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THE DISCOURSE OF THE PRIMITIVE

IN

WESTERN EUROPEAN AND POLISH MODERNISM

by

DAVID A. GOLDFARB

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

1999

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

16 September 1999
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

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Abstract

THE DISCOURSE OF THE PRIMITIVE
IN WESTERN EUROPEAN AND POLISH MODERNISM

by

David A. Goldfarb

Adviser: Professor Vincent Crapanzano

This study asks why the modern, whatever its cultural or ethnic identity, needs the primitive for self-definition and how that "primitive" is produced. It compares the discourse of the primitive in Western Europe to corresponding developments in the non-colonial powers of Eastern Europe, particularly Poland, a long colonized power that lacked material interest in an ideology of primitivization, which post-colonial critics often point to as the motivation for that ideology.

From the Western European side, the prehistory of Primitivism is considered through the works of Freud and his Enlightenment antecedents. Key elements of Primitivism are outlined through a close reading of Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon and Baudelaire's poem, "La Chevelure." Bronisław Malinowski is studied as a figure who stands between Poland and Western Europe. The reappropriation of themes of the primitive by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Witold Gombrowicz, and Bruno Schulz are analyzed in relation to their West European counterparts. A provisional conclusion is offered with regard to the semiotics of appropriation and reappropriation that generate a discourse of the primitive from the initial moment of contact between ethnographer and "native," through the use of artifacts by West European artists, to the participation in Primitivism by Polish authors and artists.

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Introduction

> Do not waste your precious time in pursuit of Europe. You will never catch up with her. Don't try to become Polish Matisses. a Braque will not be born from what you lack. Strike, rather, at European art. Be those who unmask. Instead of pulling yourselves up to an alien maturity, try instead to reveal Europe's immaturity.
>
> (Witold Gombrowicz, Diary 1:26)[1]

How can time be mapped onto space? What do we mean when we describe one culture as "modern" and another as "backward," or "developed" and "developing," as if we could go to a place and find a pure, unmediated "original" culture that we could understand in an unmediated way? What is

[1] The system of documentation employed here is the MLA parenthetical style using the author and short title when there are multiple works cited by a single author. The general principle is to provide complete bibliographic information with a minimum of clutter. Full information may be found in the List of Works Cited at the end of the text. Author and title information is omitted from parenthetical citations where context makes this clear. I have generally tried to cite published translations when available and suited to my interpretation of the original text. Where no published translation is cited, it may be assumed that the translation is my own.

Translation slightly revised, here. There is a pun in the Polish on "Braque" and the word for "lack" or "deficiency," brak.

Nie traćcie drogiego czasu na pościg za Europą--nigdy jej nie dogonicie. Nie próbujcie stać się polskimi Mattiss'ami--z braków waszych nie urodzi się Braque. Uderzcie raczej w sztukę europejską, bądźcie tymi, którzy demaskują; zamiast podciągnać się do cudzej dojrzałości, spróbujcie raczej ujawnić niedojrzałość Europy. (W. Gombrowicz, Dziennik, 1953-1956 1:44-45).

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the sequence of mediations that must take place for someone like Witold Gombrowicz, a Polish modernist writer of aristocratic descent exiled in Argentina, to say in 1953 to fellow Poles, both in their home country and in exile, mostly elsewhere in Europe, "Instead of pulling yourselves up to an alien maturity, try instead to reveal Europe's immaturity"? Which way is "up"?

Modernisms, as they emerge at various points in history, must always define themselves in terms of temporal oppositions. Any looking backward violates the boundless faith in the now and the future that might be taken as a defining characteristic of any modernism. A seeming quirk of these religions of the "now," however, is their fascination for the primitive. Paradox exists only in appearance here, as the chronotope of modernism's fascination for past time is different from that of the backward-looking currents to which modernism opposes itself. Neo-classicisms valorize some particular, historical age. Modernist primitivism valorizes an unlimited, pre-historicized time, the past's analogue to the boundless future.

The time scale of the "primitive" exists on a different dimension from the time scale of history. Primitivity is a putative stage of development that precedes civilization. All physical space must obey the calendar of history, but the calendar of cultural evolution--or devolution, depending one's vision of progress--from primitive to civilized may vary according to geography. By travelling on the earth, then, one may move backward or forward in time on the calendar of primitivity and civilization. Modernism craves this

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unsettling of history's temporal order. It declares its now-ness by seizing time itself, and appropriating the Primitive as an object of science or art.

Hegel offers the most explicit articulation of the relation between geography and progress, perhaps, in the essay on the "geographical basis of world history" included as an appendix to his introduction to the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History (152-209), where he argues that Africa, Asia, and Europe form a totality representing the progress of history, America representing its potential, and that within each of these regions, the "principles" of the uplands, the valleys, and the coasts determine local variations in the progress toward subjective freedom and the modern European state. Thus, "World history travels from east to west; for Europe is the absolute end of history, just as Asia is the beginning" (197).

The calendar of progress, however, is generated by the "moderns," and the "primitives" have no say about the use and meaning of their artifacts, physical or verbal, after they have been sold to the White man for the various purposes of ethnographers, artists, and collectors. The "affinity of the tribal and the modern," as art historian William Rubin has called it, may only exist in one direction. We are only beginning to know in the West what "the tribal" thought about Picasso or Brancusi. What role has Primitivism played in the cultures of non-colonial states, which appropriated a second-hand primitive, once turned over by the Western European primitivists? And what might we make of Primitivism as it later appeared in the modernist art of the Third World? The situation is much more complicated than it appears in the documents of Western-European Primitivism itself or in the western critique

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of Primitivism as a western phenomenon, which generally ignores the problem of these codings and re-encodings.

Marianna Torgovnick, to pick only one example, in her recent and highly popular Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives, states as the goal of her critique that it

> asks precisely that we understand the rules governing the exchange between the modern West, the postmodern West, and the versions of the primitive they created or endorse. It seeks to make impossible innocent reenactments of the dramas of us and them that have been staged and restaged in the modern West's encounters with primitive Others. (41)

This goal, however, to divorce the study of cultural diversity from the political aims of colonialism and its intellectual analogue--objectification was not completely unknown to those who would now be accused of "objectification." Leo Frobenius, for instance, despite his clear statements of the value of his African Expeditions for the advancement of colonialism (1:vi-vii) and his repeated disparagements of the "phlegmatic black" (e.g. 1:43), saw himself as correcting a European misimpression that Africa was incapable of producing high culture, even if that culture was in Frobenius's mind long dead. Bronisław Malinowski, likewise, saw himself as bringing scientific objectivity and removing cultural prejudice by living in close contact with the natives and attempting to become their equal. While Torgovnick's work is sincere, playful, and frequently insightful, it is difficult to see how it will "make impossible innocent" objectification, while restricting its field of inquiry to "the rules governing the exchange between the modern West, the postmodern West, and the versions of the primitive they created or endorse." After all, it is not as if "the rules" are the only

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phenomena that generate the meanings that are interesting in this context, or that the "exchange" occurs only between some monolithic "West" and its "version" or representation of the "primitive." The "West" includes its own range of viewpoints on the scale of "modern" and "primitive," and the "primitives" themselves surely have had their own impressions of this "exchange" apart from what so many Westerners might believe those impressions to be.

This study asks why the modern needs the primitive for self-definition, no matter what ethnic group is striving for modernity in any particular instance, and how that primitive is produced. Its starting point is to compare the discourse of the primitive in Western Europe to corresponding developments in the non-colonial powers of Eastern Europe, particularly Poland, a long colonized power that lacked material interest in an ideology of primitivization, which post-colonial critics often point to as the motivation for that ideology. By "discourse," I mean the broad field of representations in which notions and aspects of the primitive may be encoded. That field may include works of fiction, poetry, visual art, and also ethnography, travel literature, psychology and philosophy. Some of these representations, like paintings and ethnographic accounts, may lend themselves to rather direct attempts at describing "primitive" people, while others, like psychological and philosophical treatises, may contain deep encodings of the primitive through layers of abstraction. All, however, imagine the possibility of knowing a pre-social, pre-civilized, unformed, natural mode of human existence.

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Traditionally, Primitivism (with a capital "P") has been studied as a movement or a style in the visual arts or as a current or tendency in popular culture, but these approaches tend to reveal only one thread of what I see as a broad and complex system of meaning. Approaches like Torgovnick's or William Rubin's, for example, in his exhibit and critical catalogue, Primitivism in Twentieth Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern are paradigmatic.

Rubin's exhibit juxtaposed primitivist works by modernist artists with their actual or likely primitive models, telling a complex narrative about the rise of modernism, but giving little information about creation, tribal functions, original contexts or meanings of the primitive works, save for the place of origin, physical materials, approximate age, and perhaps a general description like "ritual mask."[2] "Modernism" becomes a heroic narrative in which the protagonists are artist-geniuses, and the objects they appropriate are merely formal models. The visual arts, however, were not a closed world in which "modernism" was being produced abstractly apart from scientific knowledge in the ethnography, psychology, and evolutionary theory. Within the context of ethnography, for instance, the very artifacts that inspired Picasso and Matisse functioned as the treasure won through trials and cunning by heroic ethnographer-collectors like Leo Frobenius, whose own narratives speak much more about the acquisition of artifacts than

[2] For a more thoroughgoing summary of the controversy surrounding the MOMA exhibit, which need not be rehashed here yet again, see Torgovnick, Gone Primitive, ch. 6.

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to their meaning. These same artifacts, then, might have different meanings in at least these three contexts of origin, acquisition and reappropriation. Within the context of "origin" there might be further subdivisions, perhaps for the user and the maker of the object. Within acquisition, there might be one meaning for the purveyor and one for the collector. Reappropriation may operate on several levels, say by the "founders" of a representational style and by the so called "imitators" of the founders. It becomes all the more complicated when the actual producers of the discourse occupy more than one place in the chain of signification, as when artists from "primitive" cultures, in their transition to modernity, begin to imitate European Primitivism. To study only one thread of this network of significations without at least recognizing the network is not to study it at all.

Michel Foucault demonstrated in such works as Discipline and Punish that pervasive systems of cultural meaning might exist invisibly until they are addressed across disciplines as discourses. While I draw a certain inspiration from Foucault's ability to make connections across fields, however, I do not want to suggest, as Foucault seemed to do, that a discourse is itself a closed structure. The real world is not so neat. My goal is neither to glorify primitivism as the victory of modernism over classicism or authenticity over alienation, nor to produce the sort of critique that would divide the world into perpetrators and victims. I want to read primitivism as a series of encounters, within which there may be systems that seem closed from the inside, but which are themselves subject to subversion in larger contexts. The themes of these encounters are modernity, nature or origins, knowledge, and identity.

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For the moment, I am resisting the temptation to offer a concise definition of "the primitive," because one of the projects here is to show that the definition can be as varied as the discourse. Because the Second World War vastly changed political, economic and cultural conditions in Europe, 1939 will be the outer limit of this study, and the greatest focus will be on the period roughly from the beginnings of Modernism around 1880 until that time, with an occasional glance back at some important precursors. In place of a definition of Primitivism, then, we have a notion of the boundless past, a cluster of themes, and a period, compared along the axis of Eastern and Western Europe.

To begin to understand the discourse of modernist primitivism, thus, we might start by regarding with suspicion any binary opposition that seems to describe the world too clearly. While we will need to confront and play with distinctions like "modern" and "primitive," "center" and "margin," throughout this discussion we must at every moment be aware of issues of historical perspective. Just as we must always ask when reading a realist novel who among the characters knows what, and when, and what precisely does the narrator know, we need to be cognizant, when we think about cultural history, of the fact that such synchronic oppositions are merely posited as such, and that lines of demarcation are always shifting. When we divide the world into "margin" and "center," we assume there is only one center and we equalize all margins, truly marginalizing the in-between, which is in fact where most of the world lies. Perhaps what makes the period from the turn of the century to 1939 so interesting is precisely that the centers of culture are shifting, and this new cultural ambiguity made all

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manner of new forms of artistic expression seem possible, and not only in London, Paris, Rome, and Berlin. If we, contemporary North American and European readers, want to feel some sense of this cultural ambiguity, then perhaps we should leave the safe museum-cities, the familiar languages, the pronouncable names, and the clean linear histories we produce by staying only in four-star hotels, and we should take the pulse of modernism from the world of young Bronisław Malinowski, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Aleksander Wat, Anatol Stern, Karol Irzykowski, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Bruno Schulz, and Witold Gombrowicz.

The work is divided into three major sections. The first part considers the discourse of the primitive as it has been produced in Western Europe. The second section considers the appropriation of that discourse in the Polish literature, art and culture. In the final section I will sketch out some provisional conclusions regarding the history of the idea of "the primitive" and more generally the semiotics of recontextualization.

To provide a modernist context for understanding the idea of what is prior to civilization, we will begin with Freud. In the first chapter I identify, without performing an extensive chronology, the problems, themes and rhetoric of primitivization from early modern and Enlightenment visions of a "state of nature" articulated most clearly by Hobbes in the Leviathan and Rousseau in the Essai sur l'origine de l'inégalité, to Freud's theory of Eros and Thanatos. My goal here is to set out the context of Primitivism as it emerges in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, and to hold up the example of Freud as a case for studying primitivism as a complex discourse rather than as an isolated movement.

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Earlier thinkers could draw on early modern travel literature as evidence for their own utopian speculations on human nature. In the Enlightenment, those hypotheses are abstracted beyond the context of so many localized encounters between travelers and indigenous peoples, and they are universalized. Freud then attempts to reconcile the competing social theories of Hobbes and Rousseau by relocating them as competing drives in a private self. By the nineteenth century ethnography emerges from the genres of travel chronicle and memoir. The cover of "science" allows the ethnographer to assume a kind of narrative omniscience over the object of study. This narrative and cognitive stance of first-person omniscience might be seen as one origin of "primitivization." Theories of biological evolution during this period have a strong influence on social and psychological theory. The search for unified theories in the physical sciences is suggestive for the human sciences of psychology and anthropology. Freud in his turn generates a universal scientific theory of human nature often distant from descriptions of "primitive" cultures, but deeply resonant with the categories of the discourse of primitive. The "primitive," Freud suggests, is our cultural unconscious, and the unconscious reflects our primitive instincts.

In the body of the first part I look to a few works from the canon of Modernist Primitivism to establish a field of study to work against in the second part. Here is where we will set out the themes, tropes, and visual devices in the toolbox of the Modernist Primitivists as traditionally conceived in the major studies on the period. While it may seem that warhorses like Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon and "The Waste Land" of T. S. Eliot have been studied to death, I think that the juxtaposition of anthropological,

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psychological, literary and visual texts on a single discursive plane without privileging any one of these epistemological positions in particular may yield some new insights into even such familiar works. Particularly, we will examine the rhetoric of appropriation and reappropriation across genres, and by comparing primitivism in the colonialist cultures of Western Europe to its counterparts in a non-colonialist culture I believe we can locate more precisely where the political practice of colonialism leaves its imprint on primitivist art and literature. Also, since the Polish material we are considering may be unfamiliar to readers outside East European studies, I hope that a few links to the familiar will make the "new" material a bit more accessible.

The second chapter examines the intersection of the erotic, the exotic, and the visual in modernist poetry and painting. As background I would like first to catalogue the vocabulary of Primitivism in the visual arts, roughly from Cezanne to Picasso, but with a few glances backward at academic and romantic influences. In addition to the obvious thematic appropriations of primitive sculpture and masks, primitivism is dominated by distinctive compositional elements and marked by new uses of color. Primitivism is a new kind of representation, opposed to Realism yet striving for a more profound reality than that reflected in traditional painting and sculpture. By turning away from the long-held goal of "accuracy" which seeks to erase the activity of the artist who becomes a medium for the "faithful reproduction" of the world, Primitivism further served the goals of the artist to manufacture a unique product in the age of industrial capitalism.

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In the remainder of this chapter, I will consider how these themes and their form are rearticulated in poetry. In works like Charles Baudelaire's "Jeanne Duval" poems, several poems by Gottfried Benn, and the myriad incarnations of bathers from Ingres and Cezanne to Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon and beyond, there is a distinct affinity between the exotic and prostitution in particular. Likewise, travel narrative and anthropological fieldwork are filled with images of penetration, conquest and exploitation. The female body is a colony, and the colony is a female space.

Part Two begins with a demonstration of the need to consider Eastern Europe not as a feeble imitator of Western Europe in the production of the discourses of Primitivism and Modernism, but as a full-fledged participant in the phenomenon. Just to provide a snapshot of the scene, we will glance at the explicit introduction of primitivism into Polish high culture by the so called "Prymitywiści polskie," whose work probably had more in common with Italian and Russian Futurism than with Primitivism as it is usually conceived in Western Europe and North America. It is also worth taking note of critic and writer Karol Irzykowski, whose radical fictional experiment Pałuba (approximately The Hag) created a vocabulary and repertoire of new narrative forms for the exploration of anti-culture by the Polish avant-garde. With this as introduction, the remaining chapters of the second part consider the discourse of the mythic and the primitive as a debate about the nature of matter and form in the works of the three major avant-garde cultural figures of the interwar period, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Witold Gombrowicz, and Bruno Schulz.

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The next chapter considers primitivism in the work of painter, dramatist, novelist, and philosopher, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, or "Witkacy" as he frequently signed his paintings. The first half of this chapter looks at his close relationship to Bronisław Malinowski and considers the ideological and personal causes of the break in their relationship, with an eye toward better understanding how the personal is reflected in both of their works. Malinowski is a figure of equal importance for Western and Eastern European intellectual history, though there has been relatively little discussion of Malinowski's Eastern European background outside Polish circles. As ethnography tends to be a first-person genre, and Malinowski is often taken as the "father of modern field ethnography," it would seem important to understand Malinowski's own struggle with cultural identity and the milieu in which it was formed, insofar as Malinowski's method is the product of that struggle. The fact that postmodern critics, eager to correct the sins of the fathers, generally consider the discourse of the primitive as a phenomenon only of the colonial powers and the colonized is part of the problem. Eastern Europe is interesting because it had little direct material interest in the ideology of colonialism, but produced a discourse of the primitive nonetheless.

The second part of the chapter on Witkiewicz looks at expressions of the primitive in Witkacy's artistic production, focusing on his largest canvas, Twórzenie świata (The Creation of the World) in the context of various other works of art and fiction. Witkiewicz attempts to articulate his aesthetic worldview as a theory of "Pure Form," which might be read as a mapping of Kant's theory of the Sublime onto the territory of the primitive.

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Witold Gombrowicz was Witkacy's contemporary who explored similar territory, but in terms of his concept of "immaturity," a kind of primitive of the psyche. This concept, illustrated most thoroughly in Ferdydurke, is based on Irzykowski's idea that art should attempt to strip away layers of civilization and accepted cultural norms, with the aim of disclosing the base elements of human character. Of particular interest is Gombrowicz's period in Argentina, which gave him an external perspective from which to critique the ideology of Polish nationalism in his Diary and the novel, Trans-Atlantyk. Gombrowicz is one of few thinkers who had genuine experience by which to compare the problems of cultural and political marginalization in Eastern Europe and the Third World, providing a privileged perspective for an analysis of the problem of primitivization.

Bruno Schulz found the primitive, much like J. G. Frazer and T. S. Eliot, in the language of mythology, and like Ezra Pound in the use of the "concrete." The results of what he calls "the mythologization of reality," however, seem diametrically opposed to Eliot's experiments in locating an "objective correlative." Where Eliot works, like Picasso, by superimposing the ritual over the modern in a kind of pastiche, Schulz replicates his own deeply subjective mythology, composed of mythic and mythologized fragments from the Bible, religious texts, bureaucratic discourse, classical sources, and the everyday life of the small Galicjan town of Drohobycz.

I end with a summary of the research elaborated thus far and a provisional set of conclusions. I would like to keep conclusions provisional at this point, because I see this document not as an end of research, but as the beginning of a larger project including additional texts from outside the

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areas covered here. In the concluding chapter, then, I outline the historical development of the discourse of the primitive in Western Europe and Poland, as described in the previous chapters, and propose the beginnings of a philosophical definition of "the primitive" by looking back at Western Europe in light of the discussion of the role of the primitive in the Polish struggle for form. Then we will be in a position to explore the primary theoretical question of this study: what are the dynamics of the transplantation of a set of signs from one semiotic system to another, where the dynamics of political and economic power are substantially different?

The first moment in the dynamics of Primitivism is the appropriation of signs from the Other culture into the culture of Modernity. The second moment is the reappropriation of those refashioned signs from the culture of Modernity by the "backward" and the "primitives" themselves. Each step entails significant and often conflicted efforts of self-definition by the appropriators. While these objects of appropriation come to signify very different things in their new context, they do so by a process of identification with the Other, so that the meaning of the recontextualized object is not wholly incommensurable with the precontextualized object. The questions then become: what remains, what is transformed, and by what process do the transformations of meaning occur?

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Part I

The Western European Discourse of the Primitive

The way up and the way down are one.

Heraclitus[3]

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

(Eliot, Four Quartets, "Little Gidding" 59)

[3] T. S. Eliot quotes this line, *ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὠυτή*, as an epigraph to the Four Quartets. It might also be translated "The beginning and the end are common" (Matthiessen 184).

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1. Notes Toward a Genealogy of the Idea of "Human Nature."

Prior to any Modernist discourse of the "primitive" there was "nature." "Nature" is whatever unfashioned thing is imagined to exist, for better or for worse, prior in time to "civilization" or perhaps "culture." Unlike the "primitive," "nature" considered out of context does not prefigure an idea of progress, though particular ideas of nature are invariably created out of ideas of modernity. "Primitive" accepts that determination of primacy after the fact as a given. "Nature" suppresses any ex post facto determination under the rubric of science. Where "nature" is something in all of us, the "primitive" is always an Other.

Yet, while the new discourse of the primitive will exoticize nature, making it seem alien and distant, it is not entirely discontinuous with the earlier discourse of particularly human nature. At the end of the Nineteenth Century, many new sciences were vying to explain human nature: Darwin's theory of evolution, racial theory, various strains of analytic psychology from Charcot to Krafft-Ebing to Freud, Frazer's massive studies in comparative mythology and the beginnings of modern ethnography, and now discredited disciplines and occult movements that once claimed strong followings, such as phrenology, mesmerism, and Theosophy. While each of these various projects might seem clear and distinct from a century's distance, in their own time they fed each other, and art was free to draw on all of them without any regard for standards of evidence or methodology. To

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understand the system of signs, then, that makes up Primitivism as a movement in poetry, the visual arts, music, and performance, we will have to examine the materials in the messy world from which they were appropriated.

Sigmund Freud's writings on the human psyche form perhaps the most ambitious theory of human nature of their age, and would come to have a more pervasive and direct effect on intellectual life in the first half of the twentieth century than any other system of thought. Psychoanalysis, of course, developed very much in dialogue with biological science, anthropology and medicine, but at the same time, it made the broadest claims. "The" psyche, if it ever could be pinned down to a single thing, was a more universal category than the various manifestations of "culture," so it would become the project of anthropologists like Malinowski to prove the truth of psychological principles by the comparative study of cultures, and the comparative study of cultures would become the means for, say, Jung to discover what he believed to be master narratives of the human psyche. I would like to begin with Freud, first working backward to set out the received themes of human nature operating during the period of Modernism, delimited roughly as the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the Second World War, and then proceeding to how those themes develop into the new discourse of the Primitive.

One of Freud's most concise statements of a theory of human nature, or perhaps more particularly of human motivation or action, comes from his late work, Civilization and its Discontents (1930):

> civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families,

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> then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind. Why this has to happen, we do not know; the work of Eros is precisely this. These collections of men are to be libidinally bound to one another. Necessity alone, the advantages of work in common, will not hold them together. But man's natural aggressive instinct, the hostility of each against all and of all against each, opposes this programme of civilization. This aggressive instinct is the derivative and the main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside of Eros and which shares world-dominion with it. And now, I think, the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of, and the evolution of civilization may therefore be simply described as the struggle for life of the human species. And it is this battle of the giants that our nurse-maids try to appease with their lullaby about Heaven. (Freud, Civ/Dis 81-82)

It is worth specifying, here, that the aspects of "human nature" that will be most interesting for Freud and his predecessors have largely to do with particularly human features of behavior like speech, moral action, or human types of social organization that might be opposed to an "animal" nature, and that the search for "nature" is often interchangeable with a search for "universals." Of course, it might be the case that some aspect of human motivation is universally encoded by culture, and indeed, these particular features of human nature, as opposed to specifically human metabolic processes or bone structure, are the most likely to be culturally inflected. In such cases there might be no evidence on which to settle "culture" vs. "nature" arguments. Given this indeterminability, it is predictable that research projects in psychoanalysis and ethnography should frequently overlap during this period.

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Freud's focus on behavior, moral action and motivation, and language and representation is in few respects new to Freud or even his close intellectual predecessor, Nietzsche, but derives from a long history of speculation in ethics and political philosophy regarding human motivation.[4] As such, it should be no surprise that late in his career, Freud sought to explain the broad processes of civilization with theories of individual psychology. The site of "nature" in the psyche would be "instinct," and in his theory of the "instinct of life and the instinct of destruction" Freud attempts to reconcile long disputed theories of the nature of human action, articulated most starkly by Hobbes and Rousseau. Freud's "hostility of each against all and of all against each" distinctly echoes Hobbes's "war [...] of every man against every man" (Leviathan 76), which he predicts would result in the absence of government. While Freud's theory of Eros libidinally binding individuals into groups is not equivalent to Rousseau's theory of the noble savage living freely without obligation to any larger group, Rousseau's proposition that we have a natural sense of compassion that balances our drive for self-preservation will be a strong analogue to Freud's theory. Rather than drawing the conclusion that "man is basically good" (or perhaps self-interested or aggressive), Freud wants to argue for the universal inherency of both kinds of motivation. At the same time, Freud's theory is not in all respects neutral. One could argue that humans have no

[4] Other recent readings of Freud in relation to political philosophy in the Enlightenment include Brenkman's marxist/Lacanian interpretation in Straight Male Modern and Pateman's feminist critique in "The Fraternal Social Contract."

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natural moral inclinations whatsoever, but Freud suggests that they exist naturally as competing drives.

While Hobbes's Leviathan is, as Sheldon Wolin has called it, a work of "epic" political theory, which attempts to derive a comprehensive theory of the state from first principles about human nature and project that theory into the realm of religion, there can be no doubt that these great abstractions were of immediate practical concern in Cromwell's England. The first version of Leviathan appears in 1651, two years after Cromwell abolished the English monarchy and established a Commonwealth. Hobbes published his Latin version in 1668, eight years after the Restoration of Charles II to the throne. Prior to these two events, Hobbes had lived as an adult through the Gunpowder Plot (1605), the Thirty Years War (1618-48), the Scottish rebellion of 1638, civil war from 1642 to 1646, and a Scottish invasion in 1648. Hobbes personally fled to the continent on more than one occasion to avoid potential persecution that could have resulted from his political association with the progressive Cavendishes, including the Earls of Devonshire and their cousin Newcastle, who put down the Scottish rebellion at his personal expense in 1639. In 1634 Hobbes visited Galileo, while he was under house arrest for his Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems. It is hard to imagine that one could develop an optimistic theory of human nature in such an environment, when civilization must have seemed near total collapse.

Despite the received view that Hobbes is basically a pessimist about human nature--and this seems to be the position Freud takes when he refers

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to the "hostility of each against all and of all against each"--there are contemporary readings that suggest that Hobbes may have overstated his pessimism in the Leviathan to be heard over the din of extremist political discourse in seventeenth-century England. The dominant reading of Hobbes, that all action follows from self-interest, that we never act for moral reasons, and that we never act to benefit others, is known as "psychological egoism." Stated in its most interesting and strongest form, this reading entails that we universally act according to a genuine psychological motive of self-interest in every case. Gregory Kavka, who explores these issues in greater detail than we need to here (Kavka 29-82), usefully differentiates between this theory and two weaker theories of self-interest in moral motivation: "causal" egoism and "tautological" egoism. Causal egoism would allow that we might only act on behalf of others because we have experienced a psychological reward in the past, but the theory does not exclude the possibility of genuine altruism, because past experience is not an absolute guarantee of future rewards. Tautological egoism merely implies that we always act according to our desires, because we could not logically do otherwise, but it does not imply that we act out of selfishness. Kavka's arguments extend and attempt to refine Bernard Gert's important challenge to the tradition of reading Hobbes as a psychological egoist in the introduction to his translations of Hobbes' Latin works De Homine and De Cive. Gert argues that Hobbes may have been a tautological egoist, but not a psychological egoist.

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The most fundamental aspect of Hobbes' theory of human nature is the view that actions can only be motivated by the passions, and therefore, reason is never a direct motivation for action. "Will [...] is the last appetite in deliberating," Hobbes argues (Leviathan 33), allowing for the possibility that we may act against reason, as in fact we often do, if some desire intervenes on our decision at the last moment. If will were not so, then, Hobbes argues, we would not have freedom of the will, because we would always be obliged to act in accord with reason. At the same time, Gert observes in light of statements from De Homine, Hobbes might allow that reason can inform or incite the passions, since our desires could reflect beliefs about future outcomes suggested by reason (Intro. to Hobbes, Man and Citizen 15-16). In De Cive, on Gert's reading, Hobbes goes even further to argue that we are obligated to follow the dictates of rationality (19-20). The fact that will is the last act in deliberating does not necessarily imply that deliberation is irrelevant to our choices.

These subtle readings notwithstanding, there are many statements in Leviathan that could serve as important precursors to a theory of unconscious motivations. If we accept the received view of Hobbes' theory, then it seems that he is arguing precisely for what will become a theory of the unconscious when he suggests that we do not act for moral reasons or for the sake of others. After all, most people would like to believe that they act charitably and morally, but Hobbes on the conventional reading is proposing that they are not conscious of their true motivations. Hobbes' theory, to be sure, is not as elaborate or detailed as Freud's. He makes no claims regarding the possible events or relations that might occasion our "unconscious"

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motivations. Hobbes does allow, however, that we might believe we are acting for moral reasons, but that our true desires, reflecting our true self-interest, are somehow displaced, or as a Freudian would say--sublimated.

Hobbes states in one of his more disparaging moments, "the passions that most of all cause the differences of wit are principally: the more or less desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honour. All which may be reduced to the first, that is, the desire of power" (Leviathan 41). To those who exhibit no such desire, Hobbes goes on to ascribe "giddiness" or indifference extending to idiocy. Excessive desire he describes as "madness." The ability to reason, then, is the product of the passions, and absence or excess of passion is a sign of abnormality for Hobbes. When Hobbes claims that the desires for "knowledge" and "honour" are reducible to the desire for power, we might be tempted to read a kind of mechanistic nineteenth-century nihilism into Hobbes. The contrast of normal rationality with "giddiness" and "madness" might foreclose the question of human nature for Hobbes, because such potential counterexamples to a theory of psychological egoism are excluded as not fully human. The reason of "women, childen, and Ideots" as Locke grouped them in his second Treatise is inscrutible; therefore, they are unrepresentable in any sense of the term.

If, for Hobbes, actions are always motivated by the passions, then Hobbes' theory of language will prove deeply intentionalist. If we can establish that the desire for power is our most basic desire, Hobbes argues,

> though the nature of what we conceive [in response to an utterance] be the same, yet the diversity of our reception of it, in respect of different constitutions of body and prejudices of opinion, gives everything a tincture of our different passions. And therefore in reasoning a man must take heed of words

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> which, beside the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker. (Leviathan 21-22)

We "imagine" that words have their own "nature," but our imagination might overtake the speaker's imagination of the nature of some particular set of words. Hobbes recognizes that the understanding of language is going to be influenced by the interests of the addressee; therefore, the addressee must consider the possible interests of the speaker in attempting to decode the message. For Hobbes, the "understanding of speech" is the only kind of understanding there is (21), and knowledge is always knowledge of sense or of memory; therefore, all knowledge entails representation, and implicitly all understanding is a reflection of desires and interests at some level.

A key passage for the argument that Hobbes espouses merely tautological egoism is the statement that "of the voluntary acts of every man the object is some good to himself" (Leviathan 82, emphasis in original). Gert recalls that "will is always the last appetite," and if the object of the will is always "some good" to the self, then "good" is effectively synonymous with "desire" (Intro. to Hobbes, Man and Citizen 7).[5] Statements of one's interests or values seem tautologically interchangeable with statements of desire. The context in this passage, however, is a discussion of contracts, wherein Hobbes claims that we only sacrifice a right in order to gain some good. Again, this image of rational calculus might lead the reader from

[5] Gert is actually appealing to parallel passages in De Homine at this point in his reading.

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tautological egoism to psychological egoism, and perhaps Hobbes' work is not entirely consistent when read on such a schema.

Hobbes deploys the same principle against altruism, arguing, "no man giveth but with intention of good to himself, because gift is voluntary, and of all voluntary acts the object is to every man his own good; of which, if men see they shall be frustrated, there will be no beginning of the benevolence or trust; nor, consequently, of mutual help, nor of reconciliation of one man to another" (Leviathan 95). While Hobbes' conclusion here derives from his (arguably tautological) definition of the will, his emphatic rhetoric suggests a view developed from the bitter experience of civil strife and exile. In all these examples, the slippage from tautological egoism to psychological egoism results from a confusion between deduction and induction. Experience (induction) or the absence of counterexamples leads to the pessimistic conclusion that we are psychological egoists, and the definition of the will (deduction) as the expression of desire suggests that we could not but be egoists. Slippage occurs when we begin to believe that experience could serve as evidence for a claim based in logic.

The structure of the problem is analogous to the problem of free will and determinism. On the one hand, the claim that we have free will is a claim about our experience of willing and the relation of action and desire. On the other hand, we might deduce that statements about future contingent events must have a truth value before the contingent event takes place--either it will rain tomorrow or it will not, and a statement to either effect, by the law of the excluded middle, must be either true or false, it would seem, leading one to believe in a kind of determinism or fatalism. One possible

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resolution to the paradox of free will and determinism is to recognize that inductive claims about willing are categorically different from deductive claims about the truth of propositions. My suggestion is that the problem of egoism might be the same sort of problem.

Now, what if Freud's deployment of Hobbes is based on a misreading? In one sense, it may not matter. We might say that Freud is using a key expression from the Leviathan to evoke a commonly held theory of human motivation--that humans act primarily from self-interest--be it fairly or unfairly pinned on Hobbes. Freud may be using Hobbes rhetorically, but dissociates his own (scientific) work from the tradition of political philosophy by failing to cite Hobbes' writings as evidence. On the other hand, if Hobbes' theory of human motivation is in fact more complex and subtle than it appears on the conventional reading, and if it is in fact a more convincing theory than the theory of psychological egoism, then we might begin to infer that a structural theory of Eros and Thanatos is itself too simple to account for the complex processes involved in human action.

But at this point we have only considered Thanatos from Hobbes' perspective. Rousseau will propose alternatives to self-interest, moving the theory toward Freud's binary opposition between two competing interests. Rousseau's vision of the primitive is boundlessly sanguine and his perception of its loss is profoundly melancholic. On the one hand he imagines natural man living in a world of pure sensations, "prior to all reflection" (Inequality 37), and free of the desires that are the mother of reason. Hobbes argues that "there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense" (Leviathan 6); thus, they

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are in agreement on the fundamentally empiricist principle that cognition begins with sense. Hobbes, however, limits this theory to individual cognition. He does not propose a stage of civilization at which all persons live without reason. If the desire for ever greater power is human nature, and "wit" emerges from that desire, then it might be argued that it must always exist. The "war of all against all" in the state of nature is not caused by the absence of reason, but precisely by reason--the means by which each person attempts to acquire power.

Rousseau may in fact agree with Hobbes on the notion that need or desire is a necessary precondition for the development of reason (Inequality 26, Leviathan 13, 41), but suggests that there is some age of abundance in the state of nature before "difficulties" arise to produce necessity (Inequality 45). As far as Rousseau is concerned, Hobbes and Locke as well have not "gone back" (Inequality 76, n. 9) far enough into pre-history to describe natural man. "Speaking continually of need, avarice, oppression, desires, and pride," Rousseau charges, they "have transferred to the state of nature the ideas they acquired in society. They spoke about savage man, and it was civil man they depicted" (Inequality 17). Of course it will be dangerous, even for Rousseau, to speak of unknown origins or the ineffable.

Prefiguring Freud's opposition of a death drive and Eros, Rousseau is willing to admit of compassion or pity as a motivation equal to egoism or the drive for self-preservation. Mirroring the opposition between vice and virtue and responding to Hobbes by name, Rousseau claims that "an innate repugnance to seeing his fellow men suffer" is "a virtue all the more universal and all the more useful to man in that it precedes in him any kind

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of reflection, and so natural that even animals sometimes show noticeable signs of it" (Inequality 36). Note that being "prior to reflection," pity could conceivably exist in Rousseau's state of nature. Hobbes does in fact allow for pity, compassion or grief as a response to the suffering of another, but claims that it "ariseth from the imagination that the like calamity may befall himself" (Leviathan 32), suggesting once again a motive deeper than conscious intentions. Further on in the same passage, Hobbes suggests that we might not feel pity for persons who suffer as the result of their own wickedness, particularly if we do not see ourselves as wicked in the same way, offering an intuitive counterexample to Rousseau's claim that pity precedes reflection. Even if one argues that our lack of pity for the wicked who suffer comes from our natural pity for the victims of the wicked, considerable "reflection" would have to occur before rendering pity. On the other hand, if we do in fact feel pity for the wicked, we might defend ourselves with a Rousseauvian argument about human nature.

Rousseau's noble savage is unlimited in the possibilities of "perfectibility," and this boundlessness is for Rousseau the most ideal condition of existence (Inequality 26). Hobbes might be forced to agree that an absence of necessity or desire would produce an absence of reason, but he would also describe persons living in such a state as "giddy," defective, or somehow not fully human. "Giddiness" in Hobbes seems roughly to be a form of what most people today would recognize as mental retardation or to use the term of the moment, "developmental delay." Rousseau claims that for the noble savage, "[h]is modest needs are so easily found at hand, and he is so far from the degree of knowledge necessary to make him desire to

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acquire greater knowledge, that he can have neither foresight nor curiosity" (Inequality 27). Hobbes does not require some threshold of knowledge for curiosity, but stakes out the desire for knowledge beyond immediate carnal pleasure as a fundamental trait or "lust of the mind" that distinguishes humans from animals (Leviathan 31). Hobbes further doubts that such a state of abundance as would produce universal giddiness could actually exist, claiming that "the savage people in many places of America [...] have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner as I said before" (Leviathan 77). As soon as reason, the medium of human perfectibility for Rousseau, makes its appearance, it ironically limits the possibilities of freedom (Inequality 26). Hobbes is not willing to imagine a state prior to reason and curiosity; therefore, for Hobbes, reason and will are the only means we have to pursue freedom.

From Rousseau's sense of pristine idealism, with reason bottled up in the mind as pure, limitless potential, stems his Romantic injunction:

> Oh you, to whom the heavenly voice [of the arts, sciences and laws] has not made itself heard, and who recognize for your species no other destination except to end this brief life in peace; you who can leave in the midst of the cities your deadly acquisitions, your troubled minds, your corrupt hearts and your unbridled desires. Since it depends on you, retake your ancient and first innocence; go into the woods to lose sight and memory of the crimes of your contemporaries, and have no fear of cheapening your species in renouncing its enlightenment in order to renounce its vices. (Inequality 80, n. 9)

At the same time, he accepts for persons like himself "whose passions have forever destroyed their original simplicity, who can no longer feed on grass and acorn[s], nor get by without laws and chiefs" (translator's brackets, Inequality 80, n. 9), the fate of living by the laws as best they can, "[b]ut

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they will despise no less for it a constitution that can be maintained only with the help of so many respectable people, who are desired more often than they are obtained, and from which, despite all their care, always arise more real calamities than apparent advantages" (Inequality 81, n. 9). This resignation suggests that Rousseau cannot seriously imagine, as would Tolstoy late in life, that civilization could be abandoned. Perhaps Rousseau is acknowledging that no person who has reason, cultivated by necessity, could desire to return to the state Hobbes calls "giddiness." Who is the "you" of the first sentence, "to whom the heavenly voice has not made itself heard," addressed by the ninth footnote to the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality? The members of the Academy of Dijon, to whom the discourse is formally addressed? This "you" seems to be a third-person imperative disguised in the form of the second person, a rhetorical gesture to remain unheard by its idealized addressee and to be overheard by the reader. The primitive is whatever it is that Rousseau can imagine in the face of such ressentiment. Ironically, it seems that Rousseau too has depicted civil man in attempting to characterize savage man, as he had charged the empiricists with doing, but rather than portraying a state of nature directly resembling his own time, as did Hobbes, he has depicted a utopian projection of the modern day mirrored in reverse.

The difficulties in reconciling Rousseau's idealized vision of nature with his reluctance, if not utter inability, to return to it in the second Discourse stem from the text's own methodological conflict. While accepting the empiricist principle that sense precedes knowledge, Rousseau is also hinting in the preface to the Discourse at the method he will come to

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employ ten years hence as he begins writing his Confessions, from the "inscription on the temple at Delphi" (Inequality 10)--"Know thyself." His accusation against certain "writers" on the topic of the state of nature is that they "begin by seeking the rules on which, for the common utility, it would be appropriate for men to agree among themselves; and then they give the name natural law to the collection of these rules, with no other proof than the good which presumably would result from the their universal observance" (Inequality 13). He accuses them of engaging in speculative philosophy. In the notes Rousseau argues that Locke makes claims for which "it would be necessary to perform experiments that M. Locke surely did not perform and that no one is in a position to perform" (88 n. 3).

And yet, how is Rousseau in any better position than M. Locke or Hobbes to perform "experiments" concerning the state of nature? Accepting the principle that "nature itself cannot err" (Leviathan 19, Inequality 18), Hobbes and Rousseau both can refer to travel literature (setting aside the question of the actual empirical value of such literature) to support claims about the state of nature. The fact that Hobbes can find indigenous Americans who live in the "brutish condition" he predicts, while Rousseau makes numerous references to Caribs and Africans living in an allegedly ideal condition, is proof in itself that whatever state these tribal peoples lived in at the time, it was by no means universal. Rousseau's only specimens of people living under conditions vaguely resembling his vision of the state of nature are a few "wild child" types, discovered living in isolation among animals in the forests of Europe, without language and walking on all fours (72 n. 3). Having accused the empiricists of speculation, but recognizing the

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impossibility of proving anything empirically regarding a supposed state of nature, Rousseau makes a concession to speculative philosophy in the tradition of Descartes' Meditations with the methodological injunction, "Let us therefore begin by putting aside all the facts, for they have no bearing on the question" (Inequality 17).

If there are no external facts, there is only knowledge of the self. Rousseau justifies the method of self-examination to the Dijon Academy by citing the most modern and comprehensive scientific source of his day, Buffon's Histoire naturelle, "one of those authorities that are respectable for philosophers, because they come from a solid and sublime reason, which they alone know how to find and perceive" (71 n. 2). Rousseau finds a curious concession of the limits of the empirical investigation where Bouffon admits,

> Too much taken with multiplying the functions of our senses and with increasing the external range of our being, we rarely make use of that internal sense which reduces us to our true dimensions, and which separates us from all that is not us. Nevertheless, this is the sense we must use if we wish to know ourselves. It is the only one by which we can judge ourselves. But how can this sense be activated and given its full range? How can our soul, in which it resides, be rid of all the illusions of our mind? We have lost the habit of using it; it has remained unexercised in the midst of the tumult of our bodily sensations: it has been dried out by the fire of our passions; the heart, the mind, the senses, everything has worked against it." (Buffon, Histoire naturelle 4:151 in Inequality 71-72 n. 2)

Empirical science driven ever further by technology seeking evidence in the "soul"? setting aside "the mind" and "the senses" as "the tumult of our bodily sensations? If Rousseau is adopting a "scientific" stance, it is precisely at the point at which science begins to abandon its own methods.

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With Buffon's blessing, Rousseau can begin the project of self-examination that will become the Confessions while remaining in the scientific spirit of the Enlightenment.

Under the rubric of science, Freud will attempt to rescue the project of understanding the nature of human motivation at which Enlightenment philosophy failed, by proposing a scientific method for the investigation of the soul, Buffon's "internal sense." Psychoanalysis might be seen as a scientific appropriation of the literary genre of confession from Rousseau. One effect of this scientific adoption of the theory of human action will be to conceal or attempt to strip its political content. In the universalizing equation of science, the historical elements of Cromwell's England or pre-revolutionary France are factored out. For Freud, the "war of all against all" is driven inward. The struggles within the psyche become a "battle of giants that our nurse-maids try to appease with their lullaby about Heaven."

Freud's negative strategy in Civilization and its Discontents seeks to demonstrate that religion and utilitarianism fail to account for the persistence of human aggression, otherwise known as the "problem of evil." Religion, though it may succeed in "sparing many people an individual neurosis" (Civ/Dis 36), forces conformity to "mass delusion," rather than allowing individuals the freedom of their own paths to sanity. The "lullaby about heaven" is an "illusion," we may recall, because it may be explained away by psychoanalysis as an attempt to replace the lost father in the case of monotheism as argued in The Future of an Illusion, or as an attempt to overcome separation anxiety in the case of the "oceanic" spiritual feeling that some may regard as the origin of religion (Civ/Dis 15). Rational self-interest

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theories fail to account for the existence of evil, Freud claims, because infants begin to show aggression before they have an idea of property. It would truly be difficult to imagine that if private property would be abolished, or if the market could satisfy all our material needs, or if we established a culture of free love, that human aggression or evil would disappear (Civ/Dis 71-72).

If evil is not the product of rational desires or self-interest then it cannot be part of conscious life. If one accepts the fundamental principles of Freudian psychology--that the psyche is originally composed of the ego and the id, and that there is an economy in which repressed libido is either sublimated or manifested as neurosis--then one must look to the unconscious, or the id, for the source of aggression. One might say that both the ego and the id contain information or beliefs and instincts or drives. Since information is not the proximate cause of action, then by process of elimination, whatever causes aggression must be a kind of unconscious drive, perhaps a Hobbesian "lust of the mind," and we can imagine that whatever causes love or attraction must also be a drive. Freud's theory makes much more sense if we imagine "Eros" and "Thanatos" as arbitrary names for whatever those drives may be, rather than considering that Freud is simply positing a "death drive" and leaving it to his followers to prove its existence and etiology. If self-interest for Hobbes is construed with sufficient breadth to include such "lusts of the mind," then his theory might allow that self-interest is not always the product of rational calculation.[6]

[6] Hobbes is not always clear on this. A "lust of the mind" such as curiosity seems to defy rationality, and may indeed be a passion that excites the will. On the other hand, we have noted that Hobbes argues elsewhere

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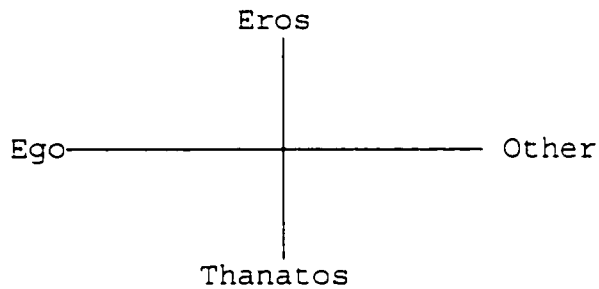
Freud's positive theory can account for all motivations and actions accounted for in Hobbesian, Rousseauvian, and theistic theories. If we consider that the libido always plays a role in instinctual manifestations for Freud (Civ/Dis 80, n. 12), we can imagine instinct and the orientation of the libido as perpendicular axes in a system. Instinct may either be toward Eros or toward Thanatos; the libido may be oriented toward the Ego or toward the Other, as such:



All relevant categories of moral action may then be mapped into this libido-instinct space. The libido manifested as Eros directed toward the ego is the source of self-esteem, the instinct for self-preservation, egoism and ultimately narcissism. Thanatos directed toward the ego is the origin of self-restraint, guilt (and thus the superego), masochism, and suicidal tendencies. Eros directed toward the other may be the cause of love, friendship, infatuation and obsession. Thanatos directed toward the other may explain competitiveness, hatred, murderous feelings, and sadism.

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that freedom from contractual obligations--and all social obligations are contractual for Hobbes--does not entail freedom from rational obligations.

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Of course most real behaviors or feelings do not fit precisely in only one quadrant. The difficult cases of altruism or compassion must certainly cross two quadrants, entailing the direction of Thanatos toward the ego in the form of self-denial and Eros toward the other in the form of generosity, though a Hobbesian might argue that there is a subconscious element of Eros directed toward the self in such cases, indeed in all cases. Criminality may entail Eros directed toward the self and Thanatos toward the other. Thanatos aimed at both ego and other may describe severe depression, and complete Eros toward the ego could constitute euphoria or even "giddiness." Even a tendency toward suicide might contain elements of Eros and Thanatos directed toward the self at the same time, as both aggression toward the self and a desire to end some real or perceived suffering (T&T 108). The notion of a libidinal economy suggests that we have a finite reserve of desire, and the theory of Eros and Thanatos gives us a limited range of emotions to buy with it.

At his most utilitarian, Freud suggests that we resolve the problem of evil through the balance of the pleasure and reality principles. He describes the relation of the pleasure principle and the problem of evil at this juncture in mystical terms:

> As we see, what decides the purpose of life is simply the programme of the pleasure principle. This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start. There can be no doubt about its efficacy, and yet its programme is at loggerheads with the whole world, with the macrocosm as much as with the microcosm. There is no possibility at all of its being carried through; all the regulations of the universe run counter to it. One feels inclined to say that the intention that man should be 'happy' is not included in the plan of 'Creation.' (Civ/Dis 25)

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Freud's rhetoric suggests that the myth of the psyche must be strong enough to overpower the "lullaby about heaven." The "war of all against all" is now cast as a battle between the pleasure principle and the universe. Echoing Goethe's Faust and perhaps the occult revival in Central Europe, Freud invokes the opposition between "microcosm" and "macrocosm," and the deist notions that the universe has "regulations" and "Creation" a "plan." The "more modest reality principle" enters in as a psychologized version, perhaps, of the Protestant ethic, whereby "a man thinks himself happy merely to have escaped unhappiness or to have survived his suffering, and [...] in general the task of avoiding suffering pushes that of obtaining pleasure into the background" (Civ/Dis 25).

Where the abstractions of Hobbes and Rousseau seem to emerge in reaction to immediate political realities, Freud's recourse to ancient myth suggests a much more complex series of intellectual displacements. Freud's mythic drives seem rooted in mysticism and only make sense in terms of cultural or anthropological evidence. In the interests of "science," a much more parsimonious theory, if one accepts that humans are rational (Freud does not accept this, and evidence is abundant that humans are not rational), might suggest that there is an instinct for self-preservation and an instinct for sympathy, and that destruction results from the conflict of these instincts, rather than from an instinct for destruction. Freud's rejection of rationality as fundamental, however, pulls the science of human nature away from the philosophers over to the new sciences of anthropology and psychoanalysis. The theory of Eros and Thanatos looks more like Romanticism than science. Psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic ethnography could bring the Romantic

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and philosophical discourses of Geist into the arena of rationality.

Freud's theory encapsulated in the famous passage quoted from Civilization and Its Discontents seems almost entirely ungrounded in the work itself. There would be no obvious reason to believe that the theory of Eros is true as stated, even if we were to grant that, as Freud suggests, utilitarianism is false. The counterintuitive "death instinct" seems to be derived in turn from Eros as a Hegelian opposite. Freud's claims at this point clearly assume knowledge of his earlier studies of desire and the libido, but unfortunately, he offers no specific reference for to ground the theory of "the meaning of the evolution of civilization," which "is no longer obscure to us".

Freud's most serious attempts to elevate his theory of individual psychology to a theory of "the evolution of civilization" are collected in his earlier work Totem and Taboo (1912-13). One of the most important projects of these four essays is the universalization of the theory of the Oedipus complex. If Freud's theory was to be accepted as a theory of human nature, he needed to demonstrate that it was not an artifact of local culture. In the midst of ethnography's golden age, the burden of cross-cultural universality was heavy, but evidence, problematic as it was, was plentiful. Freud, therefore, attempted to use his theories to interpret the large body of now classic works on totemism and the taboos of incest and murder from the forty years prior to the publication of these essays, most importantly J. G. Frazer's Totemism and Exogamy, which had just appeared in 1910, and his great compendium The Golden Bough, which was coming out at the time in its third edition. Freud was attempting in his study what Malinowski, then

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about to embark on his first expedition to the Trobriands, would attempt in the field, ultimately inconclusively (Sex and Repression in Savage Society)--to prove the cross cultural validity of the Oedipus complex.

Totem and Taboo, most importantly for this study, articulated several key steps in the epistemology of primitivization in the age of high modernism. It brought together psychoanalysis and ethnography--the theories of the unconscious and of the primitive. From the perspective of individual psychology, this move facilitated claims that the movements of the unconscious reflected primal, presocial states of human mental life. From the point of view of ethnography, Freud's work allowed that by studying tribal cultures, science could penetrate the subconscious of culture in general. Recognizing the lack of genuine scientific evidence for the leaps from individual psychology to the psychoanalysis of culture and back again, Freud consistently hedges his argument, by suggesting that such affinities are parallels more than causal relationships (T&T 89), but at the same time he proposes a very enticing agenda for future speculation in the arts and research in the sciences. In an age when hard science was attempting to progress toward a unified theory of physical forces, who could resist the seduction of a unified theory of human motivation and cultural progress?

Freud's hypothesis that the origins of psychological motivation might be illuminated by ethnographic study is a direct reflection of the then current belief in the biological theory that the ontogeny of the individual recapitulates the phylogeny of the species. Freud summarizes this theory, now almost universally discredited, in its canonical form in Beyond the Pleasure Principle: "We see how the germ of a living animal is obliged in the course

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of its development to recapitulate (even if only in a transient and abbreviated fashion) the structures of all the forms from which it is sprung, instead of proceeding quickly by the shortest path to its final shape" (44). If this theory were true, the possibility of its application to the human sciences would be intoxicatingly attractive. Imagine what a powerful theory we would have, if only it were provable that the progression from birth to adulthood paralleled the evolution of civilization from prior states. Ethnographers could study adults living in "primitive" social arrangements and discover the infantile origins of neurosis in "civilized" cultures. Conversely, anthropologists would be able to consult the literature in developmental psychology and would know what to expect when encountering a "primitive" ("childlike") culture. Cultures could easily be ranked on an evolutionary scale--"Tribe X remains at the culturally aquatic stage, while their cousins only sixty miles away are fully-formed cultural amphibians"--and the neuroses of civilized adults would easily be diagnosable on the same scale--"The patient, let us call him the Frogman, persisted in his phobias, because he was trapped in the amphibian stage, and thus could never breathe freely in a world of mammalian maturity."

The union of psychology and ethnography with the theory of evolution strongly invites Lamarckian speculations about the heritability of behavior or of ideas. At one point, for instance, Freud speculates that "some of the primitive belief in [the] omnipotence [of thoughts] still survives in men's faith in the power of the human mind, taking account, as it does, of the laws of reality," or that the power or mana once ascribed to the gods or tribal chiefs has relocated in the psyche manifesting itself, say, in wish-fulfillment

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dreams or more strongly in neurosis (T&T 110, 112). He engages in direct dialogue with Darwin in considering a possible "historical" or evolutionary argument for the origin of the incest taboo (T&T 155-56). In doing so he pits competing theories of totemism and exogamy based on Darwinian readings of anthropological evidence against each other and concludes that such a direct argument from ethnography is inconclusive. Psychoanalysis, however, allows the positing of an "inconceivably remote past" (T&T 164)--we might even call it a "state of nature"--during which the now repressed conflicts of mental life were hypothetically acted out in real life.

Freud's most adventurous suggestion in Totem and Taboo is that the taboos against incest and exogamy and the origin of totemism are evolutionary precursors to neurosis, rising from events in this "inconceivably remote past". The argument begins with behavioral analogies between taboo and obsession, in which Freud observes that personal obsessions are like "individual taboo prohibitions," in that the object of obsession takes on a kind of fetish character or a power not inherent in the object, are self-driven, are "displaceable" or have "infectious" objects, and that they give rise to ritual behavior in the form of compulsions (T&T 33-37). He warns us that the similarities may be accidental, but brackets the warning and proceeds undeterred (34). The thesis that Freud advances to connect taboo and neurosis at the level of essence is that "the basis of taboo is a prohibited action, for performing which a strong inclination exists in the unconscious" (41). The second important analogy Freud makes is between the power or mana often ascribed to the primitive ruler, as Freud sees it, and the relation of the child to the father (63-64). By this point, however, Freud has set

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aside the warning he has promised to bear in mind, claiming that "this second analogy between savages and neurotics gives us a glimpse of the truth that much of a savage's attitude to his ruler is derived from a child's infantile attitude to his father" (my emphasis, 63-64). At this point, Freud presumes in advance that all children have the same relation to their father that modern, middle- and upper-class Europeans like Freud and his patients had.

Freud himself still never goes so far as to claim directly that tribal peoples are in fact at a stage of "arrested development" on a scale of psycho-evolutionary progress (though followers like Roheim later would). Hegel uses the terms "childhood," "adolescence," and "manhood" to describe the progress of civilization from the Oriental, to the Greek, to the Roman phase, where the end of history is political, i.e. in the founding of the modern European state (Lectures 202-3). Freud is suggesting a similar pattern of development, but with psychological adulthood as its goal. He begins the first essay on the incest taboo with the concession that he is pursuing a tentative "supposition" that "[t]here are men still living who, as we believe, stand very near to primitive man, far nearer than we do, and whom we therefore regard as his direct heirs and representatives" (T&T 3). He is fully aware of the distinction between "neurosis" and "a social institution" (T&T 89). Freud reminds the reader that "primitive races are not young races, but are in fact as old as civilized races," and therefore have each followed their own paths of development, making it difficult to draw such simple analogies. In a moment remarkably prescient of the cultural relativism that will predominate in the latter half of the twentieth century, Freud concedes, "The determination of the original state of things [...] invariably remains a matter

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of construction," and acknowledges the predicament of the participant observer, admitting that "it is not easy to feel one's way into primitive modes of thinking" (T&T 128 n. 3). But only in the next sentence, Freud slips into the seduction of the analogy he so conscientiously resists, arguing, "We misunderstand primitive men just as easily as we do children, and we are always apt to interpret their actions and feeling according to our own mental constellations." Just as the latter half of the sentence admits the impossibility of understanding the Other but through the filters of our own subjectivity, the first part of the sentence draws yet another analogy between the study of the mental life of the (civilized) child and the study of the actions and feelings of the primitive (adult). Freud knows his claims exceed the evidence, but the analogy fits so well, it is hard to resist the pull of deep intuition.

Freud's slippage in the face of his strong desire to assert the scientific rigor of the psychoanalytic method attests to the powerful influence of Frazer's suggestive organization of human myth and folklore into striking thematic categories. Jung will push this connection further by characterizing the master narratives of "universal" myths as "archetypes" of a "collective unconscious." While Freud may have regarded Jung's extrapolations as excessive, it could be argued that Freudian "complexes" that have analogues in ancient Greek and biblical myths are very close precursors to Jung's idea of archetypes. Prefiguring Jung most remarkably, Freud states at the end of Totem and Taboo, "I have taken as the basis of my whole position the existence of a collective mind, in which mental processes occur just as they do in the mind of an individual" (195). Freud concedes here that he is right up against the "grave difficulties" of potentially Lamarckian inference,

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entailed by the supposition that "the sense of guilt for an action"--patricide in this case--"has persisted for many thousands of years and has remained operative in generations which can have had no knowledge of that action" (195). At the same time he again forges ahead, because he is "not alone in the responsibility for this bold procedure" (196).

The story runs like this:

> The two taboos of totemism with which human morality has its beginning, are not on a par psychologically. The first of them, the law protecting the totem animal, is founded wholly on emotional motives: the father had actually been eliminated, and in no real sense could the deed be undone. But the second rule, the prohibition of incest, has a powerful practical basis as well. Sexual desires do not unite men but divide them. Though the brothers had banded together in order to overcome their father, they were all one another's rivals in regard to the women. Each of them would have wished, like his father, to have all the women to himself. The new organization would have collapsed in a struggle of all against all, for none of them was of such overmastering strength as to be able to take on his father's part with success. Thus the brothers had no alternative, if they were to live together, but--not, perhaps, until they had passed through many dangerous crises--to institute the law against incest, by which they all alike renounced the women whom they desired and who had been their chief motive for dispatching their father. In this way they rescued the organization which had made them strong--and which may have been based on homosexual feelings and acts, originating perhaps during the period of their expulsion from the horde. (T&T 178-79)

Freud would later adapt this theory to read Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov in his controversial essay "Dostoevsky and Parricide." That the father was "actually" eliminated, and furthermore, that this "actual" liquidation of the father gave rise to totemism in any or all cases is question begging on every front. Again, Freud must presume that in the inconceivably remote past there is a father relationship of a very particular

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sort, and that there really was such a social arrangement as the Darwinian primal horde, and the motives ascribed to the conspiratorial sons to kill the father actually existed and were carried out in the form of "the deed," and that the sons would for some reason harbor guilt for this action (presuming a pre-existing social taboo against patricide), and that for some reason these primitive peoples would fixate on some external creature of another species to replace the father, and that this same narrative would occur in various cultures which had no mutual contact. Ultimately, as even Malinowski argued in Sex and Repression in Savage Society, Freud must presume that prior to the formation of the Oedipus complex, psychological motivations existed that could have only been engendered by the Oedipus complex.

It cannot be stressed enough that Freud's inference here depends on the straightforward belief in the carnival described as the primordial physical murder and possibly cannibalism of the father (T&T 176), and that the metaphorical manifestations of patricide described under the aegis of the Oedipus complex are the traces of "historical reality" (Freud's emphasis, T&T 199). This is one particular place where Freud both presumes and concludes the universality of the Oedipus complex:

> The analogy between primitive men and neurotics will therefore be far more fully established if we suppose that in the former instance, psychical reality--as to the form taken by which we are in no doubt--coincided at the beginning with factual reality: that primitive men actually did what all the evidence shows that they intended to do. (199)

"[W]e are in no doubt" of the psychical reality of the Oedipus complex if we grant Freud's overall arguments for the Oedipus complex throughout his work. What "all the evidence" could possibly be, however, about the

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"inconceivably remote past" is unclear, though Freud cites ethnographic examples from the relatively recent past (176-77 n. 55). In this regard, Freud's use of contemporary ethnographic evidence puts him on ground not much firmer than that of Rousseau, whose notes are filled with reference to travel literature. The belief in the "factual reality" that "in the beginning was the Deed" as Freud "safely" assumes in the last sentence of Totem and Taboo (200) depends on the belief that the savage sons actually had the psychological intentions imputed to them. As such, Freud attempts to confirm the evolutionary conception that "[p]rimitive men [...] are uninhibited: thought passes directly into action," while, for modern neurotics like us, "thought is a complete substitute for the deed" (200).

The idea of an inherited myth sounds Lamarckian, and perhaps Freud could not draw a clear line between the evolutionary theory that was his inspiration and the theory he was arguing for. Still, it is possible to use Freud's theory without implying that neuroses are "inherited" in the way that Lamarck suggested that musical ability or criminal behavior could be inherited. The mechanism for "inheritance" here is not genetic, as Lamarck thought, but psychic, and the theory behind Freud's story in Totem and Taboo informs the theory of trauma, which has become a dominant paradigm in contemporary psychology.

For Freud neurosis fills the space left by repression. Trauma produces repression; therefore, neurotic symptoms, for Freud, are evidence of trauma--"the deed"--manifesting itself through various filters of desire and learned behavior. Now if there is some neurosis that is universal, the implication would be that there is some trauma common to all who

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experience it. If the trauma did not actually occur in the life of the individual who exhibits the symptoms, it must have happened in Freud's "inconceivably remote past" and been imprinted on children by their parents from generation to generation. This kind of narrative is essentially the motivation for contemporary theories that argue, for instance, that the neurotic children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors exhibit symptoms of survivor trauma in spite of--or perhaps precisely as a result of--the fact that their parents or grandparents sheltered them from knowledge of their wartime experience.[7] In such cases the parent replaces the experience with silence, and the silence leaves its stamp on the child who asks "What is the meaning of the absence, the silence? What is the truth that must never be spoken?" (Kaplan 219). As psychoanalytic critic Louise Kaplan argues, such children become "unconscious witnesses" (218-19) to the tragedies they have never seen. In both cases there is a traumatic event in the past, unspeakable due to repression or forgetting induced or otherwise, that manifests itself as neurosis, which is in turn learned by successive generations, long after the traumatic event is forgotten. In Freud's case, this incredible tale of the conspiracy of the brothers is at best a placemarker that his theory demands for whatever cataclysm might have taken place to produce the Oedipus complex.

[7] This example is inspired in part by an argument offered by Michael Levine in an unpublished paper on Art Spiegelman's Maus, read at the CUNY Graduate Center on 19 March 1998. He alluded to such a study of the children of Holocaust survivors to elaborate his own reading of Spiegelman as a survivor one-generation-removed from the trauma.

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One way to understand the discourse of the primitive might be to see it as the search for or construction of mythologies of the inconceivably remote past to fill the space held by Freud's placemarker. A "state of nature," produced by setting aside "the facts" and delving into the inconceivable past in the Enlightenment, is one way of filling that void and explaining the problems of the modern day, then conceived of as political rather than psychological. Where the Leviathan of government, for Hobbes, prevents the "war of all against all" that would result from material greed, Freud points to taboo and eventually neurosis as the mechanism for preventing the "struggle of all against all" (178-79) that would otherwise ensue from uninhibited sexual desire.

The cultural fascination with the primitive in the age of high Modernism, as we shall see, confirms Freud's deep intuition about the analogies between primitive cultures and madness from every direction. Picasso, Breton, the Expressionists, Tzara, Stravinsky, Milhaud, Léger, the Vorticists, all juxtapose images of the primitive with those of sexuality and madness. These three fields of discourse can all stand for the pre-social or the pre-civilized; thus, they are constructed out of and in opposition to the social and the civilized. In art, such conflations can serve to evoke in the audience a response to forms of social malaise felt by the artist under the illusion that the artist is tapping into some primordial subconscious. Science, however, as Freud can conceive it, aspires to universal truth, and the industrial and post-industrial discourse of science ultimately carries with it forms of social and institutional power that art does not.

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2. Creation Myths and Odalisques: The Primitive in Painting and Poetry

If the Primitive is imagined as the "pre-civilized," it should be no surprise that Primitivism first becomes identifiable as a cultural current in the visual arts. Language in its apprehension requires a mental act of interpretation or conversion from sound to word to concept or image. The sign of the barbarian is the absence of language. For Hegel at least, the sign of an advanced language is its reliance on a phonetic alphabet rather than heiroglyphs or pictograms. The image, however, presents at least the illusion of immediacy.

Immediacy of expression in all acts of artifice must be illusory. The painting is always framed as art, as representation, in a context without which the spectator could not respond appropriately to the work as art. The very same artifact may produce different "spontaneous" reactions depending upon the perceiver's presumed context. The literary work might have its effect in the field of the visual, even if the image it creates is drawn in the mind of the reader. The visual work, as representation, might in turn take on a linguistic character, manipulating visual signs like words through rhetorical operations. To understand primitivism in literature, then, we might begin by charting a map of the rhetoric of primitivism by considering closely some of its characteristic works.

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Art historian William Rubin has argued that Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (1907) marks a key moment in the rise of modernist Primitivism and modernism in general (Rubin, Primitivism... 7, 13). The centrality of this particular painting is debatable. Rubin uses it to spin a narrative of Picasso as the artist who transforms culture through singular acts of genius (13, 17). This narrative may not reflect the complexity of that transformation or even of Picasso's own biography. Rubin's theory is based on the minimalization of the significance of indigenous colonial art itself--as a formal inspiration in the grand narrative of modernism, but nothing more (1)--which certainly does not reflect the complexity of the discourse of the primitive at the turn of the century. These problems acknowledged, we cannot deny the canonicity of the work, for better or for worse, and I would like to use it for its familiarity as a reference point in that discourse.

To make the connection between the visual and the verbal, and to set another anchor in the sweep of primitivist discourse from the "Romantic Primitivism" of the nineteenth century--as Robert Goldwater has called it in his chapters on Gauguin and the Fauves--to modernist primitivism, I would like to read Picasso's work in relation to another great odalisque, Charles Baudelaire's poem "La Chevelure" and certain texts that relate to it.

These two works suggest the primitive most superficially through their content. "Les Demoiselles," a work which is the summation of many versions and sketches, is a composition of five nude women in the long tradition of European odalisques and female bathers, on which are superimposed two striking African masks. From sketches and from x-radiography it is known that Picasso had planned to include two male

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"sailors" in the image, but in the end opted for a starker composition in which the two figures bearing the angular masks slashed with black streaks stand in confrontation with the pink curved flesh of the other three demoiselles, reminiscent of the classical Graces, separated by a still life with grapes, a slice of melon, and other fruits in the foreground. We also know from Picasso's notebooks that the masks were rather late additions to the composition.[8]

Does Picasso's work, which partakes of and appropriates various traditions--classical, symbolist, African, and perhaps others--function as narrative or is it somehow rhetorical? Jack Flam observes that prior to modernism most paintings referred to some actual text--mythology or the Bible--and one might argue that even paintings which did not do so created their own subtexts or underlying narratives. Flam follows many interpreters

[8] This painting has been discussed so extensively since it first appeared in 1907, that there is little to add to the discussion of its details. For the most searching reading of this work and a review of much of its criticism, I refer the reader to Leo Steinberg's magisterial essay, "The Philosophical Brothel," and his retrospect on the first publication of the essay, which appear together in October in 1988 as well as in the catalogue of the Musée Picasso exhibition of "Les Demoiselles." The essays by Rubin and Pierre Daix in the catalogue offer a thoroughgoing analysis of the work's context and the formal development of the painting through Picasso's sketches.

My goal here is limited to the consideration of the work in terms of its rhetorical strategies and its placement on the map of primitivism as a discourse, rather than as a movement in the history of the visual arts. While questions of form and iconography are important to such a reading, the ultimate object here is to understand the method of signification and the way a particular method of signification restricts what may be signified.

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of Picasso to argue that the underlying text of Picasso's work is essentially his autobiography. In the context of this interpretation--a symposium in honor of Rosalind Krauss's work, The Picasso Papers[9]--one might take Flam's reading as a response to Krauss's critique of "the Autobiographical Picasso" (Krauss, Originality... 24) presented in her 1980 essay, "In the Name of Picasso," where she suggests that many critics have been content to name the models and sources of the figures portrayed in Picasso's images, while failing to engage the questions of form raised by the images themselves. William Rubin in fact offers such a reading of Les Demoiselles d'Avignon in his extensive study, "La genèse des demoiselles d'Avignon," for the catalogue of the exhibit of the work with its sketches and related works at the Musée Picasso in Paris in 1988. To be fair Rubin is largely concerned with Picasso's place in the history of modernism in this essay,[10] but certain attempts at explaining the work resemble Krauss's objects of critique quite closely:

> Il faut voir un symptôme de l'état d'esprit de Picasso plutôt qu'un élément déclencheur, et sans nul doute un corollaire de la quête érotique concrétisée par Les Demoiselles et leurs études, dans la rupture, précipitée par l'artiste, de sa relation amoureuse avec Fernande Olivier. (368)

[9] CUNY Graduate School and University Center, 27 February 1998.

[10] Rubin suggests a more strictly biographical reading of Picasso in his recent exhibition, "Picasso and Portraiture," at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, organized by subject rather than chronologically or by style.

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It is not that such information is irrelevant to our understanding of the work, but the issue is one of centrality and conclusiveness. If we find the "trigger element" in the painter's autobiography, to the extent that we can even make such judgments about the "state of the soul" of the artist, have we even made any headway in finding the painting's meaning? The location of a "trigger element" suggests a search for origins, as if we could identify some concrete event that would unravel the work on its own, without our having to say another word. Flam, speaking in light of earlier critique, goes beyond claims at this level by acknowledging the textuality of the underlying autobiography, making what may be the best case for an "Autobiographical Picasso."

The deeper question, however, in understanding the textuality of Picasso's work, is whether it is simply mimetic of an underlying text or whether the painting itself functions on a more complex rhetorical level. Krauss's response to Flam on this occasion was to ask "what is the deictic" in these works, what is significant in the strict sense of the term? Is it even interesting to know who the models were? Are ambiguities in the image soluble? Can we know whether the tall figure in the center is reclining or standing? Does it matter what the squatting figure in the foreground is doing? We might say that Caravaggio's allegorical works are about ambiguity: we might be able figure out which limbs belong to which figure in The Calling of St. Matthew or The Entombment if we stop and think, but the moment of confusion is what the works are about. In Les Demoiselles, by contrast, we will never know whether the figure in the foreground is just squatting, or seated on an ottoman, on the bidet, or on the chamberpot right

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next to the food, but the pose is suggestive enough, like Baudelaire's "confuses paroles" in the "Correspondences," to allow for all these readings simultaneously.

The cubist projection is the division of a three dimensional object into its constituent parts viewed from multiple perspectives, reconstituted to form a whole. Leon Battista Alberti in his classical treatise, On Painting, the first modern study of perspective, writes,

> We painters who wish to show the movements of the soul by movements of the body are concerned solely with the movement of change of place. Anything which moves its place can do it in seven ways: up, the first; down, the second; to the right, the third; to the left, the fourth; in depth moving closer and then away; and the seventh going around. I desire all these movements in painting. Some bodies are placed towards us, others away from us, and in one body some parts appear to the observer, some drawn back, others high and others low. (79)

Picasso isolates each of these directions of the possible displacement of objects in a three-dimensional field. Space is flattened and layered as in collage or as in Gauguin's Tahitian works. Alberti then proceeds to list the effects of failing to represent bodies realistically in space:

> You will find that in expressing too violent movements and in making the breast and the small of the back visible at the same time in the same figure--a thing which is neither possible nor becoming--some think to be praised because they hear that figures appear most lively which most throw about all their members. For this reason their figures appear hackers and actors[11] without any dignity in the painting. Because of this they are not only without grace and sweetness but moreover

[11] Translator's note: "schermidori i istrioni" (127 n. 68).

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> they show the too fiery and turbulent imagination of the artist. (80)

Such undignified and impossible poses are Picasso's hallmark--the head turned beyond its normal range and the body contorted. Steinberg in his famous essay on Les Demoiselles refers repeatedly to the violently "released elbows" of the women, their gazes aggressively directed toward the viewer of the painting. He notes the ambiguity of the perspective of the woman in the center, elbows jutting toward the top of the frame, who may be said to be standing or to be in a reclining position, viewed from a bird's-eye perspective. The implication for the spectator is disturbing: are we peeping in at her or standing over her? It seems as if Picasso has followed Alberti's instructions to the letter to produce a confrontational image certainly without "grace and sweetness."

All parts and all perspectives cannot be rendered simultaneously, however, and the parts must substitute imperfectly for the whole, fundamentally a visual analogue of synecdoche. A square turned on end like Malevich's Tumbling Cube becomes a female breast, seemingly pasted on the torso of the masked demoiselle emerging from behind the curtain. As Mary Ann Caws writes of concealed objects partially revealed, the message is, "I show you this: you know I understand, have seen, am thinking of the rest" ("Gestures" 243). One fetishized part metonymically becomes the whole of female sexuality.

Roland Barthes reads the Arcimboldo effect as a visual form of synecdoche, where the parts of the image are themselves whole images and these whole images are parts of a different whole. For Barthes the

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Arcimboldo effect as such is a rhetorical gesture, signifying beyond the immediately represented item. Arcimboldo's synecdoche functions on the level of content. Cubism is synecdoche on the level of form, perspective, and vision. The question concerns the relation of parts to wholes. Can we see the subject from two or three perspectives at once? In a realist painting, the three-dimensional object is projected onto a two-dimensional surface, but in the cubist projection, the three-dimensional object is projected onto a two-dimensional surface in the mind of the artist, and then a collage of such representations is assembled in the painting, producing the characteristic primitivist confusion of planes that has its roots in Gauguin.[12]

In Gauguin the flattening of objects in space produces a naïve effect. The Tahitians become like cutouts in a simplified receding landscape. They are rendered as simple folk in their plain landscape, the flattening accentuating their perceived innocence. In "Les Demoiselles" Picasso flattens objects, but in the crossing of planes and perspectives he projects not innocence onto the women, but impossible complexity.

Synecdoche functions in Baudelaire's poem much like it does in Arcimboldo's portraits of persons rendered in the familiar objects of their trades or professions, or as allegories in the case of the cycle of the Four Seasons or the image of Rudolph II as Vertumnus.

> O toison, moutonnant jusque sur l'encoulure!
> O boucles! O parfum chargé de nonchaloir!
> Extase! Pour peupler ce soir l'alcôve obscure

[12] One of the most interesting arguments in Krauss's The Picasso Papers is the suggestion that Picasso's collages became models for paintings.

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Des souvenirs dormant dans cette chevelure,
Je la veux agiter dans l'air comme un mouchoir!

La langoureuse Asie et la brûlante Afrique,
Tout un monde lointain, absent, presque défunt,
Vit dans tes profondeurs, forêt aromatique!
Comme d'autres esprits voguent sur la musique,
Le mien, ô mon amour! nage sur ton parfum.

J'irai là-bas où l'arbre et l'homme, pleins de sève
Se pâment longuement sous l'ardeur des climats;
Fortes tresses, soyez la houle qui m'enlève!
Tu contiens, mer d'ébène, un éblouissant rêve
De voiles, de rameurs, de flammes et de mâts:

Un port retentissant où mon âame peut boire
A grands flots le parfum, le son et la couleur;
Où les vaisseaux glissant dans l'or et dans la moire,
Ouvrent leurs vastes bras pour embrasser la gloire
D'un ciel pur où frémit l'éternelle chaleur.

Je plongerai ma tête amoureuse d'ivresse
Dans ce noir océan où l'autre est enfermé;
Et mon esprit subtil que le roulis caresse
Saura vous retrouver, ô féconde paresse!
Infinis bercements du loisir embaumé!

Cheveux bleus, pavillon de ténèbres tendues,
Vous me rendez l'azur du ciel immense et rond;
Sur les bords duvetés de vos mèches tordues
Je m'enivre aremment des senteurs confondues
De l'huile de coco, du musc et du goudron.

Longtemps! toujours! ma main dans ta crinière lourde
Sèmera le rubis, la perle et le saphir,
Afin qu'à mon désir tu ne sois jamais sourde!
N'es-tu pas l'oasis où je rêve, et la gourde
Où je hume à longs traits le vin du souvenir?
(Les Fleurs 208-9)

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The hair evokes the memory of various artifacts and elements of nature to complete the image, as objects arranged as still life form the image of quick life in Arcimboldo. Their combined meaning is a function of their juxtaposition and they serve to join various semiotic fields: race, navigation, colonialism, the female body, eros, and--in reverse imprint--the city.

Walter Benjamin writes, "[o]f all the experiences which made life what it was, Baudelaire singled out his having been jostled by the crowd as the decisive, unique experience" (193). In this statement, the "jostle" is most significant. Benjamin argues that the "shock" of the crowd, reflected in the "shock" of the flâneur and the click of the camera (174-75) in the "Tableaux parisiens," "corresponds to what the worker 'experiences' at his machine" (176). In this traditional base/superstructure argument, the relation between la solitude and the multitude is that of the isolated worker to the mode of production. Baudelaire, like the flâneur in the crowd, is jostled in relation to his buying public, for Benjamin (166), representing the shift in mode of artistic production from the patronage system to the free market. The relationship of artist to the market entails the alienation of a labor the Romantics had made inalienable, like that of the prostitute who frequently appears in Baudelaire's scenes of Paris.

Lacking in this illuminating reading of Baudelaire, much as in many earlier European marxist analyses of political economy, is a sense of the global position of Paris. The industrial revolution did not only depend on the invention of the jostling machines, but on the location of new pools of labor and resources abroad. For the provincial peasant to become a Parisian worker, he had to be freed from the task of producing raw materials. The

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raw, primitive, and unrefined had to come from the colonies. It should not be surprising, then, if this aspect of the new mode of production were reflected in Baudelaire's work, particularly his poems addressed to the actress Jeanne Duval, his mulatto mistress, also called "Lemer" or "Lemaire," whom he had met in 1842 at the age of twenty-one. These poems gather together threads of autobiography, representations of the feminine, visions of the city, and themes of colonization. The relationship of the multitude to la solitude, it could be argued upon reading these works, is not only that of the crowd to the flâneur, but of the colonizer in the city to the distant colonized.

Elazar Barkan notes that the constellation of signifiers we are considering in these works by Picasso and Baudelaire have long established associations among themselves:

> Myths of an oceanic paradise or of noble savages were not, in effect, qualitatively different than myths of Olympus or the Arabian Nights: through spatial and temporal distancing, all bespoke remote and unavailable sexual fantasies. That such representations of "bodies," "bathing," and "brothels" often had real counterparts reveals how uncertain the dichotomy was between victimization and sublimation. ("Victorian Promiscuity," 88)

In "La Chevelure," the sea becomes a medium for the speaker's journey through her hair, through the poem, through her body. In Picasso, the sea is a lost trace--the sailor who has been excised from the composition, and who, in light of Picasso's notebooks and sketches can hardly be ignored.

In her rich intertextual reading of Baudelaire's "La Chevelure" and "Un hémisphère dans une chevelure," Barbara Johnson argues, contrary to convention, that the verse poem preceeded the prose, on the grounds that the

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banality of the prose consumes the puffed up style of the verse poem (Johnson 33-55). Yet there are persistent "souvenirs" in both texts which are not "mangés." The poet leaves a bit of fluff, which is anything but banal, on the shores ("bords"/"rivages") of the "chevelure" of the person to whom the poem is addressed. This fluff, this word which is itself "duveté,"[13] is a signature which opens a whole hemisphere of textual ancestry--a knotty hemisphere of hair which "contiennent de grandes mers" that are the "grandes-mères" of the two texts.

"La Chevelure" is typically counted among Baudelaire's "Jeanne Duval poems" (e.g. Pasinetti)[14], for the work's likely reference to her thick, twisted black hair and its images of exotica. Duval or Lemer, as we shall see, is inscribed in the text, and expands the field of resonance opened by Walter Benjamin in his analysis of capital with the rise of the city as a financial center in Baudelaire, to the far reaches of capitalism in the colonies that supported the cities financially.

[13] Evidently, Louise Varèse found the word "duvetés" so inappropriate to the otherwise mundane language of Le spleen de Paris that no trace of it appears in her English translation of "Un hémisphère."

[14] Pasinetti (92-93) argues for a religious interpretation of the "Jeanne Duval poems," claiming that references to sea, sky, and calm "are objective correlatives of that revelation of peace," and that Baudelaire's devotion to language is "visionary" and "ritualistic" in its repetition of images. This is precisely a case where an "objective" correlative is anything but. Pasinetti's terms of "cult" and "ritual" only get the critic deeper into what we shall see as Baudelaire's primitivizing aporia. This sort of "objective" correlative cannot get the reader outside the subjectivity of the poet.

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The medium of "La Chevelure" and its companion poem, like the medium of colonial exploration and trade, is the sea.[15] Each work floats on seven stanzas or paragraphs, like the seven seas. Baudelaire begins with a sea quest--"O toison, moutonnant"--immediately recalling the fleece of Jason and the Argonauts. "Moutonnant" suggests the wooly flow of the hair in words normally applied to the cresting of waves. "L'encolure," "boucles," and "chargé" are all taken from the nautical lexicon.[16] The image of a handkerchief fluttering in the air suggests passengers waving from a departing ship. In the second stanza we find "esprits voguent" and the spirit of the speaker which "floats [nage]." As waves become agitated into "la houle," the adressee becomes a "mer d'ébène. . ./de voiles, de rameurs, de flammes et de mâts." The speaker settles into a "port" where it is possible to "drink/in great waves [flots]," where "vessels glide in the gold," reflected from the fleece of the first line. In the fifth stanza, the speaker "plunges" into an "ocean" caressed by "roulis." Then having arrived on the "bords" in the sixth stanza, the poem takes in the view of a vast blue sky, and we have a reversal in the image of an "oasis," suggesting the opposite of the sea--a desert.

The first water image in "Un hémisphère sans une chevelure" is that of the oasis--precisely "l'eau d'une source" in which the speaker "plunges his

[15] I will quote the text in French where possible, but will use English where the reference to the original seems clear and as it suits my own syntax. All translation is mine.

[16] Johnson also notes this (41).

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whole face," like a thirsty man in the desert. The narrator allows his soul "to travel" in this small spring in a dream of "voilures et de mâtures" to find the "grandes mers," where he is "carried" by "moussons" to a place "more blue and deep." In the fourth paragraph the hair is an "ocean," where the speaker arrives at a "port," full of "vigorous men of all nations," as are stevedores and sailors, and "navires" in "un ciel immense." Baudelaire again recounts the features of an ocean voyage, now a pleasure trip with "long hours passed on a lounge chair in the cabin of a handsome ship, lulled by the waves [roulis] . . . amidst potted plants." As in the verse poem, we see "l'azur" and "tresses," and instead of "bords" there are "rivages."

Both works flow in la mer, and each is anchored at one end in a "source" on dry land or a port of origin. In the wooly hair of the addressee, who may be Lemer, the speaker is drawn to tropical ports-of-call on a journey toward the final destination--"memory." "Cette chevelure" yields the aroma of a litany of luxury items, imported from distant colonial outposts. Having noted already "l'or" and "d'ébène," we find "[d]e l'huile de coco, du musc et du goudron," and in the prose poem "du tabac mêlé à l'opium et au sucre . . . du goudron, du musc et de l'huile de coco." "Coco oil, musk, and pitch" blend together the scents of the tropics, of bestial attraction, and ships. "Tobacco mixed with opium and sugar" suggests the orient, the opium den, and in combination with the sexual imagery here, the odalisque.

Scent is the most primitive sense, and most closely associated with memory by virtue of its connection with the evolution of the brain

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(Ackerman 10-11).[17] Olfactory memories, as anyone has experienced on suddenly encountering a fragrance from childhood, are often the most vivid memories. By juxtaposing images of the tropics, journey by sea, the sexual, and memory, Baudelaire elaborates the very constellation of themes that will be central to primitivism at the turn of the century.

In this hair the speaker sows "rubies, pearls, and sapphires," again joining images of the orient, the tropics whence come pearls, and the sapphic. The images of fruits, leaves, human skin and the gourd distinctly recall Gauguin in his Tahitian period, where fruits seem to suggest the fertility of the tropics. In turn these images of fecundity are suggested by the still life in Picasso's work. Steinberg even goes so far as to take the melon as phallic.

The sea as medium, as la chevelure itself, is a space of disorder and drunkenness. The waves are in the speaker's "tête amoureuse d'ivresse." The memory which he drinks at the end of the verse poem is a "wine." Langoureuse Asie and brûlante Afrique are disorderly, impenetrable destinations. The psychoanalytically inclined might take these images of the unreachably exotic woman as implicit references to the poet's reputedly languorous sexual potency, but such literalist explanations, even if true, hardly suggest the full web of potential allusion here.

It is interesting that the relation of city to colony is felt most acutely in Baudelaire's poems to Jeanne Duval--that the political economy of

[17] For a detailed discussion of this topic, see the first chapter of Diane Ackerman's A Natural History of the Senses.

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colonialism is most vividly instantiated in the body of a woman. Barkan argues that in the Victorian period, "[e]thnography stood for eroticism" ("Victorian Promiscuity," 89). Picasso can tap into that source of signification, intensifying his erotic scene, by superimposing the masks onto an otherwise conventional odalisque. Baudelaire does not quite have a scientific "ethnography" to look toward, but he does have travel literature and stories of the sea. The memory contained in her hair is of a lost paradise, but like all such "inconceivably remote pasts" it is constructed out of what the poet knows--the city of Paris. The sea is the place of solitude, free from the shock of the crowd and alienation of the city,[18] and distant ports of call offer exotic scents and jewels, by contrast to the mundanity of real urban life.

When the speaker of "La Chevelure" "plunges his whole face" into "l'eau d'une source," the waters of "la mer," he precisely dives into "Lemer." Drinking those salty waters he reaches not only into that "source," but into the larger sea of les grandes-mères. From the womb of one spring the speaker can trace a line to the wide open seas, les grandes-mères des grandes mers. The vast expanse of the seas is projected onto the dimension of time, the distance of the ancient past, mother of all mariners. The body of Lemer is a channel to the primitive--a tunnel where rubies and sapphires are mined, an alcove where oysters nest, a place to dive for pearls. Colonial products here merge with images of the sexual.

[18] Ahearn makes a similar argument (217).

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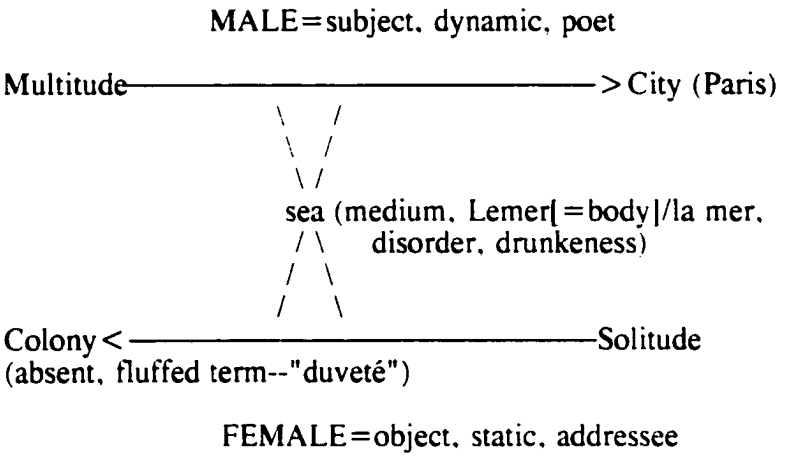
If we were to use Greimas' semiotic square as an illustrative device to show the narrative tensions established in the work by Baudelaire's juxtaposition of symbols, we might diagram it this way:



The position of each semiotic category here might best be taken as one of dominance and not of absolute logical opposition. That said, the diagram might help clarify a reading of Les Demoiselles against "La Chevelure."

The sea in Baudelaire is the medium for the sailor seeking solitude in opposition to his life as a flâneur in the city. Picasso's sailor and another male figure--a "student" holding a skull--have been suppressed, yet they lurk just below the painting's surface. Had they remained, the sailor and student might have represented an allegory of mind and body in the den of temptation, but having been removed the painting becomes much more challenging. We the spectators are the implied sailor and the student, and the demoiselles confront us. Baudelaire's passive actress in blackface becomes Picasso's aggressive woman in the mask, pushing the male figures out of the picture entirely.

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An aesthetic of parts standing for wholes and objects standing for concepts is the formal ground of primitivism. A world fragmented into parts is ripe for the appropriation of its objects and fragments, their decontextualization, juxtaposition, and recontextualization, which are the hallmark operations of the discourse of the primitive. In the remainder of this study, we will consider how the techniques of fragmentation, appropriation, and juxtaposition are reassembled to form new primitivisms raised to the next degree.

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Part II

The Discourse of the Primitive in Poland

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1. "Prymitywiści polskie:" Primitivism and Futurism

"Primitivism" as a name for a current in the arts enters Poland already veiled in irony. At least one small group of self-described "primitivists" existed among the Polish modernists. Their manifesto reads as follows:

primitivists to the nations of the world and to poland.

the great rainbow monkey named dionysis expired long ago. we announce that we are throwing out his rotten legacy

I. CIVILIZATION, CULTURE, WITH THEIR ILLNESSES—TO THE TRASH.

we choose simplicity ordinariness, happiness health, triviality, laughter. from laughter the spirit fattens and grows strong stout calves. we complain to each other gratuitously of propriety, importance, pietism. we use the laurel leaves that crown us as a seasoning for food.

II. WE CROSS OUT HISTORY AND POSTERITY.

just as tolstoy's rome, the india hats of critique, bavaria and cracow. poland ought to cast itself out from tradition, from the mummy of prince joseph and the theater. **we are storming the city.** every mechanism—airplanes, tramways, telephonic devices. only folding and mobile homes. speech shouted and rhymed.

III. social order we understand as the authority of essential idiots and capitalists. this is the most fertile ground in laughter and in revolution.

IV. those guilty of war will be rolled over by the fist. murder is unhygienic.

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women should be exchanged frequently. the value of a woman depends on her fertility.

V. THE PRIMITIVE.

VI. art is only that which yields health and laughter. THE ESSENCE OF ART—IN ITS CIRCUS CHARACTER SPECTACLES FOR GREAT MOBS. its features of externality and universality, pornography unmasked.

art is science.

from the muddled pot-house of squalid infinity we sweep out the hysterical creators called poets, crushed by the insatiable pain of life's joy, aesthetic ecstasy, inspiration, eternity. **instead of aesthetics anti-grace. instead of ecstasy—intellect.** intelligible and purposeful creation.

VII. whirling objects as the material of art. theaters to change into circus buildings.

music is two bodies beaten together. everything else is noise. we will battle the antifuturistic violin and every voice of nature. streetfights with the beethovenists.

it is necessary to tear from the walls the scraps of canvas called pictures. paint faces dressed in linen. people, houses sidewalks. sculpture does not exist.

VIII. poetry. we leave rhyme and rhythm behind wherever they are first even being conceived. **the destruction of limiting rules of creation a virtue of awkwardness.** freedom of grammatic form, spelling and punctuation, in accordance with the creators. mickiewicz is limited **slowacki is an incomprehensible sputter.**

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THE WORD has its own weight, sound, color, outline, TAKING ITS PLACE IN SPACE. these are the deciding values of the word. the shortest word (the sound) and the longest word (the book). the meaning of the word is a subordinate thing and not dependent on the ascribed concept proper to it to be treated as auditory material for NONONOMATOPOETIC USES.

IX. the chief value of books—format and printing closely alongside them—is content. therefore the poet together with the typesetter and the binder of his books should well be screaming them everwhere, not declaiming. for publication use the gramophone and film, newspapers. gramophones spinning, the canvas screen, or the wall as the collective paper for books read out loud. newspapers edited only by poets.

X. we praise understanding and therefore throw out logic, that limitation and cowardice of the mind. nonsense is wonderful by virtue of its untranslatable content, which brings our creation into relief with breadth and strength.

likewise art manifests our love toward people and toward everything. we breathe love.

let's open our eyes. then swine will seem more enchanting to us than a nightingale, and the gga of a gander dazzles us more than swansong.

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> gga. gga, ladies and gentlemen, has fallen into the world arena, brandishing like a knight its double g, and crying, a—this is the mouth of that wonderful and ordinary beast. murder's proper muzzle, or snout. (Lam 156, 170-72. My translation.)

This work first appeared on the first page of Gga. The First Polish Almanac of Futurist Poetry. A Primitivist Bimonthly, in Warsaw, December 1920, edited by Anatol Stern and poet Andrzej Wat, and is thought to have largely been the work of Stern.

Stern and Wat's vision in the Gga manifesto has much more in common with Russian and Italian Futurism and Dadaism than with the mainstream of Primitivism as I have set it out in the first part of this study. A vision of spinning machines inspired by the phonograph and the cinema is more reminiscent of Tatlin than Gauguin or even Picasso. Random urban violence evokes Expressionism more clearly than any other movement. The contradictory title of "A Primitivist Bimonthly" of "Futurist Poetry" seems a deliberate provocation aimed in a Gombrowiczean spirit at the critics, more interestingly understood as such than as any literal attempt at self-definition.

Their gestures toward the primitive, however, are toward the primitive in the abstract: "the untranslatable," "gga." There are no prose equivalents of the African mask here, no folkloric materials or quotes from Sanskrit of the sort found in "The Waste Land." We might say that "the primitive" is always defined in relation to "the modern," but in this case it is defined as an absence, rather than as some other culture in particular. This characteristic of the Gga points up a central feature of primitivism as it developed in Poland.

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Perhaps the most influential prosaist for the three figures who will be our focus in the next three sections was the critic, Karol Irzykowski, who wrote one radical novel--if it can be called a novel--Paluba (1896-1903), which might be translated "The Hag," though it can refer also to a doll in the form of a hag, so we might even translate it more adventurously as "the fetish" in the strict sense of the term. In an age of Polish prose that was dominated by realism, historical fiction, with a few decadentist and expressionistic experiments sometimes in the form of the récit, Paluba made a shocking break with all sense of narrative propriety. Boundaries between author and the outermost narrative frame, first-person narrators and third-person narrators, are thoroughly ambiguous.

The novel is composed of five sections: an erotic dream sequence told in the first person as a kind of récit, a detailed, positivistic[19] biographical study of the protagonist-narrator of the first section, a set of notes to the biographical study, a critical epilogue on the relation of the dream sequence to the biographical study, and a final reflection called the Szaniec "Paluby" perhaps translated as "The Hag's Last Stand," where "szaniec" can mean "bastion" in the traditional sense, but also "the last act of a striptease." The "notes" often correct "errors" in the study, and the work contains numerous references to historical figures and polemics aimed at actual critics and writers from the time of the author. The work is filled with cross references.

[19] In the sense of "logical positivism," rather than the Polish literary movement known as "Positivism," of which the greatest exponents were Henryk Sienkiewicz and Bolesław Prus.

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like a scholarly work, but there are no footnote numbers in the text to indicate where the "notes" are. They are listed in a separate section with page and text references back to the Biographical Study, so it is somewhat unclear how one should read them. My own temptation is to add my own "footnote numbers," but the layout of the work suggests that one should read the Biographical Study--the longest section at about 350 pages--then go back over it, taking into account the fifty or so pages of notes. These numerous levels of "correction" of the "primary text" are written in a kind of critical, authorial voice, but at the same time, that voice is a fiction, so that the reader never knows which narrator is really trustworthy.

They suggest an attempt to draw the reader into the writer's process of revision, marking the incompleteness of the work. Of course the critic may just step back and declare the work complete, but the reading process--undefined as it is--resists completeness. We might argue that Irzykowski is teaching the reader to read critically, exposing the critic's process as much as the writer's in his critical fiction. Yet the critic who maintains the notion of the integrity of the work at doctrine can take yet another step away and declare the work a complete system at another level. In the spirit of Sterne and earlier experimental novelists, Irzykowski is always trying to break out of the system he has built up, and yet in his obsession for comprehensiveness is always constructing a system at a new level.

The Biographical Study, which comprises the bulk of the work, is a kind of pessimistic Bildungsroman. The story does not so much tell how the protagonist, Piotr Strumieński, achieved his identity as the writer of travel narrative who recounts his dream-journey in the first section, as it tells how

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he lost his instinctual human character in the process of socialization. The narrator is always looking for the pierwiastek pałubiczny or "hag-like kernel" or "origin" of his character, which is always being covered up by various płaszczyki or "little overcoats"--Irzykowski's code word for reified forms of social life. This notion might be read as an elaboration of the expressionist novelist, playwright, and critic Stanisław Przybyszewski's notion of the naga dusza or "naked soul"--the true nature of the lone individual facing the immensity of the universe.

One might argue that the story is in the structure of the work here. Pałuba is a tale replaced by scholarly apparatus. Any time we may feel we have some solid facts about Strumieński, there may be a footnote awaiting us, debunking with scientific authority what we thought we knew with scientific assuredness. The récit recounting the narrator's dreams of a certain Maria Dunin is the most subjective kind of narration there can be--raw psychoanalytic data. The biographical analysis of Strumieński is the process of cloaking that unrefined tale in the artifacts of objectivity. The effectiveness of the work comes from Irzykowski's intimate familiarity as a critic with the apparatus. That he would go to such lengths to fictionalize scholarship suggests that, like most first novels, even this work has a distinct element of autobiography, if not self-parody.[20]

[20] Irzykowski may not be alone in producing such fictional scholarship. Satirist Konstanty Idelfons Gałczyński is said as a student between the wars to have produced a lengthy essay on a non-existent sixteenth-century English poet.

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From the "naked soul" to the "hag-like kernel" to "the untranslatable"--"gga" we find the Western European discourse of the "primitive" entering and mingling with an established discourse of authenticity, the true self, what Malinowski will call "the unity of personality," what Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz will call "pure form," what Witold Gombrowicz will call "immaturity," what Bruno Schulz will call "fragments of the old mythology," each of which might be seen as a variation on the theme of the primitive.

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2. Pure Form: Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz

2.1. Faces in the Mirror: Witkacy and Malinowski

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz in a Napoleonic pose and a stoutly postured Bronisław Malinowski, hand on hip, chest out, soon to gain international fame as the father of modern field anthropology, stand on the porch of the highlands folk-style Witkiewicz home in Zakopane against the backdrop of the Tatra mountains early one afternoon in the fall of 1911 staring into each other's eyes. The photographer's gaze is met only by that of an intent Helena Biedrzycka who is suspended on her elbows, each supported by one of the men who is watching the other. She must be at least a head shorter than her companions, but in the picture her shoulders are level with the tops of their heads. Two feet off the ground, she is the object of portraiture. The men are just props. Across the communication along the y-axis from Biedrzycka to the unnamed photographer, Witkacy and Malinowski are engaged in their own private dialogue along the x-axis. Helena Biedrzycka is the medium.

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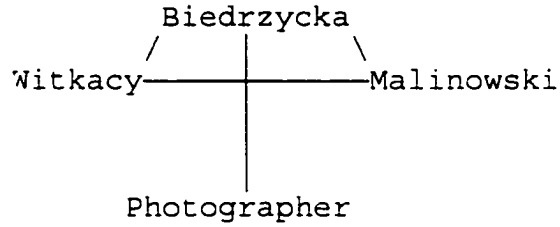

Bronisław Malinowski and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, who signed his paintings "Witkacy," were close friends by 1900, judging from an early letter from Witkacy's father to his son. Malinowski, the future emigré, must have been identified by his friends as an anglophile from a rather young age, as is suggested by his English nickname "Lord Douglas," used as early as sixteen (S. Witkiewicz, letter of 31 July 1900, Listy do Syna 39).[21] Witkacy is never called "Oscar" as far as I have read, but the absent reference suggests a likely identification with the well known British playwright. Among the first surviving texts produced from the Witkacy's friendship with Malinowski is a photograph of the pair taken in 1902 or 1903 in Zakopane. They lived together as students in Cracow during 1905 and 1906.[22] In 1910 Malinowski had left for studies in England, but returned to Zakopane for part of 1912.[23] Witkacy's fiancée, Jadwiga Janczewska,

[21] References to Stanisław Witkiewicz are to the father, the Polish impressionist painter, architect and critic. References to Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz are to the son, Witkacy, our primary object of interest.

[22] Witkacy offers a profuse apology regarding the incident in a letter from Zakopane in 1906 (Listy do Bronisława Malinowskiego, letter no. 1).

[23] A description of this and other events appears in a chronology compiled by Gerould in A Witkiewicz Reader.

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committed suicide in February of 1914, leaving the artist devastated. His family encouraged him to visit his friend "Bronio" (Malinowski) and to accompany him on his voyage to Australia to prevent Witkacy's own suicide. On this trip occurred their famous break, after which their communication was sporadic at best. This tale of childhood friendship, a quarrel perhaps ostensibly over a shared woman, and a dramatic break is a master narrative which will appear in the works of both characters in our tale.

Judging from Witkacy's early portrayals of Malinowski, it seems that he regarded Malinowski himself through the eyes of the primitivist, namely Władysław Ślewiński, a Polish painter of Gauguin's Pont-Aven school and Witkiewicz's teacher. In 1911 Ślewiński painted Witkiewicz's portrait (Jaworska, cat. no. 277). This image likely served as a model for Witkacy's repeated attempts at Malinowski over the next few years. In Ślewiński's naturalistic portrait, the younger painter is a picture of innocence illuminated in a soft feathered sidelight, in his three piece suit and bow tie, hands together, head angled downward and eyes looking up as if he were a bit intimidated by his interlocutor. Two charcoal sketches of Malinowski, one entitled "Malinowski Facing the Fear of Life," attempt the expression and approximate the garb, using a somewhat harsher sidelighting effect (Sztaba, pl. 7; Gerould, Witkacy, after 44). The sketches seem to be working toward an oil entitled, "Xerxes Jakszma," the name of a character in Tadeusz Miciński's mystical novel, Nietota.[24]

[24] The title translates as "club moss," a species which grows in the Tatra Mountains. The novel, thick with allusions to Hindu mythology and Central European folklore, is about a confrontation of mystical forces in the Tatras.

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The most successful attempt is a photograph in which he dispenses with hand gestures and clothing, save Malinowski's characteristic glasses, shooting from the shoulders up, and exploits the contrasty, reticulated, grainy quality of the gum print technique to produce the image of a glowing body and questioning face fading into a black background in what may be Witkacy's only male nude ("Bronisław Malinowski" (1911-13), Franczak and Stefan Okołowicz, pl. 99). The grain and contrast obscure physical details and simplify the image, contradicting a technology that seeks to produce ever more "realistic" images, conveying an impression of naïveté, as Ślewiński manages in his oil portrait of Witkacy. Only the glasses, which in this context iconize Malinowski, challenge the naïve image, by emphasizing the gaze returned to the camera. It is interesting that Witkacy used this style in his self-portraits on and off throughout his life, though almost all of his portraits of other adult subjects after about 1918 are grotesque and distorted.

Miciński, poet, experimental novelist, and playwright, was a friend of Witkacy's father and seems to have been something of a mentor to the young Witkacy. One of Witkacy's most fascinating photographic portraits shows Miciński with his imposing beard and bald pate in a cloud of smoke with a lion cub snarling over his shoulder. The sharpness of the lion despite what must have been a long exposure by lamplight reveals the lion to have been stuffed, but it is impressive nonetheless. Miciński was killed mysteriously in Russia after the Revolution. The common story is that he was mistaken for an Orthodox priest by Bolsheviks. A more extravagant version has it that Witkacy, who entered the Imperial Russian Army as a White officer and after the February Revolution joined the revolutionaries with his unit (that much is true), was present when Miciński was killed and was powerless to prevent it.

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or are realistic portraits in fantastic backgrounds.[25] Malinowski is one exception in which the object of portraiture appears in the guise of the artist himself.

A curious extension of the form here might be found in Witkacy's portrait of Jadwiga Witkiewiczowa (1925). The innocence is lost, but Witkacy's women are never naïve. The sidelight, position of head and eyes, and directness of expression are maintained before the background of an Australian landscape, with a suggestion of Gauguinesque still life at her left hand. Given the state of Witkacy's relationship to Malinowski, we might even read this as a submerged portrait of his "former friend," no longer the innocent explorer (Jakimowicz, pl. 105).

This vision of the other in the form of the self seems to recur frequently in the interplay between Staś and Bronio. In the abovementioned photograph of the two at ages 17 and 19, respectively, reproduced along with Witkacy's letters to Malinowski, the inseparable pair are dressed and groomed almost identically, and almost seem to have taken on each other's features. This photograph was doubtlessly of importance to Witkacy, as he kept it for thirty-five years before he sent it to his friend well after their most severe rupture, perhaps as a gesture to rekindle old sentiments, asking

[25] These are not unlike some of Picasso's seemingly "unfinished" portraits of the same period. See Picasso's self-Portrait (1917, Zervos III,76) and Flower Girl (1917, Zervos IV,226), both of which are reproduced along with imitations by other artists in Krauss, The Picasso Papers.

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whether their relationship had survived or had been long finished (Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, letter of 11 March 1937, Listy do Malinowskiego 111).

From Malinowski's side, a rather curious dream occurs in his diary shortly after he and Witkacy had separated in Australia, and when Witkacy would have been very much in his thoughts:

> I had a strange dream; homosex., with my own double as partner. Strangely autoerotic feelings; the impression that I'd like to have a mouth just like mine to kiss, a neck that curves just like mine, a forehead just like mine (seen from the side). (Malinowski, entry for 20 September 1914, A Diary... 12-13)

Though Witkacy is not mentioned specifically, a connection seems likely. It may have even been explicit, as a passage a few lines later has been expurgated. Judging from the apparent strength of the relationship, Malinowski's diary, Witkacy's letters, and the letters of Witkiewicz Senior to his son, it is difficult to believe that there was not a strong homoerotic component.[26]

The date of this passage is also interesting in that it raises the question of whether Malinowski would have read or heard about Freud's essay, "On Narcissism," which appeared in the same year. In the essay, Freud claims that "perverts and homosexuals [...] are plainly seeking themselves as a love-object and their type of object-choice may be termed narcissistic" (General

[26] New passages from Malinowski's diaries have appeared this past year in the Polish journal, Konteksty, too late for a thorough consideration here. Unfortunately, the new materials stop just before the published Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term, so they do not include an uncensored version of this particular excerpt. I am currently working on an article that will account for these early journal entries.

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69). Malinowski would have been immersed in Freud's work at this time, as one of the objects of his research to be discussed later in Sex and Repression was the cross-cultural validity of the Oedipus complex, and Malinowski's project of maintaining an intimate diary noting dreams, slips, and unsavory desires might be read as a kind of self-analysis informed by Freudian theory, so we could guess that Malinowski would be anxious to obtain every new paper by Freud as soon as possible. In psychoanalysis one often worries about the danger of inadvertant suggestion by the analyst, but in this case, at a time when Malinowski is particularly concerned about his own "unity of personality" and is intellectually engaged with psychoanalysis, it appears that Freud's theory might be infiltrating Malinowski's dreams directly from the pages of the Jahrbuch.

While one cannot read too much into Valetta Malinowska's editorial omissions of "a few extremely intimate observations,"[27] we might note that they occur most frequently in Malinowski's diary in 1914 and 1918, when references to Witkacy are also most frequent. The published diary also begins right after the break in Australia, omitting the years when they would have been much closer. Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, in his review article, "Bronisław Malinowski in the Light of his Diary" (68), expresses his belief, which seems quite common among Malinowski's closer associates, that Valetta Malinowska did not expurgate enough of the more intimate passages in the diary. To believe, however, that the diary should inform

[27] Valetta Malinowska, preface to Bronisław Malinowski, A Diary. . . vii.

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readers about Malinowski's "life. . . in the field, and about his personality" (67) while failing to include his discussions of sexuality, which were certainly significant to him, particularly when sexuality was an important topic of his research, is to buy into the scientistic view which is at the heart of the weaknesses of Malinowski's theory, i.e., that the scientist is somehow an objective recorder of data who reduces information into simple, generalizable principles. Malinowski often employed a psychoanalytic approach in his studies, particularly relating to sexuality, and even Freud who was caught up in the project of systematic science believed that analyst and client were in a state of dynamic tension, best manifested through the process of transference.

Malinowska claims that earlier portions of the diarywere not published because Malinowski did not begin his anthropological work until 1914. This is clearly not the case. He published a review of Frazer's Totemism and Exogamy as early as 1910, read a paper before the Polska Akademia Umiejętności in 1912, and had done sufficient work to gain the support of C. G. Seligman for his journey to Australia and New Guinea in 1914.[28] The years prior to 1914 must have been quite formative of his anthropological thought. The decision to publish the diaries after the separation, then, must have some other motive.

The intensity and pattern of the relationship, the inseparability interrupted by violent schism, evinced by Malinowski's Diary and Witkacy's

[28] See Andrzej K. Paluch, "Wstęp" to Malinowski, Dzieła 1:17-18.

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letters, seems a clear indication of great intimacy, which surely informed the extensive treatments of sexuality in both of their later works. Witkacy turned to Malinowski in his most suicidal moments, after the suicide of Witkacy's fiancée Jadwiga Janczewska in February 1914, even exhorting Bronio to provide him with potassium cyanide, writing, "you will do me this great favor so long as you love me a little."[29] Before the break, Witkacy's letters end "I kiss you" and even "I kiss you, hard;" whereas, after the break he ends with a distinctive "I shake your hand" or worse, "I shake your crooked talons." The sarcasm of these letters of September and October 1914 hurt Malinowski deeply. In the longest published passage concerning Witkacy in the Diary, following a gaping ellipsis, Malinowski responds to a letter he had just received:

> I am terribly dejected and dispirited by the bankruptcy of my most essential friendship. The first reaction of holding myself responsible for everything predominates, and I feel capitis diminutio--a worthless man, of diminished value. A friend is not merely an added quantity, he is a factor, he multiplies one's individual value. Too bad--the responsibility for the break lies primarily in his unrelenting pride, in his lack of consideration, his inability to forgive others for anything, though he can forgive himself a great deal. (Malinowski, 29 October 1914, A Diary. . . 29-30)

Witkacy later made this latter charge about Malinowski himself, when the English scholar failed to answer his letters. In Witkacy's post-1936 letters, he attempted to re-establish the friendship in a surprisingly conciliatory manner. Gaining no response, the letters grew in playful sarcasm, often in

[29] Łaskę mi wielką zrobisz, jeśli mnie choć trochę kochasz.

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bad English, building to a raucous doggerel entitled "To Shithead Friends,"[30] which finally evoked a response that in turn elicited friendly exchange by July 1938.

Read in this light, Malinowski's discussion of homosexuality in The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia, based on the 1914 expedition, suggests an interesting personal subtext. Discussing close friendships between men he writes:

> Sometimes such a friendship is just a passing whim, but it may survive and mature into a permanent relationship of mutual affection and assistance, as did that between Bagido'u and Yobukwa'u, and, I was told, between Mitakata and Namwana Guya'u before these two became implacable enemies. (Malinowski, The Sexual Life of Savages 471-73. Following quotes are all from this section.)

In a typical Malinowskian demonstration of how the "natives" are just like us in many ways, he explains that though the same word is used among the Trobrianders for "my lover" and "my friend," a semantic distinction is made based on the context, as with the French word ami, or as he must have thought, the Polish word przyjaciel. Then, in a moment of perhaps confession and denial, the scientist interjects:

> Difficult as it is exactly to draw the line between pure "friendship" and "homosexual relation" in any society----both because of laxity in definition and because of the difficulty of ascertaining the facts----it becomes almost impossible in a community such as the Trobriands. Personally, I find it misleading to use the term "homosexuality" in the vague and almost intentionally all-embracing sense that is now fashionable

30 "Do przyjaciół gówniarzy," appended to letter of 16 May 1937, Listy do Bronisława Malinowskiego 117-20.

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> under the influence of psycho-analysis and the apostles of "Urning" love.

He further claims that homosexuality, defined by bodily contact, was likely rare in the Trobriands, "[f]or. . . the practice is really felt to be bad and unclean because it is associated with excreta, for which the natives feel a genuine disgust," and for which a fastidious hypochondriac like Malinowski probably also felt disgust. He is constantly pictured as frail or ill in Witkiewicz senior's letters, and repeatedly injected himself with various drugs and recorded them in his diaries. He defends homosexuality among the Trobrianders as an abberation resulting from the white man's "stupidly misapplied" morality imposed on the natives.[31] In an earlier study he argued,

> The boys and girls on a Mission Station, penned in separate and strictly isolated houses, cooped up together, had to help themselves out as best they could, since that which every Trobriander looks upon as his due and right was denied to them. (Malinowski, Sex and Repression 90.)

Beyond his usual sympathy for the "savages," he extended his analysis of homosexuality to the British, arguing that social "derision" did more than legal sanctions to curb homosexual behavior.

In Witkiewicz's major novel, Insatiability, the young Malinowski appears quite literally through the glass darkly in the form of Genezyp's cousin Toldzio. Malinowski also shows up in 622 upadki Bunga czyli Demoniczna kobieta (The 622 Downfalls of Bungo or The Demonic Woman)

[31] Malinowski's interpretation here may have been far off the mark. See Herdt, Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia.

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as Lord Edgar of Nevermore.[32] In the scene I am alluding to, Genezyp is locked in the Princess Ticonderoga's washroom, masochistically watching her betray him with Toldzio. Though that is the scene to come, the first things we learn about Genezyp are his intolerance for captivity, that life with father was captivity, and that Toldzio was his escape from captivity. At the age of seven Genezyp's cousin

> introduced him to a new world of autoerotic perversions.... Toldzio was to blame (later on, of course) for everything. But for the moment he was just that closest, truest companion who became the first to possess the bizarre mystery of sinister delight and who then condescended to teach it to Zipcio.
>
> But why did Zipcio later develop such a strong dislike for him? (Witkiewicz, Insatiability 10; Nienasycenie in Dzieła wybrane 3:16-17)

Toldzio was also "a year older than [Zipcio] and. . .was. . .a count, while he was merely a baron," like the "Lord Douglas" himself (Witkiewicz, Insatiability 11; Nienasycenie 17). Recall our master narrative: early friendship and intimacy, a shared woman, and a violent break.

The pattern fits external accounts of the youthful Witkacy and Malinowski with surprising accuracy. Witkiewicz senior was constantly concerned that his son's relationship with Malinowski was too exclusive. He considered his son's companion arrogant, cynical and antisocial (Stanisław Witkiewicz, letter of 10 December 1912, 571-72). The father's letters are filled with suspicion, warning the son in 1903 not to live with Malinowski. "I was at Bronio's," he wrote, "An orgy of stink and a storm of filth"

[32] Most of the relevant passages from Bungo are translated in Gerould's Witkiewicz Reader.

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(Stanisław Witkiewicz, 29 April 1903, 87). The complaints range from health concerns to charges that young Malinowski was selfish and aloof. The elder Witkiewicz frequently prefaced these admonitions with concern about Staś's "relationships to other people" in general, fearing his son's relationship to Malinowski was too consuming.[33] Witkacy nonetheless rebelled and became closer to Malinowski until the break (and various lesser disagreements) when, at least for a time, he "developed. . .a strong dislike for him."

Genezyp, guilt-ridden by his "ungentlemanlike" practices,

> resolved upon the following decisive step: with the boldness of a man condemned to death he went to his father and told him the whole story. After being soundly thrashed and terrified out of his wits, less by the beating than by the prospect of idiocy, he summoned up all his willpower and desisted from those shameful practices. (Witkiewicz, Insatiability 11; Nienasycenie 17)

There is a decisive change in tone in the elder Witkiewicz's letter from suspicion to knowledge from 8 June 1905 (Stanisław Witkiewicz 272). While he is still concerned that the two "define themselves" in terms only of their relationship, he waxes conciliatory, stating even "I have sympathy toward Bronio, and whenever you write well of him, I am glad."[34] Witkacy must have revealed something intimate about his situation, as four weeks

[33] Daniel Gerould comes to the same conclusion in the introduction to his Witkiewicz Reader.

[34] Ja mam do Bronia sympatię i ile razy o nim piszesz dobrze--cieszę się. Stanisław Witkiewicz, 8 June 1905, 272.

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later, his father responded in a highly considered and scholarly manner to his son's request that he say "something about the question of Bronio" (Stanisław Witkiewicz, 17 July 1905, 280-82). His answer is an exhortation that their

> harmony and involvement depend on the compatibility of the higher needs of the spirit, on the commonality of mental endeavors, on a similar tone of sentiments--always the higher rocks, it is better that way and let such harmony continue.
>
> But there is a harmony of which Heine speaks:
>
> Selten habt ihr mich verstanden,
> Selten auch Verstand ich euch.
> Nur wenn wir im Kot uns fanden,
> So verstanden wir uns gleich.
>
> I wish no such harmony for you with anyone.[35]

The father resorts to the thin abstraction of a German poet for that which his own tongue resists. There was likely no physical beating involved, but the passage from Insatiability may reflect an oedipal fear associated with such a confession. Judging from the father's letter of 29 November of the same year, distance did develop between the two friends, likely due to the

[35] Jeżeli Wasza harmonia i pliskość polega na zgodności wyższych potrzeb duszy, na wspólności dążeń umysłowych, na podobnym tonie uczuć--zawsze wyższej skali, tym lepiej i niech ta harmonia trwa.

Ale jest harmonia, o której mówi Heine:

> Selten habt ihr mich verstanden,
> Selten auch Verstand ich euch.
> Nur wenn wir im Kot uns fanden,
> So verstanden wir uns gleich.

Tej harmonii nie życzę Tobie z nikim.
Stanisław Witkiewicz, 17 July 1905, pp. 280-82.

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competition over a certain Zofia Dembowska,[36] as between Genezyp and Toldzio (Stanisław Witkiewicz, 29 November 1905, 321).

The deep cause of Witkacy's ultimate break with Malinowski in 1914, personal factors notwithstanding, may have been an incompatibility at a more ideological level. Where Witkacy's attempt to resolve the problem of his marginality entailed identification with the primitive, Malinowski, by and large, sought to resolve that problem by identifying himself with the primitivizers, and in fact serving as a primary architect of what might be called "scientific colonialism." Where Malinowski took the European as the measure of man, Witkacy took the primitive. Where Malinowski envisioned progress, Witkacy saw decay.

Robert Harbison, in his study of Primitivism, Deliberate Regression, writes favorably of Malinowski as embodying the ideals of anthropology: "to find the self in the other, and see one's own frailty and betrayals more unconfusedly in the distorting mirror of totemism, taboo, and savage kinship" (Harbison 183-84). But when Malinowski in his research finds "the self in the other," the tendency is to project his own desires through the ritual of anthropology. We always read, "they are more sophisticated than we thought, because they have and are developing something that we have," and never "we are less sophisticated than we thought, because we have lost something which they retained." "One's own frailty and betrayals" seem identifiable by virtue of their commonality with features of primitive

[36] See Edward C. Martinek, Introduction to Witkiewicz, Listy do Bronisława Malinowskiego, 5-43.

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cultures. It never seems to turn out that something which was regarded as a "frailty" is demonstrated to be actually a strength, by virtue of its presence among the savages.

This attitude is wholly contrary to Witkacy's outlook. Malinowski left Poland at a relatively young age to participate in a West European program of progress, which was used--most likely unintentionally as far as Malinowski was concerned--to justify untold atrocities against the colonized world, while Witkacy's view from between Europe and the colonies was thoroughly catastrophic and decadentist. At the end of Insatiability, Genezyp, a double of the author himself, has been completely corrupted by forces from East and West--"already a living corpse in uniform," or "deindividualized in the better sense of the word" (Witkiewicz, Insatiability, 390, 405; Nienasycenie, 461, 479). Witkacy certainly had Malinowski in mind when the character of the Master in his play Janulka, Daughter of Fizdejko states "I am conquering new lands of mysteries and colonizing them with my thoughts."[37]

The relationship between Malinowski and Witkiewicz becomes an autobiographical trope in both writers' works. We expect such transformations of autobiography into fiction in Witkacy, but in Malinowski, this sort of revelation allows us to begin to understand how much of

[37] The Master speaks of visiting the Trobriand Islands and New Guinea in Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, 338. The line above is translated by Gerould in Witkiewicz Reader. The original text is "[Mistrz:] Zawojowuję nowe tereny tajemnic i kolonizuję je moimi myślami." Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "Janulka, córka Fizdejki," in Dzieła wybrane, v. 5, 367.

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Malinowski's "scientific observation" is heavily laden with judgements based almost entirely on self-reflection. In one sense, the story of the break in Australia is the story of two thirty-year-old men with fragile self-conceptions. In a broader sense, perhaps that relationship is symptomatic of the embattled cultural status of Poland between the wars: a chaos of avant-garde movements more modern than modern; Piłsudski's resurgent nationalism bordering on fascism; a flurry of activity in analytic philosophy and mathematics contributing to a mood of internationalism among intellectuals in scientific circles. Malinowski's field technique of assimilation among the "savages" afforded the possibility of assimilation in the Anglo-American shelter of academia. Witkacy's ardent refusal to assimilate in any environment, when in 1939 there seemed to be no other options, proved suicidal.

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2.2. Witkacy as a Painter with Pictures and Words

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz is often viewed as an "anti-utopian." His drama, prose, and painting portray a catastrophic vision of decadence. That does not leave him, however, without a utopian horizon. The very notion of corruption entails an ideal of a utopian prelapsarian age. We should already be familiar with Witkacy's ideal of "Pure Form." I will demonstrate, through a close reading of his painting, Tworzenie Świata (The Creation of the World), how Pure Form occupies the space of the Primitive in Witkacy.

Pure Form is "naked" like the savage, and unadorned by any Irzykowskian płaszczyk ("little overcoat") which would mask human nature. In his paintings and writings Witkiewicz developed a sophisticated dialogue with two figures who contributed substantially to the modernist conception of the primitive: Paul Gauguin and Bronisław Malinowski.

Witkiewicz's first and most substantial confrontation of Gauguin's work likely came in the years following 1906, when he studied at the Cracow Academy of Fine arts under Władysław Ślewiński, a devotee of the French painter and member of the Pont-Aven school (Jakimowicz 17-19). Witkacy in fact saw a large Gauguin exhibit in Vienna in 1907. While maintaining ties to the home country, Ślewiński spent much of his professional career in Paris and Brittany, often frequenting the café "Chez Madame Charlotte," where he met Strindberg and Miriam along with Gauguin and others, and to which he introduced Wyspiański. Ślewiński's compositions often took

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Gauguin's still lifes and figure studies as clear models.[38] The most important influence on Witkacy, however, came from Ślewiński's, and hence Gauguin's, simplification of forms, use of saturated colors, and particularly Gauguin's compression of space into animation-celllike layers--a series of fundamentally primitivizing gestures. Simple people inhabit simple forms, solid colors, and shallow space, giving the work and the subject a naïve quality.

It is important to note that Paul Gauguin himself may not have sought to degrade his subjects, but that his art functioned to do so in the environment in which they were popular--an environment of fascination with exotica brought from distant colonial outposts. Though Gauguin's primitivism began in his Breton period, he is most remembered for the Tahitian works.[39] I will argue that this effect could not be observed in Witkacy's work.

[38] Compare, for instance, Ślewiński's Studium kobiety--czesząca się. (Study of a Woman--Combing her Hair, 1897) in Olszewski, pl. 8, with Gauguin's Tahitien, (n.d.) in Hoog, pl. 131. Some of Ślewiński's more Gauguinesque still lifes in their simplicity, use of light and color are the Martwa natura z zieloną filiżanką (Still Life with Green Cup, ca. 1899) and Martwa natura z butelką (Still Life with Bottle, 1900) reproduced in Jaworska,, cat. nos. 75 and 83, respectively. Ślewiński's oeuvre even includes a painting of Dwie Bretonki z koszem jabłek (Two Breton Women with a Basket of Apples, ca. 1897), cat. no. 36.

[39] For a brief elaboration see Kirk Varnedoe, "Gauguin" in Rubin, "Primitivism" 185. Varnedoe (187 ff.) goes on to argue against this critique, claiming that Gauguin's inquiry into the primitive was a search for his own self.

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Witkacy's largest canvas (115 x 170 cm) is named after the most primitive of events, Tworzenie świata or "The Creation of the World" (1921-22), and currently hangs in the Łódź Museum of Art.[40] That it is his largest work suggests that he painted it with serious intentions, on par if not greater than Insatiability, which, as a novel, was incapable of attaining Pure Form.

The theme of the Creation engaged the Paris art scene at precisely the time that Witkacy was working on his painting, in preparation for the Ballets Suédois' 1923 production of "The Creation of the World."[41] The team of Fernand Léger, Blaise Cendrars, Jean Börlin and Darius Milhaud collaborated to produce a cubist projection of African art and myth and Afro-American jazz, which would capture Paris audiences as presenting the "authentic" spirit of savagery. As Laura Rosenstock suggests, however, the effort proved to be only another colonization of African culture as a vehicle for modernist ideas. Léger's design became a model for decorative objects, and Milhaud apparently lost interest in jazz by his next trip to the United States (Rosenstock, "Léger: 'The Creation of the World'" in Rubin, "Primitivism" 2:475-84).

The moment captured in Witkacy's Creation is more precisely that of Genesis 2:18-22--the creation of Woman. While serpents are a common motif in Witkacy, the serpent is absent here, suggesting that corruption has

[40] For a reproduction see Piotrowski, pl. 43, 50. One also exists in Présences Polonaises.

[41] Gauguin addresses the creation myth, particularly at the moment of the temptation of Eve, in his Éve exotique (1890), reproduced in Cachin, pl. 150.

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not yet arrived, though, according to Genesis, God created "every thing that creepeth upon the earth" before creating man. There seem to be some emergent creepers beneath the Satan figure--potentially, but not definitively snakes. Likewise, the tree of knowledge is not prominent, though the Creator seems to be keeping some bright red, orange and yellow tropical foliage behind his robes. We are clearly before the Fall.

The Creator here is the ancient and powerful God--God the Father. We can trace the icon to several sources--most immediately to Stanisław Wyspiański's windows in the Franciscan Church in Cracow, entitled Stań się--Bóg Ojciec (Arise--God the Father, 1896-1902, Olszewski, pl. 20), which repeates the gesture of the raised left hand and active right hand.[42] Through Wyspiański we can find the God of William Blake's creation, as in God Judging Adam (Butlin #15, pl. 13) in which God extends His hand over Adam's head, as in Witkacy's Creation, or in Blake's The Ancient of Days or the Act of Creation (1754, in Keynes 59) which shows the arm extended as God creates the world with His compass. In Blake's God Judging Adam, in the Wyspiański windows, and in Witkacy's God, the hair and beard of the elongated face are given shape in the form of thick alternating black and white lines, which in Witkacy suggests the primitive style of the Tatra sculptors, seen today in the thousand year tradition of gingerbread molds and "świątki" (see Gąssowski 159), which one can buy in souvenir shops in

[42] Wojciech Sztaba notes the borrowing "without doubt" in his Gra ze sztuką (91).

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Southern Poland [43], and was particularly important to the cubist-influenced woodcut graphics style of Witkacy's time.[44] While the simple art of gingerbread might seem the most distant thing from demonism and catastrophe (ruined gingerbread, after all, is no catastrophe, as it can always be reincarnated as kutia,[45] a traditional Christmas pudding), Witkacy took an interest in it in a cycle of drawings called The History of Gingerbreadmaking, a likely extension of one of his improvised characters, a country gingerbread judge (Sztaba 123). Witkacy's God resides in the ancient Tatras, like a powerful sorcerer from Miciński's novel, Nietota--The Secret Book of the Tatras. By means of primitivist gesture, Witkacy domesticates the Creator, rendering him autocthonous.

The created object of the painting is Eve. She is the compositional center of the work. If the eye begins with God at the upper left hand corner and follows the line counterclockwise through Satan, the creepers, cats, peacocks, frog, through her right leg it will find her at the center of a vortex. Her left leg and right arm form a diagonal, accentuating the sense of instability and change, in a manner typical of the Futurists.

[43] See Gingerbread from Raciborz or sculpture by Jan Wawro from Gorzeń Dolny, Cracow Province, "Christ in Meditation" in Czarnecka (212 and after 224).

[44] See, for instance, Tadeusz Kulisiewicz, Biedacy (Poor People, from the Szlembark cycle, 1930 in Olszewski, pl. 102).

[45] References to "kucija" may be found in Old Church Slavonic. See Codex Suprasliensis, 119.15-124.5, toward the end of the first paragraph.

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Her three limbs correspond to the three ogling old men or monsters in the upper right hand corner. What old men would be doing at the creation, one of them carrying what seems to be a bottle, is problematic. It is certainly too early for the Three Wise Men, and a certain amount of irony is always present in Witkacy. The monsters seem a strangely modern Witkacean substitute for the serpent, lurking and waiting to cause trouble like the "guest from the underground" (gość z dna) or the encroaching Murti-Bingists of Insatiability. They are, in fact, yellow and situated on the "east" side of the picture. They threaten like the three monsters in Goya's St. Francis Borgia and the Dying Impenitent (1788, Perez Sanchez, 57). It is likely that Witkacy's understanding of Goya is further tinged with associations of Miciński, who developed a fascination for Goya in his youth on a visit to Spain. Witkiewicz called Goya "the true creator" of "demonism," and included figures such as Rops, Beardsley, Munch and Bruno Schulz on his list of demonists. As Witkacy describes it:

> The point here is not the paraphernalia of demonism (witches, devils, etc.) but that evil which is the matrix of the human soul--egoism which makes allowance only for kin; rapacity; avarice; sexual lusts; sadism; cruelty; craving for power; oppression of all around--upon which only by dint of proper training grow other, nobler qualities, which incidentally, may be observed in seminal form even among animals. (Witkiewicz, "Interview with Bruno Schulz," in Schulz, Letters and Drawings 107-8)

Demonism, then, is the psychological wing of the investigation of Pure Form, or in the present context, the exploration of the primitive of the psyche. Witkacy's vision, then, is a variety of psychological naturalism or belief in human nature. In the narrative of the creation, then, by eliminating

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the serpent and the apple, and presaging the fall through the image of the "creep from the underground," Witkacy is placing the blame on a demonic human nature, rather than on a clever demon from the outside. Man and woman are an accident waiting to happen, caught in a vortex, teetering on a diagonal.

The image of Eve fits that of Witkacy's favorite nexus for demonism--the "Demonic Woman." The position of the woman at the center of a spiral with three limbs pointing to the right of the frame probably has its source in Felicien Rops' La toilette à Cythère (1878-80, Delvoy 139). Satan's disembodied head may also signal a connection to John the Baptist in "The Climax" from Beardsley's Salome, in which John's snakelike hair suspiciously suggests the tentacles issuing from Satan's neck (Beardsley, 1894, The Collected Drawings 65). These women are the imperious dominants of the sort we would expect from the prose of Witkiewicz's fellow Galicjan, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch.

Unlike Cythère, it is curious that Eve is facing away from the viewer. We only need see her "albatrosslike breasts," however, such as those possessed by Eliza in Insatiability, to know that she is demonic (Witkiewicz, Insatiability 338; Nienasycenie 399). More important is the reaction of Adam, which corresponds exactly to Genezyp's upon his first encounter with woman:

> The sight of this ferocious cunt (who had been waiting for this and only this) made a singularly striking impression on him: it was as though he suddenly possessed a tail that was curling itself clear up to his stomach out of a curious mixture of fear, lust, courage, and nausea. (Witkiewicz, Insatiability 86; Nienasycenie 106)

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Later in the novel, when Genezyp meets Eliza in the hospital, he is described as "ready to vomit," his head an "enormous, aching thing. . . his face a deep shade of purple and bathed with sweat" (Witkiewicz, Insatiability 338; Nienasycenie 399). This image of the face confronted with demonism, Adam's expression in reaction to God's creation, is a key to understanding what Witkacy intends as the viewer's reaction to his creation. Namely this is the expression of the "metaphysical sensation of the Strangeness of Existence" which Witkacy describes in his theory of Pure Form, discussed above.

The image itself likely has roots in the painting of another of Witkacy's demonists, Arnold Böcklin, whose work Witkacy saw in 1904 (Iribarne xii). The expression belongs to the dead male figure, confronted with the red-haired mermaid in Böcklin's Meerstille (Arnold Böcklin, 1887, in Andree 166). The mermaid, like Eve, is at the center of a spiral composition, and the dead figure, like Adam, is floating (in water, rather than air). This expression is something which Witkacy repeatedly attempted to reproduce on film and in the spontaneous dramatic improvisations for which he was famous.[46] It is also found in the figure about to be executed in Goya's Tres de Mayo, which may have attracted Witkacy not only for its

[46] See Witkiewicz, "Mina" ("Face"), ca. 1910; Władysław Jan Grabski, "Improvised scene--photo session: S. I. Witkiewicz and Janina Turowska-Leszczyńska, 1932; Jan Kochanowski, "S. I. Witkiewicz and Roman Jasiński," 1932; and Józef Głogowski, "S. I. Witkiewicz parodying W. Majakowski from the film Chuligan i panna (1918)," 1931 in (Franczak and Okołowicz pl. 86, 194, 200, and 287).

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"demonism," but also for the significance of that date in Polish history, as well as Spanish (1814, Perez Sanchez 120). He describes this further in a Gombrowiczean moment in Insatiability, when the Princess says to Genezyp, "'Go get dressed now. It's late and I'm tired.' She knew what she was doing: he looked as if someone had just lashed him across the face--that innocent little 'babyface'--with a birch rod" (Witkiewicz, Insatiability 108; Nienasycenie 132.) This in turn was the expression which the viewer was to have upon witnessing Pure Form.

Witkiewicz senior described Böcklin's work as painting which "grabs you by the throat" (Stanisław Witkiewicz, letter of 28 March 1904, 170), encouraging his son to follow this model, and it seems that Witkacy took up the project of seeking throat grabbing effects. The father noticed the son's affinity for the elements of Böcklin's work, which most resembled Witkacy's painting in 1904 (Stanisław Witkiewicz, 19 March 1904, 167). Among his copious pieces of fatherly advice, Witkiewicz wrote:

> I would like both in your art and in life for you to be like Böcklin--the most excellent connection of a lively and wonderfully ebullient imagination with perfect, full consciousness and multifold intelligence. (S. Witkiewicz, 2 April 1906, Listy do syna 336)[47]

Jan Witkiewicz, who toured the galleries of Munich with Witkacy, observed that in fact, the young painter was fascinated by little other than Böcklin, and

[47] Chciałbym, żebyś i w sztuce swojej, i w życiu mógł być jak Böcklin--najwspanialsze połączenie żywej i cudownie pobudliwej wyobraźni z doskonałą, pełną świadomości i wszechstronności inteligencją.

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that after he visited the actual Italian seascapes which Böcklin had painted, Witkacy turned further away from realism and more toward the fantastic.[48]

Some of the less central motifs in The Creation of the World come distinctly from Gauguin's repertoire, conveying a primitive atmosphere. The bird(s?) in the bottom of the frame appear to be a chimeric adaptation of Gauguin's peacocks in Matamoe, which Witkacy would likely have seen during his days in the Russian and Soviet militaries (Paul Gauguin in Soviet Museums, pl. 18, 83). The peacock suggests not only the primitive, in Gauguin, but also the "demonic" of Aubrey Beardsley's "The Peacock Skirt" from Salome (1894 in The Collected Drawings. . . 56). The feeding cats in the left of the frame also might hint at Gauguin's Les trois petits chiens (1888 in Hoog, pl. 89, 133).

Witkiewicz's use of color evokes the primitive through two intertwined routes. One, mentioned above, is its relation to Gauguin's use of solid, saturated colors in primitivizing the Tahitians. The second reflects Witkiewicz's own perception of the colors of the tropics which he described on his 1914 journey to Australia with Bronisław Malinowski. Though he frequently parodies such descriptions later in Insatiability, the articles he wrote for a Zakopane newspaper after his return are as lyrical as Witkacy ever gets:

> The Red Sea in the time of the June heat, when the sun reaches the Tropic of Cancer, becomes an indescribable hell.

[48] Jan Witkiewicz, Życiorys Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza in Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. Człowiek i twórca. Księga pamiątkowa, (Warsaw, 1957), 345 quoted in (Stanisław Witkiewicz, Listy do syna 159).

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> Passing yellow and orange sands, split in two by bays iridescent with all shades of green and blue, from the hues of golden celadon and turquoise all the way to the granites and dark violets, we plunged into a watery desert, from both sides of which two deserts of stone and sand yawned, like two enormous ovens, with the monstrous dry dusk. (My translation. S. I. Witkiewicz, "Z podróży do tropików" 485)[49]

Witkacy's choice of words reflects a painters eye for color, as if he were constantly asking, "now which tube would I use for that one?" His perception of these tropical colors was likely tempered by his prior exposure to Gauguin,[50] and perhaps even practice, under Ślewiński, in reproducing Gauguin's colors.

By covering entire shapes with relatively solid blocks of saturated color,[51] Witkacy uses color as a compositional element. All of Witkacy's figures are two-dimensional. Foreground and background are distinguished by shading and overlap, as in an animation cell. Though two-dimensionality and the compression of planes was a typical cubist gesture, the use of saturated color to achieve the effect might be best traced, again, to Gauguin.

[49] Morze Czerwone w czasie czerwcowych upałów, kiedy słońce dochodzi do zwrotnika Raka, staje się piekłem nie do opisania.
Minąwszy zółte i pomarańczowe piaski, poprzerzynane zatokami mieniącymi się wszystkimi odcieniami zieleni i błękitu, od tonów jasnoseledynowych i turkusowych a i do granatów i ciennych fioletów, zagłębiliśmy się w pustynię wodną, z obu stron której dwie pustynie skał i piasków zioną, jak dwa olbrzymie piece, potwornym suchym zorem.

[50] According to Louis Iribarne, p. xii, Witkacy viewed a Gauguin exhibit in Vienna in 1907. Also see (Sztaba 28).

[51] I refrain from using Witkacy's precision here in describing colors, as the hue and intensity of colors found in reproductions can vary greatly from each other, as well as the original.

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The particular Gauguin paintings in which this use of color to compress space stands out happen to be those which are concerned with the question of origins, or, which bear out other connections with Witkacy's Creation. In Matamoe flattened peacocks, discussed above, a flattened man and flattened trees are placed in a mountainous landscape where depth is created through perspective. Ève exotique is made to stand out from the terrain around her by painting her in a bright, reddish-yellow fleshtone and surrounding her in a halo of unhighlighted green by in contrast to the yellow-highlighted green of the grass in the rest of the frame. The work which creates the most striking sense of the world-in-flux envisioned in Witkacy's painting, through this use of space and color, is D'ou' venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous? (1897, Cachin, pl. 245, 226-27). Figures, trees, water, sky, and mountains lie in overlapping planes and face in different directions on a large canvas to generate a feeling of motion much like that of the Witkacy painting. They share a common sense of spatial design.

Wojciech Sztaba aptly describes this technique in Witkacy's early seascapes, painted while the artist was visiting Ślewiński in Brittany. Even in these early studies, forms in nature are reduced to "silhouettes," presaging Witkacy's "fantastical compositions," rather than imitating Ślewiński's more realistic treatment of foreground and background (Sztaba 55-56). By 1921, however, the silhouettes needed not be dark, but are filled with bright saturated color.

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The spiraling element of the composition, the use of swirling clouds and seething landscape which form a base for the figures but which itself is composed of interleaved planar features, evokes Böcklin's "demonic" seascapes. The most notable examples, Im Spiel der Wellen ("In the Play of the Waves" 1883), which Witkacy's father discussed specifically with him (Stanisław Witkiewicz, 28 March 1904, 170), and Das Spiel der Najaden ("The Play of the Naiads," 1886 in Andree 164, 165), show the cavorting of half-human, half-fish creatures, as in some of Witkacy's later portraits, with waves forming crests like the land in the Creation and clouds threatening. Triton und Nereide (1873-4, Andree 157) is also set as a cyclonic seascape, and recalls Genezyp's hallucination in Insatiability of the island of Balampang far out in the sea with the snake, here in the clutch of a "demonic woman." Genezyp's vision joins cyclonic composition with the compression of space:

> Here, distance was not distance but rather the sensation of a spiraling point into which his head had been transformed in an attempt to reach the ceiling of the world located beyond infinity. These were the words he later used in trying to describe his impressions to Eliza. But they failed to convey even a fraction of the elusive wonder inspired by the scrambling of all possible planes to the point that the feeling of space all but disappeared in the normal sense. (Witkiewicz, Insatiability, 354; Nienasycenie 419. Emphasis in translation, but not in the PIW, 1985 edition of the original.)

This use of space, then, was a conscious, rational feature of Witkacy's painting which informed other spheres of his creation.

Not so for Gauguin. He saw himself as painting the natives in their actual simplicity (Gauguin 82). Witkacy was interested in the space itself, and not the representation of any particular "shallow" people, as it was in

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that space that one was to experience the "metaphysical sensation of the strangeness of existence," or the immediate apperception of the "elusive wonder" of "unity in plurality," which could only be apprehended through the compression of the infinite space occupied by that "plurality."

Motifs and formal simplifications, typical of both Witkacy and West European Primitivism, serve different functions in the different semiotic fields, reflecting marginal and dominant culture, respectively. Gauguin's imagery is immediately identified as the exotic. The shallow space was a method of estranging the painting's subject matter from "real," i.e. European, space. Witkacy's paintings, while indeed appearing strange and fantastical, did not serve to estrange, but to domesticate the strange and demonic, through their appropriation of a recognizeable Góral folk form. Ève exotique works by alienating the creation myth to a distant and recognizeable Polynesian island. The work of Léger et Cie. exploits European images of Africa to exoticize Cubism. Witkacy's Creation of the World brings The Creation, and creation, home to the Tatras.

Witkacy's "primitive" imagery could not be located in any particular colonial outpost, nor foisted upon any non-European culture. No one could look at his painting and say, "Doesn't that just capture the simple life of the Polynesians" (or substitute any relevant "Other"). Witkacy separates "The Primitive" from any particular "primitives." He did not need to make such a separation, and certainly could have painted aborigines from his journey to Australia or Polish countryfolk in traditional costume, but Witkacy was in an epistemically privileged position to see beyond the colonialist ideology of West European Primitivism. Though Polish audiences may have had some

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appetite for the exotic, Polish patrons and consumers of the arts did not have the economic and political stake in colonialism which the major West European countries had. As Poland had no colonies, the importation of exotica was not an industry in Poland, and could not have been as culturally relevant to artists as it was in France, Spain or England. Witkacy, having been thrice marginalized--socially as an avant-garde artist, geographically within Poland as a resident of Galicja, and within Europe as a Pole--had more reason to sympathize with the primitivized than with the primitivizers, and to seek the "Pure Form" of the primitive in the relatively uncorrupted, autocthonous (at least on a then prevalent Central European myth)[52] culture of the margins of Europe.

[52] For a fascinating account of the role of Central European folklore in the modernist period see Richard Noll, The Jung Cult. An extensive web of connections could be drawn between Miciński's interests in folklore, proto-Nazi Aryanism, and folkloric revivalism in Switzerland, but that would be another chapter.

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3. Witold Gombrowicz: The Pre-Formal

ten tylko się dowie
Kto cię stracił.
Adam Mickiewicz, Pan Tadeusz[53]

I draw your attention, dear critics, to all the places in my art where the Inferior, the Younger, creates the superior in its own way, because there you have the most intense poetry I can create.

(Gombrowicz, Diary 2:5)

Witold Gombrowicz kept only the essential items needed for writing at his uncluttered simple wooden desk, writes Rita Gombrowicz in her account of her husband's life in Europe. He used no dictionary or reference books. He kept no notebooks. She recalls that he did his writing "like a schoolboy doing his homework," with only two green Parker ballpoints, an ordinary notepad, his pipe and pipe tools, and a pair of binoculars (Gombrowicz en Europe 318). I asked Mme. Gombrowicz why he needed binoculars for writing, and she explained, after the obligatory jest about voyeurism alluding

[53] From the opening lines of the Polish national epic. The narrator, addressing his Lithuanian homeland, declares "this is known only, to him who has lost you."

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to Gombrowicz's novel Pornografia, that he acquired them in West Berlin during the first year of his return to Europe to see how people were living on the other side of the Wall. This perspective of the detached observer looking at the world at a distance seems precisely to describe the point-of-view of Gombrowicz's characteristic narrative persona.

Now that studies of the literature of immigration and migration are developing as a distinct field,[54] we might want to be careful about calling Gombrowicz an "exile" in Argentina and Western Europe, though that is the term we often apply to East European writers outside their home countries during Communist rule. Gombrowicz arrived in Buenos Aires in 1939 as a refugee, the Second World War having broken out during the maiden voyage of the Polish cruise liner Chrobry. He might have returned to England, as did most of his fellow passengers, or even to Poland, but he chose to seek refuge in Argentina for reasons about which we can only speculate. Gombrowicz's works were not published in Poland from the end of the war until 1957, during which time we might accurately think of Gombrowicz as a writer in exile. With the publication of the Diary and Trans-Atlantyk, however, he begins to develop a distinct persona as an outsider--writing in

[54] I've developed the categories of displacement from home here from discussion generated by Bharati Mukherjee's paper, "An Indian Writer's Cosmopolitan Worlds," at the 1998 conference of the English Institute, "Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Work on the Literatures and Cultures of Cosmopolitanism," at Harvard University. It is interesting to note that during the entire conference, one of the only passim attempts at considering Eastern Europe in the context of issues of cosmopolitanism was a reference by Mukherjee to Gombrowicz as a kindred spirit of sorts, at home everywhere and nowhere.

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Polish for a Polish and Polish emigré audience, engaging Polish issues, but from the privileged position of a self-consciously adopted critical distance. In his late Argentinian and West European phase, we might think of Gombrowicz more as an expatriate, standing on the balcony, looking "homeward" through his binoculars, and feeling most at "home" in this posture.

What is Gombrowiczean space? As the proposed method of this discussion, as I read it at least, is to consider how the idea of home creates and is created by the consciousness of the artist, we might begin by considering the author's own living space as he has constructed it, as it has been represented in images, and as he describes it in his work, most particularly the Diary. Gombrowicz maintained a surprisingly regularized working environment given his nomadic existence following his arrival in Buenos Aires. He preferred for his uncluttered desk to be in a room lit by a large window, almost always with a balcony. Whenever he moves to a new apartment, the window is perhaps the most defining characteristic of the space. When the autobiographical character "Witold Gombrowicz" in Trans-Atlantyk becomes known as an exotic foreign writer in Buenos Aires, he narrates:

> Astounded by the abundance of my homages, the proprietress of my Pension would not hear of my staying any longer in that tiny cell of mine and to the best chamber transferred me: so, in these difficult, dangerous times of mine, instead of in a little chamber, in a large Salon with two windows I did find myself. (27)[55]

[55] Hołdów obfitością zadziwiona właścicielka Pensjonatu mego słyszeć nawet nie chciała, abym dalej w małej mojej ciupce mieszkał i do najlepszego pokoju mnie przeniosła: a tak w tym czasie trudnym,

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On the top half of the first page of illustrations, you can see his final residence in Argentina. It is not the one described here, but it provides a sense of the trajectory. When he arrives at his first apartment in Berlin, he describes it in the Diary as

> large with an enormous window, stairs from this room to the top, where there is another room, balcony, bed, wardrobe, unpacking, table.
>
> I went out on the balcony: rectangular blocks of fifteen-story buildings in lush greenery, a city-garden. I wallowed in these spaces after my Parisian hotel cubicle. (Diary 3:107)[56]

Note that the window is the first item observed, and the first destination upon arrival is the balcony.

This room suggests a narrative stance. It gives "form" to consciousness, and Gombrowicz always describes "form" as the object of his search: "you look into a crystal ball, into a glass of water, and even out of that comes something out of nothing, a form....," a form that Gombrowicz describes in the immediate context as "architectonic" (Diary 3:81-82).[57] At the same time, however, he notes that the "subject" of the Diary is the self.

---

niebezpiecznym moim ja, zamiast w małym pokoiku być, w dużym salonie z dwoma oknami się znalazłem. (Dzieła 3:32)

[56] pokój duży z oknem ogromnym, schody z tego pokoju na górę gdzie drugi pokój, balkon, łóżko, szafa, rozpakowywanie, stół.

Wyszedłem na balkon: klocki prostokątne domów piętnastopietrowych w zieleni, miasto-ogród. Pławiłem się w tych przestrzeniach po hotelowej klitce paryskiej. (Dzieła 9:139)

[57] wpatrujesz się w kulę szklaną, w szklankę wody, i nawet tam coś ci się z niczego wysnuje, kształt... (Dzieła 9:107).

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and resists falling into the trap of travel narration (Diary 1:91-92, 3:110; Dzieła 7:144-45, 9:143). As Gaston Bachelard notes, however, in The Poetics of Space, as soon as one has a conception of "inside" and "outside" or "this side" and "beyond," even the infinite acquires form (Bachelard 212). From a balcony, one can address an audience, a vast public perhaps. From the inside, the window is the focal point of the room. From the perspective of the audience, the writer seated at the desk or standing on the balcony is the focal point. This is the private space of an author who writes a personal but public diary that he publishes in the Paris emigré journal Kultura over a period of fourteen years. The window provides a vista on the world and an addressee, but it also gives the imagined public access to this private space.

Here is how Gombrowicz describes the vista from the fifteenth floor apartment in Berlin where he lived from 1 November 1963 until his departure on 17 May 1964 (see the three images in the lower half of the first page of illustrations):

> The view from my windows on the fifteenth floor: the white ponds of a broad, slumbering park, about a kilometer beyond it in the Kurfürstendamm, the Zoo, the very center of West Berlin with an American profile, pulsating, winking, blinding, neon lights appear and disappear, hosts of cars speed along the boulevards, an electrical streak floods the horizon.
>
> From the second large window: gloom and mystery, an enormous silence, beyond the wall spreads East Berlin, with long streets, sad street lamps. Chimneys, towers, blurring in the early dusk of winter, somewhere over there something is shining, I take my binoculars, a multistoried building, maybe on the hillside....
>
> This bauble, West Berlin, the last coquetry of luxurious Europe--Farther, dead silence as if it were no longer a city but

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an expanse, gigantic, as far as China. I look with concentration at the mute isolation of winter fields as if I were in the country...magic has hidden in this primordial space, of which we know that it is subject to universal and organizing Thought, dominated indivisibly by the Idea.

While West Berlin is a luminous blindness, organizing itself blindly with disorder, on the other side, where there is night, space, earth, winter, darkness, the Idea has settled, dogged, silent. Raw. This annoys. Strange, perhaps painful, that the Spirit is there, not here...its closeness fascinates...but astounds, depresses, that it is more similar to the rising mists, the descending darknesses, the passing clouds, the successive seasons of the year, than to something that would be more human...

This primordial quality...

--When one looks out a window, it looks gloomy. But, you know, in East Berlin people are much more likable....Friendly, kind...Disinterested. Not to be compared with the West Berliner, who is materialistic....

--Aha, you are a proponent of that system?

--No, on the contrary. The people are better because they live in poverty and are oppressed....It's always like that. The worse the system, the better the person....

(Translation slightly adjusted, ellipses in original, Diary 3:144-45)[58]

[58] Widok z okien moich na piętnastym piętrze.

Z jednego olbrzymiego okna: naprzód oszronione drzewa i białe stawy rozległego, uśpionego parku, tuż za nim w odległości kilometra Kurfürsendamm, Zoo, samo centrum Zachodniego Berlina o amerykańskim profilu, pulsujące, mrugające, oślepiające, jawią się i nikną neony, chmary samochodów gnają alejami, horyzont zalega elektryczna łuna.

Z drugiego olbrzymiego okna: mrok i tajemnica, olbrzymie milczenie, za murem rozsiadł się Wschodne Berlin długimi ulicami o smutnych latarniach. Kominy, wieże, zacierające się we wczesnym mroku zimy, gdzieś tam coś się świeci, biorę lornetkę, dom chyba wielopiętrowy, może na wzgórzu...

Ta błyskotka, Berlin Zachodni, ostatnia kokieteria luksusowej Europy [...]. Wpatruję się natężeniem, jak w samotność niemą pól zimowych, jakbym na wsi był...magia utaiła się w tej przestrzeni pierwotnej, o której wie się że jest poddana Myśli uniwersalnej i organizującej, opanowana niepodzielnie przez Ideę.

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According to Rita Gombrowicz's Gombrowicz en Europe, the binoculars were a gift he received in Berlin, but a gift that would become a necessity with the two pens and simple notepad on his desk. When he arrives in Berlin, a scent in the Tiergarten reminds him of his youth in Małoszyce, in Bodzechów (Diary 3:108; Dzieła 9:140). The two windows frame two worlds. Rita Gombrowicz notes that the shade you see over the window on the left in the Berlin apartment was installed at Gombrowicz's request. This is the window providing the view of East Berlin. Gombrowicz's works are being published again in Poland as he writes this and are quite popular, and he could conceivably return, but he never does. He prefers to remain at the binocular distance, in his writer's room, holding an imaginary conversation in his mind, with the readers of Kultura listening in, both looking across the

---

Gdy Berlin Zachodni jest świetlistą ślepotą, porządkującym się na chybił trafił bezładem, po tamtej stronie, gdzie noc, przestrzeń, ziemia, zima, ciemność, rozsiadła się Idea, zacięta, milcząca. Surowa. To drażni. Dziewne, może bolesne, że Duch jest tam, nie tutaj... fascynuje jego sąsiedztwo... ale zdumiewa, przygnębia, że on bardziej podobny do mgieł wstających, ciemności zapadających, chmur przepływających, pór roku następujących, niż do czegoś co by bardziej ludzkie było...

Ta pierwotność...

--Jak sie patrzy z okna, wygląda ponuro. Ale, wie pan, we Wschodnim Berlinie ludzie są o wiele bardziej sympatyczni... Życzliwi, przyjacielscy... Bezinteresowni. Ani porównać z zachodnim berlińczykiem, zmaterializowanym...

--Aha, pan jest zwolennikiem tamtego system?

--Nie, przeciwnie. Ludzie są lepsi, bo w biedzie i przyduszeni... To zawsze tak. Im gorszy system człowiek lepszy

(Bracketed ellipsis here from the Polish edition is the line in which West Berlin is compared to China, excised by the censor. Dzieła 9:184-85)

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Berlin wall from the fifteenth floor of a building in the West. Elsewhere Gombrowicz observes that places are "more concrete, perhaps, at a distance" (Emphasis in Polish version not in Vallee translation Diary 3:77).[59] As the delineation of inside and outside imposes form on the infinite, then, it conversely imposes form on the narrating self--Gombrowicz's object of study. The embattled contradictory "ja" that is Gombrowicz becomes a narrative voice.[60]

Gombrowicz suggests the binocular perspective in a chance encounter across a lecture hall in Berlin after giving a reading (at which Gombrowicz refused to read, because he was given translations of his own works in German, which were incomprehensible to him):

> Then I saw the likable and young Mrs. Kurpiers, but through a telescope in the incomprehensible distance, and she also looked at me through a telescope and cried through the telescope and said oh, please understand our pain and our suffering, we must constantly go and go and remove ourselves from ourselves and throw ourselves into space, which does not end, which is unearthly, which is beyond... (Diary 3:128)[61]

[59] one, może, na dystans są bardziej konkretne (Dzieła 9:101).

[60] On this subject see Bakhtin, "The Spatial Whole of the Hero and His World in Verbal Art: The Theory of Horizon and Environment" (Art and Answerability 92-99).

[61] Wtem sympatyczną i młodą panią Kurpiers ujrzałem, ale przez teleskop w niepojętej dali, a ona też patrzyła na mnie przez teleskop i płakała przez teleskop i mówiła och, proszę zrozumieć nasz ból i naszą mękę, my wciąż musimy iść i iść i oddalać się od siebie i porzucać siebie w przestrzeni, która się nie kończy, która nie jest ziemską która się jest poza... (Dzieła 9:166)

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After which, he returns to his fifteenth-floor apartment and falls asleep. Who she is and "beyond" where she throws herself are left in ambiguity. The context is a moment of dissociation after a discussion following the reading. Not having understood even his own works in German, he passionately attacks the only other Pole on the panel, the Warsaw futurist Henryk Berlewi, and their argument takes on its own absurdist drunken self-contained dynamic, like a scene from Ferdydurke, because at least they can understand each other. The academics are grinning smugly at their successful presentation of their honored guest as evinced by the lively discussion, probably largely uncomprehended by the audience. Gombrowicz is having a vision of himself floating in space, with figures in the lecture hall receding in the distance. Mrs. Kurpiers, perhaps someone in the room like a certain Senator or the professor both mentioned in this vision, becomes one of those figures he imagines as he gazes through his binoculars.

Gombrowicz is clearly working in the same vein as Irzykowski and Witkiewicz, borrowing key concepts and words from their existing polemics on form, but Gombrowicz shifts the metaphysical categories in a way that signals the complete turn to come in the work of Bruno Schulz. Rather than valorizing a particular kind of Form as "Pure," Gombrowicz maintains a sharper distinction between form and matter. "Matter" for Gombrowicz is amorphous and "immature," before the imposition of "form," and is identifiable by our tendency to suppress its appearance. "Matter" is, therefore, another vision of a pre-civilized state of nature.

Gombrowicz also claimed Dostoevsky as an important influence, and it would seem that that influence operates precisely in the realm of "form"

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and in the form of the psychological duel, which is fundamental to the narrative structure of the works of both authors. Shortly before making his public confession in Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov has an epiphany:

> 'Ah, it's the form that's wrong, the form is not aesthetically satisfactory! Well, I definitely don't understand why smashing people with bombs in a regular siege is formally more respectable! Regard for aesthetic considerations is the first sign of inability to act!... Never, never have I recognized this more clearly than now' (ellipsis in original, 439)

The difference between Raskolnikov and Gombrowicz's characters, however, is that in Gombrowicz no characters ever experience this recognition, which would allow them to break out of the "form" that traps them in incessant cycles of internal and external conflict.

Gombrowicz's foundational novel Ferdydurke establishes the formal problematic for all his future works. It might be described as a kind of anti-Bildungsroman, which shows how a well-formed adult could regress into childhood. Józef, the main character and narrator of Ferdydurke, returns to his school to visit his old teacher Mr. Pimko. Once he is enclosed in the walls of the institution, the fact that he is a mature adult becomes irrelevant. The place itself seems to force him into the position of the child, because Józio will always be the student in relation to the teacher, Pimko. What follows is a sequence of tales in which adult characters are "overcome with childishness," collapsing into a narrative morass or kupa--a kind of undifferentiated heap.

The dialectic of matter and form is cast as the struggle between geba and pupa. A geba is an ugly distortion of the face, a kind of "mug" that we might paste on to conceal our true nature. Pupa is a childish word for the

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buttocks, like "tushy," that an adult might be embarassed to use with other adults, but which stands in Gombrowicz as an icon for "immaturity." The word itself contains this embarassment, as an obvious diminutive of the more vulgar dupa. An adolescent boy might say dupa as a way of adopting the geba of adulthood. An adult in a position of authority might say pupa to an adolescent boy as a way of asserting the boy's inferiority.

While Gombrowicz's works might yield psychological insights, they do so indirectly as studies of form and logic in language and gesture. At one point in the drama Ivona, Princess of Burgundia, Ivona's suitor, Innocent, raises his finger to Philip, shouting "I protest!" to which Philip responds with a raised finger. The motif of the raised finger recurs throughout the play, and in a sense, it does not matter why the finger is raised at any given moment. The play is not really about the feelings of the characters which might cause them to instigate the challenge of a raised finger, but about the congealed forms of language and social life that dictate that a raised finger--or marriage proposal, or serving carp rather than pike--is an appropriate and necessary gesture at certain moments of time. The people do not make the gesture, but the appropriateness of the gesture determines their actions and feelings.

Why does Gombrowicz never return to Poland? To begin to understand this, one must be aware of the fact that he must always establish a definitive relationship to places. Should he love Paris or hate it? He decides to hate it, for all the "clothing" and "overcoats" that cover up its "nakedness"--a notion that has its roots in Karol Irzykowski's płaszczyk and Stanisław Przybyszewski's naga dusza--the idea that rigidified forms of social

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life conceal our true identities. Aboard a ship to Europe, he wants desperately "to love Argentina," but decides ultimately that he cannot, though he repeatedly thinks of himself as a "South American" as much as a Pole, having spent twenty-four years there (Diary 3:93; Dzieła 9:122).

And Poland? "Should I go to Poland?" Gombrowicz asks during his stay in Berlin:

> This question began to plague me on the ship. In Paris they tried to talk me into it, go ahead, what'll it hurt, you will see how many friends you have....And it was enough to get close to the window for the northern sky, dark and boiling with clouds, to bear down, confound it, for my prehistory to bear down on me from all sides, from colors, ways of walking, boarding the bus, the caps, the German smile which was right next door to a Polish smile. To go? Or not to go? I would not be journeying to Poland but to myself as I was...and this I feared a bit. It meant nothing that everything there had been turned inside out and was unrecognizable--I would have found myself.[...] A great opportunity, oh, pencil pushers, to shout in chorus:--Such is the fate of an emigrant and egoist! Nonsense. The fate of any person, at a certain age, whose life has split into two parts. (Diary 111)[62]

[62] Czy jechać do Polski? Pytanie, które mnie prześladowało już na statku. W Paryżu namawiano, pojedź, co ci szkodzi, zobaczysz ilu masz przyjaciół... I wystarczało zbliżyć się do okna, by niebo północne, ciemne i wrące od chmur, zaczęło napierać, do licha, już prehistoria moja napierała zewsząd, z kolorów, ze sposobu chodzenia, wsiadania do omnibusu, z czapek, z uśmiechu niemieckiego, który sąsiadował o międze z uśmiechem polskim. Jechać? Nie jechać? Nie do Polski by jechał, ale do siebie samego, jakim byłem... i tego nieco się lękałem. To nic, że wszystko tam było poprzewracane do góry nogami i nie do poznania--ja bym odnalazł siebie.[...] Doskonała okazja, o, pismaki, by zakrzyknąć chórem: --Taki to los emigranta i sobka! Bzdura. To los każdego człowieka w pewnym wieku, któremu życie rozpadło się na dwie części. (Dzieła 9:144)

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The window is close enough. The window of the Berlin apartment provides access to Poland at a safe binocular distance, but also maintains separation from its reality. The window becomes the frame of Gombrowicz's imagined Poland, his object of love and of often harsh criticism in the Diary, and at this point an encounter with the Real might damage the elaborate imaginative construct that he has spent twenty-four years creating. He fears he might be drawn into his former habits, his former consciousness, and thereby lose his privileged outsider's perspective. The Real is thus less concrete from the perspective of the author than the imaginary, less immediate, less controllable.[63]

One notable exception to this writing environment was the space in which he wrote his most challenging and adventurous work, Trans-Atlantyk, at least partially during his employment at the Banco Polacco when his supervisor was out of the room. Mme. Gombrowicz informed me that in her research for Gombrowicz en Argentine she did manage to find one of Gombrowicz's co-workers from the bank, an elderly woman who only recalled Gombrowicz as an odious character who never did any work and smoked constantly at his desk with no regard for anyone else. Trans-Atlantyk is also the work that breaks most with the voice cultivated in his other novels and in the Diary, stylized in the Sarmatian prose style of the gawęda, the most famous example of which is the Baroque memoir of Jan

[63] For comparison see the first chapter of Delany, The Motion of Light in Water, where he introduces his own memoir with a discussion of the problem of the Reality of the imaginary for the autobiographer, often in spite of the the reality of what is historically observable.

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Chrysostom z Gosławic Pasek, whom Gombrowicz lists with Mickiewicz as one of the two Polish writers who most influenced him ("Ostatni wywiad," Dzieła 10:178). In it, he imagines himself a seventeenth-century traveller, in the Buenos Aires he found upon first arriving. Trans-Atlantyk is to travel narrative, however, what Don Quixote is to medieval romance, raised to a higher order of absurdity by virtue of the distance between the writer's parody and its literary object. Of course, there is a much less distant socio-cultural object of that parody--the Polish quasi-Romantic nationalism of then contemporary Poland and its emigrés community. It is difficult to lay out here all the details, but we might suggest that lacking a Real room with a view, the stylization of Baroque memoir becomes a room, a distant point, that brings the characteristic estrangement of the Gombrowiczean narrator and Gombrowicz's own individual persona into relief. The seventeenth-century memoirist is nothing if not an observer, reporting the remarkable and strange findings encountered in his adventures away from home and his brushes with power.

Looking for form and looking for the self, Gombrowicz positions himself inside a space, pushes the interactions in that space to absurdity by means of an arbitrary confrontation, and spirals inward to unmask the self (see Bachelard 214). Bachelard describes the relation of inside and outside as dialectic, but in Gombrowicz, we might take it as dialogic. In the description of his fifteenth-story room above, Gombrowicz in fact moves from a first-person objective description to a dialogue between two internal

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voices. Meanwhile he is writing this dialogue for imagined observers with binoculars of their own, who will attack him for his views. He is anticipating the kupa that the arbitrary conflict between writer and reader will precipitate, as all such conflicts end in the Ferdydurkean world of Gombrowicz's imagination.

Poland, we could argue, remained Gombrowicz's home during his time in Argentina, Berlin, Paris, and finally Vence (see illustrations in R. Gombrowicz and Głaz), as he continued to write in Polish, about Polish characters and their complexes of Polish identity. The home that that identity depends on, however, might be described as pornographic: composed entirely of memory and the fantasies inspired by a detached representation that can only be imagined but never touched. Above all, the form of this imaginary Poland is what persists in Gombrowicz's prose: an enclosed room with a large window and an ornate balcony from which to observe the wide world of Western Europe. Ultimately, one might even see Gombrowicz's Argentina as such a room. For a refugee turned exile then expatriate like Gombrowicz, that image was comprised not only of his own memory, but by the web of representations in the minds of the emigré community, in their newspapers, journals, cultural events, institutions, and in his quarrels and interactions with them. As such, Witold Gombrowicz could only know Poland as home, as Mickiewicz wrote in the above epigraph, by having lost it.

"I was a structuralist before anyone else," Gombrowicz claimed in his Auto-Interview written in Vence during the 1960's. To take at face value Gombrowicz's statements addressed to "the critics," such as the second

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epigraph at the head of this chapter, would be madness. His work is scattered with numerous such allegedly "metafictional" land mines that are intentionally contradictory. All Gombrowicz's prose is written in the first-person, and in his written and living performances he was always trying on and exchanging masks. While the anti-structuralist barb may have been a critical pose aimed from the Gombrowiczean balcony at Barthes and his circle at their height, there is a grain of truth in it. Gombrowicz's earliest stories and his foundational novel Ferdydurke tried to demonstrate that in any social setting, if one individual raises a finger, another individual must of necessity raise the binary opposite finger, resulting in kupa or a "heap" of writhing bodies at the end of the scene in spite of any individual intentions, motivations, will or good breeding on the part of those involved. Meaning, the structuralists would argue, occurs only by virtue of such binary oppositions, but Gombrowicz reveals the binary opposition as a prison, and demonstrates that the artist must strive for the chaos of the kupa to break out of structuralism's logical confinement and create new meaning. In this light, we can read Gombrowicz's notion of "immaturity" as the pre-formal or the pre-structural: primitive matter before the imposition of form.

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4. The Vortex and the Labyrinth: Bruno Schulz and the Objective Correlative

Bruno Schulz and T. S. Eliot both saw the production of meaning in art as a process deeply laden with the construction and conjuring of mythologies. Despite the religion of the Now and the Future by which many would characterize Modernism, the recurring gesture of primitivism signals a concomitant yearning for origins. In this essay, I would like to explore the theoretical positions on mythology and meaning in Schulz and Eliot, and consider how these play out in their artistic work.[64]

T. S. Eliot, in his essay "Hamlet and His Problems" (1919), claims:

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an objective correlative; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.

There is an emotion in the mind of the artist, then, which the artist seeks to reproduce in the mind of the reader, by means of an "objective correlative"--an external thing known to addresser and addressee--that produces the same emotion in both minds. Implicit in this definition is the idea that art is successful as a communicative act only insofar as it conveys the artist's

[64] Many thanks to Bożena Shallcross, who provided many useful comments on an earlier version of this chapter, and to Sven Spieker, whose argument regarding Schulz's attitude toward the relation of matter to form has allowed me to sharpen my own view, despite our having arrived at different conclusions.

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intention--the "particular emotion." But Eliot recognizes that the artist can express that intention only by connecting to the knowledge base of the receptor. The artist's question then becomes: how do I know that the art I make now will be meaningful across cultures and across time, in the way that works like Hamlet seem to be meaningful? One of Eliot's implicit assumptions here is that Hamlet is meaningful to everyone for the same reasons it was meaningful to Shakespeare, and if that is not the case, then it would not be art but accident.

Eliot's much debated phrase captured the anxieties of artists in his circle and beyond, in an age of burgeoning "-isms" and manifestos. The objective correlative provided an operational description of metaphor with universal meaning. Ezra Pound was developing a theory of universal metaphor anchored in concrete objects well before "Hamlet and His Problems." That theory is perhaps most clearly articulated in Ernest Fenollosa's work on Chinese ideograms, which Pound translated in 1918:

> The whole delicate substance of speech is built upon substrata of metaphor. Abstract terms, pressed by etymology, reveal their ancient roots still embedded in direct action. But the primitive metaphors do not spring from arbitrary subjective processes. They are possible only because they follow objective lines of relations in nature herself. (Fenollosa 26)

For Fenollosa poetry was the process of recovering lost metaphors through etymology. He describes the process of metaphor as "scientific" rather than "logical," which we can take to mean positivistically that metaphors should be based on things that can be observed objectively rather than deduced in the mind. They are meaningful to a community of readers only insofar as they refer to something that many users of such ideograms or metaphors

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could verify by observation. Thus we can understand Pound's preference always for a concrete image rather than an abstraction. He writes of symbols:

> I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use "symbols" he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that a sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk. ("A Retrospect," 42)

Abstraction is the task of the reader, not the poet.

While Eliot and Pound both work by superimposing layer upon layer of textual matter to produce a mythology of modern life, Pound's poems surpass Eliot's in their cluttered "thinginess." They share with Picasso's collages a kind arcimboldesque quality. When one sees the collage for the first time, it appears to be a jumble of newspaper clippings, wallpaper swatches, cutouts, and paint, until a sense of figure and ground form and the trash seemingly strewn together on its support becomes a figurative representation of something else. As the collages grow more complex, figure and ground oscillate, adding further to the confusion of representation. As Roland Barthes has described Arcimboldo's technique of composing allegorical portraits from fruits, vegetables and all manner of bric-a-brac, "Nothing is ever denoted, since all the features (lines, shapes, spirals) which serve to compose a head have a meaning already, and hence this meaning is diverted toward another meaning, somehow cast beyond itself" (138).

Or is it more precisely that everything is denoted with great exactitude to produce meaning in the undenoted metaphoric domain? Pound recalls as the first principle of the manifesto he constructed in 1912 with H.D. and

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Richard Aldington the dictum of "direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective" ("A Retrospect" 36). Alternately, he formulates the principle later in the same essay thus: "the natural object is always the adequate symbol" (39).

From Eliot's poetry we will see that, drawing on the wider notions of "observable phenomena" offered by James G. Frazer and Sigmund Freud, he locates the source of "objective correlatives" in a universal mythology. Frazer tried to demonstrate in The Golden Bough that diverse cultures had a common base of fundamental myths that may have differed in detail, but were essentially the same in narrative outline. Freud and eventually Jung hoped to establish a scientific basis for these correlations through the new discipline of psychoanalysis, by demonstrating that all of these myths emerged from allegedly universal features of human development or human nature. "Universality" in art, then, could be achieved by tapping into human nature by reference to these universal mythologies. The master narratives of mythology might be seen as the "objective correlatives" to which refer the myths that Frazer identifies and Eliot appropriates.

Malinowski, like Eliot, seeks objective correlatives, but where they are mythological for Frazer they are myth psychologized for Malinowski. Psychoanalysis, with its naturalist theory of universal drives, could provide a "scientific" foundation for the existence of objective correlatives in cultural myths, and objective correlatives established through ethnographic research could provide evidence for universal human drives and impulses. If the Trobrianders are susceptible to psychoanalysis, if transference can take place

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between the ethnographer and the informant, and if Trobrianders can show symptoms of the Oedipus complex, then the Oedipus complex must be real.

It is important to recognize that between the World Wars, Malinowski's cultural relation to England is in certain respects not so different from Eliot's. While Eliot can claim the linguistic heritage of English literature, and while his work from the period is absolutely canonical today, American literature was scarcely taken as seriously as British literature in the 1920s and '30s. Polish literature could claim two Nobel Prize winners, the novelists Henryk Sienkiewicz and Bolesław Prus. Both moved to England to partake of the mainstream of European culture. Malinowski may even have had a certain social advantage as both a European and something of an exotic from the European frontier, while figures like Eliot and Pound were subject to the charge of coming to Europe because one could not be a serious writer in America.

Polish critics of Eliot were sensitive to this issue. Wacław Borowy, for instance, in what is probably the first major introduction to Eliot's critical prose in Polish, published in Marchołt, a journal of the Warsaw Institut Literacki, in 1935, goes to great lengths to establish points of cultural commonality with Eliot. Eliot's poetry would have been known in Poland at this point given the general popularity of poetry in Poland and the frequent publication of works in translation in most literary journals and magazines, and some few readers of English with access to The Dial or The Criterion might have known Eliot's prose. Borowy's survey is an extended summary and review of several of the more important essays mostly available in collected form by the early 1930's. At a certain point, he translates Eliot's

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differentiation between the poet qua poet and the poet as an individual human being, into the terms of the question of "unity of personality" (660), which was very much current in Polish intellectual circles amid the political, social, and cultural fragmentation of the 1930s, and which we have encountered in Malinowski's Diary and in various works of Witkiewicz.

Toward the end of his article, Borowy touches on Eliot's attitude toward the Catholic church, and he assures the Polish reader that, despite his conversion to Anglicanism, Eliot has "respect and sympathy, even a kind of love" for the Catholic church, but with the reservation that "the location of all the hopes of the world in one institution he regards as... improvident (669). Having thus apologized for Eliot's religious views, Borowy solidifies the case for Polish sympathy for Eliot (bearing in mind that literary debates all over Europe at this time are particularly polemical, politically engaged, and energetic), remarking: "This attitude is so prominently English that it is maliciously regarded with an expression of snobism as... American. We have no right to judge it so" (669).

In order for a contemporary American reader to understand the world as it stood in the age of high modernism, we must observe that such a gesture of Polish sympathy for the then marginal literature of the United States is in no way presumptuous, and in fact makes an enormous amount of sense. Today, we might see a figure like Eliot as being in the center of the dominant currents of modernism, but such "facts" are never so clear as they transpire, and while we might like to think Eliotically that Eliot's mastery would have risen as it did to cultural acclaim in any historical environment, predictions about cultural trends in possible worlds are tricky indeed. It is

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futile to imagine what the reception of Eliot would have been like had the Second World War ended differently, had the United States not survived the War in a position of economic superiority, had the Marshall Plan not facilitated the dispersion of U.S. culture and interest in all things American across the planet.

Once we can recognize the anthropological context of Eliot's idea of an "objective correlative," it begins to look quite similar to Bruno Schulz's statements on mythology. In a frequently quoted passage from his essay, "The Mythologizing of Reality," Schulz claims:

> Every fragment of reality lives by virtue of partaking in a universal sense.... Poetry happens when short-circuits of sense occur between words, a sudden regeneration of the primeval myths.... Not one scrap of an idea of ours does not originate in myth, isn't transformed, mutilated, denatured mythology. The most fundamental function of the spirit is inventing fables, creating tales.... [T]he building materials [that the search for human knowledge] uses were used once before; they come from forgotten, fragmented tales or "histories." Poetry recognizes these lost meanings, restores words to their places, connects them by the old semantics.[65]

Words have meaning by virtue of their connection to an "all embracing, integral mythology" or "universal sense" (115). Words, fragments of their former selves, "complete [themselves] with sense," when they are successfully transformed by "poetry" (115). The poet matches words to sense the way an archaeologist pieces together shards of pottery. Schulz's theory, articulated in 1936, combines Fenollosa's idea of poetry as

[65] I have chosen not to capitalize "sense," as it is not capitalized in the original text. My ellipses. Bruno Schulz, Letters and Drawings 115-16.

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etymology with Eliot's notion of "objective correlative" expressed as a "universal sense" with its locus in primordial myth.

The theories look quite similar, but how do they stand up in practice? Schulz, like Eliot, privileges the role of mythology in art, but Schulz's work reveals that, while he may draw on Jewish and classical mythology, the most distinctive and appealing aspect of his work is his creation of a local or personal mythology, or more particularly, the personalization of those received mythologies. Where Eliot and Pound are looking for origins by juxtaposing the malaise of modern ritualistic behavior to their recherché exotica, Schulz, the provincial secularized Galician Jew, is looking inward.

Since this chapter is concerned with Schulz, I will touch on Eliot only briefly. "The Waste Land" might be read as Eliot's clearest attempt to actualize the theory of the objective correlative, as I understand that theory, through the juxtaposition of motifs from a variety of primitive mythic sources with a narrative about modern London high society. Toward the beginning of his poem, Eliot asks:

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images [...] (Eliot, Selected Poems, 49-74, ll. 19-22. Subsequent parenthetical references to Eliot by line number refer to "The Waste Land.")

"Roots that clutch" and "branches [that] grow" refer to the mixture of "memory and desire" (l. 3) mixed by "April," which all of us now recognize as "the cruellest month." The "roots" clutch memory of a time before the "Son of man," before the destruction of the ancient pre-Christian icons. The "branches" evince a desire to grow from the "stony rubbish" of that "heap of

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broken images." The metaphor is an organic one, but unlike the Romantics who saw the work of art as a tree sprung whole from the mind of the artist, Eliot proposes that the work must form an organic whole from the rocky, fragmented soil of lost and distant myth.

"The Waste Land," in the sense of un desert, is just such a rocky amalgam of ancient fertility myths drawn from Frazer, references to the Bible, Ovid, Homer, Tristan und Isolde, "The Fisher King" as they appear in Jessie L. Weston's From Ritual to Romance on the Grail myth, probably Jane Harrison's anthropological studies published just after the turn of the century on the ritual origins of Greek myth, and The Tempest, which is itself a kind of primitivist fantasy based on Elizabethan travel literature.

The artist's problem is how to create a work that does not become like the paintings described in the second part of "The Waste Land" as "withered stumps of time" (l. 104). Poetry can recover those lost connections through meter, as surely as those "withered stumps of time" imply by their cadence and their content Shelley's "legless trunks of stone," referring in the poem "Ozymandias" to the Romantic myth of ancient Oriental despotism. The way to restore meaning to alienated modern culture then is to drink from the source, which in "The Waste Land," will be the ancient, the Oriental, and the exotic.

A primordial objective correlative will be Eliot's way out of the crisis of subjectivity articulated in the lines:

> We think of the key, each in his prison
> Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison (ll. 414-15)

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By repeating the Sanskrit mantra, "Da.../Da.../Da..." (ll. 401, 411, 418), fragments of a motto from the Upanishads, "Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata." (l. 433), Eliot restores the meaning of those words--"give, sympathize, control"-- providing an answer to his very modernist problem. If the poet can "give" (Datta) the right key, which will cause every reader to "sympathize" (Dayadhvam)--to "feel together"--then he will achieve the artist's mastery or "control:"

> Damyata: The boat responded
> Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
> The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
> Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
> To controlling hands (ll. 419-23)

In these few lines, Eliot superimposes an Oriental text onto the myth of the Fisher King to uncover the origins of and answer to a question taken from F. H. Bradley's Appearance and Reality, recontextualized through the poetic image of a prison from Dante. As the boat is controlled by the master's hands, so the reader's heart must respond "when invited" to the artist's "controlling hands," if, indeed, they are truly "expert."

In much the same way as Picasso superimposes African masks on his cubist harem scene in Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Eliot restores the connection between social representations in modern life and "primitive" myth by putting them in contact with each other. For Eliot then, and perhaps for Picasso as well, the "mythologizing of reality" might be said to take place when the "interference" between the primitive and the modern reveals to the reader the objective correlative among text, image and reader.[66]

66 "Interference" between text, image and reader in the sense that Mary Ann Caws uses the term in The Art of Interference.

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Now if this conjecture about the use of the primitive or the exotic in the production of meaning in some works of Eliot and Picasso and perhaps other Western European primitivists is correct, it would be interesting to see how an artist like Schulz might treat a similar theme. Schulz had his own fascination with the odalisque, and employed its imagery to produce a system of meaning that was quite different from Picasso's. Schulz produced several images of collections of female nudes that might be seen as following in the tradition of Cézanne's various Bathers, which so fascinated the Western European modernists. Unlike the idyllic scenes of Cezanne, however, or the abstractions of Matisse, Derain or Picasso, Schulz's images usually portray the women in dominant or aloof poses and incorporate images of men--frequently self-portraits--in postures of submission or debasement. Schulz's women are almost always a head above the bent or prostrate male figures, and their tall thin appearance accentuates the coldness of their gaze.

In the final version of Les Demoiselles there are no men, and the title casts the women as prostitutes, putting them in the position of debasement. Picasso's African mask, which mirrors the cubist compression of round space into the intersection of so many planes, serves to erase the selfhood of the women portrayed. A mask conceals the face that would otherwise represent the individuality of the subject. Cubism's compression of space reduces curved faces to faceted masks, leaving only deindividuated women's bodies, the origin of human creation in their primitive and universal sexuality.

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One of Schulz's portraits of his friend and sponsor Stanisław Weingarten (1919, from Ficowski, The Drawings, pl. 115) is Schulz's most interesting variation on the "Bathers" theme. Weingarten is seated in profile at a low desk, viewing pictures, perhaps Schulz's own drawings. Behind him is a large tapestry, fresco or painting in an ornate frame. The background seems almost to be a projection of what is in Weingarten's mind, as if he were looking at the images on the desk and we were seeing the combination of them projected onto the wall behind him. Indeed, it seems to be composed of many of Schulz's other images. There are three nude women seated beneath a canopy to the right of Weingarten's head and one reclining. The reclining woman is caressed by a wingless Cupid, and another childlike figure perches in the shadows above and behind her. A tiger reclines at the women's feet, and a nude likeness of the artist is pictured licking one of the women's feet, in a submissive posture. Two of the seated women are looking down at the submissive Schulz. One of them is looking at a clown reclining in the left corner of the frame and gazing at the whole scene. Like viewers looking at paintings, the woman in the right corner of the frame sees the clown and the clown sees the women, though no mutual recognition is revealed in eye contact. It is as if the two unidirectional gazes did not add up to a single bidirectional gaze. The whole background is a wooded setting with clouds, trees and grass.

The tiger, which appears in Schulz's Xięga balwochwalcza (The Book of Idolatry) as a submissive half-tiger/half-Schulz chimera (Ficowski, Drawings pl. 19, 21, 28), could be viewed as an importation of exotica, like Picasso's mask, but it also functions, along with the reclining clown, as

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invocation of the circus, which is one of the primary motifs of The Book of Idolatry. This clown is clearly not in his usual attitude of perfomance. The artist is not a master creator, "expert with sail and oar," but a slave, and the specator is a clown, turning the act of viewing itself, in which Weingarten is engaged in the foreground, into a kind of performance.

The world of Les Demoiselles d'Avignon is monologic, insofar as the frame delineates a sharp division of the viewing (and painting) subject and the represented (and purchased) object. Picasso's women are on the inside of a space defined by his frame, which determines our gaze. Schulz, however, puts himself and his viewer both inside and outside the frame. He then presents his viewer viewing inside that frame, fashioning a remarkably complex meditation on the problem of the perception of art by blurring the lines between subject and object. What in this image could be an objective correlative uniting the mind of the perceiver to the mind of the artist, when the perceiver and the artist become both subject and object inside the nested frames of the work?

Yet despite this blurring of objectivity and confusion of the simple relation of an objective correlative, Schulz, like Eliot, seeks to restore "withered stumps of time," as he writes in "Noc wielkiego sezonu:"

> Everyone knows, that in the course of ordinary, normal years, whimsical time sometimes bears from its womb other years, peculiar years, degenerate years, which, like a sixth little finger on the hand, grow a thirteenth, defective month somewhere.
>
> We say "defective," because they rarely reach their full maturity. Like an infant delivered too late, it lags behind in growth, a hunchback month, a half-withered shoot more conjectural than real. (91)[67]

[67] All parenthetical references to Schulz are from Opowiadania,

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As I have argued extensively in my article, "A Living Schulz: Noc wielkiego sezonu," this image is not some individual artistic fantasy or exotic fable that Schulz would have had to dig up from an arcane source, but a myth from his everyday life. Without research, Schulz finds myth immediately in the Jewish calendar, in which a thirteenth "defective month" is periodically intercalated to keep the months in line with the seasons. Schulz can feel exotic enough in the myths of his childhood without ever leaving Drohobycz.

Schulz's most sustained fictional meditation on form and myth, which is in some ways an analogue to "The Waste Land," is the "Traktat o manekinach, albo wtóra księga Rodzaju" ("Tractate on Manequins or the Second Book of Genesis") from Sklepy cynamonowy (Cinnamon Shops). Since this is a księga we should take it not as the second chapter of Genesis, but, like a tome of Zohar, as a part of the "oral Torah," or the body of myth outside the Hebrew Bible itself speculated on for centuries by rabbinic scholars. Schulz probably did not have intimate direct knowledge of Zohar or Talmud or Maimonides in Hebrew and Aramaic, but he could have read them in German, and it would have been difficult to avoid absorbing their style and fragments of their substance from the conversation of Orthodox and Chassidic Jews in Galicia at the time of Schulz's youth. Schulz is to those biblical scholars what Umberto Eco in The Name of the Rose is to the

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wybór esejów i listów and are my translation, unless otherwise indicated.

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scholar Richard Janko, who has attempted to reconstruct the second book of Aristotle's Poetics from related texts.

In the "Tractate," Jakub, the narrator's father, a fabric merchant, proposes to recreate life in a way that glorifies matter over form. Jakub begins his argument as a reductio ad absurdum, proclaiming the opposite of what he wishes to prove as his first principle, declaring: "If, casting aside the respect due to the Creator, I wished to play at a critique of creation, I would shout: 'less content, more form!'"[68] There is a great temptation to read this slogan as Jakub's actual argument, and to read it further as Schulz's view, because Jakub is prone to making such proclamations like Joshua on the ramparts. In this case, however, adopting the genre of the "tractate," Jakub assumes the posture of philosophical argument, as if he "wished to play at critique," and employs a favorite socratic gesture even if he does not carry it through to its conclusion. If this were an actual reductio, Jakub would attempt to demonstrate that his original proposition, that form is somehow superior or primary with respect to matter, was logically consistent with its antithesis, and thereby demonstrate the falsity of the original proposition and the truth of the opposite proposition, that matter is primary substance.

But as Jakub shouts his claim, his simultaneous action indicates the true direction of his argument: "my father shouted at precisely the moment when his hand was unsheathing Pauline's white calf from the imprisonment

[68] Gdybym, odrzucając respekt przed Stwórca, chciał się zabawić w krytykę stworzenia, wołałbym:--mniej treści, więcej formy! (39).

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of its stocking."[69] The hand is extracting the matter of the body--in a pose of deference if we imagine the scenes in Schulz's masochistic drawings--from the stocking that imposes its idealized form on it and imprisons its true substance.[70] Jakub's heresy consists in precisely this idolatrous ascription of divinity to matter over form. This juxtaposition reveals that Jakub's speech is itself a posture or imposed form that the primitive act of worship of the flesh contradicts. Jakub's utterance is entirely at odds with his performance.

Jakub's argument, taken as a theory of representation, is very much in line with Pound's preference for the concrete over the abstract. An abstraction is always removed from an original thing in Pound's view, much the way an ideogram comes to stand for an idea only after it has been transformed from a direct representation of a physical object. Original meaning is in things, and poetry reunites our concepts with those things.

[69] wolał mój ojciec, akurat w momencie, gdy dłoń jego wyłuskiwała białą łydkę Pauliny z uwięzi pończoszki (31-32).

[70] See Ficowski Drawings, pl. 53.

Bożena Shallcross has made the very interesting argument to me that this leg which Jakub extracts is still a youthful and idealized leg, as opposed to, say, a deformed, maternal, or perhaps palubiasta leg, and that therefore, the stocking might not represent form as opposed to matter, but something transparent that only enhances the form that is there. If the stocking were indeed an enhancement, though, I do not see why Schulz would refer to it as an "imprisonment." The objection brings out the fact, however, that the women Schulz portrays are almost always idealized in this way, and that a "real," maternal reproductive female figure is almost entirely absent from Schulz's mythological system.

I would still argue, then, that the opposition of "stocking" and "leg" represents the distinction between form and matter, but I would add that Schulz's idea of "matter" in the case of the feminine body admits of a certain blind spot to its own idealization.

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As Jakub resumes his argument, static form is further revealed as a prison, inside which pliable matter is "beating its fists on the walls" (39).[71] Static form is a kind of pałuba woskowa (39), which has been translated as "wax figure"[72] in accord with the context of Jakub's description of a carnival wax museum, although the idea of pałuba is invested with mythic significance as a "hag," "witch," the effigy of a hag, or a "monstrosity" of sorts, brought into literary currency by Karol Irzykowski in his novel of that title. The purpose of a wax figure is to produce an absolutely lifelike image, erasing the underlying matter and making it seem like something that it is not. In response, Jakub declares of raw matter, "We, in opposition, love its creak, its stubbornness, its pałubiasta awkwardness" (36).

Unlike Eliot's "hollow men," which take the form of primitive fetish objects and African masks, the products of Jakub's second creation are mannequins, familiar objects in any Jewish tailor's shop, and the wares of the Jewish tandetnik or "junk dealer." He imagines man recreated in the image of a mannequin that could be taken apart and reassembled from its fragments to serve any passing purpose (35). Unlike the Demiurge who "was in love with durable, perfect and complex materials," Jakub declares

[71] Czy słyszeliście po nocach straszne wycie tych pałub woskowych, zamkniętych w budach jarmarcznych, żałosny chór tych kadłubów z drzewa i porcelany, walących pięściami w ściany swych więzień? (39).

[72] Celina Wieniewska seems to translate each occurrence of this difficult word differently or in some cases to skip over it entirely, erasing the status of pałuba as a keyword in Schulz. See Bruno Schulz, The Street of Crocodiles.

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"we will give priority to tandeta"--the flea-market, vulgar and carnivalesque, and in one shade of its meaning pałubiasta (35). The complementary process to "mityzacja rzeczywistośći" in Schulz might be seen, if I may coin a word in Polish, as the "tandetyzacja formy"--the reclaiming of power over form by its vulgarization.

One interesting example of this in the story is the image I have mentioned of wax figures as forms imprisoning matter. Now we need only think of P.T. Barnum's famous sign "This way to the egress" to recall how the old fashioned carnival or circus used Latin to give the sideshow exhibit an air of science. In addition, as Bohdan Budurowycz has argued in his article on the figure of Drohobycz in Schulz, Latin was particularly identified in Schulz's Galicia with Austrian bureaucratic language (Budurowycz 13-14), so Schulz's use of Latin in a circus context would have the additional effect of satirizing the language of state authority. Jakub calls these wax figures Figury panoptików--figures in a panopticon, which while referring to the carnival sideshow in which "everything can be seen," simultaneously refers to Jeremy Bentham's model prison in which one guard could sit in a tower and look into the cells arranged in a circle around him, controlling all the prisoners at once, so that they would believe themselves to be under surveillance at every moment, without the necessity of having a guard posted at the door of each cell. Matter is imprisoned in wax form just as the wax statues are like prisoners in the ironically named "panopticon," and the apparatus of state control--the language of Austrian bureaucracy--is tandetyzowany, or revealed for its bankruptcy by being relocated in the circus. Forty years before Michel Foucault made us all familiar with the

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panopticon (Foucault, Discipline and Punish), Schulz saw the poignancy of this image and recognized that the panopticon was not just a practical design for a prison or carnival show but a mode of representation itself.

These few examples suggest that Schulz is stating a much stronger claim than Eliot, when he states that all words, not just poetic speech, are fragments of old mythologies to be recovered. As such we might understand those fragments as the matter so vaunted in Jakub's "Tractate," when applied to Schulz's art. Eliot juxtaposes eclectic fragments of myths from Frazer, Weston and Harrison to illustrate the ritualistic elements of London society. Schulz occasionally alludes to the exotic, as when he refers to the sources of Jakub's birds or the scent of Oriental spices, but that exotica is the product of a childlike fascination. There are no "footnotes" that Schulz could provide for those particular references, unlike Eliot in "The Waste Land." Schulz manages to find the truly exotic, what S. I. Witkiewicz called "the metaphysical feeling of the strangeness of existence," in so many commonplace discourses that he has no need to import them from Africa. Schulz reveals that every word can be regenerated into its full mythic form, like the fragments of a hologram, each of which contains the whole image.

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Part III

The Semiotics of Reappropriation: A Provisional Assessment

One might argue that appropriation is the fundamental gesture of postmodern art--from Andy Warhol to Cindy Sherman--and that the appropriation of distinctively identifiable styles in the period of high Modernism is a prefigurement of the postmodern.[73] Postmodern appropriation, however, is self-conscious, ironic, and parodistic in a way that the appropriation of the primitive, at least in the early stages,[74] rarely seems to be. Primitivist appropriation presumes a faith in authenticity of the artifact--the artifact taken as fact. By appropriating the primitive object, the Modernist artist attempts to rejuvenate Modern art by appropriating its aura of authenticity. The postmodern artist appropriates objects to reveal their original emptiness, like so many soup cans that can become containers for any message that comes to hand. The Modernist seeks to escape the

[73] Rosalind Krauss proposes just such a reading of Picasso's use of pastiche in his early collages and collage-like paintings in The Picasso Papers.

[74] I use this qualifier to distinguish between the initial moments of the discourse of the primitive in ethnography and in Western European culture and the secondary or tertiary appropriations in figures like Witkacy. There are of course examples of ironic appropriation of the discourse of ethnography in Western European art, most notably in the Moroccan writings of Wyndham Lewis.

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perceived emptiness of Modern life by appropriating the fullness of the Primitive.

In ethnography, the first moment in the European discourse of the Primitive, the dynamics of appropriation begin with the fundamental problem of all narration, as anthropologist and literary critic Vincent Crapanzano indicates in his comparison of the ethnographer with the Greek messenger-god:

> Hermes was a trickster: a god of cunning and tricks. The ethnographer is no trickster. He, so he says, has no cunning and no tricks. But he shares this with Hermes: he must make his message convincing. It treats of the foreign, the strange, the unfamiliar, the exotic, the unknown--that, in short, which challenges belief. The ethnographer must make use of all the persuasive devices at his disposal to convince his readers of the truth of his message, but, treating these rhetorical strategies as though they were cunning tricks, he gives them scant recognition. His texts assume a truth that speaks for itself--a whole truth that needs no rhetorical supports. His words are transparent. He does not share Hermes' confidence. When Hermes took the post of messenger of the gods, he promised Zeus not to lie. He did not promise to tell the whole truth. Zeus understood. The ethnographer has not. (Crapanzano, Hermes' Dilemma 44-45).

The narrator's obligation, well recognized as long as there has been fiction, extends not only to "non-fiction" genres like ethnography, journalism, history, memoir, and autobiography, but even to works that do not pretend to realism, but must have their own coherence and truth-effect.

It may not be the whole truth to say that the ethnographer is not in some sense an acknowledged trickster. While there certainly are many works that put up a positivist front, some of the classic ethnographic texts of interest here engage in a kind of rhetorical play that could only be self-

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conscious. To be a successful rhetorical trickster, however, one must follow the Renaissance injunction to conceal the devices of rhetoric. The burden is on the reader, as it was on Zeus, not to accept the ethnographer's voice of transparent authority, to maintain some scepticism about the ethnographer's message, and to unmask his rhetorical trickery.

Leo Frobenius' basic narrative mode, for instance, is the adventure tale that regales his reader with accounts of how the brave German ethnographer narrowly escaped danger with the local police in the African colonies (129-30), or used the sexual prowess of his native guide to swindle the locals out of their artifacts (50-51, 53-54, 81). "Lying, robbery, perjury, with the lurking assassin in the background," Frobenius assures his gentle reader, "play their parts in [the experiences related] as bravely as in any backstairs novel" (106). In a particularly uncanny moment, Frobenius even adopts Crapanzano's metaphor to describe his own role at a judicial hearing concerning the alleged theft of objects from Ifé by members of Frobenius' group:

> Seeing that the negro does not mind lying the least little bit and that the whole of his morality consists in getting all the good he possibly can out of life in general and its accidents in particular, the lying that took place might have been for prizes offered for the greatest proficiency in Mercury's secondary profession. (114)

"Out in the bush," as it were, it's trick or be tricked as far as Frobenius is concerned. Africa, for Frobenius is truly the site of Hobbes' "war of all against all," or as Frobenius called it, an "ethical Sahara" (107). His only caveat in this regard is that the Europeans not "forget their unity of race and culture in the bush of Africa" (107), lest their fate be that which befell the

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Portuguese colonists, where "[t]he phlegmatic black had sucked up the strength and will-power of the white man's race--the white man's racial energy had deliquesced in 'niggerdom'" (43). Frobenius' success as an acknowledged liar only boosts his credibility with the reader, who perhaps wants, like Anna Karenina reading the English novel on the Moscow-Petersburg train, to identify with the narrator-hero and think that she too would be as dashing and clever as Frobenius in tricking the tricksters.

Malinowski, despite his significantly greater sympathy for the objects of his study, equally delights in his own cleverness when he tells us how he got the Melanesians to own up to the taboo against sibling incest. He begins, following Freud's method, by asking the natives about their dreams, and discovers, much to his surprise, that "[i]t is a remarkable and characteristic feature of these natives, in which they seem to differ from other savages, that they apparently dream little, have little interest in their dreams, seldom relate them spontaneously, do not regard the ordinary dream as having any prophetic or other importance, and have no code of symbolic explanation whatsoever" (Sex and Repression 89). From this observation, he asks rhetorically the Freudian question: "Is this absence of dreams, or rather of interest in dreams, due to the fact that we are dealing with a non-repressed society, a society among whom sex as such is in no way restricted?" (89). Generally acknowledging at this moment in the text Malinowski's tendency to idealize the Melanesians' mode of life, recognizing that he is moving back and forth on which aspects of Freud's theory to accept and which to reject, we as readers might be pulled into his narrative ploy. For the moment, it might seem absolutely plausible that the naked savages are in comparison

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with us modern neurotic Euro-Americans relatively unrepressed, and that therefore, they might not have very vivid dreams.

A few paragraphs later, however, Malinowski pulls away the curtain and reveals that he was only playing a trick on us, the very same trick, in fact, that was played on him by his native informants. It was only by trickery that he was able to get to the bottom of the Melanesians' secret desires as revealed in their previously unacknowledged dreams of brother-sister incest:

> Of course I knew enough never to ask such a question directly of a man, and never to discuss it in company. But even asking in the form of whether 'other people' could ever have such dreams, the reaction would be that of indignation and anger. Sometimes there would be no answer at all; after an embarrassed pause another subject would be taken up by the informant. Some, again, would deny it seriously, others vehemently and angrily. But, working out the question bit by bit with my best informants, the truth at last appeared, and I found that the real state of opinion is different. It is actually well known that 'other people' have such dreams.... I found that this is, in fact, one of the typical dreams known to exist, occurring frequently, and one which haunts and disturbs the dreamer. (91-92)

When the trick is revealed, the messenger has solidly gained our trust, because he has brought us into his confidence by letting us in on the joke of which we were the butt. We have seen what a great trickster he is firsthand, so we acknowledge his skill. While we were still being misled by the narrator, however, we experienced his own confusion, so that when the fog is cleared, we sympathize and identify with him all the more. We can slap old Bronio on the back and say, "You sly devil, it's just as we always

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suspected! We knew all along they were having those dreams! They didn't fool us!"

In both of these absolutely canonical cases, the ethnographer as narrator gains the confidence of the reader precisely by revealing his trickery. If it works, we believe that we are in on all the tricks. In Frobenius' "ethical Sahara," trickery adds value to the objects obtained, because anything that is obtained easily is not worth having. For Malinowski, outright lying is replaced by the subtle ploys of the alienist, who can cause the patient to slip up and reveal hidden desires--the only desires worth studying.

The trickery topos, however, is itself an elaborate rhetorical trick. In a critique of ethnographic attempts to acknowledge and account for the ethnographer's subjectivity, Clifford Geertz writes,

> To place the reach of your sensibility--rather than, say, that of your analytical powers or of your social code--at the center of your ethnography, is to pose for yourself a distinctive sort of text-building problem: rendering your account credible through rendering your person so (78-79).

But that necessity is not new to "postmodern" or "experimental" forms of ethnographic narrative, nor for that matter to any narrative. All narrators, fictional or otherwise, strive for credibility on some level. Just as the postmodern, self-consciously autobiographical ethnographer must create a credible persona, so did Frobenius and Malinowski. The issue for them is who is the butt of the trick at any particular moment. The ethnographer might acknowledge a bit of trickery at the expense of the informants to gain the trust of his reader. The reader should be aware that similar treachery

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might have been required for the ethnographer to have gained the trust of his informants.

If the reader could do this, however, would all difficulties of ethnography be solved? The attitude of caveat emptor might be the best response to texts like those discussed here, but it would seem, then, that the whole process of ethnography becomes a dialectic of marketplace exchanges in which truth and credibility are bought and sold like commodities in an environment based on distrust, and motivated by greed, competition and treachery. This is hardly the kind of ethic that could be the foundation of an equal and transparent relationship between a researcher and the object of research, or between author and reader. Crapanzano remarks that at the edges of such relationships, "we have to remember that whatever the resistance of those with whom we converse they are always a little our creation as we are a little their creation. That empirical fact may mark the limit of our empiricism" (Hermes' Dilemma 215). A question for this study is, how far do such compromises reverberate through the discourse, and what is the form of those reverberations at each stage?

The West European artist or poet, Picasso or Eliot, does not appropriate the African mask or the linguistic artifact from its original source, but only the object as it has been recoded by the ethnographer, the collector, the curator. These artists, by and large,[75] lack even "the briefest contact" with the primitive peoples who as Lévi-Strauss observed "can

[75] Notable exceptions including Gauguin and Wyndham Lewis.

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sanctify the traveller" (41). They are not really making any positivistic claims, either, to "represent" primitive peoples or their artifacts in a "realistic" way. By appropriating the artifact, however, the creative works in question seek somehow to appropriate their power, their ineffability. Perhaps, through the magical mediation of the artistic process, the European artist can even hope, like Baudelaire sailing through his mulatto mistress, to shed the corruption of modern urban life, to "connect" through form with the maker of the primitive artifact, and reconstitute the object's original mana in the new work.[76]

The East European artist or writer, such as the Polish authors we have considered here, in turn, appropriates the primitive at least in part as a way of participating in modernity. That is not to say that they are not interested in the "fundamental human questions" posed by West European ethnography

[76] I am borrowing some language here from Crapanzano's critique of Marcel Mauss's interpretation of magic and mana:

> Mauss's point is that the climactic moment of a magical rite ["the moment of prestidigitation"] is in fact intractable, if not outside language, then outside critical regard. Magical judgments, he argues, precede magical experiences. [...] Mauss has already given us more than a theory of magic: he has offered an explanation of how society can create and hold illusions--a point of considerable concern, as I have suggested, to both the dandies and the sérieux of fin-de-siècle France. Mauss's failure to delimit the meaning of mana does not result merely from the confusions of primitive thought or of his own thinking. It reflects, I believe, the instability of those referential terms that are used to gloss such pragmatic functions of language as the performative. (Crapanzano, "The Moment..." 102, 104)

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and art, but that those questions have already been contextualized by political and social conditions, and that in the moment of reappropriation under new political and social conditions, they must be recontextualized and a dialogue established, accounting for the intermediate position of Eastern Europe between "modernity" and "the primitive" or perhaps just "backwardness" as it is often called. The result is an implicit critique of the West European discourse of the primitive, to which, unfortunately, there is rarely any response. It is my hope that through studies like this one, the dialogue may not only be established in the East, but engaged by the West.

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Abbreviations:

Civ/Dis--Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents

T&T--Freud, Totem and Taboo

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