopelessly busy (as usual :) until June 20, and won't have time to change the naming everywhere.[197]

Pioch advocates a rereading, or a kind of unwritten translation, of the virtual text as a solution to the problem of changing the name throughout his web site. The virtual museum, because it is temporary, amorphous, and fragmented, is continually open to such new and contradictory readings. The state of the virtual museum may be altered without any change to a particular web museum's coding. For instance, the Louvre is continually rewritten by Nicolas Pioch's WebMuseum and other versions of the web Louvre, although not in ways that are acceptable to the "official" Louvre.

Pioch expresses an ambivalence towards the legal ramifications of naming and correcting in his copyright page:

> I made this private exhibit for my own pleasure. If you are intruding here, you do so at your own risk, and assume alone full responsibility for what you do, download, and whatever happens. If you think the law prevents you from viewing these exhibits, you should stop now and do something more interesting, such as flying to Paris and touring live! [198]

He attempts to resolve further legal controversies by describing this site as "private." His attempt to differentiate between public and private virtual settings relates to other academic and community discussions about the legality and ethical nature of quoting material from various on-line sources.[199] Pioch makes his own position about publishing

[197]Nicolas Pioch, "WebMuseum: What's New Around?" http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/about/whatsnew.html (23 July 1997).

[198]Nicolas Pioch, "WebLouvre: Copyright 1994," http://www.nime.ac.jp/~ohnishi/Tanikawa/WebLouvre/license.html (18 March 1997). The "official" Louvre site also provides warnings, a statement about intellectual property code protections, and other provisos for the use and reliability of their site. Louvre "Instruction Concerning the Louvre Server," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/serveur/notice.htm (27 May 1997).

[199]There was a great public outcry when DejaNews first started archiving all usenet posts. Until that time these posts were only available for a limited time and these systems were considered by many to be "private." They were of course accessible to anyone who wanted to read the posts and had usenet access. Now, unless users mark their posts so that they are not archived or remove themselves from the archive, any individual can search DejaNews' database of posts and locate their posts. Prospective employers have started to use services such as DejaNews as a way of screening job applicants. The archiving or "snapshots" of the web taken by The Internet Archive has also been viewed with hostility by web page designers and home page producers who believe that their sites are private and that they hold a copyright to their material.

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information on-line clear in another forum: "[A]s long as you can photograph the artworks yourself, you are absolutely free to do whatever you want with them -- whether to scan them, put them on a web site, edit postcards with them . . . whatever!"[200]

This internet publishing policy is also evident in Nicolas Pioch's ludic recitation of warning labels and other disclaimers. His "US Lawyers section (NOT Part of the Legal Agreement)" is a comic sketch about limits in a virtual environment in which material warnings can no longer be applied. Pioch's copyright page begins with copyright notices but it ends with this campy and elaborate presentation of product disclaimers that works as a critique of the legal process:

> This product is meant for educational purposes only. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental. Void where prohibited. Some assembly required. List each check separately by bank number. Batteries not included. Contents may settle during shipment. Use only as directed. No other warranty expressed or implied. Do not use while operating a motor vehicle or heavy equipment. Postage will be paid by addressee. Subject to CAB approval. This is not an offer to sell securities. Apply only to affected area. May be too intense for some viewers. Do not stamp. Use other side for additional listings. For recreational use only. Do not disturb. All models over 18 years of age. If condition persists, consult your physician. No user-serviceable parts inside. Freshest if eaten before date on carton. Subject to change without notice.[201]

Pioch's quotation of consumer warnings continues on in a random fashion until he states, "This supersedes all previous notices." It is not surprising that Pioch concludes his section of the copyright page, which is "NOT part of the legal agreement," with a

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http://www.archive.org/ (24 June 1997). The prevalence of researchers and reporters on MOOs and MUDs has generated hostile debates and at least one MOO conference. The difference between public and private was heatedly argued in the MIT "The Ethics of Research in Virtual Communities" conference held 20 January 1997 at Media MOO. This conference is now archived at http://asb.www.media.mit.edu/people/asb/mediamoo/ethics-symposium.html (9 August 1998). Many characters in on-line communities object to the way that they are quoted and claim that their on-line speech and descriptions are private. LambdaMOO even contains the following warning. "NOTICE FOR JOURNALISTS AND RESEARCHERS: The citizens of LambdaMOO request that you ask for permission from all direct participants before quoting any material collected here." Text from the logon screen, LambdaMOO, telnet lambda.moo.mud.org 7777 (4 August 1998).

[200]Nicolas Pioch as quoted by Paul Jones, "RE: Internet Copyright Infringement," CNI-Copyright, 7 June 1996. Archived at http://www.cni.org/Hforums/cni-copyright/1996-02/0754.html (25 June 1997).

[201]WebMuseum, "Copyright 1994, 1995, Nicolas Pioch," http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/about/license.html (24 June 1997).

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statement that allows these ironic quotations to supersede his previous copyright warnings and disclaimers.

Nicolas Pioch continues to critique the traditional museum's desire for control in a letter to the CNI-Copyright list:

> The biggest problem those angered people are facing is the fact that they are control-freaks. They hold all those treasures between 4 walls, are used to have total control on them and continue to do so.
>
> Unfortunately for them, the Internet makes it easy for anybody to publish information easily. Unfortunately for them, as long as the artist-author has been dead for over 50 years according to the International Berne Treaty on Copyright, the artworks are in the public domain.[202]

The contention over the identity of the web Louvre is not an isolated incident. A recent post to the Museum-L listserv differentiated between virtual web museums and pages that are sponsored by physical museums:

> Last Tuesday January 9 a message appeared advertising a new website on Glanmore National Historic Site. When you access the page the title is "Glanmore, From Home To Museum." Subscribers to this list should be aware that this website is in no way linked or related to Glanmore National Historic Site, Hastings County Museum in Belleville, Ontario, Canada. The web page in question is a private site and in no way reflects the museum.[203]

Glanmore National Historic Site, like the Louvre, is attempting to maintain control of "its" name, identity, and right to self-representation. These museums want to establish a visible difference between their representations and the web museums that are produced by other sources. Museum staff members seem to believe that their web museums will appear to be different and better than other representations simply because they are sanctioned by physical museums. There is a drive in the museum community to control representations on the web as if these images were the same as the aura-imbued

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[202]Nicolas Pioch as quoted by Paul Jones, "RE: Internet Copyright Infringement," CNI-Copyright, 7 June 1996. Archived at http://www.cni.org/Hforums/cni-copyright/1996-02/0754.html (25 June 1997).

[203]Sean Purdy, "Glanmore National Historic Site, Hastings County Museum," Museum-L, 11 Jan 1997. Archived at http://home.dc.lsoft.com/scripts/wa.exe?A2=ind9701b&L=museum-l&P=12571 (25 June 1997). This interest in retaining the right to a name can be related to more general fears about getting "lost" on the web.

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artifacts that museums own or as if other web representations might devalue these objects. The Dallas Museum prefaces a collection of digitized images with a request that is similar to the "do not touch" sign in the material museum: "Please help us protect the integrity of these artworks by using them for personal purposes only."[204] The Dallas Museum's warning seems misleading. The integrity of the traditional museum, rather than the continued preservation of the reproduction or virtual object, is in danger. Without the most clearly demarcated structure, a contextualizing bracket that is difficult to maintain on the web, there is no distinct difference between all these web sites. The on-line versions of the Louvre, Glanmore National Historic Site, and Dallas Museum can't be located by their possession of unique objects. There is no qualitative difference between the "official" web museum's digital reproductions of objects and other web sources.

Pioch has not fully relinquished the use of the name Louvre or ceased making derogatory comments about the museum entity despite a letter to the CNI-Copyright list in which he claims that he is on good terms with the French Ministry of Culture and the Louvre.[205] He has continued to emphasize his right to the name Louvre through numerous means. He has developed his own stories about the contest over the name Louvre. In an e-mail message he produces a scenario which revokes the Louvre's "land rights" and makes them the squatters. "The Louvre is a French monument (thus the name doesn't belong to the Museum, contrary to "Musée du Louvre"). The Museum is just

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[204]Dallas Museum, "Museum Galleries," http://www.unt.edu/dfw/dma/www/gallery.htm (26 December 1996). Clicking on the "Introduction to DMA Digital Images" node on this page produces an additional warning. "The digital images in this archive are intended for personal/educational use only. All images bear a 1995 photographic copyright that belongs to the Dallas Museum of Art (so no, they are not in the public domain!). Please contact the Museum directly if you wish to inquire about obtaining reproduction permission. You can aid us in protecting the integrity of these artworks (and this public access project) by using them appropriately." Dallas Museum, "Museum Galleries," http://www.unt.edu/dfw/dma/www/gallery.htm#images (26 December 1996).

[205]Nicolas Pioch as quoted by Paul Jones, "RE: Internet Copyright Infringement," CNI-Copyright, 7 June 1996. Archived at http://www.cni.org/Hforums/cni-copyright/1996-02/0754.html (25 June 1997).

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squatting."[206] Pioch's statement is an attempt to underline the Louvre's colonization of a monument and to revoke their rights to it.[207] Pioch's letter to the CNI-Copyright list, his e-mails, and his copyright page exist alongside each other as ambivalent narratives. The virtual museum's stories, which refuse to collapse into a seamless narrative, subvert the linear and factual narratives of the traditional museum. The continued production of virtual museums may even be dependent on these fluctuations. The divergent positions represented by Nicolas Pioch, the Paris Louvre, and Glanmore National Historic Site suggest that the virtual museum embraces a set of opposing forces. This hybrid virtual museum functions as a critique of the traditional museum as defined by Ludmilla Jordonova:

> [W]e are entitled to speak of the representational practices of a museum as "coercive". This often applies to museums that claim to be literal, life-like, exact, telling it as it really was. And, in this connection it is useful to invoke the term "realism".

Pioch's WebMuseum destabilizes the Louvre's ability to "tell it as it really was." There can be no realism for the "official" Louvre because other Louvres abound.

The ambivalent, contradictory, and splintered narratives that Pioch produces are echoed by the many versions of the WebMuseum that are currently accessible on-line. The WebMuseum is referred to as the "WebMuseum network."[208] The use of this term only begins to suggest the multiple drafts of the WebMuseum that are available to the user. The opening page of the University of North Carolina WebMuseum provides links to thirty-one sites that support the WebMuseum, or thirty-one WebMuseums. The ability to read the WebMuseum as a whole, to conceive of its structure as similar to the multiple

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[206]Personal e-mail between Nicolas Pioch and Michele White, 7 January 1997.

[207]Pioch's description evokes the shared idea among many internet users that these systems are the last frontier. If the web is a frontier then Pioch laid the first claim and has the right to use the name Louvre in cyberspace.

[208]Nicolas Pioch, "WebMuseum: Bienvenue! (Welcome from the Curator)," http://sunsite.unc.edu/louvre/ (18 August 1997). This site is copyrighted on the main page and dated 22 June, 1996.

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copies of a book that contain the same material in each version, is distorted because some WebMuseum sites only present a page or a section. Older versions of the WebMuseum continue to exist along with more recent constructions. Pioch's WebMuseum is a series of parts that are randomly repeated and mirrored in fractured configurations across the web. This produces a series of museums that are reproductions but not quite copies of each other.

The WebMuseum is still tied to the name Louvre even though a number of years have elapsed since Pioch promised to change the name of his site. Some of the WebMuseum's addresses, or URLs, such as the sunsite at the University of North Carolina, which is at http://sunsite.unc.edu/louvre/, include the word Louvre. Search engines, which provide users with addresses and descriptions, also often have the site listed as "Le Web Louvre" or even "Le Louvre." The WebMuseum appears to offer the user access to the Louvre structure in Paris despite, or perhaps because of, the Louvre's legal demands.

This refusal to fully comply with the Louvre's legal demands is echoed by the tone of various WebMuseum descriptions. The WebMuseum's view of the Louvre is coded as illicit. One WebMuseum page knowingly tells the visitor, "You probably know the name of the most important museum in Paris, called Le Louvre. Feel free to tour around the Louvre buildings, even at nighttime, or get inside!"[209] The WebMuseum promises the visitor a virtually illegal entrance into the physical museum. The WebMuseum guarantees such an entrance into the Paris Louvre but only provides a few still images of the Louvre building and its environs. These images could scarcely be called a "tour." Many virtual web tours depend on the viewer's fascination with web technologies to supply the images and stories that their web pages don't provide.

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[209]Nicolas Pioch, "Webmuseum: Pictures from Paris." http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/paris/tour/ (14 May 1997).

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The WebMuseum's intimation that it will provide users with a view of the "real" Louvre is first figured in the "Bienvenue!" or "Welcome from the curator" page. The "official" Louvre's opening page also provides a "Bienvenue" on the French version and a "Welcome" in the English version. This mirroring of "Welcome" messages undermines the authenticity of speech that the Paris Louvre tries to establish. The legitimate view is compromised even without Nicolas Pioch's "Welcome." The sculpture, which is featured prominently on the "official" Louvre's opening page, is a recent lead copy of the marble sculpture by Bernini which stands in Versailles.[210] When interrogated, the "official" Louvre site experiences a loss of "reality" by representing itself with reproductions, such as photographic copies, and reworkings, like I. M. Pei's transfiguration of the Paris Louvre.

World wide web museums are currently struggling to find a vernacular that will bring the physical characteristics of the museum into cyberspace. The museums on the world wide web must mime the presentation of physical objects, invoke aura through other means, or establish an on-line presence that rejects the museum's investment in aura and presence. Virtual museums that are linked to physical structures usually try to reify the scripts of the traditional museum while a number of the digital museums, which have no link to physical structures, attempt to destabilize the traditional museum's organization. In their present configuration, most museums on the world wide web appear to be resistant to using their virtual sites as a place in which to reconceive the physical structures and conventions of the museum.

[210]The sculpture is described by Emile Biasini et al. , *The Grand Louvre: A Museum Transfigured, 1981-1993* (Paris and Milan: Electra Moniteur, 1989), 123. Of course, most sculptures undergo a series of mock-ups, sketches, and casts that should undermine any investment in authenticity. A wide variety of art historians and theorists have critiqued society's continued investment in originality and authenticity.

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Entering the Web Museum

The virtual museum quotes the conventions of the physical museum by representing its architectural "entrance." The user's first "sight" of the web museum is usually a logo or image of the museum at the top of the web page. This image often presents the museum's door to the viewer. This device allows the viewer to begin their virtual museum visit by metaphorically entering the physical museum.[211] Viewers virtually enter in a number of different ways. The Art Institute of Chicago's first page presents a logo of a peaked classical-style building that is rendered in yellow and purple.[212] The alternating blue and yellow "stairs" that lead up to the museum can be clicked on in order to access the site's pages. By clicking on links the viewer virtually walks up the stairs and enters the museum. The visitor's view of the museum is encapsulated in the three arched "windows" that are formed from details of famous works in the museum's collection. The process of entering is presented as a regulated procedure by the two digitized photographs of sculpted lions that "guard" the door to the museum. Dan's Gallery of the Grotesque, which has no physical counterpart, presents another version of the regulated entrance by allowing viewers access to the museum through a "ticket booth." The Korean American Museum of Arts and Cultural Center makes the viewer's entrance into a narrative. "Please be patient for the doors to open! . . . " and after a slight pause while the data are loading, "ENTER."[213] The viewer only has access to the

[211] The virtual qualities of the web museum are also already present in the physical museum. The entrance provided into traditional museums is almost always into a space of passive viewing rather than "hands on" contact. Virtual web museums are often copies of the physical museum's brochures and texts that promise museum visitors virtual access and an experiential tour of the cultures on display. It can be argued that both the visitor to the traditional museum and the virtual web visitor are scripted into a narrative that simulates a physical experience. There are exceptions of course to this museum experience. Science, technology, and children's museums may offer objects to be touched; or at least the manipulation of objects, which rest inside of display cases, by pushing buttons and turning levers.

[212]The Art Institute of Chicago, "The Art Institute of Chicago Museum," http://widow.artic.edu/aic/firstpage.html (20 May 1997).

[213]Korean American Museum of Arts and Cultural Center, http://koma.org/lobby.html (7 January 1997).

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museum after this message. The door produces a visual and conceptual difference between the web museum and the spree of spaces that the viewer has previously accessed.

Virtual museums quote the doorway in an attempt to produce walls on the web. The presentation of a virtual door provides a ritual of entry that is related to the ritual structures of the physical museum. The use of an architectural vocabulary in the web museum is clearly related to traditional museum practices. According to Carol Duncan, the traditional museum employs architectural vernaculars and details as a way of distinguishing the museum:

> Museums are normally set apart from other structures by their monumental architecture and clearly defined precincts. They are approached by impressive flights of stairs, guarded by pairs of monumental marble lions, entered through grand doorways. They are frequently set back from the street and occupy parkland, ground consecrated to public use.[214]

Web museum sites like the Chicago Institute of Art clearly present the monumental stairways, grand entrances, and mighty lions that Duncan describes.

However, the on-line museum has difficulties controlling the viewer's entrance into the museum "space" despite these rituals. Entry may be a particularly difficult experience to convey when viewers can control where and how to interact with a web museum. Viewers who have previously visited the museum or who are accessing a painting or collection at the recommendation of another user may use either an address or a bookmark in order to go directly to the page that they want. Most browsers allow users to tag, or "bookmark," pages that they find interesting. Users can then use the bookmark option to go back to these sites. The inclusion of text also disables the visitor's perception of entering by foregrounding the abstract or two-dimensional qualities of the web museum. The trend to present objects as individual digitized images against solidly colored or abstractly patterned backgrounds flattens these representations. Text appears to

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[214]Duncan, "The Art Museum as Ritual," in *Civilizing Rituals,* 10. The library is another building type that uses such architectural devices as large sculpted lions and oversized doors.

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be the privileged component since it usually surrounds all digitized images. The entrance to the virtual web museum is written as much as it is visualized.

The entrance to the museum is demarcated but the viewer usually "exits" without visual cues. The virtual museum may make great efforts to produce a facade but the reverse side of this structural element is never articulated. The extreme attention that web museums pay to their entrances may be because the viewer can exit from any part of the structure without notice. This design flaw in the virtual museum's ritual script prevents these sites from reading as contained structures. In short, the virtual museum is constantly opening out onto the larger array of spaces that the web offers despite the great efforts that the museum makes to demarcate these borders.

The use of doors and other architectural motifs in the entrance pages to museums is an attempt to invoke the physical entity of the museum in on-line sites. Virtual doorways mark the place between inside and outside and suggest that there is a physical depth to these WWW sites that can be entered by the viewer. The doors in web museum sites rarely function as an entrance into the site, rather they sign the possibility of entering and notate the conventions of physical architecture and spatial metaphors. The door frame, which makes reference to and perhaps exaggerates the scale of the body, brackets an individual that remains elusive. The on-line site acts as an index of the possibility of entering the physical museum. It stands in for a space that, if the viewer chose to travel there, still contains the authentic objects that have somehow slipped out of alignment on the web.

The "official" Louvre's and other web museums' lack of enclosure or boundary definition may be partially shored up by the repetitive nature of the web museum's structure. Most web museums rely on a similar architectural script in order to define their sites. This means that the "official" Louvre's entrance and organizational configuration are already familiar to the virtual web museum visitor. Visitors who access the "official" Louvre site are presented with a menu of links that is similar to those in other web

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museums. The viewer has the option of selecting links to the "Magazine (in French only)," "The Collections," "Practical Information," "The Louvre Palace and Museum," "Cultural Activities Programme (partly in French)," "The Grand Louvre," "Publications and Databases," and "Partners and Mailboxes."[215] More recently, the menu has been changed: "The Grand Louvre" is now "Renovations of the "Grand Louvre," and "Cultural Activities" is "Exhibitions, Auditorium, Guided Tours (partly in French)."[216] The viewer is offered the option of selecting a French, English, Spanish, or Portuguese version of this material. The viewer can also answer a survey, learn about a conference on web museums held at the Louvre, and access information about the server from this page.

The experience of entrance is rendered through a number of devices on the "official" Louvre web site. The first page presents the menu of links and a digitized photograph of the museum that functions as a virtual entrance mat [fig. 4]. The picture even has a "Welcome" sign that the viewer can "step" across in order to access the museum. But the museum's rendering of structural components, including the illusion of entering, is compromised by the photograph. The photograph of the museum has a skewed perspective. The two sides of the Grand Louvre, which the photograph depicts, are stretched out and arched up as if to embrace the virtual viewer. The building, with its wings in the air, appears to be defying the properties of gravity. The normative properties of the building and the viewer's expectations of walking into the structure are destabilized by the photographic view. As the visitor assimilates this perspective, the viewer will notice a message that is imprinted on this digital photograph. In white type it reads, "Welcome to the Louvre site."[217]

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[215]Louvre, "Louvre Museum," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/louvrea.htm (16 December 1996).

[216]Louvre, "Louvre Museum," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/louvrea.htm (5 March 1997). This change occurred when the Louvre's web site was updated on 28 February 1997. The site has been updated again since that time.

[217]Louvre, "Louvre Museum," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/louvrea.htm (9 August 1998). The image of the Louvre that is presented in the WebMuseum site presents a similar view but with a very different use of perspectival conventions.

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The vertical axis of the Louvre image, which appears to be marked by the single word "Louvre" imprinted above the photograph and the word "Menu" below, is decentered by two structures that almost divide the image. The lead equestrian sculpture of Louis XIV, which would traditionally mark a directional path through the courtyard, is deflated and decentered by the not quite solid shape of the I.M. Pei addition.[218] The pyramid crowds the sculpture and disorders the symmetry of the photograph. The photograph's striking light effect that shows the left side of the building glowing a creamy golden yellow in the sun and the right side in shadow is disturbed by the weight of these two masses. The decentered vertical axis of the photograph echoes the relationship between the Louvre and Paris' main axis. The palace and the cour Napoléon are not in line with the city's grand east-west thoroughfares. Emile Biasini et al. argue, in their description of the addition to the museum, that the statue works to assure viewers that the off-center location is not the result of some miscalculation.[219] Pei centered the pyramid in order to emphasize the fact that this structure is the main entrance to the museum. In the photograph, the sculpture does not work to stabilize the image and the pyramid does not appear as a central focal point. The main entrance to the Louvre, which is now the pyramid, is not visible to the virtual viewer unless the visitor is familiar with Pei's redesign of the Louvre.

The web site's quotation of the Louvre entrance ticket also remains invisible to the many viewers. The word Louvre, which is printed out in white lettering, is set inside a

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[218]For I. M. Pei's discussion about the remodeling of the Louvre, including the relocation of the Ministry of Finance and the use of the Richelieu wing and the installation of the painting collection in the Richelieu wing, see "I. M. Pei on the Louvre: Excerpts from the MIT Technology Day Address," http://alberti.mit.edu/plan/plan41/backup/illustratedtalk.html (12 March 1997). The Pariscope Magazine website is one of the few on-line images of I. M. Pei's pyramid which emphasizes its function as the main entrance of the Louvre.

[219]According to Biasini et al. , "the culminating point of the triumphal axis has been pin-pointed by a large equestrian statue of Louis XIV; this is a lead copy of the Bernini marble statue standing at Versailles." It is perhaps not surprising, when encountering the flattened and compressed rendering of this equestrian statue in the photograph, that the sculpture is mostly hollow. Biasini et al. , *The Grand Louvre*, 123.

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black and white horizontal view of clouds. This horizontal block is arranged above the digitized photograph of the museum. The blue sky of the museum, with one or two puffs of clouds, echoes and enhances the black-and-white image of a cloudy sky. The initiated visitor, who has visited the physical museum, may notice that this horizontal cloud image is part of the Louvre's entrance ticket. The use of this motif once again distinguishes between insiders and outsiders. Visitors who have visited the Paris museum, or who recognize this ticket quotation, can metaphorically act out the process of having a ticket and passing from the exterior to the interior of the museum.

The visitor to the on-line Paris Pages tourist guide enacts a different process of entering the Louvre [fig. 5]. The opening page to the Louvre section is titled "Musée du Louvre."[220] This title suggests that the user is visiting the on-line Louvre museum rather than employing a tourist guide. The process of distinguishing between the Louvres is further confused by Paris Pages' quotation of the museum's entrance ticket. To the left of the page's title there is a deep, almost Prussian blue rectangle that depicts a cloudy sky. Once again, the word "Louvre" is written out in white across the image. The visitor's process of entering the museum is further suggested by a copy of the front and back image of the Louvre's entrance ticket that appears near the top of the page. Visitors can act out the process of holding the ticket by clicking on the image and gaining a closer view. Users of the Paris Pages scroll by the ticket and virtually buy their entrance into the museum.

The ticket documents a visit and connects the Paris Pages' museum to the "real" Louvre in Paris. The quotation of the Louvre cloud logo also creates a dialogue between the Paris Pages Louvre and the "official" virtual Louvre. The Paris Pages' use of the ticket is more complex than its citation in the "official" Louvre site. Paris Pages uses tickets as a way of forming their guide into a virtual museum of the city. Entrance tickets are included in a number of their "attractions" pages. These tickets are then gathered

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[220]Paris Pages, "Musee du Louvre," http://www.paris.org/Musees/Louvre/ (1 June 1997).

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together into an exhibition called "Paris by Ticket." The visitor to the exhibit can directly access particular Paris Pages attractions by clicking on the appropriate entrance ticket. The text that accompanies this exhibition suggests that the viewer can "see" Paris through these tickets.[221] What the viewer obviously sees is the pages of a web tourist guide that refigures itself as a virtual tour and a virtual museum. Paris becomes a series of "museum" objects that are owned and presented to the viewer by Paris Pages. The Paris Pages' reproduction of a culture is quite similar to the processes of many physical museums that claim to provide the viewer with access to distant cultures through collections of objects. The ticket exhibition, which provides tickets that "transport" the viewer to various locations, connects the sites and museums of Paris in a larger configuration. This site becomes a meta-museum while insistently remaining under the aegis of Paris Pages. It forms a larger virtual museum complex than the "official" Louvre.

The Paris Pages' virtual Louvre succeeds in assimilating other virtual versions of the Louvre. This site has a link to the "Official web pages: Musée du Louvre." So, the viewer who uses this link will enter the "official" Louvre through the Paris Pages' Louvre. The ability to detect the virtualness of these sights may be disabled by the move from reproduction to reproduction. In this progression from Louvre to Louvre, the first site that the viewer visits may appear to be an original as successive copies are accessed. Paris Pages looks like the real thing because it presents a copy that is ironically the "official" Louvre. After all, the Paris Pages has presented almost the same material as the "official" Louvre web site. When the Paris Pages acts as a recontextualizing bracket that makes the "official" museum appear less authentic and informative it also makes its own site appear more official.

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[221]"Souvenirs come in all shapes and sizes. We buy them in a hopeless attempt to capture a place and to revive our future memories and recollections. In all of the big business surrounding souvenirs - T-Shirts, small statues, and the rest, there are forgotten little pieces associated with every visit to a place - tickets. And Paris has its own set: Métro tickets, tickets to the Arc de Triomphe, tickets to the Louvre. Some of our favorite moments are associated with those small tickets which mark a voyage, a passage, or a day in the life. So click away and discover Paris by way of its tickets!" Paris Pages, "Paris Pages Expo: Paris by Ticket," http://www.paris.org/Expos/ParisTickets/paristickets.html (1 June 1997).

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A consideration of the Paris Pages and "official" Louvre suggests that there are many sites on-line that have a stake in the production of a web Louvre. These sites produce a hybrid Louvre that is configured according to diverse interests. All the concerned sites do not have the same level of power in the production of this hybrid. Alfred Arteaga described hybridization as a "dialogue of dissimilarity . . . Hybridization asserts dialogue by articulating an alternate discourse and by organizing itself in internal dialogue. It is born of the struggles for discursive dominance."[222] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam describe hybridity as "power-laden and asymmetrical."[223] The Paris Pages' Louvre, the "official" Louvre, and the many other web Louvres participate in a fight for dominance. The varied Louvres speak to a series of shared representations and differences.[224]

Viewing the Web Museum

The real contest in the virtual museum may be between unifying spatial metaphors and fragmenting views. These two tendencies produce an ambivalence about representation in web museums like the "official" Louvre. This site that takes great care to reinforce its claim to the name "Louvre" also presents an optically disorienting view of its own structure. The lens of the camera is persistently foregrounded by the depiction of spatial anomalies and other photographic "effects." The image on the opening page depicts the elements of virtual sight that visitors to the web museum encounter. The

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[222]Alfred Arteaga, "An Other Tongue," in *An Other Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*, ed. Alfred Arteaga (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 18.

[223]Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism," *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 43.

[224]This internal dialogue doesn't mean that these individual web museums have chosen to lose their identity and form a larger unnamed meta-museum. In his description of the "Museum without Walls," a new form of museum that provides a very different view of art because of photographic reproductions, Malraux doesn't consider the traditional museum's reaction to these new configurations.

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digitized photograph collapses visual and textual views, unravels stable subject positions with its torqued perspective, presents drastic and illogical shifts in sizing and arrangement, and presents the simultaneous possibility of a spatial entrance and a flat page. This dizzying frenzy of anomalies produces a destabilized and queasy virtual viewer. The photographic image, with its torqued perspective, seems to be based on a disembodied or dislocated subject position rather than the traditional relationship between objects and the vertical or columnar body.

The web museum enacts Leo Steinberg's horizontal subject position because it can't reinvoke the traditional role of the picture. "A picture that harks back to the natural world evokes sense data which are experienced in the normal erect posture."[225] The terms of the "natural world," "sense data," and even "erect posture" have been drastically disfigured on-line so that the position of the body, while contemplating a form of montage, is cast in diverse configurations. The virtual body simultaneously floats over topographical maps and landscapes, adopts contemplative poses and active arrangements, is encouraged to enter into spatial environments and is held back to read web pages like a book.

The virtual body is positioned above the landscape in the "official" Louvre museum's aerial view [fig. 6].[226] The aerial photograph presents the Louvre Palace, the garden of the Tuileries, and a segment of the surrounding Paris environs. The aerial image directs the viewer's attention to the location of the museum. It offers an entrance into the Louvre museum that has already been figured by the opening page's image of the Paris museum. The space of Paris is laid out for the optical and presumably spatial pleasure of the viewer. Aerial photography produces a virtual mobile view. The viewing

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[225]Leo Steinberg, "Other Criteria," in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 84.

[226]This page is accessed from the main page by clicking on the "Renovations of the 'Grand Louvre'" link. Louvre, "Renovations of the "Grand Louvre" http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/grandlou/g-louvre.htm (27 May 1997).

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subject appears able to float freely over a distanced and miniaturized landscape. This type of photography suggests that the viewer can survey the whole spatial terrain which is open for colonization and inhabitation.[227] In this photographically induced position the size and axial position of the viewer's body may shift between physical and optical or experiential and detached viewing positions.

The "official" Louvre's digitized photographic introduction condenses both the verifying inclinations and destabilized virtual views that are ever present in most web museums. The image depicts the physical museum in order to emphasize the relationship between the Louvre's "official" web museum and the "real" museum in Paris. This stress on the site, which is then reinforced and sited by the aerial photograph's inclusion of the physical place, is grafted to the image's elaboration of the properties of virtual sight. The "welcome" image is a mediated, technologically facilitated sight and a stand-in for the physical site.[228]

Jonathan Crary argues that computer-facilitated views refer to the bits of the image rather than a viewer's position in the "real" world:

> The rapid development in little more than a decade of a vast array of computer graphics techniques is part of a sweeping reconfiguration of relations between an observing subject and modes of representation that effectively nullifies most of the culturally established meanings of the terms *observer* and *representation*. The formalization and diffusion of computer generated imagery heralds the ubiquitous implantation of fabricated visual "spaces" radically different from the mimetic capacities of film, photography, and television . . . Most of the historically important functions of the human eye are being supplanted by practices in which visual images no longer have any reference to the position of the observer

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[227]Roland Barthes's writerly beholder seems to be related to this active viewer who can write into the web setting. This "writerly" web viewing position, as well as that of the nineteenth-century extra-illustrator who writes into, controls, and changes *The Marble Faun*, suggests that Roland Barthes's writerly text may not always be a positive force because these positions produce colonizing viewers as well as active readers.

[228] The decentering of the physical museum's site and the visitor's sight is underlined by the Louvre's use of the word "site," rather than "museum," in their welcome message. In most web museums, the viewer is welcomed to the "museum." There is rarely any differentiation made between the museum and the more reproductive tendencies of the museum site.

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> in a "real," optically perceived world. If these images can be said to refer to anything, it is to millions of bits of electronic mathematical data.[229]

My discussion of the web museum has already pointed to some of the ways that Crary's position fails to elaborate the whole story. Computer-facilitated views, such as those provided on web pages, cycle the viewer between site and sight because they appear to offer users a situated position within the depicted space and distant sights.[230] Crary presents some very interesting insights but he fails to consider the reinscription of conservative tendencies and spatial representations in cyberspace. The images in the Louvre site, as well as in other virtual museums, do collapse the space and the culturally established differences between observer and representation. However, the virtual museum continues to insistently feature these distinctions. The computer-mediated image points to a radically reoriented understanding of the function of sight but this view is often obfuscated. The representation of the traditional terms of seeing and the relationship between a sight and a physically positioned body are revisualized in many computer representations and virtual environments:

> [T]he representation of "reality" in VR is actually a highly specific view of the world, a view which unthinkingly assumes a Western tradition and ideology. VR rests on an unstated foundation of conventions such as Cartesian space, objective realism and linear perspective. It is easy to assume these conventions to be neutral and transparent, to be part of the way everybody sees reality, but in fact they are deeply rooted in an historical philosophy that privileges perspective, with its implication of detachment, objectivity and observation.[231]

Sally Pryor and Jill Scott's description refers to virtual realities in which the user accesses a computer rendered environment, which appears to be three-dimensional, through such interfaces as virtual reality helmets and data gloves. Their description also

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[229]Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1990), 1-2.

[230]Other representations also allow viewers to shift between distanced viewing and physical siting. However, the web's complex rendering of physical space and material bodies makes these positions more serviceable.

[231]Sally Pryor and Jill Scott, "Virtual Reality: Beyond Cartesian Space," in *Future Visions: New Technologies of the Screen*, eds. Philip Hayward and Tana Wollen (London: BFI Publishing, 1993), 168.

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applies to less technologically intensive virtual conditions. Pryor and Scott insist that certain Western conventions, which ideologically shape virtual spaces and bodies, appear neutral and transparent to the user because of their familiarity. It is thus not surprising that the virtual web museum also appears to be a neutral environment. Its scripting of views is largely invisible to viewers who have become familiar with traditional museum practices. On-line viewers may even choose to invest in these museum narratives, which provide a location for the body, since less spatially descriptive views of the museum point to a destabilizing rupture in the relationship between subject and object. Foregrounding the museum's mediated views, the use of conventional renderings of perspective that according to Pryor and Scott produces "detachment, objectivity, and observation," and the disassociation of subject and object is dangerous business for the traditional museum since these terms are part of the very foundation of the museum system. The on-line versions of the traditional museum that choose to expose the museum's terms risk rupturing the means by which the physical museum functions.

According to Crary, Western tradition presumes that vision is produced by a stable and fixed subject position that is embodied in such mechanisms as the camera obscura. This subject position relates sight to truth. Many virtual museums reproduce this subject position in order to form a series of virtual objects that not only stand in for the "real" material object but have, according to web authors like Nicolas Pioch, become that object. The transparency of the web's spatial conventions may actually be reinscribed by the optical effect of the screen and the black mask that visually separates the computer case from the data field. Information that appears on, or should we say embedded in, the computer monitor looks like it is situated behind the transparent glass, or window, of the screen. The black "mat" of the computer and the user's tendency to read things on the web as unmarked by the mediation of the computer may produce an effect that is similar to that of the photograph. Barthes argues in *Camera Lucida* that we don't see the

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photograph because it is invisible. It could also be argued that, when using the web, the computer screen is always invisible: "it is not it that we see."[232]

The virtual museum consolidates its forces against a crisis in vision that is suggested by virtual representations, as well as such "problems" as the nineteenth-century move to associate vision with the "empirical immediacy of the observer's body" that is described by Jonathan Crary, and the twentieth-century "denigration of vision" in French thought that Martin Jay discusses.[233] The images and web representations that I have described form an ambivalent attempt to maintain the position of the observer. These sites point to the kind of viewing that is institutionalized in the museum and offer viewers a place from which they can establish their own critical position by consistently representing the position of the regulated viewer. This vision, despite its focus on clean and institutionalized sites, often borders on the abject because of consistent changes in subject position. Julia Kristeva tells us that it is not the "lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules."[234] The instances of regulation that I have been considering in the on-line museum are certainly in reaction to the abject nature of virtual subjectivity, an as yet undefined, unreliable, and unfocused position, where the collapse of subject and object would be imminent if not for the counteracting forces of such structures as the museum.

Mapping the Web and the Web Museum

The use of location maps, which provide the virtual user with a map of the physical, are a way of marking the museum's physical distance from other virtual

[232]Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 6.

[233]Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 24 and Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[234]Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

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structures. Otherwise, the space between subject and object, or self and world, is destabilized. It is impossible to describe the spatial relationship between a series of web pages. There are no such differentiating concepts as near and far. Every site is conceptually one click, or one typed address, away from every other site. Time can no longer be a marker of distance on the web because the time that it takes users to navigate a series of pages depends on such variables as an individual's modem speed and the number of other people accessing information.

The appearance of maps and other locational devices on the web is an attempt to resolve these spatial ambiguities. The Louvre site prominently features a series of maps of its galleries. These plans present the same maps as those that the visitor can obtain in the "real" museum. The maps that the Louvre maintains are echoed by a similar group of maps that can be found in other virtual museums. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, The Kimbell Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, the Ashmolean Museum, the Birmingham Museum of Art, and the Andy Warhol Museum are only a few of the web museums that have navigable maps of their collections. Web museums that have no corresponding physical structure such as Dan's Gallery of the Grotesque also often maintain complex maps of the structure. Museum maps are related to the trend to map space on the web.

"Space" on the web remains unarticulated, or unbounded, by traditional material and political dividers such as territorial borders, rivers, mountain ranges, geographic distances, walls, doors, and gates. And yet, as I have previously stated, the spatial ambiguity of the web is often obfuscated through the representation of material structures. The illumination of the "terra incognita" of cyberspace as a plotted terrain was influenced by the writing of cyberpunk science fiction writers who visualized the internal workings of the computer. William Gibson's cyberpunk fiction, which was published a number of years before the development of the web, conflates the computer and the city.

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When hackers interface with the computer, in his novels, they meld with programs and navigate a data landscape that is formed in the image of specific city buildings:

> Case had the strange impression of being in the pilot's seat in a small plane . . . The Kuang Program dived past the gleaming spires of a dozen identical towers of data, each one a blue neon replica of the Manhattan skyscraper.[235]

Gibson's hackers experience their interface with the computer as a spatial terrain that is consistently partitioned in an architectural manner. Hacking is the process of demolition or breaking down walls:

> Ice walls flick away like supersonic butterflies made of shade. Beyond them, the matrix's illusion of infinite space. It's like watching a tape of prefab building going up; only the tape is reversed and run at high speed, and these walls are torn wings.[236]

The effect of passages like these should not be underestimated. Many early producers of on-line technologies and internet users read science fiction writers like Gibson. He is credited with coining the term "cyberspace" (although the prefix cyber has a much longer cultural history) and his writing has affected the ways that cyberspace is conceptualized. William Gibson's spatial metaphors allow the reader to follow the hacker into the computer and to visualize its abstract terrain. Plugging into the computer also produces a spatial landscape in *He, She and It* by Marge Piercy:

> She chose the door marked Net, entered, then faced a plan where the user requested a destination and a path lit up on a big display map . . . The spatial dimensions of the Net were all metaphorical, mental conveniences.[237]

Maps allow Piercy's characters to read the virtual landscape and to produce it as a comprehensible space. Diagrams and plans also make the web visible for the user. They are one of the many ways that the concept of space is graphed onto the web.

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[235]William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 256-257.

[236]William Gibson, "Burning Chrome," *Burning Chrome* (New York: Ace Books, 1986), 177.

[237]Marge Piercy, *He, She and It* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1991), 266-267.

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The dislocating experience, or loss of body and place, that users of the web may experience is lessened by the proliferation of maps, plans, and locational systems in web museums and other sites. The on-line museum's relation to a city plan and its establishment of an ordered space within the city limits is disturbed by the lack of an on-line Cartesian grid system. The persistent use of these way-finding devices, which often sign for plotted terrain rather than assisting the user in finding anything, is an attempt to assure viewers that they can't be lost because they have a map:

> To become completely lost is perhaps a rather rare experience for most people in the modern city. We are supported by the presence of others and by special way-finding devices: maps, street numbers, route signs, bus placards. But let the mishap of disorientation once occur, and the sense of anxiety and even terror that accompanies it reveals to us how closely it is linked to our sense of balance and well-being. The very word "lost" in our language means much more than simple geographical uncertainty; it carries overtones of utter distress.[238]

Many sites on-line call their sites cities and use plans and maps of these imaginary structures as a way to alleviate the spatial distress that users of the web may experience. The Louvre's, and the virtual museum's, production of a mapped version of a physical site is related to other spatial or building metaphors that appear on the web. There is even a site called "Virtual Town" that reimages a series of web links into a mapped town. The virtual "town" refigures the unruly spaces of the web into a friendly, ordered, and populated environment.[239] The "Graphic Virtual Town" map has a "Bus & Rail Depot--Transit for the masses," "Houses of Worship--Virtually make peace with your God," "Museums and Other Exhibits, Virtual tours start in the lobby on the hour." The map

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[238] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass: The Technology Press & Harvard University Press, 1960), 4.

[239] The visitor to Virtual Town is greeted with a message from the "mayor." "Hello! Welcome to the Virtual Town. I'm the new mayor, Charles Blas. I have tried to assemble various links on the Web into a form that resembles what you and I would find in a typical town. There are stores, public offices, and much more!" Virtual Town, which is available on the Computer Science Instructional Facility Home Page on a University of California at Davis server, was organized by Vik Varma and Elaine Lazarte. Charles Blas, the "new mayor," is now maintaining this representation. Virtual Town, http://wwwcsif.cs.ucdavis.edu/virt-town/welcome.html (30 May 1997).

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supplants the user's random link clicking with what appears to be a community. These and other maps appear to make the structure of the web visible.[240]

The web is rendered as a lived community where the houses appear to be always open for visitors because users' personal web pages are referred to as "homepages." The GeoCities site, which uses the slogan "your home on the web," even provides the user with a definition of "homestead" that allows the user to view their page as a territorial possession as well as a home. GeoCities' transformation of their users into homesteaders echoes the many descriptions of cyberspace as "the last frontier." The production of this new West, on the GeoCities site, is underlined by cacti and other Western motifs. In the GeoCities site, the frontier metaphor readily gives way to zoned territories.

GeoCities users are encouraged to pick one of thirty-six "themed neighborhoods" that relate to the content of their web pages.[241] These themed neighborhoods, many of which are named after "real" physical cities and locales, work to contain individual identities within bordered communities. The diversity of material that exists on the GeoCities site is rearranged into a geographically related series of city states. Each area has a description that models the appropriate behavior.[242] Identity would appear to be

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[240]Virtual Town, "The Graphical Virtual Town," http://wwwcsif.cs.ucdavis.edu/virt-town/town-graphic.html "The Virtual Town: Town Square," http://wwwcsif.cs.ucdavis.edu/virt-town/town-txt.html (30 May 1997). This redrawing of web links into a relational gridded town repeats the spatial metaphors that are evoked by the names of browsers such as "Netscape Navigator" and "Microsoft Internet Explorer." Some versions of Netscape Navigator come replete with a graphic image of a ship's wheel, with a starry background and a network of lines that suggest navigational plotting or longitude and latitude lines, that appears while the browser is loading up. The Netscape N floats in the heavens like a beacon for the web traveler. This sign, with its celestial heavens and steering device, suggests that the user is about to embark on a virtual voyage. The use of these exploration and travel oriented metaphors works to codify the process of using the web into a process of movement. These spatial metaphors are related to the tendency to talk about the process of using the web as "navigating," "exploring," and "moving."

[241]GeoCities, "GeoCities Homesteading Programming Information," http://www.geocities.com/homestead/ (29 May 1997).

[242]Athens, Athens/Acropolis, Athens/Forum or Athens/Delphi: A community based on education, teaching, reading, writing and philosophy. Teachers, philosophers, and those interested in literature will feel at home here . . . Baja: Rev up your four-wheeler and head for the open road! A community for adventurous travelers who know no boundaries . . . CapitolHill or CapitolHill/Lobby: Politics, government, state and national affairs. Members of this neighborhood have strong opinions and are not afraid to express them . . . Heartland, Heartland/Hills, Heartland/Plains or Heartland/Meadows: A family oriented neighborhood that represents Main Street in cyberspace. This is the place to find parenting, pets, and home town value . . . SoHo, SoHo/Lofts or SoHo/Studios: The place where bohemian artists and writers

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stable and the user is assured of the "appropriate" neighborhood, where those with "home town values" will not have to encounter "adventurous travelers who know no boundaries," as long as viewers and web page producers remain in their own environments. GeoCities' lifestyle zones are related to other attempts to produce a cultured and bordered environment on the web. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has produced a new type of museum membership where users have to register and pay for some on-line museum services. "The Metropolitan Museum of Art is pleased to announce a new membership category created just for you, Met Net Membership!"[243] Net Membership is clearly a new frontier of patronage and revenues for The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Maps produce borders for the virtual environment and suggest limited and visualized paths for the virtual body. The map provides a diagram from which socialized and ordered users can colonize fractured virtual bodies. The familiar maps of virtual towns and the museum maps suggest that the web is a transparent structure from which the viewer can see everything.

Mapping the Louvre Web Museum

The maps and other photographs in the "official" web Louvre are an attempt to remake this site in the image of the "real" museum. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose state that "[m]apping operates in hegemonic discourses as a form of mimetic representation-it textually represents the gaze through transparent space.[244] Maps form users into virtual

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congregate and display their work . . . and WestHollywood or WestHollywood/Heights: A community with a culture based on gay and lesbian identity. GeoCities, "GeoCities Neighborhood Directory," http://www.geocities.com/homestead/homedir.html (29 May 1997).

[243]Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Welcome to the Metropolitan Museum of Art," http://www.metmuseum.org/ (13 January 1997).

[244]Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose, "Introduction: Women's Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies," in *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*, eds. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (New York and London: Guilford Press, 1994), 8.

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travelers who visit sites by gazing upon them. The physical territory of the material museum is made visible to the virtual viewer through such representations as maps. The "official" site lays claim to the Louvre name by mapping its structure. The "official" Louvre, like other political entities, uses the map "to reassure their viewers about the writ of power over the territory in the map."[245] Other web sites, including Paris Pages, also provide maps of the "real" Louvre. The museum map which emphasizes partitioning, as well as providing a panoramic view of the museum layout, marks the traditional museum vocabulary of walls, exhibition halls, and collections. Through these mimetic devices the virtual museum attempts to rewrite the virtual parameters of on-line structures with material constraints.

The geographical uncertainty of the "official" Louvre's position, the inability to say where the "authentic" Louvre is located, is partially stabilized by relating this structure to time tables, bus routes, and maps. These way-finding devices and schedules suggest that the web site is part of some larger timed and mapped universe. The "Practical Information" link provides the tourist with information about how to get to the "real" museum but is also points to the geographical setting and contours of the museum. The link to "Exhibitions, Auditorium, Guided Tours (partly in French)" contains dates and times for the museum's educational programs. This node emphasizes the processes and rhythms of the dated and timed museum as much as it provides the user with useful information.

The maps in the Louvre site provide a ritual for the virtual viewer. Through the process of clicking on these maps the viewer can enact the process of walking through the museum:

> [A]s anthropologists argue, our supposedly secular, even anti-ritual, culture is full of ritual situations and events - very few of which (As Mary Douglas has noted) take place in religious contexts. That is, like other

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[245]J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Iconography of Landscape*, eds. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 296.

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> cultures, we, too, build sites that publicly represent beliefs about the order of the world, its past and present, and the individual's place within it. Museums of all kinds are excellent examples of such microcosms; art museums in particular - the most prestigious and costly of these sites - are especially rich in this kind of symbolism and, almost always, even equip visitors with maps to guide them through the universe they construct.[246]

The mimetic relationship between the virtual viewers' progression through the virtual museum and a walk through the physical museum is supported by the map. The virtual museum's maps, like the virtual entrances, appear to provide an opening into the physical museum. Maps inculcate the viewer into the universe that the museum has constructed. When viewers "walk" the museum by reading these maps they repeat the museum's rituals and perform the museum's organizational systems.[247]

Maps intervene between the virtual visitor to the "official" Louvre and its collection by forcing the viewer to encounter objects in an ordered way. The visitor doesn't directly encounter works of art from "The Collections" link. When visitors click on "The Collections" link they are offered a brief introduction to the collection, a color coded list of the various collections, and a series of four color coded maps [fig. 7]. By clicking on one of these small maps, the viewer can access a larger floor map and links to the collections that reside on that floor [fig. 8]. The viewer can also directly click on a specific collections link without accessing the large map. When the visitor clicks on "The Collections" link they access a site, and are sited within the museum structure, rather than obtaining the expected sight of the collection. This siting of viewers within the space of the museum emphasizes spatial placement over the process of seeing. The oscillation between sight and site that is figured in the aerial photograph of Paris is continued in the maps and links to the virtual collection in the web Louvre. The "official" Louvre and many web museum sites replace, at least temporarily, the web's tendency to be a

[246]Duncan, "The Art Museum as Ritual," in *Civilizing Rituals*, 8.

[247]In the Paris Pages version of the Louvre, this experience of "walking" or moving through the museum is emphasized by the link texts. The viewer is invited to "Go to individual Floors." http://www.paris.org/Musees/Louvre/Plan/ (3 August 1997). "Another link invites the user to "'Click' on the floor you wish to visit."

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"Museum without Walls" and its concomitant unlimited potential for seeing reproductions of objects, with a viewer who seems to be positioned within the mapped museum.

The introductory text on the collections page works as a script for viewers. Visitors are inculcated into a way of seeing before they are introduced to any works. The components of the collections link the texts, the lists, and the maps together to produce a narrative about the development of art:

> The collections of the Louvre Museum represent works of art dating from the birth of the great civilisations of the Méditerranean area until the western civilisation of the Early Middle Ages to the middle of the XIXth century. The collections are divided into seven departments: Oriental Antiquities (with a section dedicated to Islamic Art), Egyptian Antiquities (with a section dedicated to Coptic Art), Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities; and, covering the modern period, Paintings, Sculptures, Objets d'art and Prints and Drawings. In addition, there is a section dedicated to the history of the Louvre, which includes in particular the medieval moats erected by Philippe Auguste in 1190, which were discovered during work on the Grand Louvre project.[248]

The introductory text presents the collection as an organized series of exhibits that tells the story of "civilization." This narrative, which evokes the chronicles of other virtual and physical museums, moves the viewer through a teleological progression. The organization of this list of collections suggests that the viewer is to move from "Oriental," Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities, towards the developments and achievements of Western art. The indoctrinary process of entering "Napoleon's Louvre" as well as the modern museum, which is critiqued by Duncan and Wallach, is repeated in the "official" Louvre's organizing schemas:

> The visitor entering Napoleon's Louvre passed through triumphal arches decorated with trophies and victories. In today's European and American museums, exhibitions of Oriental, African, Pre-Columbian and Native American art function as permanent triumphal processions, testifying to Western supremacy and world domination.[249]

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[248]Louvre Museum "The Collection," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/collec.htm (27 May 1997).

[249]Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," 449.

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The "official" Louvre's textual narrative and the organization of its virtual collections can be read as a "triumphal procession" that culminates in Western art, particularly French painting. The hierarchical organization of the Louvre's collections is echoed by the maps that are presented on its web site. These maps suggest that the visitor starts on the lowest level of the museum, moves through the antiquities, and finally climbs to the paintings on the first and second floor of the museum. The valuation of painting over sculpture is underlined by presenting sculpture on the lower floors and painting on the top floors.[250] The developmental story that the "official" Louvre tells about art is echoed by the evolutionary story that the Louvre tells about its own growth. After the discovery of the moat and other artifacts during the recent excavation, the Louvre's story was simultaneously made into a virtual and "real" exhibition.

The developmental narrative about art, which is presented by the "official" Louvre site, is underlined by the inclusion of maps in the "antiquities" departments. The "Oriental Antiquities and the Islamic Art Section" has a link to a "Map of Ancient Orient," the "Egyptian Antiquities" links to a "Map of Ancient Egypt," and "Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Antiquities" provides a "Map of the Mediterranean Area." The "Department of Paintings" link provides access to "The French School," "The Italian School," "The Flemish, Dutch and German Schools," and "The Spanish and English Schools." None of these painting collections are accompanied by maps despite the fact that web viewers may have very different perceptual images of these Western places because they can logon from anywhere in the world. According to Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, there is a tendency for Western films about Africa to "begin their narrative of 'making sense' of an obscure continent through a map."[251] The Louvre site performs a similar process of "making sense" through their process of mapping. The Louvre

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[250] This organization is also due, in part, to the structural issues that surround exhibiting large heavy sculptures. Of course, not all the sculptures on display demand this treatment.

[251] Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, 147.

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describes their Department of Egyptian Antiquities as a collection that displays "the remains of the civilizations."[252] This suggests that Egyptian culture is extinct and must be made visible, or recreated for the museum audience, by mapping while the Western cultures of the past are still culturally and geographically present and don't require maps. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose describe maps as "graphic tools of colonization, themselves colonizing spaces perceived as empty and uninscribed."[253] The text on the Egyptian antiquities page suggests that museums have saved the last vestiges of Egyptian civilization. Egypt and other non-Western locations are produced as empty spaces that the virtual museum and the virtual visitor can remap, rediscover, and reinhabit.

Museums and other web sites assert a kind of visual claim to cyberspace by superimposing maps over the virtual "terrain." It may be problematic to describe all these mapping practices as "colonialist," or even regimentary, because it is difficult to say what, if anything, these maps are superimposed over. Pamela Gilbert suggests that these maps write over a decentered way of speaking and thinking. She relates the unmapped virtual field to Luce Irigaray's theory of speaking that is based on the multiplicity of women's bodies.[254]

It is easy to forget that virtual museums are produced as bordered spatial environments, with a traditional ideological program, because of the high level of

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[252]Louvre Museum, "Department of Egyptian Antiquities," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/collec/egypte.htm (12 June 1997).

[253]Blunt and Rose, "Women's Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies," in *Writing Women and Space*, 9.

[254]"Those blank spaces waiting to be inscribed, penetrated, mapped, those dark continents awaiting the incontinence of logorrheac programming, strings of text commands which will magically become, phenomenologically, spaces -- haven't we seen them somewhere before? This obsession with mapping, with being located (which is based on the potential of being lost -- as if there must be a particular place to go), doesn't it smack a bit of the economy of the one, as Irigaray says, rather than the multiple, the decentered? The Net, with its multiplicity, its refusal of the center, could be, even spatially, read empoweringly as a woman's body -- were there enough of an interpretive community to make that stick. "Where" in the Net is women's desire to be "found"?" Pamela Gilbert "On Space, Sex and Stalkers," *Sexuality and Cyberspace* issue, *Women and Performance* 17. http://www.echonyc.com/~women/Issue17/art-gilbert.html (24 August 1997). See also Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).

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verisimilitude that physical museums install in their virtual offspring. Maps carve out space in the otherwise flattened environment of web pages. Donna Haraway suggests that maps bind bodies "inside 'absolute' dimensions such as space and time." Her work affirms the idea that the virtual museum's and the traditional museum's containing practices are figured as logical and rational because of the naturalizing process of the map:

> Geographical maps are embodiments of multifaceted historical practices among specific humans and nonhumans. Those practices constitute spatiotemporal worlds; that is, maps are both instruments and signifiers of spatialization. Geographical maps can, but need not, be fetishes in the sense of appearing to be nontropic, metaphor-free representations, more or less accurate, of previously existing, "real" properties of a world that are waiting patiently to be plotted. Instead, maps are models of worlds, crafted through and for specific practices of intervening and particular ways of life.[255]

Viewers assume that maps figure what is already there. J. B. Harley's analysis of cartography focuses on the ways that maps are viewed as unbiased. "[M]aps can produce a truly 'scientific' image of the world, in which factual narrative is represented without favor."[256] The map works as a part of the traditional museum system, a societal construct that also seems to provide access to authentic cultures and "real" artifacts without bias or mediation.

The visitor to the "official" Louvre museum appears to have a number of points of view and bodily positions because of the variety of schematic sights and photographic views that are presented. The visitor is embraced by the "arms" of the museum and then seemingly floats free over aerial views and maps. These views establish a bodily position where virtual access appears to be an inalienable right. The limited access to digital collections that most web museums provide presents viewers with a very different image of their virtual bodies.

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[255]Haraway, Donna. "Pragmatics: Technoscience in Hypertext," in *Modest Witness@Second_Millenium,FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 135.

[256]Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Iconography of Landscape*, 287.

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The positioning that virtual maps promise, but can't deliver, is an attempt to resolve the virtual problem of relating bodies to locations. The museum appears to take its viewer on a tour where such familiar mapping ideas as "you are here" assure the viewer that there is a fixed virtual position. The schematic may provide a map for the body and a way that viewers can relate to the museum structure. This brings scale into the virtual space. All markers of size are disabled on the web without such diagrams for the human body.

Identity and Body in the Web Museum

> Nothing about the "spatiality" of space can be theorized without using objects as its indices. A space empty of objects has no representable or perceivable features, and the spatiality of a space containing objects reflects the spatial characteristic of those objects, but not the space of their containment. It is our positioning within space, both as the point of perspectival access to space, and also as an object for others in space, that gives the subject a coherent identity and an ability to manipulate things, including its own body parts, in space.[257]

According to Grosz's theory, "nothing about the 'spatiality' of space can be theorized" in the virtual museums because there are no real objects to use as indices. There is no direct relationship between the web museum's images of objects and the viewer. In fact, if there are objects on web pages they are not copies of the museum's artifacts. There are illusory suggestions that things can be manipulated in the virtual web museum, but despite these assertions, the visitor's "clicking" or "movement" through the structure has no lasting effect on the museum's composition. Coherent identity is challenged in the virtual web museum by the user's inability to change the structure and by the lack of objects.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak about a web museum setting as a space since the body can't be positioned "inside" of it and there may not even be an inside. It is

[257]Elizabeth Grosz, "Space, Time, and Bodies," in *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 92.

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also difficult to speak of the web museum as surface because of the ways that the museum is rendered. The web museum may be one of the few settings in which the viewer can't act as an object for another person's spatial contemplation, or function as an index, since users can't see each other. The viewer has no coherent position within the non-space of the web and thus no ability to measure or describe the setting's conditions in consistent terms. The subject remains outside of the screen. It is possible that, as these terms are generally used, there are no subjects and no objects inside the web museum.

As I have just argued, indices that establish a relationship between the dimensions of architecture and the span of the human body are distorted in on-line sites. The body of the viewer no longer has any proportional relationship to the architectural landscape. Yet, there is still a body rendered despite this dislocation between the visual space of the web and the material presence of the body. A hand appears when users of graphical web browsers, like Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer, put their pointer over a link. Many users are familiar with this hand, or cursor, that also allows users of Macintosh and Windows based operating systems to manipulate documents:

> The world of tools is a world of handles, arms, blades, and legs. We have only to think of the scythe as it both replaces and graphically represents the bent back of the reaper, or of the fist of the hammer, the clawed hand of the cultivator. This is the image of the body as implement, as moving in and through the environment in such a way that the material world is a physical extension of the needs and purposes of the body. But this relation between the body and the world takes place only in the domain of the physical space actually occupied by the body, the domain of immediate lived experience. The miniature allows us only visual access to surface and texture; it does not allow movement through space. Inversely, the gigantic envelops us, but is inaccessible to lived experience.[258]

As the work of Susan Stewart and Elizabeth Grosz suggests, the virtual web museum provides visual access rather than spatial mobility. Yet the body of the web museum visitor is consistently being reconfigured. When the on-line museum invokes a space that is both miniature and gigantic, it also produces a body that is continually being

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[258]Susan Stewart, "The Gigantic," *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 102.

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resized. If viewers use the hand-pointer as a metaphor for their own body then they are constantly in the position of shrinking down to meet the dimensions of that representation and expanding back into their own corporeal body that doesn't quite rest on either side of the computer screen. The hand image of the browser reconfigures the body as an implement. This anthropomorphized tool suggests that the web browser is "an extension of the needs and purposes of the body." This rendering of the empowered body has significant social implications. Of course, not all bodies have the same relationship to the hand-pointer.

The body that we produce in conjunction with the computer and the web browser has seemingly unlimited license to touch, view, and acquire. "Our" hand, which is rendered by the browser, floats over and promises that we can posses all situations and terrains that we visit on the web. It is not surprising that this hand is white.[259] The skin color of users will never correspond to the white hand of the pointer. However, some users have learned to think of themselves as "white" while other users have been culturally produced as "not white." The white hand-pointer that touches and manipulates for the viewer enforces a racial inside and outside in the web environment.

When we look at our virtual bodies, objects, and rooms, these sights are framed through the prosthetic apparatus of the computer. Viewers can't "see" themselves without a technological lens. This technological apparatus may become assimilated into the user's notion of self. Computer and software programs that facilitate interaction with particular worlds and distinct selves have shaped a new cyborgean body. This augmented body may produce an altered body image and offer different levels of mobility than the user's "real" or pre-virtual body. Elizabeth Grosz's analysis of the changes that people may experience in their self-image, while using objects, argues for a reading of technologies that

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[259]Some operating systems provide the user with a variety of cursors to chose from. In Windows NT the user can choose cursors that include a dinosaur, horse, barber pole, and a number of hand styles. It is striking that all these hands are white.

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considers the ways that the computer writes on the body as well as the ways that we write on the computer:

> Anything that comes into contact with the surface of the body and remains there long enough will be incorporated into the body image--clothing jewelry, other bodies, objects. They mark the body, its gait, posture, position, etc. (temporarily or more or less permanently), by marking the body image . . . In driving, the car becomes part of the body image, a body shell for the subject; its perils and breakdowns, chasing another car or trying to fit into a small parking spot, are all experienced in the body image of the driver (and sometimes, to their horror, in that of the passengers as well).[260]

The web browser supplies a new image of the hand and a newly revisioned viewing body for the viewer. (The body's incorporation of an object can, as in the case of a car, produce a "shell" for the subject that allows the body a speed and geographical mobility that legs can't facilitate.) This body can also become severely handicapped when the internalized object and web hand no longer function.

The WebMuseum's rendering of a virtual viewer figures the difficulties that web museums face when trying to depict "real" views. The virtual viewer is depicted in a graphic drawing that appears about half way down the WebMuseum's "Welcome from the curator" page [fig. 9]. A bright green dinosaur-like viewer with wide open eyes, a purple belly, and gestural tail stands in profile. The creature faces the image of a woman while holding its thumb up to measure her virtual image. The virtual dinosaur viewer may be able to measure and catalog the parts of the WebMuseum's image but the computer user can't. The user's body is pushed out of the museum despite both Louvres, Pioch's and the "official" Louvre's, consistent welcome messages. In the WebMuseum's graphic image, a series of ropes cordon the computer user off from the graphic representation of two landscape paintings that face the viewer. This representation suggests that close viewing is stymied, as it sometimes is in the material museum as well. The computer user's corporeal body is separated out or maintained at a distance from the virtual process of viewing. The

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[260]Elizabeth Grosz, "Neurophysiology and Corporeal Mappings," *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 80.

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"real" viewer is metaphorically held back by the ropes. The small size of these images, as well as the drawing quality, prevents the physical viewer from properly seeing. The problem of virtual size is addressed in Pioch's measurements of "Les très riches heures du Duc de Berry" exhibition. "The size of most pictures in this exhibition area is around 100 Kb."[261] The traditional concept of size, as it relates to painting and other objects, is replaced on-line with an expression of the size of computer files.

This graphic on the WebMuseum site suggests that there are alternate virtual viewing positions that the user can appropriate. The creature's view, which the user can employ, establishes a different relationship to the paintings. This technologically facilitated position is related to the process of viewing that is implemented by a browser. The image of the virtual viewer, which the WebMuseum presents, looks very much like Netscape's graphic mascot "Mozilla."[262] Mozilla was the nickname for the Netscape Navigator browser and a graphic representation of it appeared on Netscape's welcome screen. Mozilla acted as a friendly stand-in for the browser's process of making the internet visible. The text below the figure read "You have just entered on a journey across the Internet, and Netscape is your vehicle." The technological lens of Netscape and Mozilla "sees" for the viewer. The WebMuseum's graphic suggests that the virtual viewer is facilitated by and may even become the browser. Our sight of virtual bodies, objects, and rooms, is framed through the prosthetic apparatus of the computer. These technologies change the way we see as they train the way we see.

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[261]WebMuseum, "Les très riches heures du Duc de Berry" http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/rh/ (26 June 1997).

[262]Atlas to the World Wide Web "Chapter One, Mosaic Cometh," http://www.rhythm.com/~bpowell/Atlas/Ch1.htm#BEFORE (28 May 1997).

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The Collections

The reorganization of sight that is spurred by new technologies of vision is linked to a reconceptualization of objects and collections. Traditional museum collections and the history which they seem to embody are remade when they become part of the virtual field. Kenneth L. Ames argues that collections are part of the current economic system of exchange. He suggests that an object's role as a contemporary commodity may even outstrip its historical role.[263] Similarly, an object's virtual position may outstrip its place within the traditional museum narrative. Nicolas Pioch believes that the virtual museum offers the viewer access to a previously inaccessible cultural heritage that disrupts the acquisition policies of museums. Pioch's description suggests that the web performs a virtual repatriation:

> It's really a sad behavior, when you realize that most of the ancient artwork located in there are the result of various wars, pillage, stolen treasures . . . Really, those artworks do NOT belong to the museums; they belong to the world's history and, if we can find a low-cost publishing tool such as the Internet, everybody should get free access to this part of our historical culture/heritage. At least that is what the WebMuseum does, for public-domain artworks.[264]

It would seem that if Nicolas Pioch's vision for web museums was realized then it would usurp earlier museum projects. The meaning of objects and collections would be reinterpreted in order to fit their new virtual conditions. By contrast, the "official" Louvre publishes some of its collections on the web but this practice works to reassert the museum's claim to these objects. The role that the Louvre museum plays in figuring France's cultural role is reiterated by texts on the web site:

> [T]he Louvre offers almost 60, 000 m2 of exhibition rooms dedicated to preserving items representing 11 millennia of civilisation and culture. The

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[263]Kenneth L. Ames, introduction to *The Colonial Revival in America*, ed. Alan Axelrod (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1985), 7.

[264]Nicolas Pioch as quoted by Paul Jones, "RE: Internet Copyright Infringement," CNI-Copyright, 7 June 1996. Archived at http://www.cni.org/Hforums/cni-copyright/1996-02/0754.html (25 June 1997).

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> "Grand Louvre" is also a cultural unit which has a didactic role towards the public, a role which it fulfills through lectures, audiovisual and interactive productions and very many printed publications which are available in the exhibition rooms or at the bookshop under the pyramid.[265]

The "official" Louvre text emphasizes the role that the museum plays in preserving the very cultures that Pioch believes have been disrupted. The "official" Louvre's narrative works to justify its rights. In this story the viewer accesses an otherwise unreachable past that is made real by authentic objects.

The Louvre museum played a part in the formation of France into a republican state. According to the work of Carol Duncan, the Louvre was a symbol of the new political order.[266] The didactic and educational purpose of the Louvre, which is described in the on-line site, has been a part of its organization since the Louvre became a public museum.[267] The Louvre museum presented a teleological view of art, through such devices as the layout of the museum, in which French art was presented as the pinnacle of artistic development. This view is emphasized on-line by the division of the sculpture collection into "French Sculptures" and "Foreign Sculptures." A similar set of distinctions occurs in the painting collections. The visitor to "The French School" learns that the "Louvre is the conservatory of French painting."[268] "The Italian School" is just

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[265]Louvre, "Renovations of the "Grand Louvre" http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/grandlou/g-louvre.htm (27 May 1997).

[266]"In 1793 the French Revolutionary government, looking for a way to dramatize the creation of the new republican state, nationalized the king's art collection and declared the Louvre a public museum. The Louvre, once the palace of kings, was reorganized as a museum for the people, to be open to everyone free of charge. It thus became a powerful symbol of the fall of the *ancien régime* and the creation of the new order." Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, 93.

[267]"The first time you walk through this gallery, I hope you will find that this exercise already brings a character of order, instruction, and classification. I will continue in the same spirit for all the schools, and in a few months, while visiting the gallery one will be able to have . . . a history course in the art of painting." Dominique Vivant-Denon as quoted in Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 140. "The museum is not supposed to be a vain assemblage of frivolous luxury objects that serve only to satisfy idle curiosity. What it must be is an imposing school." Jacques-Louis David as quoted in McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 91.

[268]Louvre, "The French School," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/collec/ecolefr.htm (4 August 1997).

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described as "[a]nother strong feature of the Louvre collections."[269] The Italian School may be just another part of the collection but the French School "is" the Louvre.

The "official" Louvre web site, like most other virtual museums, works to maintain the pre-virtual historical significance of museums. "The Louvre Palace and Museum" link emphasizes the Louvre's place in the history of museums. "Established in 1793 by the French Republic, the Louvre Museum . . . is one of the earliest European museums."[270] Two reproductions allow the viewer to see that the Louvre has been "a museum for the last two centuries, the architecture of the Louvre Palace bears witness to more than 800 years of history." The left image by the Limbourg Brothers from *Les très riches heures du duc de Berry* or *The Book of Hours of the Duke of Berry* is of *The Month of October* and is owned by the Musée Condé at the Château de Chantilly [fig. 10]. This document presents a "history" that may appear more unmediated because it is not a part of the museum's collection. The text emphasizes the image's importance as part of the museum narrative by stating that the work includes "the Louvre of Philippe Auguste in the background." The image on the right depicts a painting by Giuseppe Castiglionne of *The "Salon Carré," in 1865, at the Louvre Museum.* Each digitized work stands in for a specific time in the history of the Louvre.

The Book of Hours of the Duke of Berry is one of two "Special Exhibitions" at the WebMuseum. The WebMuseum presents this group of reproductions as an exhibition by quoting particular museum practices. We even know that the show opened on 24 April 1994.[271] The WebMuseum frames these reproductions in a different way than the "official" Louvre. The Louvre uses the illuminated manuscript as documentary evidence

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[269]Louvre "The Italian School," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/collec/ecoleit.htm (4 August 1997).

[270]Louvre, "Two Centuries as a Museum, Le Louvre: palais et museé," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/musee.htm (9 August 1998).

[271]Nicolas Pioch, "WebMuseum: les trés riches heures du Duc de Berry," http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/rh/ (9 August 1998).

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of the physical museum's history. The "official" Louvre tries to offer the visitor a view of the museum's past while the WebMuseum claims to offer the visitor a unique look at otherwise unavailable objects. The WebMuseum text tells us that the "original Riches Heures manuscript is stored in the Chantilly museum, but is so degraded that it is no longer available to the public . . . except for WebMuseum visitors!" Pioch promises WebMuseum visitors the original but provides a digital copy that is like the reproductions that are widely available in art history texts and other sources. Despite this recontextualization of reproductions as originals, the WebMuseum does provide information on this Book of Hours that is not available on the "official" Louvre site. The WebMuseum provides information on the International Gothic Style and presents "documentation" of this material that includes links to "What is the Très Riches Heures?" "Who painted the Très Riches Heures?" "Who was their Patron?" and "How did they paint the Très Riches Heures?"[272] The WebMuseum presents the four quarters, or all twelve images, from this Book of Hours, while the "official" Louvre only presents one image.

The identity of most web museums isn't shaped by the availability of the museum's collection for virtual viewing. The "official" Louvre only presents ten images in their "The Major Works of the Oriental Collection" page.[273] The Louvre describes their on-line Islamic Art collection as "amongst the most important in the Western world," and then only presents an image of "Basin, known as the Baptistery of Saint Louis" and a "Horse Head Dagger."[274] The extremely small number of images that the "official" Louvre presents on its web site is uncommon for a museum of its size. There

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[272]Nicolas Pioch, "WebMuseum: les trés riches heures du Duc de Berry," http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/rh/ (9 August 1998).

[273]Louvre, "The Major Works of the Oriental Collection," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/collec/collecao.htm (10 March 1997).

[274]Louvre, "Islamic Art Section," http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/anglais/musee/collec/islam.htm (10 March 1997).

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are however, many museums that offer the user little access to images from their collections. On-line museums like the Imagebase of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco that offers the user access to over sixty thousand works are rare.[275]

Such rare virtual archives allow viewers to produce a "Museum without Walls" that is formed from the museum's holdings. The Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco currently offers users access to over fifty percent of its collection through its database of images. It intends to offer visitors virtual access to images of its complete collection. The users can produce their own exhibitions by performing a word search of the Imagebase. For instance, my search for the word "museum" generated more than one hundred images, or an "exhibition" that was based on this word. These search capabilities allow users to have an effect on the organization of the material that they access or even to reconfigure the contents of the virtual museum according to their needs. However, there are no web museums that provide a completely user-selected and user-generated virtual exhibition where works could be individually chosen from the collection and then reproduced on a page. This version of the virtual museum would facilitate a more open and interactive environment. Visitors to the "official" Louvre and the many other web museums encounter a site that remains structured because virtual museums resist creating a more fully engaging setting that would be less like the traditional museum.

A "correct" reading of virtual museums, like the "official" web Louvre, is still dependent on the visitors' experiences with physical museums because of these institutions' propensity for categorization and borders. A "correct" reading of the reproductions of the "major works" from the Louvre museum's collections is dependent on the viewer's understanding of the structure of the traditional museum and the conventions of art reproduction. The few images that are included in the "official" web Louvre offer a minimal amount of information about the works. The "label," or brief text

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[275]Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, "Imagebase," http://www.thinker.org/imagebase/instructions.html (9 August 1998).

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that appears below the reproduction, lists the author (if known), title, date, material, and dimensions. There is nothing that differentiates between the works, which are copies, and these texts. This lack of differentiation doesn't prevent virtual museums such as the "official" Louvre from continuing to privilege "objects" over words.

In the "official" Louvre's painting section, the pages dedicated to the major works from each of the schools only contain between three and eight reproductions. These reproductions are lined up as a series of horizontal pairs so that the collection forms a kind of vertical exhibition that can only be viewed by scrolling up and down. This form of viewing is very different from the process of lateral viewing that usually occurs in traditional museums. The viewer never can see all the pairs at the same time. The virtual viewer becomes engaged in a process of revealing the images and seeing the rest of the page by manipulating the browser's scroll bar. This process of revealment is heightened by the way that these reproductions are initially represented only by a detail. Visitors must click on the detail if they want to see the whole work.

The prevalence of cropped nude or partially naked women's bodies in the "official" Louvre's painting collections further emphasizes the voyeuristic tendencies of this web viewing process. The depicted bodies are cut into, pinned down, and left open to the view. Users may voyeuristically view the lush play of bodies in Rubens's *The Arrival of Marie de Medici at Marseilles* and the erotics of exposure in David's *The Rape of the Sabine Women* with little awareness of complicity because of the distanced relationship that the web viewing process affords.[276] The "official" Louvre site and many other virtual museums continue to promote the tastes of the traditional museum's collection, which contains many representations of women reclining, looking down, sleeping, half-dressed,

[276]This distanced web viewing position is produced by the way that the viewer seems to be held back by the screen. A number of sensual views of the male body, particularly from behind, could offer a space from which to perform another reading about the gaze and power relationships in the virtual museum. This reading would point to the possibility for a homoerotic gaze, or even a lascivious female viewing position, within the web museum.

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and nude.[277] Women are rendered as passive and available to the gaze within the museum setting, because of the preponderance of this type of portrayal. The virtual museum's continued production of these limited depictions of women's place in society is underlined by such overt manipulations as the one that occurs in the first image on the major French School paintings page.

The painting, which is identified in the text as being from the Fontainebleau School and titled *Gabrielle d' Estrée and Her Sister*, circa 1595, is shown in the most closely cropped detail [fig. 11]. The cropping focuses the viewer's gaze in on the hand of one sister as her fingers encircle the other sister's nipple. The complex image of the sisters' bodies and the lush background, which provides some context for the women, has been excised in favor of a view of one sister's breast. This revision of the image, which turns the work into an even more sexualized gesture where only the "good parts" are shown, is further complicated by the process of viewing on the web. Both the detail and the complete painting, which is accessed by clicking on the detail, become even more about sexually available female bodies because of the incremental way that most images appear on the web. The image, particularly the larger full image, appears as a slow striptease. The top of the painting appears first and is followed by more of the image until the whole image is portrayed. The web's process of loading images may be related to other voyeuristic views of the female body. For instance, this incremental show of the women's bodies should be related to peep show booths where viewers access a view of the strippers by feeding a slot machine. The screen is raised when the viewer pays, lowered when the money runs out, and raised when the fee is paid again. A similar series of unveilings occurs each time a viewer accesses a new image on the web.

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[277]Carol Duncan's argument about the modern art museum also applies to the larger museum field. She points out that there is remarkably little variety in the renderings of women even though museums are "crowded" with images of women. "Most often they are simply female bodies or parts of bodies, with no identity beyond their female anatomy-those ever-present 'Women' or 'Seated Women' or 'Reclining Nudes.' Or they are tarts, artist's models, or low life entertainers-highly identifiable socially but at the bottom of the social scale." Carol Duncan, "The Moma's Hot Mamas," in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 348.

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The browser's process of loading the image onto the computer screen, which suggests that a curtain or cover is being drawn back from the image, is echoed by the way that the drawn drapery within the painting reveals the sister's bodies for the entertainment of the viewer [fig. 12]. The voluptuous reds and shiny pinks of the fabric depicted in this painting form a curtained stage that frames the sisters' actions. The culmination of this striptease may be partially ruptured, since the viewer has already seen and possessed the sister's nipple on the previous page, but the overt stage-like construction of this view allows the spectator to dominate this image and visually possess these erotic objects.

The viewer's body is a necessary part of this composition. The viewer stands in for the painter and orchestrates the action inside the painting "stage" by commanding the picture to load and virtually "pulling" up the curtain. The placement of the two sisters in the foreground of the canvas can only be counterpointed by a necessary near far vertical when the viewer's body occupies the extreme foreground position. A diamond composition is formed when the viewer acts as a balance for the seated woman in the background. The triangular configuration that the artist employed is weakened because the bent woman is too small to balance out the painting.

A section of a painting within the painting that is just visible behind the red curtains reveals a pair of legs. The viewer's visual possession of these naked women is justified by the women's virtual possession of these legs. This series of views, like the presentation of women in many other paintings, is still coded as part of a masculine domain since none of the women in the painting have a view of these legs from their position.

The cropping of the painting within the painting down to a sliver of legs justifies the Louvre's own eroticized cutting of the image of the women down to a fondled breast. The tendency to crop images of women into a series of partial views, or immobilized parts, has been critiqued in a variety of feminist literature. Laura Mulvey has considered the practice of sadistically cutting and fetishizing women's bodies within Hollywood

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films but the manipulation of the woman's body in the web environment develops some new tendencies that were not considered by Mulvey.[278] The detail of *Gabrielle d' Estrée and Her Sister* focuses the user's attention on the process of virtual touching. As I have previously suggested, users of web browsers like Netscape move "their" white hand over images in order to access them. In this work, the viewer's hand moves across the painting of fingered breast and "touches" the image. This touch is a particularly effective simulation because hands and the process of touching are consistently foregrounded in these two images. The detail focuses the viewer's look in on the hand that touches the breast. In the full view, the curtains are clearly pulled back by the viewer's hands which allows "him" to be the master and possessor of the depicted space. The viewer moves beyond the role of static voyeur, the male visitor that draws the curtains in order to gaze upon these women, and gains a new mastery over these representations with this combination of web hand and empowered gaze.[279] A pleasurable view by female spectators is possible but not encouraged by the painting's system of women that choose to reveal themselves rather than look.

The simulated aspects of these optical views and tactile sensations can't remain completely transparent despite the Louvre's rendering of spatial positions and material experiences. These images appear to be cut out of and reproduced from some larger whole. Indeed, when clicked, the cropped images generate another reproduction. The use of details underlines the fact that these images are both digital photographs and reproductions. The codes of photography usually remain invisible, particularly in reproductions of paintings, so that the viewer looks at the painting rather than the reproduction. Rosalind Krauss reiterates Roland Barthes's theory about photography

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[278]Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 4th ed. eds. Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 746-757.

[279]The overwhelming emphasis on corporeality and touching in the web environment may be one reason that pornography sites are so prevalent and popular.

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when she states that "photography seems to offer a direct transparent relationship to experience" but this transparency can be framed by the cut which points to the fact that "if photography duplicates the world, it does so only in pieces."[280] The photographic basis of the Louvre site reappears because of these blatant crops of the painting's composition. The overall effect of the painting is altered and a new virtual museum is produced by "punching" a piece out of the image. At this moment, the photographic cut points to the reproductive basis of the virtual museum. When the viewer continues to click, the virtual museum cycles through a dizzying series of copies and copies of copies. When viewing images like *Gabrielle d' Estrée and Her Sister* the viewer vacillates between an almost realized ability to touch, simulated by the browser's use of the hand-pointer, and the photographic cut's ability to dematerialize this transparent access to experience. The virtual museum facilitates both mastery and loss. The viewer's position in these divergent experiences is in part dependent on personal desires.

Ironically, the reproductive aspects of the virtual museum are also figured by the prominent place that the *Mona Lisa*, referred to as *La Joconde* or *Monna Lisa*, plays in the "official" Louvre site. The presence or fame of this "unique" painting draws many people to the Louvre museum in Paris. As I have previously argued, the virtual museum often tries to bring the viewer to these moments of "realness" by providing virtual views that emphasize the objects and collections of the traditional museum. The simulation of materiality is rendered in this representation of the *Mona Lisa* by including the work's frame [fig. 13]. The frame seems intended to make this image of the *Mona Lisa* unique and "material." The frame grounds the image to the page or "wall" and allows the user to see the "real" *Mona Lisa*. The objectness or dimensionality of the image is heightened by the frame's cast shadow.

The hypertextual link to the image of the *Mona Lisa* is graphically separated from the other painting school links and is categorized according to a different method. The

[280] Krauss, "Stieglitz/Equivalents," 129 and 133.

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Mona Lisa is accessed from the "Magazine 'La Jaconde' " link rather than being included in "The Italian School" page. The prominent position of French art in the on-line Louvre site could be disturbed by featuring the *Mona Lisa*, by the Italian painter Leonardo da Vinci; however, the work's "label" doesn't even include his nationality. The organization of this painting suggests that the work transcends national identifications. The *Mona Lisa* acts as a stand-in for the Louvre and the Louvre is for many viewers a point of origin for the painting. The Louvre is, as Yahoo states, "home of the Mona Lisa."

The virtual museum's attempts to reinscribe the unique and aura-infused qualities of "real" objects are its greatest moments of failure. The *Mona Lisa* is continually twinned on the Louvre's web site. An image of the *Mona Lisa's* eyes is prominently displayed on the collections page.[281] Clicking on her eyes provides the user with a view of another, or whole, painting of the *Mona Lisa.* There are actually two links to the full image of the Mona Lisa painting from the painting collections page. The viewer can click on the view of the Mona Lisa's eyes or follow the textual "Magazine 'La Jaconde' " link. These links lead the viewer to different pages but each page contains a full image of the *Mona Lisa*. The three *Mona Lisa* representations, the detail of eyes and two full reproductions, collapse into each other but they do not reform a singular master work. These representations bring the viewer to a hybrid *Mona Lisa* that evokes the contestational array of virtual museums.

The splitting of the *Mona Lisa* into a series of images is echoed by the splits, mars, and tears that distort the unified surface of the digitized painting. These ruptures in the digital fabric of the painting force it to float in a disturbing position between "real" and reproduction. The codes of the photographic process, the "original" reproduction of the painting (if such a thing is possible), are not legible, but the traces of the act of

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[281] The important role of authentic sight in the virtual museum is emphasized by this depiction of eyes. The viewer clicks on these eyes and gains sight but then this "real" sight is canceled out with the appearance of more *Mona Lisas*. The usual reading of the painting is supplanted because the famous enigmatic smile of the *Mona Lisa* is literally cut out of this detail.

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painting are also not visible when this work is viewed on the web. There is actually damage to the *Mona Lisa*, which generates part of this mark, but the view of the digital painting develops its own series of ruptures.[282] As the image of the *Mona Lisa* appears on the screen it is already torn in two. There is a distortion which cleaves the image apart. The vertical gray-green line almost appears to be a tear in the "fabric" of the painting but the *Mona Lisa* is painted on a wood panel. The cut starts on the brown "wooden" frame and then draws down across the "painted" part of the image. The mark ends on the left side of the *Mona Lisa's* hair and is then picked up by a brown mark that is so faint that it is almost invisible. This part in the continuous surface of the digitized painting picks up the painted part in the hair. These divisions draw the viewer's attention to a series of other divisions that divide the digitized painting into a series of uneven quadrants.

I lean in to see these imperfections and my attention is drawn away from the subject of this digitized photograph, which is ostensibly the portrait of a woman. The glowing luminescent light which seems to emanate from the women's face, her almond eyes, the lips which seem to be pressed together until the pressure from this meeting forms the contours of her lower face, and her smile which is rendered illusionistically so that the space between her lips appears to have been cut by a knife rather than painted, are all lost to my fascination with these punctal marks. The painting dissolves into a series of computerized bits or dots when I lean in to identify this scar. The transparent plane of the reproduction is ruptured. The codes of painting, photograph, and digitalization are each confused and irretrievably commingled by the collapse of reproduction and original into the surface that they share.

The ability to view the *Mona Lisa* as an authentic art work, with a stable subject, is problematized by these punctal marks, the duplicate copies of the painting in the "official" Louvre web site, and the appearance of a variety of *Mona Lisas* on other web

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[282]An X-ray in Roy McMullen's book on the *Mona Lisa* shows that there is a crack in the panel which has been improperly overpainted. Roy McMullen, *Mona Lisa: The Picture and The Myth* (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 113. My thanks to Michael Allen Rooks for pointing me towards this citation.

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pages. My search for "Mona Lisa" using the search engine Alta Vista generated a list of links that included numerous reproductions of the painting, a *Mona Lisa* that blinked her eyes, a Mona Lisa bake shop, a couple who thought their child smiled like the *Mona Lisa*, and separate descriptions of a porn star and a cow that were both named Mona Lisa. The *Mona Lisa* has been reproduced in the popular press, quoted in advertisements and other mass media forms, and widely used as a source by artists. Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol have both made versions of the *Mona Lisa*. It is striking, although not at all surprising when considering the popularity of the work and the strong cultural links that are drawn between the painting and the Louvre museum, that the "official" Louvre features this painting. The *Mona Lisa* was hybridized into a collective work long before her representation appeared on the web. In fact, when Douglas Crimp wanted to find an example of Walter Benjamin's discussion of the depletion of aura, which we have all experienced, he described the *Mona Lisa*:

> We know, for example, the impossibility of experiencing the aura of such a picture as the *Mona Lisa* as we stand before it at the Louvre. Its aura has been utterly depleted by the thousands of times we've seen its reproduction, and no degree of concentration will restore its uniqueness for us.[283]

The depletion of aura may be an inevitable result of mechanical reproduction but the virtual museum still employs photographs, which stand in for paintings, in order to reinstall the authenticity of material objects in non-material domains. Crimp argues that contemporary photographic practice is deeply imbricated in the recuperation of the aura-infused object:

> [I]f the withering away of the aura is an inevitable fact of our time, then equally inevitable are all those projects to recuperate it, to pretend that the original and the unique are still possible and desirable. And this is nowhere more apparent than in the field of photography itself, the very culprit of mechanical reproduction.[284]

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[283]Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 112.

[284]Ibid.

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A consideration of most art books and catalogs shows that photographic reproductions of paintings and other works of art insistently work on this project of recuperating aura. Despite this drive, the persistent incorporation of such works as the *Mona Lisa* into the identity of the Louvre emphasizes the deeply reproductive spirit of this and other virtual museum entities.

The two full images of the *Mona Lisa* on the "official" Louvre web site, which seem to be alluded to by the detail of her two eyes, point to a division between the virtual museum and the traditional museum. The virtual museum is a structure that is based on reproductions, repetitions, and the consistent availability of multiple versions of objects. The *Mona Lisa* is bound to reappear in the virtual museum, but in the view of the traditional museum this work is still fixed in the Paris Louvre. The virtual museum and the many *Mona Lisas* are meant to stand in for the "real" museum and its objects without displacing them. However, these representations develop an unruly series of counter readings on-line. This suggests that the physical museum is in an interesting double bind where loss of aura occurs, whether the museum establishes a spatial representation of its site on-line or doesn't represent itself on the web. There are of course other strategies that are not organized around a desire for mimesis that the museum could employ on the web. The stable identity of the traditional museum, which attempts to sustain its identity by reenacting its structures on-line, is cyclically disordered by the way that its copies undo the authority of the original, and then reordered by the perpetuation of these traditional museum practices.

The Virtual Rise of Walls and the Loss of Art

I have considered the virtual museum as a "Museum without Walls" in this dissertation. On-line museums, such as the Kimbell Museum's web site, should be referred to as walls without art or walls without objects. In the virtual Kimbell Museum,

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clicking on the "gallery plan" link brings the visitor to a representation of a three-dimensional model of the museum. Clicking on one of the three galleries generates a bird's eye view into the gallery space. Despite promises that the gallery plan will provide the viewer access to both interior views and individual works, the visitor to the twentieth-century gallery encounters a virtual blockade that rises before the view of the object:

> The majority of images in this area are not viewable due to copyright restrictions. The rooms are available, however, to provide a complete architectural setting. The majority of the works in other areas of the gallery are fully viewable. These restrictions are due to financial and legal constraints imposed by the agent representing the artist's copyright.[285]

The Kimbell Museum provides two photographic views of the gallery walls from the twentieth-century gallery. In this exhibition hall, the frames of the paintings are depicted but the surface of the paintings and sculptures has been replaced by a gray ground.[286] This part of the Kimbell, as well as many virtual museum plans and architectural simulations, present walls rather than collections of artifacts. With the loss or displacement of material objects in the web museum, the mimetic walls and mapping systems become the exhibition and the collection.

The "official" Louvre's lack of a comprehensive collection of images, as well as the focus on maps and other delimiting plans, suggests that the web Louvre is about materializing walls and realizing boundaries that will produce the "real" Louvre's place in cyberspace rather than producing a virtual collection. Indeed, if the function of the physical museum is to provide access to authentic objects then the on-line museum may be walls, barriers, and defined spaces without museums. With the institution of these models of verisimilitude that fail to represent either the physical museum or the virtual space, the virtual museum has substituted "the signs of the real for the real."[287] A system

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[285]Kimbell Art Museum, "Gallery Plan: Twentieth Century," http://www.corbis.com/features/secure/kimbell/w55i.html (20 August 1997).

[286] Even the page backgrounds of this part of the Kimbell Museum on-line site foreground the wall. The ecru color and slightly nubby texture of these web pages evokes the fabric that covers many museum walls.

[287]Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," in *Simulacra and Simulation*, 2.

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of dysfunctional models is produced that when closely read works at nothing as well as the destabilization of the "real" that these models were produced to support.

Conclusion

The virtual museum on the web should provide the user with a "Museum without Walls." The reconfiguring properties of the "Museum without Walls" are partially disarmed by the many virtual web museums that insistently reproduce the stabilizing structures of the traditional museum on-line. Web museums remain, to a great extent, museums without bodies. The material body can't enter these settings and the user can't establish a spatial relationship with the web museum through objects. The web museum is a two-dimensional representation despite its spatial quotations and references to interactivity. The large number of people who access web sites suggests that there is a community of web museum users but these visitors usually remain invisible to each other.[288]

The social practices of the traditional museum may be disrupted by the lack of bodies and communities within the web museum setting. The traditional museum tries to order the visitor's movement through space, standardizes social routines, and reforms manners.[289] To consistently produce these behaviors, the museum must be populated and

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[288] Web museums use a variety of tactics to render the virtual museum as a communal space. For instance, the WebMuseum tries to suggest that it has a community by presenting the user with statistics about visitors. According to the opening page, The WebMuseum "is now welcoming 200, 000 visitors every week, delivering over 10 million documents!" Nicolas Pioch, "WebMuseum: Bienvenue! (Welcome from the curator)" http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/ (14 July 1997).

[289]Such authors as Duncan, Wallach, and Bennett discuss the regulating properties of the museum in their work. Duncan and Wallach "The Universal Survey Museum," and Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*. A number of authors, including Bennett, have discussed the panoptic-like social regulation that museums enforce on visitors. Foucault describes the panopticon as a system of power in which the prisoner's behavior is controlled and maintained by the possibility that a guard or other law enforcer is observing. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). In the work of contemporary theorists, including Bennett and Cartwright, Foucault's model of the panopticon is altered to include panoptic social regulation by community surveillance. In other words, community codes are maintained by a mutual understanding of social standards and the knowledge that the

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its codes enforced by guards or other visitors. The virtual web museum can't regulate behavior by equating visitor copresence to community surveillance and social regulation. Attempts to reinstall the ritual space of the museum through plans and other diagrams are not completely successful because web museums have no control over the user's movement. The web museum becomes an isolating and deregulated system with the dissipation of museum rules and the dirth of any markers of presence. David Ross applauds the dissolution of social pressures in on-line museums. Unfortunately, his vision of the new museum also offers a museum without dialogue, collaborative learning, social interaction, or objects:

> It's our job to let the public know there are artists out there making work that can be seen with no social pressure-you don't have to walk around a museum and maybe feel you don't know what's going on. You can visit it, like it or not, and leave.[290]

Visitors to the web museum are able to view reproductions and access information without the same regulatory procedures that are consistently enforced in most physical museums but other factors of identity formation are also dislodged. On a positive note, the inability to describe body, space, or place in relation to these on-line systems could allow active subjects to reconfigure the ways that their bodies are marked. If the dominant cultural notion of the body is itself a regulatory system that shapes how individuals and communities can read bodies then the lack of consistent rules for all on-line bodies could allow for the rewriting of what bodies can mean. The lack of a stable subject on the web can lead to both a promising postmodernist vision of fragmented identities and a troubling collapse of communities. The inability to confirm a user's identity has led to infighting, troublesome infiltrations, and even the dissolution of societies that base their cohesion on identity politics. There are still many overarching

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community itself is or could be watching. Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

[290]David Ross as quoted in David Coleman, "The Art Screen Scene," *Artforum* 34 (September 1995), 9.

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metaphors of bodily identity that are employed by web browsers and sites despite the often discussed promise that virtual settings will facilitate the deconstruction of normative constraints. The ability to rethink the cultural notion of body is hindered by the browser's rendering of white hands that can "touch" and manipulate, the gendered forms of address that are used in many web pages, and the fascination with making "bodies" (in particular, suggestively represented women's bodies) available for the gaze of users.

The "official" Louvre "exhibits" images in order to reconstruct material artifacts and physical environments on-line. However, the ever doubling Louvre site presents the museum and the museum's objects as ever reproduced copies or simulacra. The museum rejects its unauthorized reproductions, such as virtual museum clones like Nicolas Pioch's WebMuseum, because of its stake in maintaining the authenticity and uniqueness of its collection. Most physical museums that support on-line sites are resistant to producing these hybrid entities. The virtual Louvre museum is not produced by the French Ministry of Culture's "official" Louvre site or Nicolas Pioch's WebMuseum despite this drive to produce unique museums in virtual settings.

The presence of this hybrid Louvre is underlined by various usenet posts that connect the Louvre site in Paris with Nicolas Pioch's WebMuseum.[291] There is an irony in asking "Where Is the Louvre" because this question is most often asked, at least on usenet, about a defunct FTP site named the "Louvre" that offered the user access to an archive of erotic stories.[292] Pioch's ludic representation of lawyers and the hysterical focus on authenticity in the "official" Louvre's web site suggest that the shape of these sites is determined by their parasitic relationship to each other. These sites have formed a hybrid entity or a virtual museum that is produced by the conversation about identity that the two

[291]See for instance Duncan Coons, "Medieval Louvre Exhibit" soc.history.medieval, 16 September 1996. This post is available via DejaNews which archives usenet posts. http://www.dejanews.com (9 August 1998).

[292]FTP stands for file transfer protocol. It allows users to move files from one computer to another or from one network to another.

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share. These hybrid enactments that evoke Malraux's "Museum without Walls" are not a completely new type of museum. A "Museum without Walls" can be a malformed copy, or a self-reproducing system, that has been generated from a unique physically sited institution.

I have argued in the introduction to this dissertation that aspects of the virtual museum, particularly the on-line museum, destabilize the ability to conceive of the museum structure in relationship to such concepts as space, subject, and object. A great deal of the critical literature about the museum suggests that the museum creates meaning through a reliance on these terms. For instance, the museum presents itself as a purveyor of truth and knowledge because "individual," "unique," and "valuable" objects seem to provide the viewer with a link to a particular historical moment or a type of aesthetic enlightenment. In order to create its structuring narratives, the museum is dependent on the viewer's faith in the aura of objects and the visitor's ability to locate artifacts within the larger display apparatus. The virtual web museum presents a contradiction because it constructs itself through a culturally shared understanding of terms that have no definitional integrity on the web. The web museum's insistence on borders makes the categories and boundaries that are enforced in physical museums visible. The transparency of the museum and its unmediated views can be interrogated when the workings of the traditional museum are revealed. The "official" Louvre site and many other web museums unwittingly perform a kind of critique of the museum by causing a version of the traditional museum to malfunction.

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CHAPTER 3

HOW IS THE MOO (MULTI-USER OBJECT-ORIENTED WORLD) A MUSEUM?

> "Museum" therefore, is a word acquiring new significance as the twenty-first century gets nearer, and is likely to be a key term in the wider debate over what it means to live in an old continent. Not the museum in the narrow sense of particular building or institution, but as a potent social metaphor and as a means whereby societies represent their relationship to their own history and to that of other cultures. Museums, in this sense, map out geographies of taste and values, which is an especially difficult and controversial task when it is necessary radically to redraw the maps in response to major social change. Although some new museums are trying to develop a role for themselves which is future oriented and promotes innovation, the past is still the main concern.[293]

> I am writing this chapter while idling in the museum of a virtual world. Inside of this system I am intergender. Sometimes my virtual bodies are female but more often they are Spivak or either.[294] In any case, the boundaries of these body constructs are mutable, they are shaped by community conceptions, operator misperceptions, and my performance of what these alternative genders entail. I may be unusual because I logged on to these systems in order to find a place where the relationship between body and identities could be reconceived. I came to these systems in order to be fragmented. My body is simultaneously at the computer screen typing this text and located in this virtual world as a character. Although I am not presently logged on to other virtual worlds, other parts of me, a series of alternative selves, exists on other machines.[295]

Introduction

This chapter considers the textually constructed virtual museum of LambdaMOO and the users who construct their virtual bodies within this structure. The LambdaMOO museum is only one example of the many existing MOO, or multi-user object-oriented world, museums. Xerox originally ran LambdaMOO as part of a research project to

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[293] Robert Lumley, introduction to *The Museum Time Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*, ed. Robert Lumley (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 2.

[294] The "Spivak" gender is named after Michael Spivak. He is a programmer who has done extensive work with pronouns.

[295] Michele White, Unpublished Manuscript, 1997.

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design on-line spaces in which scientists could communicate.[296] The MOO is now supported by Stanford University and Placeware Incorporated. LambdaMOO has been internet accessible since October 1990 and currently has 5, 521 characters.[297] This population has visited the LambdaMOO museum more than 106, 000 times.[298]

The LambdaMOO community accepts this structure as a museum because it offers a high level of architectural verisimilitude and easy access to a variety of virtual artifacts. The MOO user is engaged in a complex museum script, or an "architecture of belief," which seems to solidify the museum's arrangement and supplant the need for a physical structure. Both the user of the MOO museum and the visitor to the traditional museum recognize these structures as museums because they employ a familiar architectural vernacular, even though this "architecture" is achieved through very different means. In the physical museum, this recognition is reified by the traditional museum's ability to present authentic objects and "unique" information. The virtual viewer is embedded in a ritualized structure which remains largely unexplained and without access to original or aura-imbued objects. There are problems defining such key museum terms as "object" in a way that fulfills all aspects of the MOO environment. This is quite different from the traditional museum which relies on a stable and culturally shared understanding of what bodies, objects, spaces, art, and viewers are in order to

[296]"MUDs, or 'Multi-User Dungeons,' are programs that accept network connections from multiple simultaneous users and provide access to a shared database of 'rooms', 'exits', and other objects. Users browse and manipulate the database from 'inside' the rooms, seeing only those objects that are in the same room and moving between rooms mostly via the exits that connect them. MUDs are thus a kind of virtual reality, an electronically-represented 'place' that users can visit." Pavel Curtis, "Muds Grow Up," Presented at the Third International Conference on Cyberspace, May, 1993, 2. ftp://parcftp.xerox.com/pub /moo/papers (4 May 1997).

[297]Pavel Curtis, "Mudding Social Phenomena in Text-Based Virtual Realities," Presented at the conference on Directions and Implications of Advanced Computing, sponsored by Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, 1992, 11. ftp://parcftp.xerox.com/pub/moo/papers/DIAC92 (5 May 1997). The number of players was obtained from the LambdaMOO system. telnet lambda.moo.mud.org 8888, ;length(players()) (21 July 1998). This and many other commands are only available to programmers.

[298]The number of museum visitors was obtained from the system. Keelah, LambdaMOO ;#50827.visitors (21 July 1998). This number is not exact because Keelah, the museum's programmer, only started counting visitors a few months after the opening of the museum.

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shape meaning. The stability of the LambdaMOO museum is fractured by these differences between the museum's script and its contents.

The role of the LambdaMOO museum is related to Robert Lumley's discussion of the rising significance of the term "museum" in cultural debates. The LambdaMOO museum provides the user with more than a sense of a physical building structure, it testifies to the worth of the virtual community, and it allows the MOO community to relate its own culture to that of the physical museum. The Lambda museum even has a history room with old newspapers and other documents which present the evolution of the MOO. Displaying individual works of art or visual material isn't part of the LambdaMOO museum's purpose. The LambdaMOO museum is designed to present the architectural language of the MOO and the means by which users can produce or reproduce the parts of the system. The LambdaMOO museum maps out one version of the tastes and values of the virtual community. Lumley is certainly correct in his argument that the reconceptualization of the museum in response to major social change is a difficult task but it is also certain that virtual settings often reinscribe the tastes and values of the traditional museum.[299]

The on-line MOO museum requires a new theory of spectatorship because it presents a quotation, or view, of a museum rather than a physical building structure that can be explored by the corporeal body of the viewer. These performative "views" destabilize the spectator's ability to access a factual narrative or to remain invested in the realness of the museum system.[300] Thus, the term "museum" and the traditional viewing body are redefined by the components of MOO environments. This chapter considers the

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[299]Lumley, introduction to *The Museum Time Machine*, 2.

[300]Judith Butler and others use the term "performative" to describe the ways that normative scripts, such as gendered behavior, can be destabilized through repetition. My reading is slightly different than Butler's because I am including willful acts as a form of the performative that people can employ. See Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York and London, Routledge, 1993) and Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds. *Performativity and Performance* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).

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aspects of this virtual spectatorship and shows the ways that virtual museums can constitute a kind of critical work on the traditional museum.

In order to show how MOO systems and museums redefine the constituent parts of the museum, this chapter includes an introductory outline of the basic parts of MOO culture. Logging in, character description, looking, speaking, gender, and other details of character creation are discussed. The layout of the MOO and the museum's place within this structure are related to character navigation and the structure's architectural vernacular. The reader and the body of the character reach the museum through this "architecture of belief." The discussion of the museum includes sections that describe the traditional aspects and aesthetic plan of the virtual museum as well as sections about the components that subvert this program by acknowledging the fragmented subjectivity and hyper-representational modes of the MOO environment. The relationship between subject and object, the placement of art within the MOO community, and the community's attempted formation and resistance to stable viewing subjects are considered. This chapter concludes with a consideration of the promise and problems of virtual museum subjects.

As discussed by many postmodern theorists and illustrated by the virtual communities of the net, the corporeal entity that we think of as our "body" is more contingent, fragmentary, and elusive than we may have previously expected. Virtual worlds are part of a growing network of cyborg-like organisms.[301] My use of the term "cyborg" is meant to emphasize the fractured and hybrid position of MOO users. Virtual communities, including MOOs, are amalgamations of technological interfaces, computer

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[301]"By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are all cyborgs . . . In the traditions of 'Western' science and politics - the tradition of racist male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of other - the relation between organism and machine has been a border war. The stakes in the border war have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination." Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in ***Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*** (New York: Routledge, 1991), 150.

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programming, and "real" bodies. This monstrous body, a space of fragmentation, confusion, and alternate realities, promises or threatens to destabilize embodied experience as we know it. After building and writing their bodies in cyberspace, users can see how they participate in constructing bodies in their local community. Users access virtual settings through the "information superhighway," a world wide communication network, where the boundaries of a community are determined by your access to a system rather than your proximity to a "real" location. While on-line a person is simultaneously sitting at a computer terminal and "somewhere" interacting with other characters in a communal setting.

Character Creation and Attributes

All users who log onto the host's computer see an initial welcoming screen. This screen gives you some information about the system and advice on how to handle yourself in this virtual world. If you decide to enter LambdaMOO you can either connect as a named character, which you have previously constructed, or you can connect as a guest. In either case you enter the virtual world with a specific identity. Many participants differentiate between RL (real life) and VR (the virtual world of the net) within MOO spaces. Virtual worlds have specific rules and codes that the participants collectively understand. On LambdaMOO these codes are outlined in a "help manners" document that is available to the general community.[302] Some users find it difficult to adjust to the idea of speaking about these structures as communities. There is no physically embodied interaction between people on-line and there is no specific "real" space in which

[302]One user's breach of the community's assumed codes of behavior is documented in an article about virtual rape. This early article on LambdaMOO chronicled the changes in the political system after this invasive occurrence. It is interesting to note that this portrayal of lawlessness and the community's reactions to virtual rape is what attracted many new users to MOO systems. Julian Dibbell, "A Rape in Cyberspace or How an Evil Clown, a Haitian Trickster Spirit, Two Wizards, and a Cast of Dozens Turned a Database Into a Society," *The Village Voice*, 21 December 1993, 36-42.

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interactions take place. These virtual worlds are completely text-based. All communication is accomplished through descriptions that appear on the screen.

The first thing that someone creates on the MOO is a character. The attributes of a character, the way that character looks, the character's gender, the objects it carries, and the descriptions by which a character navigates through space can be adjusted and readjusted at will.[303] Descriptions appear to construct "real" people or any one of a number of animate, inanimate, or otherworldly figures. Some of the writers of detailed "personal ads," and a segment of the LambdaMOO community, want to believe that these descriptions mimic the "real" as carefully as possible.

Character descriptions and other options that users can set are a way of alleviating the narrow-bandwidth which these spaces supply.[304] Narrow-bandwidth means that there is only a limited amount of information that the system is capable of providing. The wealth of data that occur in face-to-face communication including facial gestures, tone of voice, and body movements must be communicated textually.[305] The belief in the society of VR is sustained by the behavior or performance of the participants.

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[303]The attachment to individual characters was illustrated during an event on LambdaMOO. The names database was being reloaded so people could not access their characters unless they knew the character's object number. Countless Lambda regulars were logged on hysterically looking for someone to help them get their character number; they were fairly desperately searching to reacquire their regular character despite the fact that the logon screen assured them that the names database would soon be reloaded. They kept going around identifying themselves as their character name, trying to move outside of their guest identity and have someone recognize them as their "real" on-line persona. This on-line persona is identifiable to regulars within the system because of its stable name and identification number. The specifics of someone's persona are very important to people on-line because this is one way that they can be "recognized."

[304]Another way that people on-line try to circumvent narrow-bandwidth is through the use of smiley faces. These pictograms, formed from keyboard characters, run the gamut from simple expressions like happy :) and sad : (to more elaborate drawings like someone with glasses on sticking out their tongue 8^P.

[305]A discussion of bandwidth and virtual communities occurs in Allucquère Roseanne Stone, "Virtual Systems," in *Incorporations*. Her discussion of virtual communities and their potential for reordering notions of singular identity is further elaborated in Allucquère Roseanne Stone, *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1995).

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MOOs, MUDs, and other virtual communities offer a liminal or fluid space where the accepted conventions of the "real" world can be rewritten by the opacity of the screen. Verifiable information about the other people who are on-line is difficult if not impossible to acquire. The screen provides access to the textual world of the net. This surface doesn't provide a transparent door into the other participants' homes. The opacity of the screen, the inability to read the "real," is often denied by the transparency of structures within the virtual community. While there is no access to the "real" physiognomy of individuals, there is a heightened access to all spaces, descriptions, and attributes of the virtual world.

The MOO system defines characters as objects. "Objects are the fundamental building blocks of the MOO. Every object has a unique number, a name, an owner, a location, and various other properties."[306] This means that all things on the MOO, including rooms, characters, and manipulable things, are objects and have a unique "object" number. The relationship between subjects and objects in physical environments, and even feminist critiques of the gaze, may be problematized by the terminology and code of these virtual domains. This reconceptualization of the "object" has a significant effect on traditional museum viewing structures which rely on a significant difference between subject and object. These new designatory categories, which place all subjects into the object category, also appear to radically change the way that objectification functions as part of a cultural system of power. Unfortunately, systems of power are often reified by MOO programming and community standards.

Participants must gaze at bodies in order to "see" the way that characters are constructed in MOO systems. Users can see what a character looks like by typing any one of a number of commands. The most common way to see someone would be by typing "look <character name>." Characters don't have to be in the same room in order to be

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[306]This definition was obtained from the system by typing "help objects" on LambdaMOO (25 June 1998).

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viewed.[307] Most characters have an option which informs them that a character is "looking" at them. This looking can become invasive. Users often receive messages that characters are looking at them across the MOO. Some characters use long distance looking as a way to find appropriate net sex partners. Consistent and inexplicable bouts of being looked at suggests that character attributes are being tabulated and patrolled by the larger community. The operator and character exist within a kind of panopticon.

The programming decision to associate information inquiries with the "look" verb institutionalizes gazing on MOOs. Characters need to "look" in order to navigate the system with ease. The stress on looking and the community's investment in making characters visible would appear to be in reaction to the textuality of these domains. The process of reading text is supplanted by an ideology of looking and seeing. The visual is the privileged term in these communities.[308] It is perhaps not surprising, considering the

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[307]Typing "@scope abraxas" generated the text, " 'abraxas',#42395 is programmer Abraxas, a male #49900 Sick's Sick Player Class. Aliases are Abraxas, Aplysia, Abrax, brax, Abx, abr, Rax, T-B, Trouble-Maker, braxy, Abraxas!, Wary_Guest, abraxas-3, abraxas-4, abraxas-5, abraxas-6, abraxas-8, abraxas-9, abraxas-10, abraxas-11, Abraxas*, Abraxas-1, braxie, abraxas-12, Abraxas_, Abraxas~, Abraxas-, abraxas-2, and SaintGenet. And he owns 12 thing(s): Abraxas has a total building quota of 50,000 bytes. His total usage was 46,383 as of Sat Apr 29 02:03:49 1995 EDT. Abraxas may create up to 3,617 more bytes of objects, properties, or verbs. DESC: 'A slim 5'9 fellow who enjoys biking, golf and Windows programming. So go ahead and ask: "What do you do for fun?" (hmm) I enjoy watching . . . '.He is carrying 9 things. He is at #43216, Abracadabra and has been idle for 5 minutes." Typing, "@peruse Darkdancer's_RoboSuck" produced "Darkdancer's_RoboSuck(tm) (#85473) :: Programmer :: Parent #87687 Sculpted out of an intarnishable, indestructable steel, this robotic apparatus glistens with a twighlight-blue sheen, that pains your eyes to stare into for very long. Although it looks as though it could not have come from anything of this world, there is something strangely creature-like, almost human about the protrusions and crevices. A panel is unlatched at the side, baring a small glimpse of a matrix of wires and switches, that are the intestines. The beauty and ambiguity of this unit tempt your curiosity, compelling you to keep looking, despite the intense throbbing in your eyes. You decide to move around and study more of its immaculate details. Horror fills you as you discover an opening, spilling blood and flesh, through which shapes and bits of human sexual organs can be identified. It is alone in The Happy Garden (#61234). Darkdancer's_RoboSuck(tm) was last connected Wed Oct 9 13:22:18 1996 EDT. The time in Darkdancer's_RoboSuck(tm)'s town is 8:25pm. Contents: Key Rock (#84584), pomegranate (#48752), Fist Me shirt (#4078), black lace panties (#36248), black orchid (#92798), shrooms (#83651), The Book of Dark Visions (#4462), Lulu (#13880), one euphoric moment of happiness (#14518)." Typing "look faulkner" generated the text, "Faulkner. an overworked college man seeking relaxation t-shirt and a pair of baggy jeans as well as a pair of size 18 tenis shoes. He is awake, but has been staring off into space for a minute." LambdaMOO.

[308]Users who have met other participants "IRL," or in real life, maintain a level of respect or even awe within MOO communities.

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vernacular of these systems, that participants often comment that they "haven't read anything lately."

"Speaking" is also facilitated by writing in these systems. Innuendo based rewritings of other character's "speech" and fast and furious word play are spurred by the tenacity of typos in real time typing. Two of the most common means of communication are "emoting" and "saying." The "say" command means that statements will be prefaced with the statement, "<character name> says." The say command is associated with speech. The help system describes emoting as "non-verbal communication with others in the same room." [309] Characters can use emotes to describe their feelings and actions because the text appears as "<character name> <statement>."

One programmed trait of all characters is gender. Gender choices on the MOO include: neuter, male, female, splat, Spivak, royal, plural, 2nd, either, and egotistical.[310] All users must select a gender for their character but features such as race, the age of the user, and the user's socio-economic class need not be chosen or indicated in the character description.[311] The system provides information on gender when a character "looks" at another character. Gender can also be accessed via a series of commands. When one character pages another, a pre-programmed message appears followed by the statement, "she (he, it, . . .) pages, <message>." When asked why the system limits gender choices

[309] This definition was obtained from the system by typing "help communication" on LambdaMOO (19 April 1999).

[310] LambdaMOO users can obtain a definition of the Spivak gender and a list of pronouns by typing "help Spivak." This description was written by the character Velvet and was then edited and implemented by the wizard Nosredna. The complete version of Velvet's Spivak FAQ is available from Phaedrus, "The -Official- SpivakFAQ," http://www.jacksonville.net/~phaedrus/spivak.html (13 August 1998). There is currently no description of such untraditional genders as splat and egotistical. The specifics of each intergender category and their distinguishing qualities are occasionally argued by members of the community. There is no consensus on how any of these categories relate to physical traits. On PMC-2, the MOO that was sponsored by *Postmodern Culture*, the gender "grrl" and "person" were added to the gender choices. This MOO is now supported by the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia. telnet hero.village.virginia.edu 7777 (9 May 1997).

[311] Users who don't set their gender by typing "@gender <gender>" will have their gender remain as "neuter." If a character sets their gender to something other than the one of the ten gender choices then the system uses "neuter" pronouns. A few characters have circumvented the neuter pronominal markers by programming their own set of gender pronouns.

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by assigning pronouns to characters, most programmers argue that the system's generation of texts, such as the one just quoted, "require" pronouns. Gender marking is believed to be necessary, even in English language MOOs, in order to facilitate natural language parsing. But obviously, with some textual awkwardness, the character's name could be substituted for all pronominal markers.

Multi-user object-oriented worlds are often viewed as open arenas for gender play even though MOO programming insistently marks gender as an attribute of all characters. The possibility of selecting non-binary gender positions has been read, by a group of academics and on-line participants, as an opening up of the repressive societal fixation on the male/female dichotomy. For the character Szara, the virtual environment offers a space in which to reconsider familiar gender representations:

> From my very first days online I was smacked in the face with my own preconceived notions of what was "male" and "female" and (ack) "appropriate" behaviors, thoughts and feelings. I had no idea I held many of the ideas I found that I held. My online experiences have truly opened my eyes, so to speak. I think these types of learning experiences . . . or the chance to really challenge (and change!) your own thinking in "big" areas like these are rarely found IRL.[312]

The intergender categories of Spivak and splat provide a communal space for individuals such as Li2CO3. Such characters don't ideologically fit into the binary "norm."

> I like Spivak because I'm attracted to marginality as part of a critical way of viewing reality. When I was thinking about them I held up traditional socially given gender roles and decided against them. I really wanted room to play with my identity, to determine who I was rather than have a definition imposed from outside of me. I guess a RL androgynous appearance helped me out towards this way of thinking, yeah and probably exclusion from lots of group activities.[313]

Judith Butler's discussion of "willful" gender performativity should have a sobering effect on any hope that MOO systems offer a free space for identity formation. "Such a willful and instrumental subject, one who decides *on* its gender, is clearly not its gender from the start and fails to realize that its existence is already decided *by*

[312]Szara, LambdaMOO on-line Newsgroup, *Grrl, 25 August 1995.

[313]Li2CO3, LambdaMOO on-line Newsgroup, Message 19 on *SpivakNews, 12 July 1996.

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gender."[314] The enforcement of gender identities as part of character formation in virtual communities may only increase users' investment in discovering binary gender roles. Most users of these systems choose to define themselves as either male or female even though there are ten programmed gender choices. Intergender identified characters often receive hysterical demands that they reveal their "real" gender. Some members of the community insist that binary gender labels should be attached to alternative genders. An addition to an on-line MOO newsgroup reproduces a commonly shared belief about intergender identification. "Periwinkle_Guest [to Plaid_Guest]: So, r u a male it, or a female it?"[315] Through this device members of the MOO community construct binary identity on top of liminal gender positions.

Architecture and LambdaMOO's Designer

Some members of the MOO community are attached to conventional roles and representations, including characters who appear to identify their "real" binary gender, realistic descriptions, character messages that announce when a character enters and leaves a space, traditional conversational structures that begin with a form of greeting and end with a goodbye, and the use of established architectural vernaculars in room descriptions, because these behaviors appear to make the fractured aspects of MOOs legible. Members of virtual worlds construct textual versions of familiar architectural types, including museums, so that visitors to these spaces will not become disoriented. New MOO visitors who lose track of which guest character they are manipulating can be placed back into alignment by expressing this confusion, "Red_Guest wonders who he is," and by the way that cozy MOO spaces mirror personal home spaces.

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[314]Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, x.

[315]Periwinkle_Guest, LambdaMOO on-line Newsgroup, Message 677 on *Quoted-Out-Of-Context, 10 August 1995.

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LambdaMOO has the feeling of both a suburban home and a metropolis because of the many architectural vernaculars that are quoted on the MOO. The coat closet, where guests and roomless characters arrive when they logon, and living room are among the most likely places for members of the community to congregate.[316] It is common knowledge among the LambdaMOO population that the core of the house, which includes the living room, dining room, and kitchen, was designed to represent the "archwizard" and programmer Pavel Curtis's real house in Palo Alto. The name Pavel Curtis generates reverence, fear, and mockery on the MOO. The larger LambdaMOO community is aware of the overlap that exists between the "real" world of Pavel Curtis and the virtual architectural spaces which they inhabit. One of Pavel Curtis's characters on the MOO is named Lambda. LambdaMOO is thus clearly coded as Pavel Curtis's project both on-line and off. Curtis's reproduction of his personal space, instead of a more neutral house, suggests that he is magnanimously allowing all these characters to enter his home. If this is his home then people have to think of themselves as guests, a class of citizen that is much maligned through all MUDs and MOOs, and the populace may be asked to move on at any time. The close relationship between LambdaMOO and Pavel Curtis also highlights his special powers. The LambdaMOO experiment, like all other MOOs, could be canceled at any time. The community's fear that LambdaMOO might disappear is supported by persistent rumors, system crashes that make the community inaccessible, and the disappearance or restructuring of such MOOs as World, PMC, and River.

With the move from Palo Alto to cyberspace and from tactile space to textual space there are changes in terminology. The LambdaMOO space is often referred to as a "mansion." This terminology works to explain the overwhelming size of the MOO, which is composed of 11, 314 rooms, and its logic doesn't negate the aggrandizing connotations

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[316]Once a character uses the command "@sethome <room #>" they arrive in that room rather than the coat closet after logging on.

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of the term.[317] When Pavel Curtis moves from "real" space to cyberspace his house becomes a "mansion" and his programming becomes "wizardry." Part of Pavel Curtis's mystique may be the way that his residence has somehow slipped into cyberspace.

Navigating Towards the Museum

The Lambda museum is part of the larger series of rooms that exist within the confines of the MOO. MOOs are structured as a series of interlocking rooms. Whether constructed to "look" like homes, universities, or otherworldly environments, all MOOs provide particular spaces where characters can go to access on-line documents. Most of the MOOs that I have visited have a library; the construction of museums is also a common phenomenon. It is not coincidental that virtual communities have constructed spaces in which their own particular kinds of history can be documented.[318] Those who oppose MOOs and other on-line social spaces argue that these structures have no value, waste the limited resources of the internet, and can be dangerous to users because of their addictive qualities.[319] One way that MOO designers resist these negative views is by connecting these social spaces to such valued structures as museums.

You can "walk" to the LambdaMOO museum from the living room which is the main hub of the house. Walking to the museum would mean moving through a series of

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[317]My thanks to John Bump for this total. (10 December 1998).

[318]The invitation to the opening of the LambdaMOO museum clearly states that it intends to document the history of the community. "LambdaMOO evolves quickly, new and interesting objects are designed and old objects fall into disuse, so it is often quite difficult to get a feeling for the history of the MOO or the provenance of the objects which it contains. The LambdaMOO Museum (#50827) has been set up to house and document representations of objects which have been important in the evolution of LambdaMOO. Periodically, new objects will be added to the museum's collection, so that MOOers will be able to keep track of the changes in MOO life as they happen." Keelah, Quoted from "Grand Opening of LambdaMOO Museum," LambdaMOO, read #51412, (20 November 1996).

[319]The museum acts as a reply to testimonies like, "I was thinking about it today and I realized that I was spending more than 8 hours a day MUDding, skipping classes and ignoring homework in favor of all the socialisation of the MUDs. It also hit me that I was going to flunk out of college if I didn't stop it. I'm addicted bad." Garth Minette, as quoted in Richard Bartle, *Interactive Multi-User Computer Games*, 1992, 320. ftp://parcftp.xerox.com/pub/moo/papers (5 May 1997).

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hallways and rooms. A character can walk through a space when the user types a set of compass directions, such as north, s, e, w, ne, or a character can move somewhere by "teleporting," "@go <room number>," directly to that location. The room's name, description, objects, and a list of the characters present scrolls up the screen when a character enters a space. Additional information about a room may be accessed by typing such commands as "@examine <room number>."

Users who walk to the LambdaMOO museum first encounter a wide variety of architectural types. The museum is located on a multi-use floor. This floor of the mansion includes a university where people can learn about role playing games, a library that offers books on a number of subjects, a bookstore that allows people to teleport via the book as metaphor, individual player rooms, and a men's and women's rest room. All of LambdaMOO may become a house museum, a museum structure that has a live-in curator or other residents, because the museum is an integral part of the mansion. LambdaMOO becomes a kind of museum, and the whole MOO system can be viewed through the contextualizing brackets of the museum.

The Traditional Museum

Foyer

Cool marble launches twenty feet from pure white floor to vaulted ceiling. Gargoyles peek around corners watching scurrying attendants in blue starched uniforms.

All around the room are fine paintings hanging on the wall. The pictures are of the finest quality bordered with golden frames. Haakon, TheCat, Slartibartfast, ur-Rog, Rincewind, Heathcliff, Sprout, Ho_Yan, Geust, Nosredna, and Bits gaze down at you with eyes that seem to follow you as you walk. Seemingly out of place are little computer panels below each picture. There is a sign by the panel that says to find out about a wizard, type "press <wizard>" or look at the picture.

In the center of the room is a huge map of the museum. To find out what else is in the museum, type "look map". To the north is the observatory (just finished). There is a spiral staircase leading down in the corner of the room. The museum is heated by a small vent recessed in the floor. In the center of the room is a podium upon which sits a registry and quill pen.

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Sitting on a table between two arches on the east wall is a dictionary. There is a thick wooden door that goes back to the south.[320]

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                  . . . . . . . . . . . . .
                .                           .
              .      Museum Observatory       .
            .                                   .
+-------------+------+........+----+-----------------------+
|             +                    |                       |
|  Generic                         +                       |
|  Objects    +                           History          |
|             |                    +                       |
+-------------+                    +-----------+-----------+
|             |     LambdaMOO      |           |           |
|             +      Museum        +           +           |
|  Generic            Foyer                                |
|   Rooms     +                    +  Player   +  Feature  |
|             |                    |  Classes  |  Objects  |
|     +-------+-+  +-+      +-----|           |           |
|     |            |        |||||||           |           |
|     |  Gift Shop |        |Stair|           |           |
+-----+------------+-+    +-+-----+-----------+-----------+321
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The LambdaMOO museum is comprised of the foyer, generic objects room, generic rooms room, history room, feature objects room, player classes room, museum observatory, catacomb, and gift shop. All of the rooms except for the gift shop were "built" by the programmer Keelah.[322] The museum even has a curator. Keelah often switches to his second or Curator character when he discusses the museum with visitors. The museum proper was built in December of 1992. The gift shop and the catacomb, or role playing game room, were added during the summer of 1994.[323] The museum

[320]Keelah, from the "Foyer" description, LambdaMOO, @go #50827 (4 April 1995).

[321]Keelah, LambdaMOO, @go #50827, look map (4 April 1995).

[322]Keelah's description even highlights his role in the production of the museum. "Keelah is the designer and creator of many LambdaMOO icons including the LambdaMOO Museum and others." @peruse Keelah (5 May 1997).

[323]The Gift Shop was changed into the "Estate Sale Booth" in April 1997. This renovation is still underway and is part of plans to expand the museum. The Estate Sale Booth contains generics and other important objects that were not recycled when the characters who owned these objects were reaped. A character is "reaped" after four months of inactivity. The character and the character's possessions are removed from the system. These objects are grouped together so that they can be claimed by programmers who are interested in maintaining them. The command "help reaping" explains this process. "The present reaping policy is to reap any player and all eir owned objects who has not logged in for four months . . . If an about-to-be-reaped player has objects that are deemed of 'significant worth' (objects with children owned by others, public objects with many verbs and obviously a lot of effort put into them, objects which

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observatory, constructed in October of 1994, is the most recent addition to the museum. The observatory is programmed to replicate the "real" weather of Keelah's town.[324] Through this weather feature the museum echoes Keelah's life in the same way as the core of LambdaMOO mirrors Pavel Curtis's home.

The LambdaMOO museum architecture, like that of traditional physical museums, imposes a certain order on viewers and makes them behave in a particular manner. The familiar "high" architectural conventions of the LambdaMOO museum, and its ordered spaces that don't provide easy access to rooms, works against the MOO museum's ostensible function which is to present easy access to information about the various types of objects available in the system. The LambdaMOO museum creates a ritual for viewers by providing a specific way that characters must move through the space and by suggesting that rooms maintain particular kinds of embodied experiences. Through these conventions the LambdaMOO museum produces a ritualized script that supports the "architecture of belief" of the structure:

> [T]he museum itself-the installations, the layout of the rooms, the sequence of collections-creates an experience that resembles traditional religious experiences. By performing the ritual of walking through the museum, the visitor is prompted to enact and thereby to internalize the values and beliefs written into the architectural script.[325]

In the LambdaMOO museum, this ritual is implemented by the sequential way that characters must move through the museum. The teleport command usually allows characters to move to almost any location without having to "walk" through intervening rooms. However, an attempt to use the teleport command, and subvert the museum's plan, puts the character back into the foyer and generates the statement, "A security guard

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have become central to LambdaMOO culture by virtue of their location in a centrally connected area such as the living room or dining room) these objects may be offered to other players as caretakers for said objects. If no caretakers are found, these objects will be deleted despite their worth."

[324]All numbers and dates were provided by Keelah from statistics which he accessed for this author. Keelah, Personal interview with Michele White, LambdaMOO, 25 November 1994.

[325]Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," 450-451.

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stops you and says, How did you get in here . . . you have to start from the beginning!" The "architecture of belief" of the LambdaMOO museum, which forces the user to experience the virtual museum as a linked series of rooms, is strengthened by this ritual script. The LambdaMOO museum programming makes insistent the processional experience of the space. The viewer must enter the museum through the foyer and move from this room into one of the connecting spaces. In order to go to rooms on the same side of the museum plan the viewer must continually traverse the foyer. If a player wanted to go from the generic objects room to the generic rooms room, that character would have to go back out into the foyer and then enter the second room. This movement is time-consuming and repetitive. The ordering of spaces forces the character to participate in the performance of the museum's ritual.

The programming of the LambdaMOO museum space brings the viewer to confront an architectural order. The unbounded spaces of the linked, but not insistently proximal, virtual environment are made into a traversable plan by the LambdaMOO museum. This plan would appear to regulate the body of the viewer in a way that evokes the traditional museum's practice of ordering the visitor's movement, standardizing social routines, and reforming manners. The programming in the LambdaMOO museum foyer enforces boundaries. It is through this regulation that a defined and mannered virtual viewer may be described:

> In fact, since the originary enclosures, the concept of boundary has undergone numerous changes as regards both the facade and the neighborhood it fronts. From the palisade to the screen, by way of stone ramparts, the boundary-surface has recorded innumerable perceptible and imperceptible transformations, of which the latest is probably that of the interface. Once again, we have to approach the question of access to the City in a new manner. For example, does the metropolis possess its own facade? At which moment does the city show us its face?[326]

In the MOO museum, boundaries can't be justified by the physical limits that a space imposes on the viewer's body. The restrictions to the body that are ordinarily

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[326]Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension*, trans. Daniel Moshenberg (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 12.

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imposed by facades, steps, curbs, floors, walls, and furniture are disabled by the virtual environment, even if textual descriptions of these markers sometimes remain. Materially built space is made into a container and contextually demarcated by the architectural brackets of face and facade. In the MOO environment, boundary is not linked to face or facade by any architectural vernacular. The defining characteristic of MOO rooms is not a facade vocabulary of doors, exterior walls, and entrances. Virtual rooms are usually conceived of as a set of interiors. There is almost never any text that allows the user to move towards a wall and use a doorway to enter or exit a room. Rather, the user is almost always "inside."

The "facade" of LambdaMOO (an exterior structure which may act as a screen) and indeed the facade of all MOOs may be the text on a logon screen. This "welcoming" text presents a list of rules and warnings rather than a view of the city or community environment. The logon screen should be viewed as a sign at the virtual city limits. It functions as a false front that doesn't reveal the interior architectural or social functions of the system. MOO logon screens provide a fixed entrance, users always encounter the same text when they access a particular system, but once characters logon they "enter" a variety of spaces. Characters choose where they first "appear" in the system, or their first view after logging on, by setting their "home" for a specific room. MOOs seem to have a facade, because all the characters on a MOO access the same logon screen, but there is no stable face. The face of the MOO, the point that the city is revealed, is dependent on where characters enter the system and this face shifts drastically because characters have different entrance points.

Contrarily, the LambdaMOO museum highlights its face through programming, which makes all characters enter the museum in the same way, while downplaying its facade. The face of the LambdaMOO museum, the introductory structure that shapes meaning, reveals the institution's structure, and marks the space as a museum, is the interior of the foyer, even though the museum's entrance would be through the corridor

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that also opens up onto the bookstore. "[T]his east-west corridor is a bit shabby, with peeling wallpaper and flaking paint. An ornately decorated wooden door leads to the north. A plaque beside the doors says, 'LambdaMOO Museum.'"[327] The corridor entrance is perhaps too low brow for the museum's purpose.

The distinct "high" architectural attributes of the LambdaMOO museum are reinscribed with each traversal of the foyer. This happens because the text that describes the museum foyer's attributes scrolls across the screen every time you enter the space. What is not textually present in the LambdaMOO museum structure is the run down suburban feeling that many of the other public rooms maintain. The museum space is a sanctum from the abundance of restless characters that lurk in the public rooms of Lambda house. The foyer is a place of echoing silences. A character's movement through the LambdaMOO museum causes other museum visitors to experience footfalls. We are told that the LambdaMOO museum is constructed from marble which is cool and pure. The vaulted heights and the white surfaces are designed to lend a grand air to the feats of programming that are memorialized inside. The textual description of a "vaulted ceiling" creates a quite different space than the intimate sunniness of the living room.

The fine "paintings" of the wizards, the programmers who control the running of the MOO, are bordered with golden frames. These objects provide a view of the ennobled wizards when the user types "look <name of wizard>." The framed portraits are designed to reinscribe a hierarchical system that was supposed to be alleviated with the institution of a "democratic" government. The visitor to the LambdaMOO museum foyer is under the watchful eyes of the wizards who gaze "down" at the interloper. This regulatory gazing suggests a heightened version of panoptic looking, as discussed earlier in this chapter, that all characters employ. The watchful gaze of the painted wizards may suggest to characters that they are also being observed by wizards in other MOO situations. This

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[327]Groundskeeper, from the "Corridor" description, LambdaMOO, @go #19811 (21 October 1996).

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seemingly paranoid proposal may ring true in virtual worlds where wizards often traverse their territories unobserved while spying on other characters. The lack of control that this surveillance suggests is further echoed by the character's performance within the museum. The unsuspecting visitor who looks at anything is described in these terms, "<character name> stares in awe at one of the museum displays." Veneration is programmed into the character's experience.

The LambdaMOO museum's architectural quotations, which allude to royal banquet halls, Gothic churches, fine art museums, and libraries, suggest that something of importance, something of artistic or intellectual value, is contained within the walls of this structure. This reference to "value" is emphasized by the display of paintings in the foyer which have "golden" frames. The inclusion of paintings may make a specific reference to Keelah's interest in relating his structure to the fine art museum. Despite these allusions, the diversity of objects presented and the eccentricity of much of the material links the MOO museum to *cabinets de curiosités* and *Wunderkammern*. These earlier strategies of collecting, which are considered to be the prototypes for modern museums, incorporated an array of curiosities rather than only assembling objects with intrinsic "artistic value."

The objects on "display" in the LambdaMOO museum include rooms, room exits, player classes that allow characters to perform certain actions, features that provide users with additional commands, puppets, containers, packages, signs, furniture, clothing, and food. The objects presented by the LambdaMOO museum are not owned by that institution. These objects are the generic building blocks of the community, programs that can be copied by characters and used to create further manipulable parts of the system, rather than the traditional museum's authentic aura-imbued objects. So, the museum displays "objects" but these programmed things are of a very different order than the artifacts that are owned by the traditional museum.

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The linguistic construction of the LambdaMOO museum in terms of "high" architectural conventions and its ordered spaces that don't provide easy access between rooms works against the LambdaMOO museum's ostensible function, which is to present easy access to the various types of objects that can be copied. If a person wanted to build a type of room or commodity they could go to the LambdaMOO museum to see what programmed objects were available for copying and reprogramming. Keelah, the programmer who built the LambdaMOO museum, explains his project as, "I constructed the different 'rooms' so it would be easier for programmers to find the generics that were available . . . thus reducing the need to reinvent the wheel."[328]

What Keelah accomplishes is the insistence on the inventions of programmers rather than their reinventions. The function of this structure, as a system that points progammers towards MOO code, is not necessarily antithetical to his choice of the museum as his structuring instrument. "I didn't want it to be like a library, I wanted it to be more like a museum to 'honor' the creator of the object."[329] A "registry" in the LambdaMOO museum foyer lists the programmers with objects "on display." This registry is certainly related to the lists of donors which appears on the walls of many traditional museums. The fragmentation of authorship that might happen on the MOO, where one object is rewritten and made other by a different programmer, is diverted by the registry's list of firsts.

The LambdaMOO museum serves a special purpose for those programmers who are aware that object numbers, available through the museum apparatus, can provide access to code. By not telling users that they can access the code of an object with commands like '@show," "@list," "@verbs," and "@examine" the museum privileges those who know. The LambdaMOO museum favors programmers, like the ones that it is

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[328]Keelah, Personal interview with Michele White, LambdaMOO, 25 November 1994. All ellipsis in this and the following interview are Keelah's.

[329]Ibid.

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already memorializing on the registry, rather than adopting an educational purpose. In this way the LambdaMOO museum institutionalizes the mysteries or the art of programming.

The LambdaMOO museum provides the information to replicate objects. However, Keelah imbues the museum with the "aura" of the original and authentic article.[330] You can access information about "objects," and in this situation objects refers to characters, rooms, and things, via the "object" number. The LambdaMOO museum also acts as a structuring device for characters to gain information about a "class" of object. In this case class would refer to any set of objects that share a similar set of attributes and have a similar code. Since a class is a set of objects, and many objects can be copied, the only difference between two objects may be the number. Sometimes it is solely an object's number which distinguishes its individuality and authenticity. However, there is a certain amount of aura that is generated by the code of well-programmed objects.

The LambdaMOO museum provides the tools for the bifurcated performance of the community by vacillating between the space of the reproducible product and the space of the original aura-laden object which is uniquely designed by a particular programmer. It is interesting that a gift shop exists in this structure because the shop only provides another framework for what is available in the other rooms. The gift shop contains a series of object-producing "vending machines." The vending machine's "operation" is accompanied by textual descriptions, including a "grinding sound" from the mechanism's innards, when the user orders an object. The user's interaction with the

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[330]My use of the terms "aura," "original," and "reproduction" is meant to evoke the often-cited essay by Walter Benjamin. "The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object. One might subsume the eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which whithers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art." Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, 221.

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vending machine and its textual narrative makes a performance out of the production of an object.[331] The copying of an object in the other spaces of the LambdaMOO museum only becomes a performance when that reproduction fails.[332] But the LambdaMOO museum is not about the failure to copy properly.

The LambdaMOO museum attempts to tell a story about the individual successes of named programmers. For instance, the registry that is available in the museum's foyer allows users to look up all the objects that a player has exhibited in the museum. This registry includes a command that lists the "top ten creators in the museum."[333] It is not coincidental that the term "creator," which is often used to describe individuals involved in artistic production, is substituted for the less culturally weighty role of programmer. The LambdaMOO museum produces a hierarchy of individual named programmers through these lists, descriptions, and architectural motifs.

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[331]Looking at Mickey's vending machine generates the following text: "A paisley blue pattern undulates on the surface of the machine. Stepping back, you can see that it spells out a name: Spacy. The lower part of the machine is a window, with some holographic letters floating in it. There are some numbered buttons below the window. To make a selection, do 'press <any> on #46118'. For more info, do 'press ? on #46118'." Pressing the number 1 on this "machine" generates the text: "A red warning light lights up: 'PREPARING FOR OBJECT CREATION'. You probably had no idea the process was this complicated! (You thought maybe they just kept these things in stock?) A friendly voice asks, 'What would you would like to call your Bottle Room?' [Type a name for the Bottle Room or '@abort' to abort the command.]" When I chose the word "foyer" the system responded: "The voice says, 'Just so there are no misunderstandings, please let me confirm your order. I am about to create one Bottle Room named "foyer". Is that correct?' [Enter 'yes' or 'no']" I entered "yes" but still received no room because I didn't have enough quota, characters are allotted a certain amount of quota, or database space, for their personal use. "A buzzer sounds and a sign blinks 'Resource limit exceeded'. The machine shuts down. Your purchase has failed." Mickey, LambdaMOO (4 April 1995). These vending machines are no longer available in the museum.

[332]The incorrect command to "@create" may produce lengthy trace backs or the need to continually alter your command until you have implemented the right sequence. This retyping is both performative and frustrating in nature.

[333]The "top ten creators" is a list of programmers that have the most objects on display. Keelah, LambdaMOO, @go #50827, help registry (29 April 1997). Keelah's interest in producing a traditional museum structure that pays homage to individual programmers is also underscored by the following text from the "Generic Player Classes" room. "This is the part of the museum that honors the player classes that programmers have made." Keelah, LambdaMOO, @go #50827, east (29 April 1997).

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Fragmenting and Subverting the Traditional Museum

The LambdaMOO museum's tendency to render MOO practice as part of a unique aesthetic program is occasionally subverted by parts of the system which acknowledge the fragmented subjectivity and representational modes of the MOO environment. The attempt to produce a hierarchy and order in the LambdaMOO museum doesn't mean that this set of rooms is protected from the ruptures that system-wide lag generates. The virtual space is an unstable structure where time and descriptions are constantly fractured. Communication is not in "real" time but is determined by the amount of system-wide lag. The computer can only process so much information at a time. The more information it has to process the more slowly things happen. Different characters may experience different amounts of lag. A typed comment may appear right after it has been produced or it may appear minutes later. This causes breaches and pauses in conversational flow. When the lag is high the viewer experiences a performance that is produced by the system rather than the actions or designs of individual users.

The LambdaMOO museum's ability to control the progression from space to space is thwarted by the system's lag time. The slowdown produces an anticipatory structure that is more theatrical than architectural. There is no clear "time" that it takes to move through a "space." Things can happen immediately or events can be terminated when the system goes down. When this happens it is often unclear when the structure will be accessible again. These performative ruptures, in which the character can't execute commands, replace the idea that the MOO is a communal and interactive space with the notion that the MOO is a stalled system. There can be no relationship between spaces and distances because there is no fixed way to judge how long it will take to traverse the structure.

The MOO structure is understood through textual descriptions of its architectural attributes but this bracket is also open to fragmentation. The consistency of the

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architectural structure collapses when a character types a comment as a description is appearing on the screen. The writing will appear in the middle of the otherwise coherent description. These coincidental hypertextual markings cut into what would otherwise be understood as the "fixed" parts of the MOO. When the character writes into the architectural structure of the space then the text is experienced through these interferences. The framing brackets of the MOO are constantly being reordered by these occurrences.

The LambdaMOO museum's tendency to reflexively represent the parts of the MOO system, and even its hysterical reinscription of traditional museum practice, can work as a kind of critical work on the museum. For instance, the programming which insistently reinscribes the processional experience of the virtual museum space produces, with each traversal of the foyer, an ever more ludic representation of the traditional museum's attempts to order the visitor's movement through space, standardize social routines, and reform manners. These cases illustrate the deeply ambivalent nature of the virtual museum, and even the conflicted space of the virtual community, where postmodern deconstructive practices generate defensive bouts of unitary identity formation from others in the community and where conservative mores produce a reactionary practice.

The recent critical debates about viewing position and identity formation have certainly been affected by the promise of virtual subjects. The process of virtual viewing is highlighted, in the LambdaMOO museum, by the language and programming that Keelah employs. The spectatorial process of looking, which is evoked throughout the MOO, is privileged by the foyer's description which provides gargoyles that "peek" and framed paintings of wizards with "eyes that seem to follow you as you walk." Keelah's programming, which forces the viewer to "walk" through the museum rather than teleporting directly to any museum location, suggests that the viewer can see the physical structure of the LambdaMOO museum. To discover the configuration of this space the

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user will probably type "look map." Through these devices Keelah enforces the visual processes and the spectatorial positions that are operative in physical museum spaces.

The LambdaMOO museum, because it presents a view of a museum rather than a physical building structure that can be explored by the corporeal body of the viewer, requires a new theory of both spectatorship and readership. I am using Leo Steinberg's discussion of the flatbed in his article "Other Criteria," rather than more recent discussion of bodily positions, because Steinberg theorizes a new relationship between the viewing subject and art objects. His article is particularly useful for my purposes because Steinberg focuses on the intricate relationships that develop between bodies and art objects in structures such as museums. Steinberg's horizontal flatbed, "any receptor surface on which objects are scattered, on which data is entered," provides a theoretical model or a space in which to conceive the computer and the MOO museum.[334]

Steinberg suggests that a single subject/object philosophy was operative from the work of the "Old Masters" through Abstract Expressionism. This shared tenet is the "conception of the picture as representing a world, some sort of worldspace which reads on the picture plane in correspondence with the erect human posture."[335] The flatbed art work, according to Steinberg, disorders the traditional vertical relationship between viewer and art object. The viewer of a Rauschenberg painting may still be standing in front of a work that hangs on the wall. However, the position of the viewer's body no longer corresponds to the working process of the artist or to the direction of the objects on the canvas. Such works don't provide a continuous spatial illusion, or a window, that invites the viewer to enter the fictive world. The viewer is challenged to encounter spectatorship as a series of subject positions and discordant views. MOO users also simultaneously occupy a number of bodily positions and contradictory representations.

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[334]Steinberg, "Other Criteria," in *Other Criteria*, 84.

[335]Ibid. , 82.

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The traditional relationship between subject and object is disabled by virtual spectatorship and Steinberg's flatbed viewing position:

> Rauschenberg's work surface stood for the mind itself-dump, reservoir, switching center, abundant with concrete references freely associated as in an internal monologue-the outward symbol of the mind as a running transformer of the external world, constantly ingesting incoming unprocessed data to be mapped in an overcharged field.[336]

Steinberg's description of the work surface would also apply to a conversation in the public rooms of LambdaMOO where multiple conversations, monologues, and performances create a field of conflicting data rather than a linear narrative. Steinberg consistently associates the flatbed position with tables, charts, and other data processes rather than with any system that produced a cohesive world view. The non-vertical flatbed works have a "radically new orientation, in which the painted surface is no longer the analogue of visual experience of nature but of operational processes."[337] The MOO subject is also composed and supported by operational processes rather than creative acts. Disparate charts, maps, and isolated commands facilitate an understanding of the MOO space. This vision of the MOO is far removed from the traditional art museum's enforcement of a unified body and cohesive world view.

The LambdaMOO museum's role in maintaining and confining the spectator may be little more than a quotation of the traditional museum's function because the unitary body of the viewer can't be articulated or located. For the museum to produce meaning it must have a coherent viewing subject. It is difficult to conceive of an on-line viewing position, the character's bodily placement, as geographically related to either the virtual space or the virtual exhibit. Instead, the MOO viewer has a virtual mobile view that allows them simultaneous "visions" of many virtual spaces. On-line characters maintain little bodily identity that is collectively understood by the on-line community. The characters that are present within a room appear as a list to other characters that enter.

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[336]Ibid., 88.

[337]Ibid., 84.

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There is no mapping of a character's gesture as it relates to other objects, except on rare occasions. The hybrid or cyborg viewing subject, when confronted by the LambdaMOO museum's collection, can't maintain a fixed bodily position or an erect viewing stance because those notions have been disordered by the virtual environment.

This lack of a unitary bodily position means that the viewing subject is continually disarranged. The cyborg subject can never be fully described as erect, prone, awake, or asleep. Users who have a virtual room may "@sethome <room number>" and leave their partially conscious characters in that space even when not on-line. The character can record messages or be programmed to wander while the user is logged off. Characters can look at, move, speak, and take things from another character when it is "off" or asleep. Avital Ronell could be talking about the relationship between the modem connection and the character when she states, "The call of the telephone is incessant and unremitting. When you hang up it does not disappear but goes into remission . . . There is no off switch to the technological."[338] There is no off switch to a virtual character that is triggered when the person logs off the computer. The characters perform within the system while our corporeal bodies are focused on the material world. The identity of a character is not determined solely by the operator; the "architecture of belief" is maintained even when the character is not logged on.

Steinberg's flatbed theory suggests that the standard vertical position of the viewer can be disordered by works that "no longer simulate vertical fields, but opaque flatbed horizontals."[339] The LambdaMOO museum presents a series of opposing views, conflicting spectatorial states, which become more apparent because of its attempts to simulate a consistent vertical field. The LambdaMOO museum's production of an architectural landscape, coherent view, and unitary subject is consistently challenged by

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[338]Avital Ronell, "A User's Manual," *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), n.p.

[339]Steinberg, "Other Criteria," in *Other Criteria*, 84.

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the lack of a stable spectatorial position or viewpoint. There are no architectural barriers that limit a character's ability to look through or around objects. "Looking" is the process by which characters access and read textual descriptions in order to visualize such "objects" as rooms and characters. This textual looking is never solely determined by location in the virtual community. This anti-position excises the traditional notion of viewpoint in favor of a virtual mobile view. The transparency of spaces on MOOs allows the character to understand the whole structure from any point. Rooms appear in similar ways irrespective of whether the character walks into the space, teleports, or views that space from "afar." Once inside a room, viewers may become disassociated from the architectural environment that they read on their entrance. The text that describes the space that a character is in, the bracket that determines the "architecture of belief," scrolls up the screen as the character interacts with the structure. Space is conflated or even rewritten by characters when they examine a set of rooms while inside of another room. Room ambiance and character descriptions are also disordered by conflicting descriptions.[340]

The body's position, as conceived by its place within a stable and confined environment, is destabilized by the totality of vistas that are made accessible on the MOO. The viewing of bodies, rooms, and code is always accessible via a series of commands. This programming suggests that there is no partial vision or subjecthood that is shaped by the limits of the city:

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[340]When someone enters the hot tub they see the text, "The hot tub is made of molded fiberglass: on three sides a bench will seat five comfortably (and ten who are friendly), and on the fourth side there is contoured couch for one luxurious soak. There are two rubber mounted buttons here. You may push either the right or left button. The bright sunlight glinting off the water makes you squint. The underwater light is on. The bubbling jets are on." A message also tells the user what specific corporeal experience they are currently enjoying. For instance, "Aaaahhhh! The water is at that perfect temperature where you can just lie in here forever." Each new character that enters the tub generates the text "Splash!" which all the other users see. yduJ, LambdaMOO, @go #388 (29 April 1997). Despite textual attempts, like the one in the hot tub, to enforce the architectural belief in MOO spaces, character teleport messages and behavior often deny the physical characteristics of virtual spaces. In the very wet world of the hot tub, characters' teleport descriptions regularly portray them driving into the space, crashing through what are non existent room walls in order to arrive, and tripping and falling to the floor. These incongruities happen because users have not considered the diverse spaces that they will move through when writing their teleport messages.

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> To walk in the city is to experience the disjuncture of partial vision/partial consciousness. The narrativity of this walking is belied by a simultaneity we know and cannot experience. As we turn a corner, our object disappears around the next corner.[341]

The simultaneity of the physical city system, a fluidity which is then placed under the law by architectural partitioning and its concomitant limit to the subject's vision, is redynamized by the ever conscious and multipartite virtual subject. The composite parts and multiple viewing positions of the new subject, whose position cannot be quite described as resting within the walls of the virtual museum, performs critical work on institutionalized vision.

A critical operation is also performed on the traditional museum when Keelah presents the "generic rooms" display in more reflexive terms than the other rooms in the LambdaMOO museum. "All around the room you see floorplans, code, and pictures of innovative and unique rooms. On the north wall is a huge computer display."[342] The "room's" description enacts a reflexive display of all the parts of the system by quoting the computer. The description lists the simultaneously existing MOO structures of floor plans, code, computers, and representations. This reflexivity foregrounds the apparatuses which structure perception. This room performs and unveils for the viewer the devices, the computer codes and other technologies, through which virtuality is constructed. The LambdaMOO museum produces meaning and then illustrates the parts of the system through which this manufacture occurs:

> I see it like the multimedia world today . . . you go to the museum in (RL) . . . walk up to the wall which is really a huge screen and as you approach information comes up on the screen . . . and then by touching the screen you get to see the item on display . . . and then have options to look at other info about the item, like history about the creator of the item, etc.[343]

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[341]Susan Stewart, prologue to *On Longing*, 2.

[342]Keelah, from the "Generic Rooms" description, LambdaMOO, @go #50827, west (4 April 1995).

[343]Keelah, Personal interview with Michele White, LambdaMOO, 25 November 1994.

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Keelah's description suggests that the traditional museum is a computer screen which reproduces both objects and information. His description and the generic rooms display can refocus the LambdaMOO museum visitor's attention from a confrontation with individual authentic objects towards a viewing of multiply marked representations. The part that traditional museums play in enforcing meaning may be more easily noted by viewers when collections of objects are revealed to be part of larger meaning producing systems.

Attempts to Reinforce the Traditional Museum:
Cataloguing, Framing, Mapping, and Surveillance

The LambdaMOO museum produces meaning without relying on the placement of tangible objects within its walls. Though the traditional museum's role in fetishizing material objects is destabilized by the lack of material objects in the virtual MOO museum, there is certainly a nostalgia for the locatable and delineated object. Everything in the virtual community is clocked, dated, and catalogued. The virtual body is a catalog of parts. "Looking" at a character means receiving a list of objects "carried" by that person, the character's gender, description, and logon status. Typing "@examine <object>" provides the object's full name, aliases, the number of the object, the owner's name and object number, a description of the object, the contents of the object and their object numbers, and the object's "obvious" verbs. Features can provide totals, medians, and averages for age.[344] The feature object command "genwho" breaks down the gender totals of logged-on characters.

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[344]A definition was obtained from the system by typing "help features" on LambdaMOO (29 April 1997). "Features are objects that provide you with commands not covered by the ordinary player objects. The advantage of using features is that you can mix and match the things you like; whereas if you like a command that's defined on a player class, you have to also get all the commands it defines, and all the commands its ancestors define." Users have to "@addfeature <feature number>" in order to be able to use these commands.

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Features can also provide useful navigational tools. The command "@rose" generates a compass map. This feature lists possible directions that the character can move in, the rooms that are located in that direction, and the rooms' object numbers. Users need to be able to locate other characters and know paths through the community in order to navigate the MOO. There are numerous ways that characters can be found. When a character types "@wwho" they receive a list of the logged on characters whom they find "interesting," their object numbers, the amount of time they have been connected, the amount of time they have been idle for, and their location.[345] Typing "@crowd <character name or room number>" provides a list of characters in a room, their sex, and the amount of time they have been idle.

These mapping strategies allow users to guide themselves through the system with ease. The information supplied is also often of a personal nature. The amount of time that users spend in the system and the characters that they associate with become familiar information to all of their virtual acquaintances. There is no discreet way of logging a character into a virtual world. Users are immediately informed when people on their @interesting list logon. These commands obviously enforce a high level of surveillance throughout the system. If a user employs commands to steer through the MOO then they also support the panoptic effects of the system.[346]

MOOs develop an "aesthetic" of categorizing with the proliferation of lists. The MOO's practice of numbering, labeling, and describing links this system to typical museum practices. This classificatory aesthetic can be related to the LambdaMOO

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[345]This command is available as part of the "log in watcher" feature. Users add characters to their @interesting list by typing "@interesting <character name>."

[346]A closer consideration of mapping strategies on-line would certainly be informed by a Foucauldian reading. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* would seem particularly useful here. There are a number of recent works that take up Foucault to talk about the ways that technology and the apparatus control the subject. See John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). The relationship between "surveillance society" and recent technologies is taken up most explicitly in David Lyon, *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

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museum's function as a documentation supplement to the already mapped surface of the MOO. In this way the MOO museum continues to act as a reflexive representation of the MOO system.

The architectural brackets of the MOO organize and frame objects. This architectural grid does not lead to any opacity of surface. If the LambdaMOO museum is unnecessary, because it classifies subjects that are organized elsewhere and presents architecture that is visible throughout the MOO, this is because of the heightened sense of visibility that code on the MOO offers. The MOO structure can be seen as a series of frames which offer maximum visibility. Characters don't have to inhabit spaces in order to look at them. This lack of boundary surface de-emphasizes normative space and instead suggests that the MOO is a series of porous constructions that vie for the viewer's attention.

The objects on the MOO and in its museum may be organized but the plethora of organizing strategies leads to its own disorder. The array of categorizing systems on MOOs are provided a more normative and logical frame by the museum's walls. The LambdaMOO museum, as well as other MOO museums, offers a vehicle of presentation and a reason for the existence of statistics. In place of a nonlinear sprawl of interlocking rooms, objects, and characters, the MOO museum provides lists. Examining individual objects on this list leads to the same kind of scattering of spaces as jumping from one virtual space to another via teleporting. The MOO structure is constantly being reordered and reconceptualized by the addition of new types of cataloguing. These continually developing classification strategies may be in reaction to the constantly dissolving borders of the virtual space. New ways of cataloguing allow characters to reconceive the system and to develop new strategies of surveillance.

The LambdaMOO museum structure is designed to distinguish the objects that it exhibits. Displayed objects are not situated in these rooms. Conceptually, displayed objects aren't in the LambdaMOO museum because they can't be manipulated. The

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museum displays, like such MOO commands as "@examine <object number>," allow the user to "look" at a room while anywhere on the MOO. The LambdaMOO museum's eccentric collection may suggest a cabinet of curiosities; however, the dearth of objects in this museum provides an unusual twist to most physical museums' stress on materiality and presence. The LambdaMOO museum structures the user into a veneration of the objects produced while presenting no direct access to even a virtual version of the framed objects. The LambdaMOO museum's main feature is the framing display structures. This suggests that the structure of the LambdaMOO museum, like some web museums, produces a museum that has walls and frames without objects. However, the LambdaMOO museum, unlike the view in many traditional museums, focuses the viewer's gaze outside the museum and onto other objects. When the viewer becomes aware that most of the LambdaMOO museum's objects aren't "in" the museum, then the museum acts as a screen onto the multiple spaces of the MOO.

The LambdaMOO museum literally encases the objects of the community in culture brackets. The viewing strategies of MOO culture, and to a lesser degree MOO museums, perform some of the functions of André Malraux's "Museum without Walls":

> For a "Museum without Walls" is coming into being, and (now that the plastic arts have invented their own printing-press) it will carry infinitely farther that relevation of the world of art, limited perforce, which the "real" museums offer us within their walls.[347]

Malraux envisioned a new type of museum; this structure was made possible when photography facilitated the mass reproduction and dissemination of images. Through photography the "Museum without Walls" could incorporate all types of material into its structure. The location, size, condition, and cultural significance of objects was reconfigured by this new apparatus.

Malraux's theory of a "Museum without Walls" would seem to be more closely related to the viewing strategies available throughout the LambdaMOO community than

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[347]Malraux, "Museum Without Walls," *The Voices of Silence*, 16.

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the framed views of the LambdaMOO museum. However, the LambdaMOO museum's "Walls without Objects" may not be as far from Malraux's theory as it at first seems. Rosalind Krauss points out that Malraux originally described a "*musée imaginaire*" and that "bowing to the English language's appetite for demonstration, for the concrete instance, for the visualizable example - for the image, in short - the translator made free with the book's title and therefore with its conceptual underpinnings as well."[348] Rosalind Krauss suggests that the "*musée imaginaire*" reveals the "great 'fictions'" and thus the structures of the traditional museum.[349] Malraux's "Museum without Walls," or "*musée imaginaire*," emphasizes the framing aspects of the traditional museum that have remained hidden within the institution's structure, and points to the role that the reproductive museum plays in foregrounding that frame. In many situations, the LambdaMOO museum also foregrounds the framing display strategies and ritualized scripts of museums.

The "Museum without Walls," like Keelah's LambdaMOO museum, focuses the spectator's view out onto an endless collection. The properties of MOO systems, which allow for the examination of objects from anywhere within the structure, presents the possibility of countlessly refiguring the MOO's parts in diverse arrangements. According to Krauss, "what the *musée imaginaire* makes possible is that the user of the museum may participate in this writing, may create his or her own "fiction."[350] Any user can rewrite the MOO as a museum by employing long distance looking. The LambdaMOO museum acts as a frame, or a series of programmed walls, through which the viewer can access a series of virtual mobile views. This would suggest that Malraux's museum may also have walls, or some kind of framing instrument, that enables the viewer to look out

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[348]Rosalind Krauss, "Postmodernism's Museum without Walls," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 341.

[349]Ibid., 345.

[350]Ibid.

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upon a vast array of images. The photographic version of the "Museum without Walls," which is depicted in Malraux's book, may provide an endless series of views but the camera's processes of framing and cropping are still implicitly a part of this museum.

André Malraux's description of the museum and his vision of a "Museum without Walls" suggests that the museum functions as an apparatus of (re)visioning:

> The effect of the museum was to suppress the model in almost every portrait (even that of dream-figure) and to divest works of art of their functions. It did away with the significance of Palladium, of Saint and Saviour; ruled out associations of sanctity, qualities of adornment and possession, of likeness or imagination. Each exhibit is a representation of something, differing from the thing itself, this specific difference being its *raison d' être*.[351]

The LambdaMOO museum offers the viewer a very different view of the MOO than the experience that is available in the public rooms of the mansion. Like many museums, the LambdaMOO museum works to re-mark and recontextualize the objects which it frames. The LambdaMOO museum takes the diverse active and populated parts of the MOO system and reorganizes them into displays and exhibits. These displays are very different from the ones that are encountered in fine arts, natural history, house, or historical museums. The MOO museum acts as a pointer towards objects rather than as a container for material artifacts. The heightened utilization of looking and touching metaphors in the MOO museum may act as a reaction against the lack of material objects.

The whole LambdaMOO community can be viewed as a living museum since each object on Lambda has a number and participates in the cataloguing properties of the system. LambdaMOO may also be described as a museum because of the wealth of personally designed "museum" structures in this community. There are a number of "museums" that also serve as residences for characters. These "museums" don't appear to document the MOO, or to function as community museums, but they do reflect a preoccupation with the terms and representations of museum structures. "The museum of Paleontology" is owned by the character Schloop. The main room leads to "The

[351]Malraux, "Museum Without Walls," *The Voices of Silence*, 14.

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invertebrate wing" and the "Science Room." This structure is described as being under construction and there are currently no displays or other museum oriented objects. The "Museum of Immaterial Issues," which is owned by the character Matt, presents a different view of the museum:

> Where nothing matters. Birds are trapped in perspex. People are caught in limbo. There is no segregation, for it holds no relevance. There are no emotions, only an androgynous stew. Shells exist, waiting to be filled The room, where every exhibit is rolled into one . . . There is a queen-sized bed with black flannel sheets here, covered by an immense white down comforter. A small tupperware container sits on a nightstand next to the bed.[352]

The simultaneous presentation of a critical view, where methods of museum classification are described as irrelevant, and the "queen-sized bed" presents an odd rendition of the house museum structure.

The strange presence of another general LambdaMOO museum, which is owned by Mumbles, unintentionally highlights the authenticity and functionality of Keelah's LambdaMOO museum. Mumbles even questions the purpose of his "museum" in the "Help Wanted sign" in the foyer. "After all, there is already a museum here and a moo doesn't need two."[353] Mumbles's rooms are obviously a copy of Keelah's museum. Mumbles tries to make his structure appear to be the latest museum or an updated version by including the term "new" in many of the room names. In this "Museum Foyer (new)" there is also a map. Mumbles has also included a foyer, generic objects room, generic rooms room, history room, feature objects room, and player classes room. This simulacrum names many of the structures of Keelah's museum without copying their content. For instance, Mumbles's history room has the same objects as the history room that it mimes. These objects can't be read and don't perform any function other than to stand in for the objects in Keelah's museum. This "museum" may support the originality

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[352]Matt, from the "Museum of Immaterial Issue" description, LambdaMOO, @examine #11282 (2 May 1997).

[353]Mumbles, from the "Help Wanted sign," LambdaMOO, @go #80510, read Help Wanted sign (2 May 1997).

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of Keelah's structure in the same way that a photographic copy of the *Mona Lisa* may remind viewers of the aura-imbued *Mona Lisa* that hangs in the Louvre and produce in these viewers a desire to see "the original." The authentic function of an object is challenged only when the copy becomes as valuable, meaningful, or even negates the ability to locate an original. Mumbles's "museum" would have to supplant the usefulness or appear more uncannily like Keelah's museum, while being somewhat distinguishable from it, in order to call the authenticity of that museum into question.

Keelah's exhibits are not the only museum structure on LambdaMOO that document the system and culture of this community. The "Negative Museum" was designed by the character Number_One and it provides detailed information about the ways that negative numbers function on the MOO. "This is a small, plain, wooden room which contains a small exhibit on the east wall dedicated to the negative objects on the MOO."[354] This exhibit may be most appropriate to the non-material aspects of the MOO since it documents such things as $nothing which "is #-1, the Void. It's purpose on the MOO is to act as the lack of an object. It can be the lack of any object: a thing, a room, an exit, a player."[355] When you "look" at the exhibit for #-1 you "see" that, "Inside the golden picture frame, there is nothing. You see the bare wooden wall behind it." This "frame," which offers the user a view of nothing, performs a very different function than the "paintings" in Keelah's museum, which provides the user with views of the ennobled wizards. The Negative Museum, like the objects in Keelah's history room, creates a MOO past that is part fact and part mythic lore:

> You can even travel to #-1, providing you have programming capabilities. Simply type ";move(player,#-1)", and you're there, but be careful though. It's not always fun being nowhere. Many of the commands you're used to won't even be understood, because they are usually defined on the room you are in. Even the "look" command won't work! So if you do travel to

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[354]Number_One, from the "Negative Museum" description, LambdaMOO, @go #68493 (2 May 1997).

[355]Number_One, from the "#-1" description, LambdaMOO, @go #68493, look #-1 (2 May 1997).

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> #-1, be careful, for legends tell of some inexperienced programmers who went there, and came back insane, driven mad by the power of #-1[356]

The rendering of a mythic reality is also present in the RPG, or role playing game, museum that is owned by Darkson.[357] This museum has a much larger number of rooms and displays about RPG than Keelah's display in the "Catacomb." The visitor to the RPG museum, like the user of Keelah's museum, must walk through the structure rather than teleporting from one room to another. Darkson's RPG museum has a generic rooms room, a generic beasts room, a generic weapons room, a generic armor room, and a miscellaneous generics room. This museum is located next to the RPG Library and is part of the Bovine Illuminati Academy which provides a ritual that characters can go through in order to become RPG players on LambdaMOO.

The living museum structure that these many MOO museums suggest is supported by visitors from RL communities. MOOs are regularly visited by populations who are curious about these communities. Classes will often be guided through one of the MOOs by a teacher. MOOs are used as classrooms and as conference spaces. People will frequently give "tours" to their family and friends. It is not uncommon for characters to be asked to say something about the MOO. I have also witnessed "tour guides" insisting that characters should be on their best behavior when the "exhibits" are beginning to act up.

An understanding or "tour" of the LambdaMOO structure is facilitated by ASCII, American Standard Code for Information Interchange, maps. ASCII art is a type of drawing that is formed from the letters and other characters that are available on a keyboard. One of the available documents in Keelah's history room is an ASCII map of

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[356]Ibid.

[357]To access the RPG museum @go #91, north, north (2 May 1997).

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the various rooms in Lambda house.[358] A segment of this map depicts the relationship between the museum and the other rooms on "floor 0.5 east" of the mansion:

```
                          +-----------------------+----------+
                          |                       |          |
                          |        BallRoom       |   East   |
                          |                                  |
                          |                       |  Patio   |
                          +--------+--  --+-------+----------+
                          |        |      |       |
                          | Men's  |      |Women's|
                          |                       |
                          |Restroom|      |Restrom|
                          |        |      |       |
                          +--------+--  --+-------+
                          |                       | /---------\
                          |                       |/           \
                          |  North Wing Firside      Spiral-al |
                          |        Hall           |\          /
                          |                       | \---------/
                          +---------+  +----------+
                          |         |  |          |
                          |Polycarp      Maverick |
                          |         |  |          |
                          +---------+  +----------+
                          |         |  |          |
                          | Ashley       Cyberfox |
                          |         |  |          |
                          +---------+  +----------+
                          |GrandSlam|  |          |
                          | Bridge        Mara    |
                          |  Club   |  |          |
                          +---------+  +----------+
                          |         |  |
                          | Falkon      |
                          |         |  |
                          +---------+  |
                          |         |  |
                          | A_Smile     |
                          |         |  |University ...
 FLOOR 0.5 EAST           +---------+  |     |  |
                                    |  +--+  +--+-
                                    |   Lounge  }
 --+-----+                          |  + Room  { termites
 . |Note +-------+------------------+  |        |
 d.|Ed(1)|       |                  |  +-----+--+----+------+-------+
 --+- ---+  Bath |                  |  | Reg.|  Misc.|  M   |History|
         e       |                  |  +-----+          U           |
Editorial+---+   |      Library     |  |Star +-------+  S   +-------+-----+
Boardroom|  #|   |                  |  | Ch. |Rooms     M    Player  FO   |
  (1)    |-#-+-- +-------- ---------+  +-- --+-------+--  --+-------+-----+
-+--+ ---+#[[[[[
 |\/|  [[#---+---  ------+- -----+---+  +---------+------  -----+-----------+
 |/\|  +#    |          | Guest |   |  |         |            |           |
```

[358]The map only schematizes a part of the larger Lambda community. It does not take into account rooms which are not linked via entrances and exits to the rambling LambdaMOO mansion. Rooms that have no spatial relationship to the mansion may appear related to the overall schema because characters usually move via teleporting.

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 +--+  #     | Lambda's |       Bath| | ??      |   Bookstore |          |
 |  | #      |  Den     |  BR    |  | |         |             |          |
-+--+#Master |          |        |  | +-----+---+-------------+----------+
    #  Bed-  +----------+--------+--+ |Init.| Library
-+-#   room  |      ttt              | | Ch. |
  # |  (G)   |                       | +- ---+------
 #--+        |  hot tub              | |B.I.  Academy
#   |        |   deck                |  Atr.|
----+--------+                       | +-- --+-
                                     | |    |
```
[359]

It is through this plan that I determined the relation between Keelah's LambdaMOO museum and the larger MOO structure. Moving through the virtual space, via a series of commands, makes it difficult to conceptualize the ways that rooms are linked together. The ability to teleport from one distant space, as defined by the ways that rooms are "walked" through, to another distorts the idea of any linked or schematically organized structure. It is perhaps not surprising, considering the constantly shifting shape of the mansion, that the MOO contains a number of maps of its own structure. There are MOO maps in Keelah's LambdaMOO museum foyer and history room as well as in the dusty intersection, Los Altos Hills, secluded grove, and living room. A rack of pamphlets that contains maps and walking tours of Lambda is available in the library alcove. Maps are also often posted to the mailing list "*Theme-Issues" as a way of communicating spatial relationships to confused members of the Lambda community. The map available in the living room warns the visitor about the shifting surface of the MOO:

> This is a map of part of LambdaHouse and the surrounding areas. Exits between rooms are shown, but keep in mind that some exits are one-way, and some, such as "enter," "up," and "down" aren't shown. Also remember that, although this map is kept as accurate as possible, LambdaHouse is a volitile thing, always changing. Areas marked with ". . . " have exits to other areas you may wish to explore.[360]

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[359]Keelah, Portion of the ASCII map available in the "History Room." LambdaMOO, @go #50827, ne, displays here, press 13, (20 November 1996).

[360]waffle, Text from the map available in the "Living Room." LambdaMOO, @go #17, read map (6 May 1997).

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These plans are mirrored by the numerous maps, many with conflicting representations of the MOO layout, that appear on MOOers' homepages.[361] These rationalizing schemas on the WWW and in LambdaMOO contain the "volatile" surface of the MOO. The ASCII maps in the diverse parts of the MOO work to reconceptualize the amorphous category "room" into a gridded plan. Most rooms are rendered as four straight walls that meet at right angles. These artful redrawings seem to promise that the LambdaMOO mansion will become a regulated system of interlocked containers.[362]

Art and the Museum

American Standard Code for Information Interchange, or ASCII, is also used to demarcate other forms of art within MOO systems. ASCII art is used in conversations, through imagistic visual drawings, and through linear renderings that are incorporated into room descriptions.[363] Like most other forms of cultural production, these drawings vary from imaginative works to crude repetitions of the most common images. While ASCII art does provide a form of cultural expression for those that haven't been trained in other forms of rendering, it can certainly be argued that ASCII art is usually related to art in name only. Most of the ASCII art on MOOs occurs as repetitive "speech acts." These representations of teddy bears, cows, and "acking" cats annoy a segment of the general population.[364] ASCII art surfaces in a diverse array of sites on-line including

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[361]See for instance "HumbertHumbert's LambdaMOO Archive." http://vesta.physics.ucla.edu /~smolin/lambda/ (7 November 1996). The character Nim's "A dream image of Lambda House from 1000 feet up" models LambdaMOO in 3-D. http://tribeca.ios.com/~everett3/ (8 November 1996).

[362]The ASCII maps on LambdaMOO, like the maps in virtual web museums, allow the user to "see" the MOO as a physical structure.

[363]More conventional types of writing are also available on LambdaMOO. The mailing lists include "*Poetry," "*Literature," and "*erotica" which are all forums for user writing. The philosophy of the *Literature list is "A list for posting original poetry and stories. Anything goes, art is in the mind of the writer." Llrain, @examine *Literature, LambdaMOO (21 October 1996).

[364]Cynthia cheers Red_Guest up with a teddy bear!

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usenet groups that are dedicated to the representation and discussion of this form, sig or signature files that are attached at the end of e-mail messages, and as part of the logon screen for virtual communities such as MUDs and MOOs.[365] One of the most familiar and easily generated forms of ASCII art is the smiley face that is used throughout on-line communication.[366] Some of the most common images depicted through ASCII art are flowers, animals, buildings, and pop-culture icons like Snoopy, Mickey Mouse, and Beavis and Butthead. There is also a whole genre of ASCII art that renders the nude.

ASCII art representations that attempt to render realistic depictions of objects appear only peripherally, if at all, within the museum's walls. The "paintings" in the foyer are represented through words rather than visually depicted. Part of the reason that objects are textually rendered rather than drawn on MOOs is that ASCII art requires a large amount of quota or database space from computer systems that are already overburdened. Nuances are evoked through text rather than through visual illusionism within most MOO spaces. If anything is understood as "real" within virtual spaces it is

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  {  . .  }
 _( Y )_
()_     _()
 (_)-(_)
```

[365]Some of the usenet groups that discuss and represent ASCII art are: rec.arts.ascii, alt.ascii-art, and alt.binaries.pictures.ascii. The URL http://www.connecti.com/~rgrando/ascii.html includes links to a number of ASCII sites. Bob Alison, the moderator for rec.arts.ascii, has an FTP site that contains many examples of ASCII art at ftp://ftp.wwa.com/pub/Scarecrow/. Christopher Johnson maintains a page with examples of ASCII art by a similar group of artists at http://www.chris.com/ascii_art_menu.html (6 May 1997). A number of virtual communities use ASCII art as part of the logon screen in order to further represent the theme of their space and as a means of aestheticizing the screen that users see when they first log into these communities. Dhalgren (telnet dhalgren.english.washington.edu 7777) presents their name in a three dimensionalized format as part of their logon screen (13 August 1998). Ancient Realms (telnet cardinal.umeais.maine.edu 5150) renders a castle or fortress-like structure that evokes the fantasy theme of the space (6 May 1997). Armageddon (telnet thrash.isca.uiowa.edu 7777) threatens with a large erect insect, mandibles ready to clench, as a visual counterpart to their menu and the sign in which states, "Choose thy fate" (6 May 1997).

[366]The two character smiley face would suggest that this form of expression is limited, however, there are thousands of documented versions of these emoticons. Compendiums of "smileys" are available on the WWW from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, "Electronic Frontier Foundation's (Extended) Guide to the Internet - Smiley Dictionary" at http://www.eff.org/papers/eegtti/eeg_286.html and "Helwig's Smiley Dictionary" at http://www.cg.tuwien.ac.at/~helwig/smileys.html (6 May 1997). A Booklet of smileys is published by David W. Sanderson, ed., *Smileys* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly & Associates, n.d.).

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objects which can be manipulated because of their coding. "Art" has not so much been excised from these spaces as it has been reordered to mark a certain ideological aspect of MOO society. The art of MOOs and MOOing is facilitated through if not synonymous with programming skills.

Numerous gallery shows and events have occurred in multi-user object-oriented worlds. These shows often feature, or are produced in conjunction with, programmed on-line art objects. As far as I know, these works have all appeared outside the confines of MOO museums. The task of MOO museums, including Keelah's museum on LambdaMOO, is to present the architectural building blocks of the system and to chronicle the "events" and "history" of the MOO. Keelah's stated project is not antithetical to the presentation or citation of on-line art events. However, the underlying ideological position of the MOO museum as a framing and ordering bracket would seem to diverge from on-line art projects, which tend to stress the liminal and decorporealizing possibilities of cyberspace.

A virtual version of the Sandra Gering Gallery was the site of an on-line exhibit on PMC-MOO.[367] This show occurred simultaneously as a Blast project in the Gering gallery space in New York City and on-line.[368] Visitors to the gallery could log into PMC and visit the gallery's mirror space while the show was "up" in New York City. The virtual objects can still be read, manipulated, and viewed in the "Galerie de Archives"

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[367]The MOO is now an IATH project, Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, and is renamed by users with the employment of a command. The museum on PMC(-2) borrows from the programming and architectural design of the LambdaMOO museum. telnet hero.village.virginia.edu 7777 (13 August 1998).

[368]The Sandra Gering Gallery exhibition was produced in collaboration with Jordan Crandall, Laura Kurgan, Jason Pilarski, and John F. Simon, Jr. "BLAST is a boxed publication containing unbound printed matter, objects, computer programs, and other materials, produced by individuals not only in the arts, but in scientific and technological fields. Distributed at bookstores worldwide" As quoted from the "call-for-participation" on PMC. The on-line blast project is described as, "*Blast: Bioinformatica* 1994, After introducing bodily action to the editorial processes of Blast, The X-Art Foundation positioned Blast 4: Bioinformatica to specifically address the relationship between the physical and the informational. As boundaries between information space and physical space become increasingly porous, Blast 4: Bioinformatica prompts a repositioning of materiality across the borders of 'real' and 'virtual' space." As quoted from the "*Blast: Bioinformatica*" object on PMC-2. @go Gering, read blast (4 April 1996).

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room. This new room stands in for an exhibition of the first five years of Blast at the Galerie des Archives in Paris. The objects on display include versions of the Blast boxes. Some of the other art pieces are *Wakespace*, which is owned by the character ham and references *Finnegan's Wake*. *Howler* is described as "a small, sleek, black, metallic box" invented by the character dome that plays a number of "tapes." *Miesspace*, also by ham, renders a dizzying scroll of ASCII grids, concrete poetry, and texts that evoke the architectural work of Mies van der Rohe. At one point the text ironically reads, "Don't you feel better now? Purer? Cleaner--no more messy blood, no more the saggy bag of flesh that wrapped you. Now you belong here. Relax, you deserve it. Who needs a life? You have art. Enjoy it--it's all yours." The *Sensuous Sea*, which is owned by the character shark, immerses the viewer in a textual exploration of a virtual ocean. Waves are represented through the use of ASCII art in this piece. By typing commands the viewer can "look" at an array of sea life. *Belisaire Demandant L'Aumone* is "a flickering projection of a David painting" owned by the character collective_subject. The textual description of this work goes on to inform the user that "engraved in the gold frame" there is a web address. This web site initially presents the visitor with a reproduction of the painting and nothing else, not even a title.[369] The image is almost degraded because of the lack of detail and an emphasis on the bits of the image. The textual description and the web image of collective_subject's work disorder the materiality of this painting by David and his position within an art historical canon. The work becomes both fragmented and multiple because it is realized through an array of technological apparatuses. The art in these rooms, because of its virtual position, encourages the user to leave the flesh behind while virtually recapturing "art." What this new form might be and who has the tools to produce it are still at issue.

[369]Jordan Crandall, "Blast Conversional Archive," http://awa.com/artnetweb/projects/blast (13 August 1998).

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The on-line Sandra Gering show also incorporated a number of performances. Another performance work, this one organized by the cyberfeminist group VNS Matrix, occurs at intermittent intervals on LambdaMOO.[370] The collective was started in Southern Australia in 1991 and is composed of the artists Josephine Starrs, Julianne Pierce, Francesca da Rimini, and Virginia Barratt.[371] A VNS Matrix event, from September 1995, featured simultaneous sites on LambdaMOO and a show at the YYZ Artists Outlet in Toronto where visitors could access the virtual space. This work was a collaboration between the collective and Canadian artists Janine Marchessault and Michelle Gay.

VNS Matrix produces performances in virtual domains in order to explore the radical possibilities of on-line bodies. An early VNS cyberfeminist manifesto can be related to the <.spiral.space.>>>> performance invitation with its explicit intent to deconstruct binary gender:

> The Internet, and the virtual world in general, is constructed, rhetorically, as a transcendent space, where gender fucking and perpetual identity morphing is your ticket to escaping prejudicial real life paradigms. The utopic site of the virtual community neutralises tyrannical distance and transcends gender sexuality, physical dis/ability, race, even language. It promises new contexts for knowing/talking/signing/fucking bodies.[372]

The VNS Matrix performance space, like the "Galerie de Archives," includes a room that generates intermittent lines of text. "The State of X_ness" room destabilizes the user's ability to link speech to a particular body or subject position. The room generates lines of text that appear to be spoken by Subject_X:

> Subject_X says "You are beautiful. I know I will always sleep deep and
> close with you (my fingers on your skin . . .)
> (moving through membrane) Subject_X pages "I want to know you. . . "
> Subject_X says softly "I have missed you so much"
> Subject_X tongues your unbreakable spine

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[370]VNS Matrix's cyberfeminist manifesto and other material is available on the WWW. VNS Matrix, http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/manifesto.html (10 August 1998).

[371]Virginia Barratt left the collective in 1996.

[372]VNS Matrix MOO-mail, LambdaMOO, 15 August 1995.

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Subject_X is beside emself
Subject_X whispers to you "come here baby"
Subject_X infects you[373]

These preprogrammed messages become indistinguishable from the speech of the other Subject_X, who owns this room. The virtual Subject_X voice remains largely unattributed because the words could be either preprogrammed or typed by the user in real time. Subject_X "infects you" and becomes a stand-in for "Patient 0."[374] The behaviors of "Patient 0" were widely speculated upon by the scientific AIDS establishment. In the shifting positions that are staged in this room, Subject_X references figures like the medical establishment's "Patient 0" and renders multivoiced subjects rather than disempowered objects of study. Through such acts as these, VNS Matrix dismantles the strategies of mapping, ordering, and attributing that are reinforced by the virtual museum. However, all of these acts remain "outside" of Keelah's LambdaMOO museum structure.

"High" Art and "Low" Bodily Functions

The LambdaMOO museum may provide access to a variety of ways in which individuals can make their characters perform but performative behavior by individual characters is not welcome. The LambdaMOO museum provides information on how characters can enact pre-written scripts by typing a command. The use of feature objects,

[373]Subject_X, text generated from the "The State of X_ness" room, LambdaMOO, @go #53696 (29 April 1997). Most users would realize that some of these lines aren't "spoken" or paged because of the improper use of commas and other syntactical devices in formatting these sentences. When this room is populated, with numerous users simultaneously generating text, these small "clues" are more difficult to catch.

[374]"Patient Zero" was a term used by the CDC, or the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the scientific AIDS establishment to explain the spread of the AIDS virus in North America. The "origin" of AIDS was traced to the flight attendant Gaetan Dugas because of his relationship with a number of men who died of AIDS. Publicity in the media, including an infamous *60 Minutes* episode, detailed the sexual exploits of the "first" AIDS patient. "Patient Zero" was a sensationalized construct that suggested that the "promiscuous" and "irresponsible" behavior of the homosexual community had led to the spread of AIDS. Many people have worked to critique such ideologically problematic theories about the origin of the disease including John Greyson, the director of the film *Zero Patience*. My thanks to David Vallilee for some of this information.

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which are listed in the feature objects room, allows bodies to be sucked into the sewers, explode in a visceral mess, lick, kiss, bite, and dance like Barney. However, the character Jay was rebuked when he tried to diffuse the museum's order by placing his body on display in the museum. The seriousness and reality-enforcing intentions of the LambdaMOO museum are echoed in the curator Keelah's reason for not accepting Jay into the collection. "Reason for denial: Get real."[375] Keelah seems to be suggesting that the body is "real" rather than virtual. His response suggests that the museum provides a code of behavior which all characters know and which Jay attempted to subvert. The LambdaMOO museum illustrates the tools which programmers use to render space, body, and culture on virtual worlds while refusing to display the unruly body. Its structure is a clearing ground for information on the performative body but it also provides provisos for this behavior. The LambdaMOO museum vacillates between the "low" bodily functions of virtual characters, who use the features that are displayed in the museum, and the "high" role of the programmer, who produces art.

My use of the term "low bodily functions" is meant to evoke the lower bodily stratum as discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin and the abject as theorized by Julia Kristeva.[376] The unruly bodily acts of characters, which often occur in the public rooms of the mansion, include spamming or flooding a character's screen with a deluge of unnecessary text, enacting grotesque bouts of bodily humor that are conveyed by such things as textual belches and pissing, throwing tantrums, "emoting" violence, harassing characters, spoofing or using commands so that a text is attributed to the wrong character, shouting so that all characters on-line hear something, gender fucking, continually attempting to solicit "tiny" sex from uninterested characters, and having public net sex. The lower

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[375]Curator, LambdaMOO on-line Newsgroup, Message 16 on "*Museum-Additions," 18 November 1996.

[376]Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) and Kristeva, *Powers of Horror.*

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bodily stratum and the abject, both on the MOO and off, unsettle the order and borders of the conventional world.

The LambdaMOO museum plays a role in reinforcing normative cultural behavior and attempting to erase the abject from multi-user object-oriented worlds. The museum quotes, or should we say performs, high culture in order to create a stable and legitimized structure. The "authenticating" function of the museum is an ambivalent attempt to reorganize the fraying on-line categories of the body, space, objects, and gender. My critique of the LambdaMOO museum has pointed to its attempts to form and regulate the subject. The following section will elaborate upon lower bodily functions like on-line gender bending in order to further explicate the opposing forces that uneasily coexist in MOO communities. The MOO encases a contestatory relationship between those who want to enforce a traditional notion of body and architectural vernaculars and those who want to rethink the societal fixation on singularity and originality via the destabilizing properties of MOO systems and code. Obviously, these inclinations are inextricably bound together. These tendencies coexist within the structure of the MOO and form a kind of hybrid by using their "opposite" as a way of producing meaning. Like other hybrids, these forces are intermeshed because of their struggle for dominance.

The Museum, Gender, and Knowledge

> There is a story about two small children in a museum standing in front of a painting of Adam and Eve. One child asks the other, "Which is the man and which is the lady?" The other child answers, "I can't tell-they don't have any clothes on."[377]

Judith Shapiro's story describes the museum as a place in which one needs to "know." Her description is directly related to the traditional museum model that Keelah quotes on LambdaMOO. The traditional museum appears to provide access to an

[377]Judith Shapiro, "Transsexualism: Reflections on the Persistence of Gender and the Mutability of Sex," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 248.

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authentic past without bias or mediation. Despite this representation of the traditional museum as unmediated, a position that remains uninterrogated by many visitors, the traditional museum renders meaning by presenting a collection that is "organised according to some systematic and recognisable scheme of classification."[378] These classification strategies often remain invisible because of their conventionality. Judith Shapiro's narrative points to a museum in which viewers and museum professionals systematize, categorize, and label bodies. In a similar way, the MOO user learns about virtual gender, history, bodies, and spaces while using the schematics and maps that are prevalent in the system. Shapiro's story emphasizes the process and problems of classification. It is not surprising that classificatory systems are employed on-line since these methods are also imposed upon the material world.

There are some rooms on LambdaMOO that classify according to gender. The bathrooms that are available in another foyer that was designed by Keelah work to enforce the idea of "appropriate" gender categories. The "Gentlemen" and "Ladies" restrooms can only be entered by characters that have the appropriate gender setting or reset their gender. I was prevented from entering the bathroom because my gender was set to Spivak. "Sorry, you must be a male to enter this restroom."[379] When I was prevented from entering the bathroom, without some gender resetting or passing, I realized that there are numerous bathrooms even though virtual bodies don't need to evacuate.[380] The proliferation of bathrooms that exist in this virtual system work to represent the "needs" of the material body rather than providing for the functions of the

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[378]Smith, "Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings," in *The New Museology*, 8.

[379]Keelah, denied entrance message from the "Men's Restroom," LambdaMOO, @go #29992, west (5 May 1997).

[380]This fascination with evacuating in virtual environments should be related to the popularity of virtual pets like the Tamagatchi. These LCD toys are marketed as pets that the owner has to "feed," "punish," "entertain," and "clean up" after the pet "evacuates."

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virtual community.[381] The reality effect of Keelah's bathroom, and thus of the bathroom's process of distinguishing, is emphasized by the elaborate programming in these rooms. Characters can enter a stall, sit on the toilet, flush the toilet, and wash "his" or "her" hands once inside the "appropriate" bathroom. Keelah's bathroom programming may rematerialize the physical body by regulating the type of functions that it will process. The user must only interact with the bathroom in traditional ways. You can wash your hands in the sink but typing "wash fins in sink" will generate the text, "Do What?"

As this programming suggests, the desire for methods which will enforce and authoritatively determine binary gender are continually played out on-line. Judith Shapiro's story points to an irresolvable question, a longing which is clearly echoed by a segment of the LambdaMOO community, about how to determine "appropriate" gender categories. The following exchange with all its real-time typing mistakes, which was posted to the MOO mailing list "*GrrlTalk" by Lemi, points to the ludicrous methods that users try to employ in order to determine "real" gender:

> You sense that Infrared_Guest is looking for you in The Coat Closet.
> It pages, "you are a girl, your name uis too feminine."
> page infrared feminine like bobby and tony?
> Your message has been sent.
> You sense that Infrared_Guest is looking for you in The Coat Closet.
> It pages, "Will you reveal your sex to me?"
> page infrared I'm spivak
> You sense that Infrared_Guest is looking for you in The Coat Closet.
> It pages, "Would ypuou say hello or Hi?"
> page infrared i don't know. would you?
> You sense that Infrared_Guest is looking for you in The Coat Closet.
> It pages, "It is obvious to me now that you are male, I am studying Psdychology."[382]

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[381]The command "place bathroom" listed more than thirty-three bathrooms on LambdaMOO. Examining individual owners on this list revealed that these bathrooms were all owned by characters that had their gender set to male or female. It seems that intergender characters may have less interest or stake in reinscribing the functions of the material body that a bathroom evokes. Twenty-four of these bathrooms were owned by men and nine bathrooms were owned by women. There was a disproportionate amount of bathrooms owned by men in relationship to the general breakdown of the MOO population. (8 May 1997).

[382]Lemi, reposted to the LambdaMOO on-line Newsgroup, Message 566 on *best-of-the-lists, 13 January 1997. I have left all spelling errors and typos as they "originally" appeared.

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Lemi's story points to a desire for scientific methods, reason, and facts that will ascertain gender in a world where stable categories are becoming increasingly undermined. In Shapiro's story the children enter the museum, a place of knowledge, looking to find their clothed and sexually marked structure echoed in the objects that they see. The "authenticity" of the painting of Adam and Eve that the children view makes them inquire about another type of authenticity. The children realize that gender is culturally produced. The LambdaMOO resists such ideas and instead attempts to reform the body into a singular, masterful, and original state. However, the LambdaMOO museum's process of distinguishing is misshapen by characters who refuse to participate in the binary process of male and female, by the splits and torques in their identity, and their status as copies.

The LambdaMOO museum acts as a space of excess or supplementarity. The system unravels because the LambdaMOO museum's connotative structure of awe restates systems which are inherently understood and observed by the MOO culture. The museum is an information supplement to the cultural space of the MOO; it provides views that can be seen elsewhere. These excesses can only be perceived as negatively laden if the reflexive structure is meant to remain hidden. The reflexive play with computer "displays," the high architectural attributes of the museum, and the display of performative feature objects within the museum's walls suggests that the LambdaMOO museum vacillates between awe and abjectness. The excessive cultural performance of the LambdaMOO museum is related to the performance of gender on-line.

Male users who perform as females on-line often play their gender roles with an excessive adherence to conventions. Those who represent themselves as sexually aggressive and available women on-line are usually marked as men. Although it is impossible to prove, it seems that women also perform themselves with an excessive femininity in order to remove themselves from the perceived notion of "femininity." A female position may be undermined by this play with gender. Being female, or at least

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being excessively female, doesn't provide a stable position. Through this gender play the female position may be rendered inauthentic and even uninhabitable. Men continue to occupy their gender position without contestation. The statement by a LambdaMOO guest, "It doesn't really matter . . . I mean . . . I'm sure there are actually female MOOers . . . But most of them are actually guys," represents a common understanding of on-line gender.

These unverifiable and inauthentic gender performances are antithetical to the traditional knowledge-based structure of the museum. It is striking that the museum structures, which are readily locatable on LambdaMOO, are all "built" by characters that have set their gender to "male." This gender representation is quite skewed. There are always characters with their gender set to "female" and other genders logged into the system. A recent use of the feature command "genwho" broke the characters logged into the system down to "99 males (49%), 75 females (37%), and 26 others (13%)."[383] The ready appearance of such statistics may increase a certain segment of the population's investment in locating "truth." The inability to authenticate a user's "real" gender on-line often causes male guests and some male characters to aggressively demand that female characters identify themselves and make themselves available for advances. The "problem" of Spivaks and other intermediate gender categories is often resolved by presuming that they are females. Such verifying and labeling strategies are less likely to be performed by characters that have selected a gender other than male. It is possible that these same disorienting gender representations propel some male characters to build museums and other structures that temporarily resolve the destabilizing properties of MOO environments.

The destabilizing aspects of gender bending, and the performative nature of gender, is often discussed in public spaces on the MOO as well as on the system's

[383]"genwho" output, LambdaMOO, (5 May 1997).

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mailing lists. The following comment was posted in response to a warning that a character was "posing" as female:

> Thanks for the warning, but I decided years ago I really don't _care_ if it's a guy. Don't get me wrong - I'm hopelessly hetero I'm afraid, but I just figure as long as they can *play* a good woman here it really doesn't matter.[384]

This post echoes the sentiments of many other MOO mailing list participants. Many users acknowledge that it is impossible to "know" the gender of users. This willingness to accept gender settings rather than trying to determine "real" gender does not necessarily lead to a rethinking of sexuality. Even users who acknowledge the unstable nature of on-line gender and choose to enjoy a "good feminine performance" may align their practices with heterosexuality. It is deeply disturbing but not surprising, considering the popularity of excessive drag performances in many clubs and cabarets, that gender fucking and the reinscription of stereotyped feminine traits can happen simultaneously. The surplus of femininity, which is consistently highlighted through on-line discussions, public joking, and bad performances, may work to disrupt stereotyped representations. Mary Ann Doane theorizes that an excessive show of femininity foregrounds the masquerade.[385] On MOOs and off, masquerades demonstrate the constructed nature of men's and women's bodies.[386]

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[384]Videx, LambdaMOO on-line Newsgroup, Message 127 on "*BDSM," 23 October 1996. Few self identified women have publicly expressed concern on LambdaMOO that their on-line partners are gender bending. In other systems there have been problems with men masquerading as lesbians in order to have MOOsex. I unfortunately don't have the space in this chapter to examine the MOO community's focus on female masquerades. It would certainly be worth exploring the seeming lack of concern about male masquerades. The role of women within these communities can remain uneasily unnoticed because of the contestation over the "female" category. Rather than attempting to inscribe a stable notion of the authentic female within these systems, a project that is riddled with contradictions and problems, I would advocate the misperformance of masculinity and the destabilization of the "authentically" male category.

[385]"The masquerade, in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance. Womanliness is a mask which can be worn or removed. The masquerade's resistance to patriarchal positioning would therefore lie in its denial of the production of femininity as closeness, as presence-to-itself, as, precisely, imagistic." Mary Ann Doane, "Film and Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 25.

[386]Recently I was asked what gender I was "IRL." This is an ordinary question for someone to be asked on MOOs where gender is selected by the character rather than "determined" from codes by the viewer. This question was especially familiar to me because I am "Spivak," an intergender category that seems to annoy or confuse many of the members of the community. What was surprising to me was that the

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It is interesting to note that there has been no public discussion about the excessive cultural performance of the LambdaMOO museum or community interest in radically reordering the spatial metaphors that are used on-line. Discussions about the adherence to the mansion "theme" do occur on mailing lists like "*Geography" and "*Theme-Issues." The LambdaMOO museum's supplementarity and the role of architectural vernaculars may remain invisible to the general MOO population unless the community becomes as invested in arguing about virtual architecture as it is fascinated with highlighting virtual gender.

Conclusion: The Promise and Problems of Virtual Museum Subjects

The MOO museum can't produce a unified truth or a stable system of knowledge. The terms of the traditional museum are reorganized by the Lambda house museum. A segment of the population who perceives the MOO space as theirs, programmers and young boys who go to these worlds to be entertained and to find a space that is coded and plotted, must face the unraveling of their bodies by the very rules which they feel they have invented. The computer participates in the performance through the words that it re-presents, by the employment of gendered pronouns that switch and change in relation to the character, and by having encoded in its system a gender that the character may often deny with typed words.

The performances and masquerades of virtual subjects within the larger living "museum" structure of LambdaMOO can function as a critical operation:

> Performances will be loosely structured, with a number of loose themes to weave the action around. Certain spaces will be devoted to specific interrogations and "play." Your avatar will be accommodated. Or bring an entire performance! These are some questions which you might like to use

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person who asked me this question was someone I had "known" for a long time on the MOO. This person seemed to be interested in the same kinds of unraveling of binary gender as I was. This was the interest in fact that had originally brought me to LambdaMOO. What interests me about this question, and the reason that I relate this story, is that it enabled me to answer, "I wear the mask of the female."

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> to begin imagining a performance of interrogation . . . * How culturally diverse and rich is the virtual world? * Who are the pioneers in these virtual frontier towns? *Are we creating new paradigms, opportunities to express difference, or virtual ghettoes? * What is the relationship between the flesh persona and the virtual persona - how does the flesh persona digitise itself into virtuality? * How does online interaction affect subjectivity - to what degree can the subject transcend culture and conditioning and how much of this baggage is brought online? * What is the role of the imagination in creating virtual communities? <.spiral.space.>>>> will interrogate and activate. <.spiral.space.>>>> exponentially hot, dangerous and seductive. <.spiral.space.>>>> a zone to be bent, distorted, discarded, augmented, deconstructed.[387]

On the virtual stage of LambdaMOO, the terms that support the traditional museum, a culturally shared understanding of stable bodies, objects, spaces, art, and viewers, are rewritten by the "subject" who can never quite find its viewing position and the LambdaMOO museum that re-presents the codes and scripts of the traditional museum vernacular in a hysterical configuration. Some members of the MOO community, such as the performance group VNS Matrix, align themselves with a critical performativity in which no social structure escapes dismemberment through such devices as parody. This hybrid theater presents such terms as "museum" to a populace that consumes and then reproduces these concepts as irrevocably altered.

TheLambdaMOO community, like Malraux's project, is capable of a diversity of positions and organizing strategies. The rise of surveillance and the decontextualization of objects are certainly potential problems inherent to these structures. However, the MOO community's tendency to illustrate the ways that gendered bodies are constructed rather than "natural" has the potential for providing tools to revision other bordered communities. On-line museums, which are without physical walls or objects, suggest alternative architectural languages, improper collections, disordered presentation strategies, and performative participants. The once institutionalized spectators have more agency to develop their own viewing strategies when they are released from the power of consistent ritualized scripts. The appearance of museums on the world wide web and in

[387]VNS Matrix MOO-mail, LambdaMOO, 15 August 1995.

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MOOs offers strategies for the documentation and reorganization of communities. As these systems become increasingly more available, "RL" museum designers, educators, directors, and curators may have to ask themselves if traditional museums can provide products, services, and views that aren't already available in cyberspace. This on-line challenge to the traditional museum has yet to be fully implemented.

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CONCLUSION: FROM THE MUSEUM TO THE COLLECTION

> The first function of a museum . . . is to give examples of perfect order and perfect elegance, in the true sense of the test word, to the disorderly and rude populace. Everything in its *own* place, everything looking its best because it is there, nothing crowded, nothing unnecessary, nothing puzzling. Therefore, after a room has been once arranged, there must be no change in it. For new possessions there must be new rooms.[388]

> When a group of fakes is accepted into the canon of genuine works all subsequent judgments about the artist or the period in question are based on perceptions built in part upon the fakes themselves . . . This, finally, is our complaint about fakes. It is not that they cheat their purchasers of money, reprehensible though that is, but they loosen our hold on reality, deform and falsify our understanding of the past.[389]

> Presentations of the past raise peculiarly intractable conundrums of authenticity. Every relic displayed in a museum is a fake in that it has been wrenched out of its original context. Riddled with the inconsistency of compelling yet conflicting preconceptions - the golden glow of nostalgia, the sordid squalor of savagery - all "olden times" are potentially fraudulent. "Is that object real?", is a query often heard at historic sites. "Are you really a weaver? Is this building real? Are you actually doing that work?" Doubt becomes endemic.[390]

I have argued in this dissertation that the virtual museum performs a kind of critique of traditional museum structures. The virtual museum loosens our hold on reality because it becomes a shadow or fake of the traditional museum. "Endemic doubt" about the museum will proliferate as long as the virtual museum relies on terms, such as "subject," "object," and "collection," that have been problematized by the virtual setting. The virtual museum needs an appropriate vocabulary. Until the time that it has one, doubt can provide a productive way of highlighting the structure of the physical museum but we must eventually reconsider the virtual museum's functions. The case studies in this dissertation suggest that the virtual museum can

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[388]John Ruskin, "A Museum or Picture Gallery: Its Function and its Formation," *The Lamps of Beauty: Writings on Art*, ed. Joan Evans (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 323.

[389]Mark Jones, "Why Fakes?" in *Fake? The Art of Deception*, 16.

[390]David Lowenthal, "Forging the Past," in *Fake? The Art of Deception*, 17.

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adopt a number of tactics, including the formation of more personal "museum" collections by allowing users to search image databases or write into pre-existing texts, the quoting of contradictory narratives, and the foregrounding of the non-material and simulated aspects of "exhibits," rather than representing the structure of the physical museum. This shift in the role of the virtual museum could have a drastic effect on the traditional museum's role. It is possible that the term "virtual museum" will become a misnomer in this transition.

The term "virtual museum" is useful at the present time. It foregrounds the manner in which the architectural structures of the traditional museum are replicated, the ways that these sites act as documentary supplements to specific physical museums, and the practice of relying on the aura-laden term "museum" to distinguish these configurations from other virtual sites.[391] As virtual museums develop, it is likely that some of these configurations will only function as museums for a particular segment of a physical society or virtual community. For example, the LambdaMOO museum presents material that is an important part of its history. These museums may present material that isn't of interest or available in other settings. It is even possible that the process of defining and documenting artifacts will produce communities. Virtual settings facilitate these possibilities because they can display diverse artifacts without concern for their condition, location, ownership status, or even the reality of the "objects."

Virtual museums don't have physical structures, in which to store and display material artifacts, but these settings still function as museum collections of a sort.

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[391] Many virtual museums on the web appear to be only a guidebook version of the museum but some of these web museums are becoming increasingly more complex and offer users a wide variety of experiences. Users are now able to download specialized software that enables exploration of what seems to be a continuous and three-dimensional museum space. See for instance The Israel Museum, "Interactive Israel Museum - Jerusalem," http://www.imj.org.il/vrmenorah/ (10 October 1998). Users can also gain a "personalized" view of a museum object by using web interfaces that manipulate a camera in the museum. See for instance The UC Interactive Museum at the Fisher Gallery, "The UC Interactive Museum," http://digimuse.usc.edu/museum.html (10 October 1998).

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They are designed to virtually display "objects" of a lasting interest or value. The virtual museum acquires and cares for these "objects" in a very different way than the physical museum. On-line virtual museums and objects require the maintenance of HTML, JPEG and GIF files, and MOO coding instead of the conservation of the object's material structure.[392] The conservation in virtual museums will be dependent on the preservation of old software and hardware or the continued translation of the virtual museum's structure. Old versions of on-line museums will become inaccessible without these measures.

The on-line virtual museum's evolution isn't as easily chronicled as that of the traditional museum. Photographs and other ephemera document the evolution of displays, collections, and museums, but the changes to virtual structures often remain undocumented.[393] Considerations of the virtual museum are difficult because so many of its histories are lost. The virtual museum may remain outside the bounds of serious ongoing critique if we can't find ways of recording its transient structure. Adequately documenting the available virtual museums is difficult. For instance, the interconnected properties of the web museum, facilitated by hypertextual links, are almost impossible to record without retaining the whole programmed structure. Even then, the document is always incomplete because there is an ever expanding series of links and URLs that users can follow.

I have already argued that the virtual museum, because it can contain anything, disables the architectural structure of museums and the user's ability to conceive of the museum as a walled structure. The careful limits and categories of the

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[392]JPEG is defined as "a compression standard for graphic files developed by the Joint Photographic Experts Group." GIF is "short for Graphics Interchange Format, a .gif is a way to encode color graphics for easy transfer over networks." Cathy Young, "A Kinder, Gentler Glossary for Net Neophytes -- And Others" *Sexuality and Cyberspace* issue, *Women and Performance*, 17, eds. Theresa M. Senft and Stacy Horn. http://www.echonyc.com/~women/Issue17/glossary.html (10 October 1998).

[393]There have been attempts to take "snapshots of the web" but these projects remain inaccessible and would not present documentation of the virtual structures full development.

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traditional museum's collection are disrupted by such different cases as the large number of photographs that can be tipped into books, the borderless collections on the web, and the relationship between individual objects and the MOO's structure. The virtual museum can't supply the consistent order, or the addition of new rooms, that John Ruskin described. These "problems" suggest that we need to theorize virtual collecting as well as the virtual museum. This concept of the virtual collection is already an implicit part of the extra-illustrated *The Marble Faun*, hybrid Louvre, and MOO museum. In fact, the virtual museum couldn't have occurred without such collections. For example, extra-illustrated editions of *The Marble Faun* are produced from pre-existing collections of photographs. The on-line Louvre embodies the hybrid state of the virtual museum because it is a collection of sites. The LambdaMOO museum recontextualizes existing categories but doesn't create such collections as feature objects and rooms. These sets have already been produced through programming and institutionalized by the community's "architecture of belief."[394]

The process of collecting suggests a move away from the limits of the traditional museum. The virtual collection doesn't have to be maintained by institutions. Individuals can produce the extra-illustrated museum, a version of the Louvre, or the MOO museum because they require no material objects and don't rely on physical architecture for their formation. John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, which was influenced by the work of Walter Benjamin, envisions a radical disruption of the traditional museum and its replacement by the personal collection. Berger's personal collection could also be described as a virtual museum:

> Adults and children sometimes have boards in their bedrooms or living-rooms on which they pin pieces of paper: letters, snapshots, reproductions of paintings, newspaper cuttings, original drawings, postcards. On each board all

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[394]Typing "help rooms" from anywhere on LambdaMOO will provide the user with an explanation of this term. The LambdaMOO museum also doesn't present all of the ways that rooms are formed into collections on LambdaMOO. Feature objects, like "place <room name>" that produces a list of rooms with the same names and "@rose" that lists the rooms accessible from a character's current location, form rooms into collections.

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> the images belong to the same language and all are more or less equal within it, because they have been chosen in a highly personal way to match and express the experience of the room's inhabitant. Logically, these boards should replace the museum.[395]

The Good Vibrations web site advocates a similar personal production of the museum:

> If you enjoy browsing flea markets, thrift stores and garage sales, you can easily put together a vibrator museum of your own. For those of you who are happy to browse on-line, we've reproduced images of our favorite antiques on this page. And to give our museum an authentic historical flavor, we've invented tales linking these antique toys to notable women and men of the past.[396]

The "Antique Vibrator Museum," collected by Good Vibrations founder Joani Blank and available in her stores as well as on-line, tries to rewrite parts of a sexual history rather than to "deform and falsify our understanding of the past." The museum relates a series of vibrators to a list of famous, yet apocryphal, "owners" such as Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Virginia Woolf, Billie Holliday, Marilyn Monroe, Roald Dahl, Henry Ford, Lillie Hitchcock Coit, Margaret Sanger, Mata Hari, Amelia Earhart, Colette, Henry and June Miller, Anaïs Nin, Emma Goldman, Ernest Hemingway, Janis Joplin, and Gypsy Rose Lee in order to produce a museum where sexuality can be written back into the story. This "museum" does more than sell Good Vibrations products; it also allows the user to imagine a set of their own stories and collections. This site suggests that objects can be made real with the inscription of meaningful narratives. However, the "Antique Vibrator Museum" doesn't allow users to collect and arrange virtual objects on the web. The "Antique Vibrator Museum," with its apocryphal stories, is related to The Museum of Jurassic Technology and other

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[395]Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 30.

[396]Good Vibrations, "Antique Vibrator Museum," http://secure.goodvibes.com/cgi-bin/menu.cgi?token=PZMSEOPKZZJSAHML&doc=museum.html (8 September 1998).

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museums that engage visitors in the schemas and vernacular of the traditional museum while encouraging them to doubt.[397]

Virtual settings are a particularly useful way of putting the twinned processes of collecting and arranging back into the hands of the viewer. These virtual collections, like Benjamin's theory in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," deplete aura by putting the ownership, or at least the virtual possession of objects back into the public domain.[398] Collecting has historically been understood as a process of selecting and possessing, a process that often limits the circulation of the object through society, but the virtual collection, which is confined by a very different set of criteria, can provide a seemingly infinite number of arrangements and repetitions.[399] It may be more useful to describe the virtual museum as a collection. If the "Museum without Walls" is more than one art book or archival collection of photographs then its massive body may be a product of all reproductive depictions. If the collection can include all reproductions of cultural artifacts then the "Museum without Walls" is an ever expanding bracket that is ruled by a collective of image makers, snapshot takers, and film producers. Ordering and classifying can be a subset of this reproductive museum, but these parameters are at least partially canceled out by the other collections that the virtual museum contains.

Virtual museums offer an eclectic form of collecting. They have as much in common with such eccentric collections as dime museums, *cabinets de curiosités*, and *Wunderkammern* as they do with universal survey museums and modern collections.

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[397]There have been a number of authors that consider the Museum of Jurassic Technology. See Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995); Ralph Rugoff, "Beyond Belief: The Museum as Metaphor," in *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*, eds. Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995); and Margaret Wertheim, "The Museum of Jurassic Technology," *Omni* 17 (November 1994), 35.

[398]Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations.*

[399]For a discussion of collecting see James Clifford, "Objects and Selves-An Afterward," In *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 238.

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The potentially limitless virtual collection evokes the dime museum's diverse array of "dioramas, panoramas, georamas, cosmoramas, paintings, relics, freaks, stuffed animals, menageries, waxworks, and theatrical performances."[400] Internet users produce personal "collections" and reformat information because on-line technologies facilitate a writerly interaction with data. The sites that users visit, their previous on-line experiences, and their diverse methods for accessing internet sites allows users to have drastically different experiences on-line. I will discuss these access methods in some depth because I want to argue that such things as surfing, bookmarking, hotlists, web rings, archiving, downloading, and search engines produce virtual collections.

Users can form a collection by using a variety of on-line functions and systems. Surfing, or following links and other paths from one web page to another, allows viewers to visually and conceptually link together a series of unrelated pages. To surf is to "traverse the Internet in search of interesting stuff, used esp. if one is doing so with a World Wide Web browser."[401] The term has also been "used by analogy to describe the ease with which an expert user can use the waves of information flowing around the Internet to get where he wants."[402] The individual's reorganizing and rescripting of "waves of information," whether productive or unproductive, is related to Barthes's writerly text. Users can superimpose their own virtual mobile view over a series of related web pages and form a collection of images, or a narrative, that is based on their choices rather than another individual's predetermined direction.

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[400]Dennett, "Origins of the Dime Museum, 1782-1840," in *Weird and Wonderful*, 5.

[401]Eric S. Raymond, Jargon File," The New Hacker's Dictionary," http://fount.journalism.wisc.edu/jargon/jargon_33.html#SEC40 (13 December 1998).

[402]Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing, "surfing from FOLDOC," http://wombat.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/foldoc.cgi?surfing (10 October 1998).

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The user's "collection" can be reaccessed in a number of ways. Pages can be recalled by selecting a particular page from the "Go" menu.[403] The user can also retrieve, arrange, and categorize sites by employing gopher and browser bookmarking options. Gopher is "a menu-driven way to browse through files on a network" and Veronica, its search function, presents data as an organized and itemized collection.[404] Users can easily revisit sites by using the web and gopher forms of bookmarking, which record a location for future retrieval. Web browsers, like Netscape, allow users to arrange their bookmarked addresses into varied sets through the employment of "folders."

Web page designers also produce data collections for users. For instance, homepage designers may offer hotlists, which are a collection of their favorite links, as a way of representing their identity. Another form of hypertextual link is the web ring or net ring. "A Web ring (or Webring) is a way of interlinking related Web sites so that you can visit each site one after the other, eventually (if you keep going) returning to the first Web site. Typically, users can also elect to go backwards through the ring of sites, skip a certain number at a time, visit sites randomly, or see a list of all the sites on the ring."[405] Web rings conceptualize linked pages into a collection and allow users to access a similar set of sites. The Ring Surf site describes the ways that these structures form collections. "Users like Net Rings because rings pull related sites together into easily explored groups."[406] "There are Web rings on acrobatics,

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[403]This function is only available if the user had already viewed that page during the same browser session.

[404]Cathy Young, "A Kinder, Gentler Glossary for Net Neophytes -- And Others" *Sexuality and Cyberspace* issue, *Women and Performance*, 17, eds. Theresa M. Senft and Stacy Horn. http://www.echonyc.com/~women/Issue17/glossary.html (10 October 1998).

[405]Frank Reaume, What Is, "What Is . . . A Web ring (a definition)," http://www.whatis.com/webring.htm (12 October 1998).

[406]Ring Surf, "Ringsurf - The new wave in webrings," http://www.ringsurf.com/ (12 October 1998).

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quilting, mermaids, the macabre, Spanish hotels, the Chevrolet, Dixieland, medieval studies, native American sites, and Winnie the Pooh."[407] Such directional devices as web rings and hotlists offer users different ways of perceiving sites.

Meta-collections, such as WebrRing's RingWorld which provides an organized subject list of rings, provide another version of the collection on-line.[408] Internal search functions on individual sites, as well as more general search engines like Excite and Yahoo, also produce collections.[409] Search engines generate lists from their database of information in response to the user's input of search terms. These collections appear to be unique and personal, even though many users may end up with the same results, because the list appears in response to the user's inquiry. These databases of information are an archive that can then be reformatted into a seemingly infinite number of more organized collections through the actions of users. The most popular search engines offer the user lists of other sites and a small amount of information about that site but archives of email lists and usenet posts, such as Dejanews, store a more detailed set of data.[410] For instance, users can access lists of usenet posts, as well as the whole post, through an ostensibly limitless set of terms and criteria. Through these computer-generated archives the user can form and reform collections of names, addresses, data, and ideas. Through these acts, the user and database collude in the recontextualization of these data sets.

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[407]Frank Reaume, What Is, "What Is . . . A Web ring (a definition)," http://www.whatis.com/webring.htm (12 October 1998).

[408]Web Ring, "Welcome to Web Ring!" http://www.webring.org/ (23 October 1998).

[409]"On the Internet, a search engine has three parts: 1. A spider (also called a "crawler" or a "bot") that goes to every page or representative pages on every Web site that wants to be searchable and reads it, using hypertext links on each page to discover and read a site's other pages. 2. A program that creates a huge index (sometimes called a "catalog") from the pages that have been read. 3. A program that receives your search request, compares it to the entries in the index, and returns results to you." What Is, "What a Search Engine Is," http://www.whatis.com/ (23 October 1998).

[410]Deja News, "Deja News," http://www.dejanews.com/ (23 October 1998).

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The collecting methods that I have discussed produce a more temporary accumulation of ideas, either visual or textual, than the data stored on a hard drive. This ephemeral quality may make it difficult to contemplate the "collection." However, users can use such procedures as downloading, saving files, and printing to shape this temporary writerly version of information into a more traditional collection. Downloaded images can be displayed as a desktop image that users see when they turn on their computer. Images can also be printed out so that they become a material object or "hard copy." Downloaded images can also be uploaded onto web pages, FTP, or gopher sites so that they form part of yet another collection.

On-line collections of data are often called archives. An archive site is "An Internet host where program source, documents, e-mail or news messages are stored for public access via anonymous FTP, Gopher, World-Wide Web or other document distribution system."[411] The slight differences between the archive, "a place in which public records or historical documents are preserved," and the museum, with its more object-oriented collection, continue to collapse on-line because all this information is stored and displayed through the employment of code.[412] It is not surprising, considering the proliferation of computer databases, that Derrida relates the archive to the "hypomnesic and prosthetic experience of the technical substrate":

> Was it not at this very instant, having written something or other on the screen, the letters remaining as if suspended and floating yet at the surface of a liquid element, I pushed a certain key to "save" a text undamaged, in a hard and lasting way, to protect marks from being erased, so as to ensure in this way salvation and *indemnity*, to stock, to accumulate, and, in what is at once the same thing and the something else, to make the sentence available in this way for printing and for reprinting, for reproduction?[413]

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[411]Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing, "archive from FOLDOC," http://wombat.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/foldoc.cgi?archive+site (13 December 1998).

[412]Merriam Webster, "WWWebster Dictionary," http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/netdict (13 December 1998).

[413]Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression.* trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 25-26.

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Computer technologies offer multiple ways to collect, sort, store, and display data. However, despite Derrida's claims, no document is ever fully or permanently saved. There is always the possibility that data will be corrupted or lost through hardware and software failures. The ideological distortion of data, so that they reproduce a different meaning, is both a consistent technological problem and promise. Such virtual documents as "open" word processing files, because they are convertible and waiting for additions, can't be entirely reproduced. It is still unclear what effect such acts as virtual writing, downloading and uploading files on the web, and MOO coding will have. There may be a "false" sense of agency that is produced by these systems. Berger's bulletin boards, either on-line or off, may allow the owner to rescript their relationship to culture and to appear to "own" culture, but in all but a few cases these collections remain at the level of the personal. Larger cultural constructions, such as the museum, seem largely unaffected by these perceptual shifts.

The virtual museum should be different from Ruskin's concept of the traditional museum where everything is fixed into its "appropriate" space. The exhibitions and collections, which are facilitated by new technologies, suggest that active viewers can find models from which to shape their own views, reorganize representations, and even form their own collections. Each of the virtual museums in this dissertation, when closely examined, reveals alternative collecting strategies. Virtual museums can't remain a unified and static structure, even with the edicts of the current virtual museums and the problems with these organizational strategies, because users employ the system in drastically different ways than the designers intended. Designers of on-line virtual museums may attempt to order and standardize the viewer's experience but the virtual museum also provides contestational models for resistance.

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Figure 1. *The Marble Faun*, vol. 2, across from page 229, Albumen Photograph. (Courtesy of the Rare Books Division; The New York Public Library; Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.)

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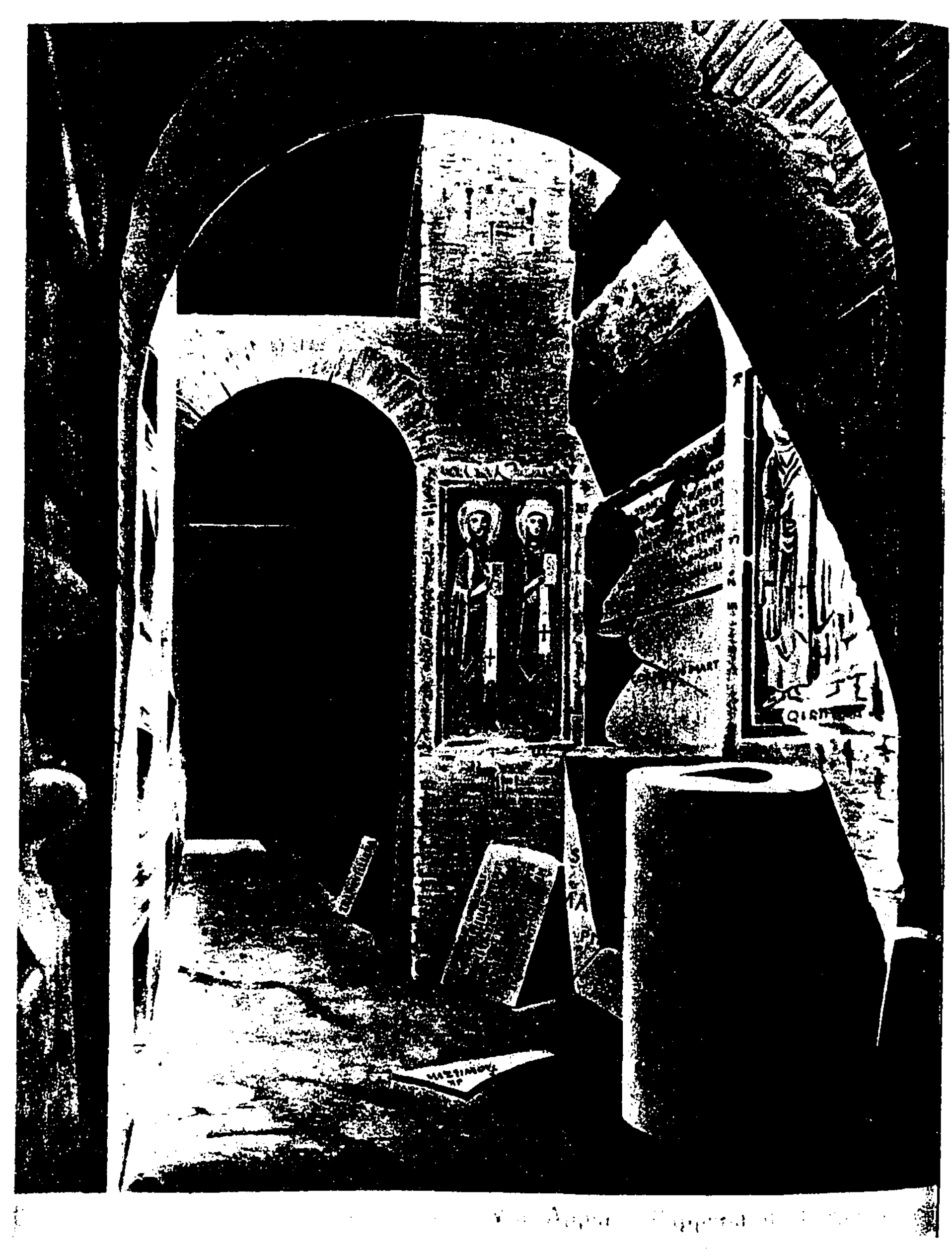

Figure 2. *The Marble Faun*, vol. 1, across from page 25, *Roma-Catacombe di S. Caliesto Sutta Via Appia Capella di Cornelia Veso*, Albumen Photograph. (Courtesy of the Rare Book Division; The New York Public Library; Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.)

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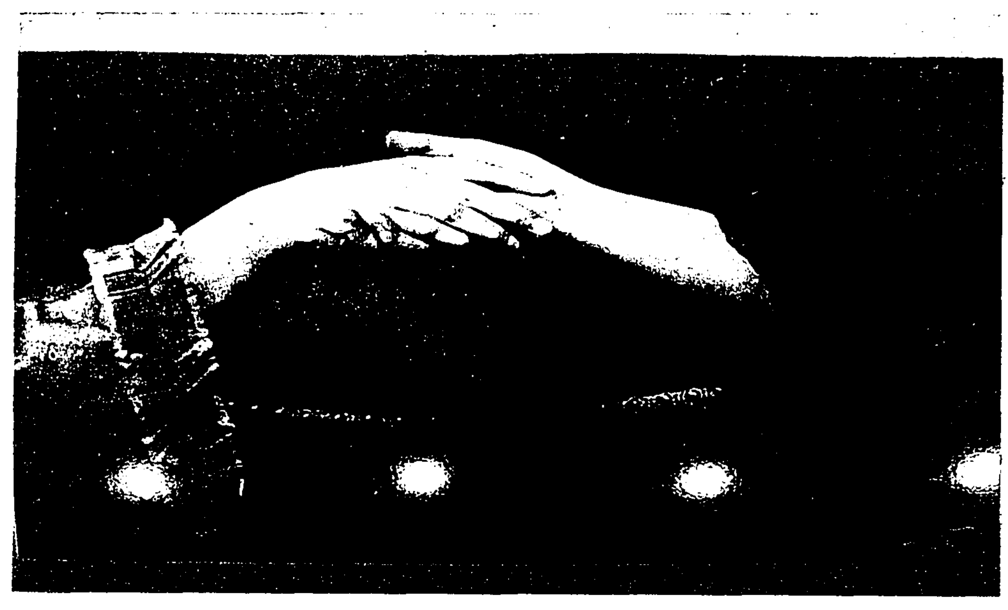

Figure 3. *The Marble Faun*, vol. 1, across from page 143, Albumen Photograph. (Collection of the Author.)

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Menu

- Magazine (in French only)
- Practical Information
- Cultural Activities Programme (partly in French)
- Publications and Databases
- The Collections
- The Louvre Palace and Museum
- The Grand Louvre
- Partners and Mailboxes

Français · English · Español · Português

Survey · The Server

Latest update 30 november 1996

Figure 4. The "official" Louvre, "Louvre Museum." (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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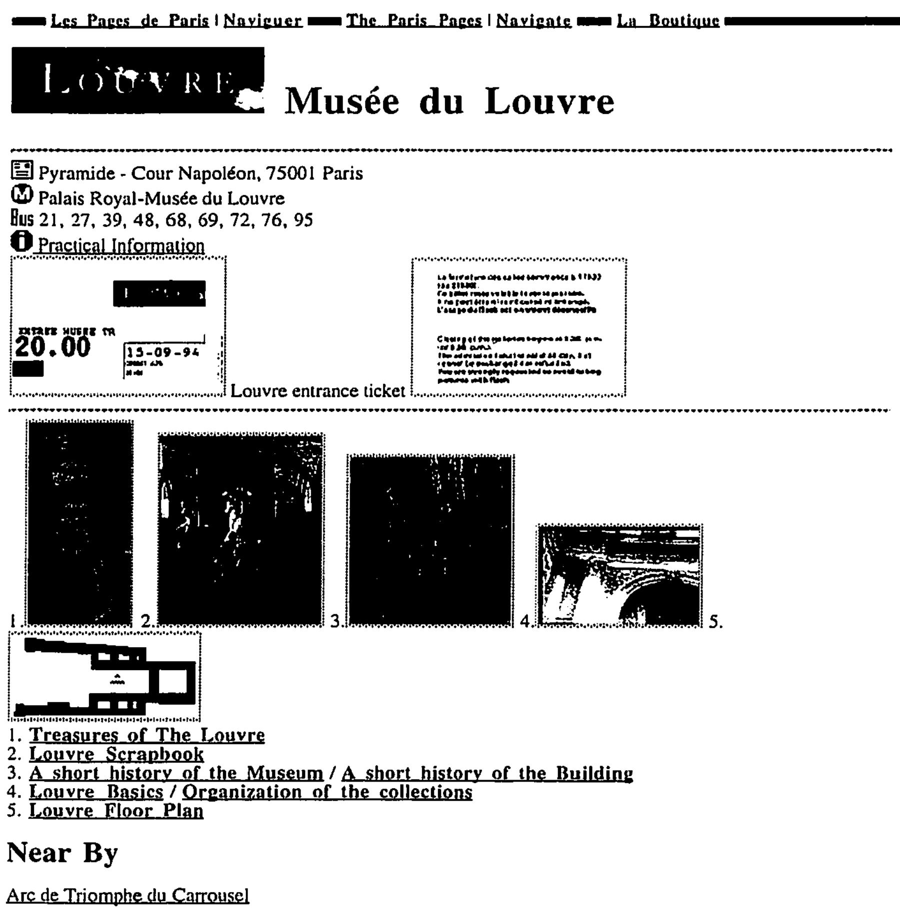

Figure 5. Paris Pages, "Musee du Louvre." (Courtesy of Norman Barth and The Paris Pages.)

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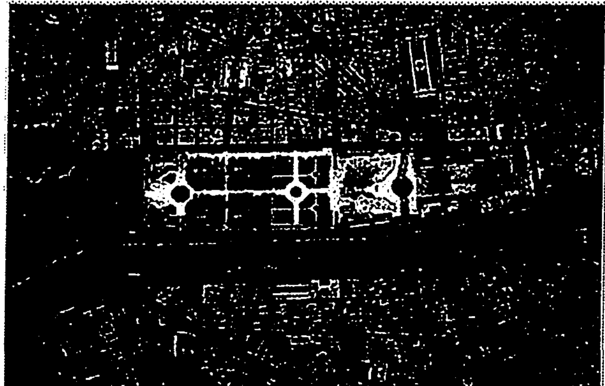
Renovations of the "Grand Louvre"



Aerial view of the Louvre Palace and the Jardin des Tuileries

The "Grand Louvre" is a part of the "Grand Travaux" or Major Works defined by the President of the Republic François Mitterrand, which also includes the new Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Opéra Bastille and the Grande Arche de la Défense.

In fact it constituted the realisation of an earlier project, which involved devoting the entire Palace to the function of a museum, whilst modernising and improving the presentation of the collections.

Covering an area of some 40 hectares right in the heart of Paris, on the right bank of the Seine, the Louvre offers almost 60,000 m2 of exhibition rooms dedicated to preserving items representing 11 millennia of civilisation and culture. The "Grand Louvre" is also a cultural unit which has a didactic role towards the public, a role which it fulfils through lectures, audiovisual and interactive productions and very many printed publications which are available in the exhibition rooms or at the bookshop under the pyramid.

- The Project
- The Pyramid
- Richelieu Wing
- The End of the Project
- Openings of New Galleries in the Louvre Museum in 1997

Louvre Menu

Figure 6. The "official" Louvre, Aerial View. (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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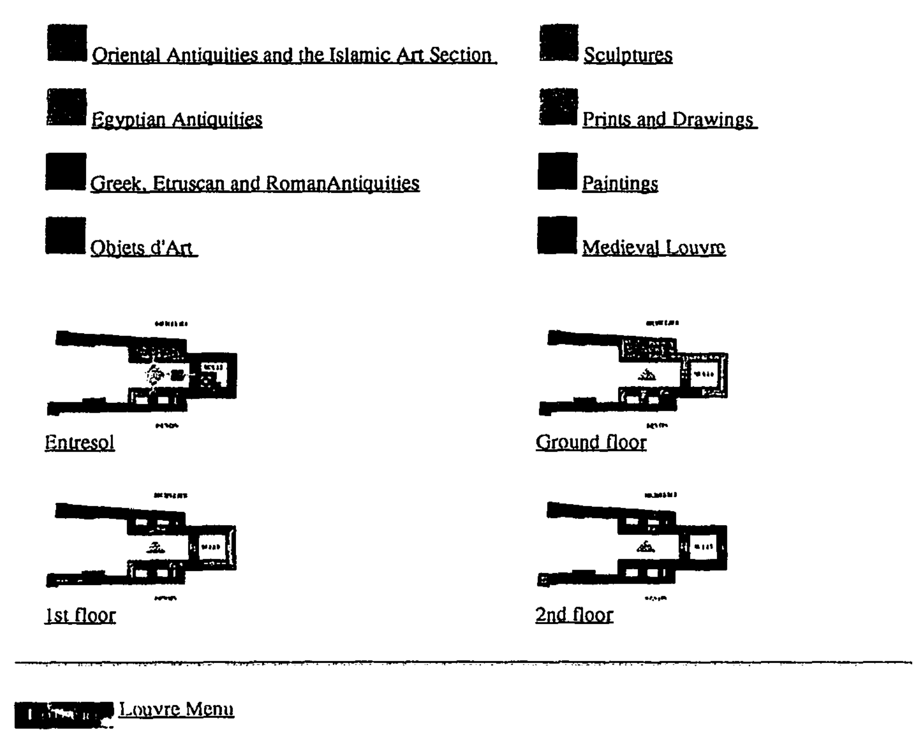

Figure 7. The "official" Louvre, Floor Plan. (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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Entresol

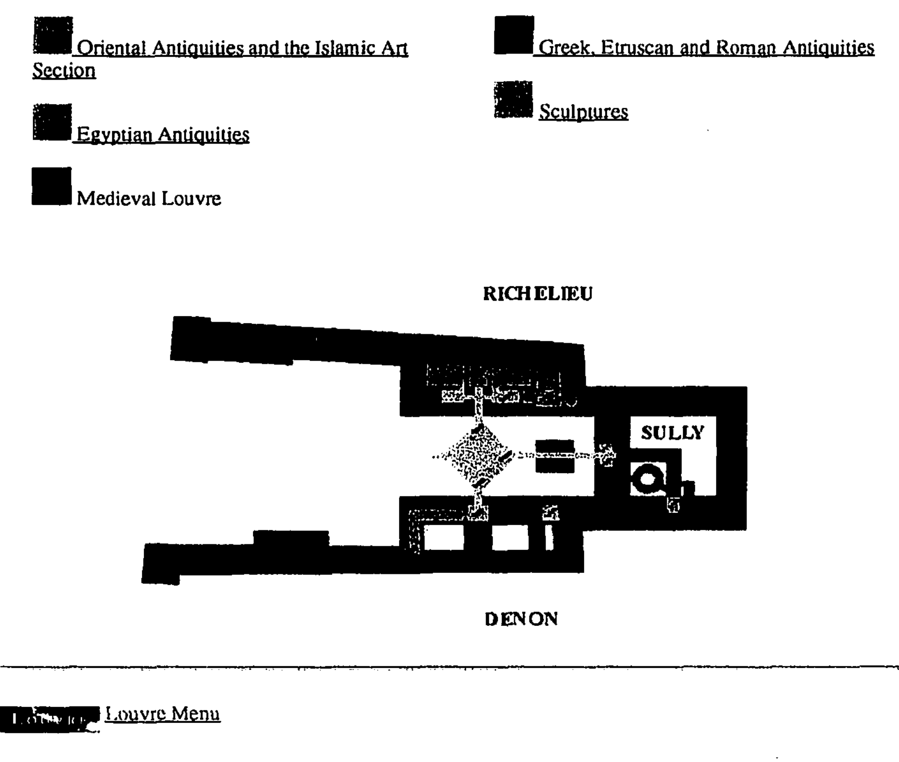

Figure 8. The "official" Louvre, Entresol Floor Plan. (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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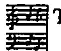
Explore the WebMuseum unique Famous Paintings collections

Other Resources

Visit Paris on a small tour


The Auditorium

All you ever wanted to know about the WebMuseum (includes What's New in the WebMuseum)

Don't forget to visit our hosting sponsor home page!

Please take a couple of seconds to switch to the closest site in the ever-expanding WebMuseum network; this should dramatically improve the speed of data access.

- NORTH AMERICA:
  - USA - **North Carolina**: SunSITE University of North Carolina
  - USA - **Florida**: OIR, University of Central Florida
  - USA - **Iowa**: Yet Another Webservice Provider
  - USA - **California**: *emf*.net, Berkeley
  - USA - **Wisconsin**: World Internet Technologies
  - USA - **Mississippi**: Mall of Cyberspace (Starkville)

Figure 9. Nicolas Pioch, WebMuseum, "Welcome from the Curator."

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The Louvre Palace and Museum

"Mouseîon: establishment in which a collection of works of art, items of historical, aesthetic or scientific interest are preserved, exhibited, shown to advantage." (Larousse dictionary)

The Limbourg Brothers
The Month of October with the Louvre of Philippe Auguste in the background
Illumination from the calendar of the manuscript
Les très riches heures du duc de Berry
Musée Condé, Château de Chantilly

Giuseppe Castiglionne
The "Salon Carré", in 1865, at the Louvre Museum
Canvas - H 0,69 m; W 1,03 m

The Palace

A medieval fortress, the palace of the kings of France, and a museum for the last two centuries, the architecture of the Louvre Palace bears witness to more than 800 years of history.

Two Centuries as a Museum

Established in 1793 by the French Republic, the Louvre Museum, in the company of the Ashmoleum Museum (1683), the Dresden Museum (1744) and the Vatican Museum (1784) is one of the earliest European museums.

The Collections

Figure 10. The "official" Louvre, "The Louvre Palace and Museum." (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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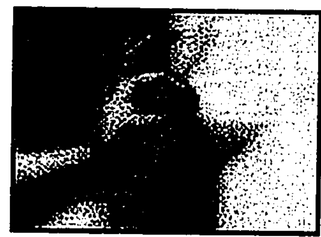

Fontainebleau School
Gabrielle d'Estrée and her sister detail
Circa 1595?
Wood - H 0,96 m; W 1,25 m

Simon Vouet
Allegory of Riches detail
Circa 1630-1635
Canvas - H 1,70 m; W 1,24 m

Figure 11. The "official" Louvre, "The French School." (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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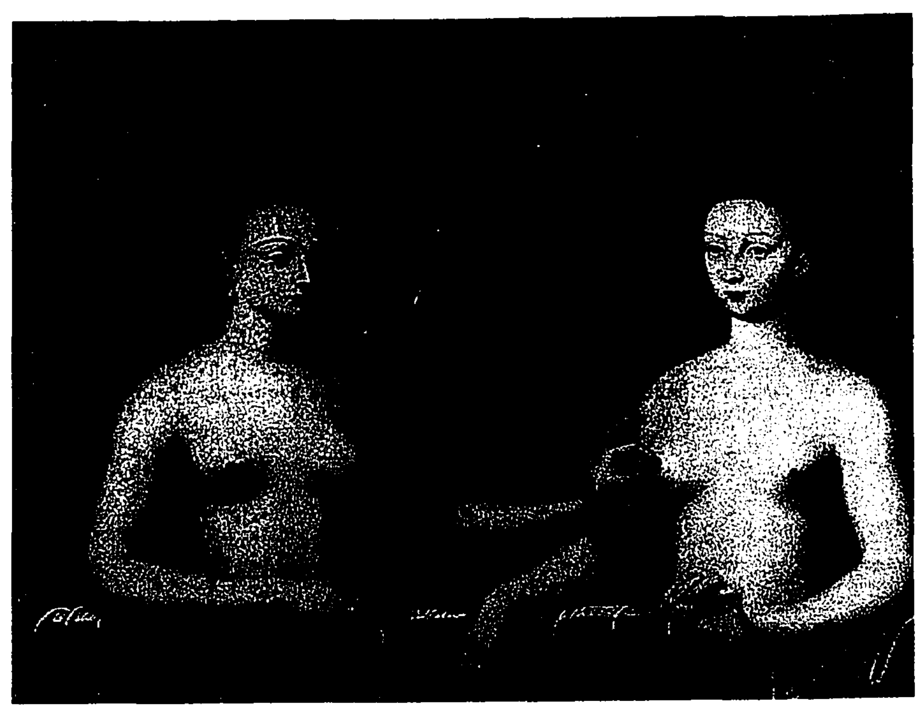

Figure 12. The "official" Louvre, Fontainebleau School, *Gabrielle d' Estrée and Her Sister*, circa 1595. (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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Les visages de la Joconde

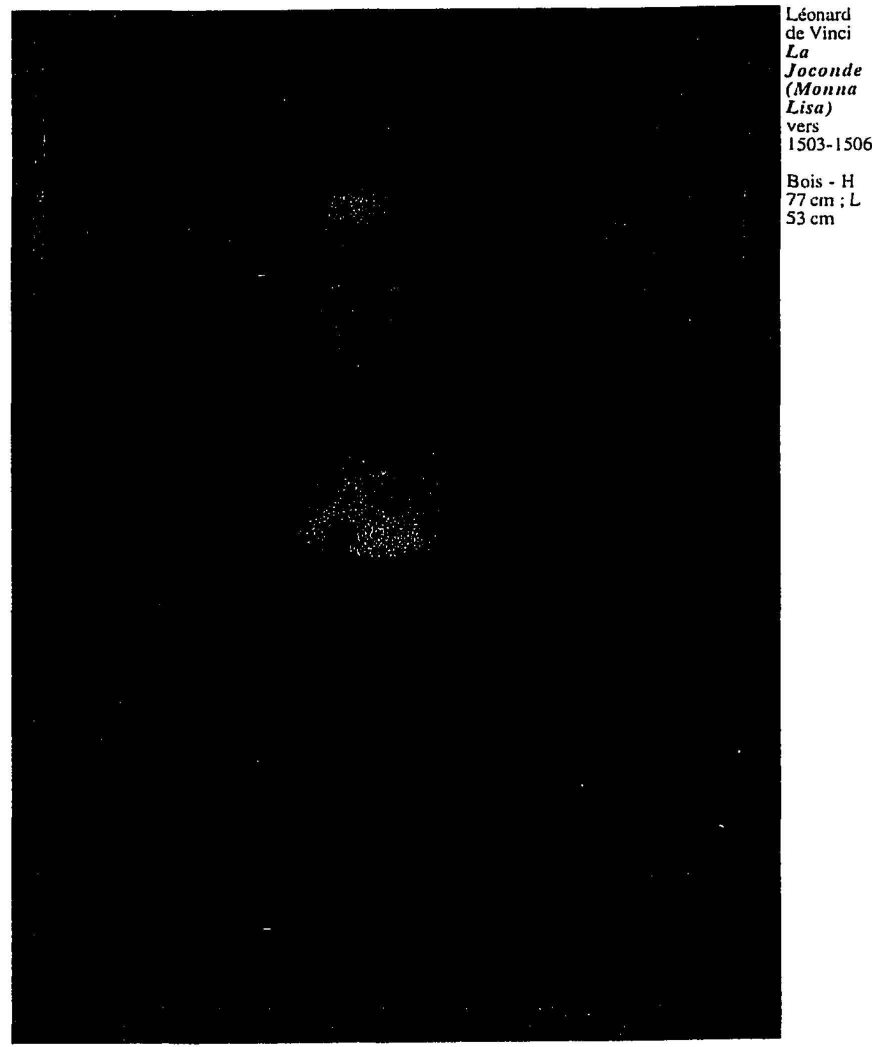

Figure 13. The "official" Louvre, "Les Visages de la Jaconde." (Courtesy of the Louvre Museum.)

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