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Painting (Excerpt from Khoroos Jangi, first period, issue 4, 1949-50.)

Jalil Ziapour

May 18th, 2011

(...) But in the case of art and artists (who create artworks—and not subject matters—for a *unspecified and unrestricted community*) this is pure crime: these people demand of art to be comprehensible to the masses, and also claim that: “We are not saying that the artist should descend to the level of the masses, he should progress, yet in a way that he would, *at the same time*, elevate the level of understanding of the masses!” *This would actually be a contradiction in terms to move alongside the masses progressing in art*, or else, whatever is created and is not comprehensible to the masses should not be considered art! Since, due to a “necessary principle,” because Cubism is not pleasant to the narrow-thinking and uncultivated masses, it is of no value! (But, if those who have established this “necessary principle” found it appropriate and limited not and alienated not the poor masses from progressive art, the masses would surely have understood properly and it would have been pleasant to their taste as well. *For, the spirit exhibited by Cubism through its structuring and powerful colourful backgrounds is exactly the representative of those militant powers which the masses require.*) But since Cubism, Abstraction and Surrealism are vague and incomprehensible and contain abstract thinking, they are considered pervert and decadent art forms! Only a kind of limited and compromised realism of a century ago is considered, based on a “necessary principle,” acceptable and artistic, because such realism is comprehensible, logical and manipulative in its ‘subject matter’. How strange! With the appearance of this “necessary principle,” one should say that regression and decadence is *offered* to artists. This is why at this point an avant-garde presses the cotton more deeply into

his ears and does not, as usual, pay attention to their sayings. For, he knows that the artist should not become a toy in the hands of a bunch of pretending art connoisseurs (!) or pseudo-connoisseurs or anyone else. To an avant-garde, abstraction and generalization are but the same phenomenon. For he knows that such terms coined by pseudo-philosophers is nothing but hot air. Because art is what emerges through the artist from contradictions and colliding currents of each period. And in any case, it is connected to the ideology of the time and is not controllable and it should not be.

From: Painting, Jalil Ziapour, Khorous Jangi, first period, issue # 4, P. 16-17, 1949-50, Source: Pages' archive

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ایهام بیابان و انحرافی و اصطلاحی و سایر نکات تکمیلی و سنگ راه و غارهای پنهان شده اند بر مخطا میروند و دوست به معنای واقعی طبع هومی در شعر نیز نبوده اند. و اگر حقت این منطق لااقل در مقام درکنا شکستی نمیکند و معرطفه میفهمند مگر در مرتبه‌های بعد صرف و واژه و اورده کشند. او نیست که زبان برای از میان بردن او پس زدگیها و محدودیت های انضامی اینکه در اینها وجود دارد. از روی غضب و هم ارقام بومال مطلق منقش شده پیام‌نگاری هومی میخانه افکار و روحیات سنگی او به بیان غایب بی زبان لازم شد بنگارند و سخا منطقیه مرتبه‌ها را که برای همین این زبان از او بهتر صرف شده بودگی هوم بسته برای آنجا سوز سازگی پیش‌جانبی آقاها نویسنده و یا که در اس و نیز وجوب و چنان غاشی گفته. این مدعی مدعی استشار بطور کلی، ولی رسن سخت ملاحظه کار و دهر حال استشاری برای آنرا هم در معادله هستند. اینگونه استشار یا بیاری دیگر و مگرگی هومی که شاید و بلکه ضمن فرموده کیهی‌شون اجتماعی. برای ناپیچند که انضامی باطنیها اعمال شده‌برند. موافق موازین طبعی و منطق لازم باشد ولی فرموده هر فرهنگه‌ای که از هومی - به سوز - در آن هم برای انجاء غیر سخن در غیر محدود (مجموعه) برآوردند. نهایت محبت - اینها میفهمند که هر فال هم بوده باشد، و هم میگویند (ما تکویم که مرتبه‌ها با هم و نامسطح فکر توده بنگارند بلکه پیش بروند. نوعی کند که سطح فاشنا بی توده را نیز در درمن به بالا ببرد) و واژن غن در سطحی پیش کوه راه پیش بین سخن دوش هومی توده، و با آنها در هر پیش رفتن و درون انصورت هر اثری که از کسی بود آید بدون برای توده مفهوم ندارد از هومی نیست اگر کسی هم حکم منطق لازم شد باید خود توده محدود و پرورش نیافته نیست پیش‌فایل از روی نیست اگر و دورنگه اگر و از همین این منطق لازم صلاح با او منظران این توده چیا در محدود و از هومی برای نیکند معنی توده خوب میفهمد و سخن آید خود او هم است. زیرا در فرسودگیه این کوسیم بوسه‌ای سنگش بدنها و زمینه های رنگی هم میفهمند. درست نمانده‌ها همان توده‌های مبارزه جویای است که توده‌ها نمانده‌اند. ولی کوسیم - اینترا

کیبود و صورت آید پس چون از اساطیر و موضوع و کنگ و نامعلوم است و چون دارای انگار برجیست پس باید آنها یک شعر انحرافی و اصطلاحی است فقط بکنون آید پس محدود و معنی که مربوط چندین صد و اندی سال پیش است چون اساطیر و موضوع قابل فهم و صورت ساده و استنتاج و هوم فریانه است از اینرو حکم منطق لازم در هر صورت با برکتی هنرست است هجید! پس ظهور این منطق لازم باید گشت بر واقع غریب از اینجاست و اصطلاح هنرست که بهترین حرفه شده است. اینست که در اینجا، بکنفر بیشتر پیش را سمت تر و گوش خد میفرد و بدون هیبه هرگز بپیشن آید و نمی‌تنگد ارد. و اجاز کار نمکند. عدایان. یا هر ششسان! و با او موندگندگان پیششمانی. با این و آن و هر کس دیگر که باشد قرار گیرد. برای ایست بکنفر پیشو نهید و نسیم بکسیت. چون میباید که اینگونه کتاب ساخته لغه‌ها برای در هر حال و اینها باشد. از روی و دست و قایل کشیل نیست و هم باید باشد. بنا بر این، بشرد بدون توجه با تفکرات و معانیها ها و در چا کنگیای متقدین و مناقین، روی نیازمندیهایی و معانیها گند میادرت میکند. و برای اوجسخت کسه معلومات، فراهم، قوانین و قراردادهای و تجربیات. همه همه در و با این نیازمندیهایی زمان، و حسد از آن برود. آید. پس عمل همیشه مقدور و هیچه همیشه در دیانت نتیجه ی عمل هم چنین نتیجه‌ای اثرات معیاد بصورت اثرات بین‌ملتستی. باری. گرچه قابل نظرات سور رأیست ما که در جای غن آدمی‌نگار چیا و در نظر فکر هنری واروست. و اینها اینچنین نظر داشتن که بر هر چه شده فرض انحرافی یا انضامی. عطای. یا با موهوبانی فکر کردن و فقط ایده‌ها را در هر حال باید شرح کرد. در میدان خود و هدفی اتمل کافی نیست. برای تشریح یک ایده که اموان او نظر تخصصی بیشتر مربوط نویسنده گشت و نباید بکلی اساس هنری شیان معضله را زیرا آنگاه است. زیرا آمده غایب‌بودگی و باطنی، و باطن‌نگاری باشد و برای توضیح غن یا پیشرو و چیا، سخن نیازمند که خا-رود تخصصی مناسب باوصف گشت که هر یک بشعنه تقریب آرا دارا هستند. در قاضی، اینها فاوله و را

Wounds of Archive

Saleh Najafi

October 23rd, 2013

Wounds Of The Archive¹

As we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into dispute. To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it—be it something or nothing—begins to seep through; I cannot imagine a higher goal for a writer today.

Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta*²

Forgery As A Mode Of Alternative Archiving

Forgers can be considered clandestine or illegal archivists who seek to penetrate furtively into the recesses of established archives and, consciously or unconsciously, change the paradigms of archiving. Forgers challenge the use-value and exchange-value of the archived materials and make accessible something forbidden. Nevertheless, not all forgers can be viewed as so-called radical (or counter-) archivists. Here I speak of forgers who do not just copy a pre-existing work but try to produce a new one ‘in the manner of’ some past artist,³ and who, although intentionally mislead art critics and art lovers, point to the otherwise unnoticed creativity of a forged artist. Such forgers create uncanny temporal coordinates. Past and present are intertwined and in this way a condensed duration is added; there arises a lost hope belonging to the creative spirit of an age come to an end and now resurrected for perhaps the last time.

Forgers, by nature, might prefer anonymity and therefore are rarely remembered. They are like skillful thieves who must live underground and are always behind masks of obscurity. They

hopelessly look for times when posterity will take away the pain of being forgotten and resurrect the memory of their adventurous attempt to disrupt the order of archives. In this context, Han van Meegeren (1889-1947) is a significant exception. His story is viewed by many as the most dramatic confidence trick in the history of twentieth century art.⁴ He is the most notorious and celebrated forger of the last century. However, from the vantage point of the archive question, he is also the most notable figure for boring some unforgettable holes in the body of the archives of art criticism, for challenging the very idea of originality, renewing the discussion of aesthetic and art historical value of copies vis-à-vis originals, and therefore reposing the debate on the status of forgery in the age of technological reproducibility of artworks.⁵ Furthermore, he created some new originals which went beyond the dichotomy of copy-original. He acted as an impossible pupil, working in his late master's workshop and practicing his own craft, while simultaneously working as this very master's double, copying his style in order to disseminate his works, and finally as a third party in pursuit of profit.

Van Meegeren's forgeries are in no way direct copies. They are somehow new performances by Johannes Vermeer in the hope of discovering new dimensions in his own work. Van Meegern in fact copied a nonexistent work.

The important thing not to forget is that the forger differs from mere swindlers who obtain money by fraud. He is, rather, a person who actually forges things, i.e. shapes something by heating and hammering, like a smith. His work requires invention, creation, make-believe: "he turns values upside down. He doesn't merely change good coin into bad; he's an alchemist in reverse, offering base or even trash metal for gold. This is why Dante, in his *Inferno*, places forgers, imposters, perjurers and counterfeiters together with alchemists near the lowest circle of hell."⁶ Van Meegeren produced his first forgery in 1923, a legitimate copy of Frans Hals' *Laughing Cavalier*. This forged painting was authenticated by an expert and fetched a good price at auction, but was detected as forgery some months later. His involvement went undiscovered. From this

experience he gained a certain prowess that helped him succeed in his first Vermeer forgery. This forgery was produced nine years later and was praised as a very fine Vermeer by the eminent art historian Professor Abraham Bredius. The same year he left the Netherlands and went with his wife to live in Southern France.

In 1945 van Meegeren disturbed the complacent tranquility of the art world and art critics by emerging out of anonymity and confessing that he was the artist responsible for eight paintings, six of which had been sold as legitimate Vermeers and two as de Hoochs. His *Disciples at Emmaus* received the very highest praise from Abraham Bredius, and hung in the Boymans Museum for seven years (1938-45). There was no doubt in anyone's mind that this was not only one of Vermeer's finest achievements but also one of the most beautiful works of art in the world. Van Meegeren replicated the styles and colors of artists so well that the best art critics and experts of the time regarded his products as genuine and sometimes exquisite. He created, so to speak, some excellent *copie conforme* or, put differently, some appealing works that Vermeer or de Hoochs could have created or produced had they lived longer. In other words, he put in extra time through unauthorized means—a sort of temporal excess—into the life of his chosen masters in order to give them opportunity to create new works in another time, and in this way he forged a temporal gap in the body of the archive of art history.

Van Meegeren also added new works to archives of the history of painting, by studying the formulae for seventeenth century prints and experimentation with ways to produce a pigment surface which had both the hardness of old paint and the crisscross of fine cracks or crackles on the painting's surface. What he set himself to do was to “age the paint artificially”.⁷ He made his work hot in an oven for two hours and bent it over his knees to induce age craquelure. In sum, by artificially participating in the normal process of archive disintegration he managed to create new wounds and produce new interstices. One can say that he tried, in the words of Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, to “fashion perspectives that displace and estrange

the world.” He actually forged an inexistent past in the existing present—perspectives that reveal the world “to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light”.⁸

Mis-Archiving, Or “A Mere Splash In The Sea”

Hanging in the Musee des Beaux-Arts in Belgium are works by some old masters, most notably perhaps, an extraordinary painting attributed to Pieter Bruegel the Elder. This work is doubly unique in the oeuvre of the great Flemish artist. Firstly, this is the only painting Bruegel dedicated to a popular mythical subject matter, the famous tragedy of Icarus, son of Daedalus. The story is well known: Icarus flew too close to the sun, which melted his wings hurtling him to the sea and death (an allegory for an artist who seeks exultantly for the truth of his age and then irremediably falls down). Thus *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* is a revealing work for Bruegel enthusiasts, creating a new entrance into the world of the Flemish Renaissance artist. In this context, Bruegel figures as a special sort of archivist who struggles to inscribe a mythical legend in his own manner on the memory-pages of his age and after all challenges the idealized image of the Classical world fashioned by the Italian Renaissance masters. In Bruegel’s account, the death of Icarus takes place in spring when, in the words of William Carlos Williams, “the year was emerging in all its pageantry.” So the bitter irony of the death of Icarus is that his death goes unnoticed in the spring—“a mere splash in the sea.”⁹

Secondly, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* was a painting subjected to intensive scrutiny by art academics looking persistently for the real artist responsible for this masterpiece. In this sense, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* puts a disturbing question before the archivist. The painting was unidentified until it came to the Musee de Beaux-Arts in 1912. The problem was that, following technical examinations in 1996, the attribution of *Fall of Icarus* to Bruegel was regarded as very doubtful, and it is known as a good early copy by an unknown artist

of Bruegel's original, perhaps painted in the 1560s, by an early predecessor of van Meegeren. But how can we know with some certainty who this unknown copyist-forger was? What if there is no 'original' and what we have is a copy which refers to a nonexistent original, a masterful copy by a gifted pupil, an enthusiastic spectator who wondered what it would have looked like if the great master had made his mind up to produce a painting derived from the poetry of a Roman poet on a Greek legend? In the mind of our fictional copyist, if the master of genre painting had created a landscape in which an unreal event takes place, he would have depicted it as an uneventful sunset landscape; everyone continues his own way, albeit with a surplus element: the pictured shepherd looks into an empty sky. Afterwards, another inferior version appeared and made the experts more perplexed. It was obtained in 1953 by a David van Buuren for his private house, known today as the Van Buuren museum in Brussels. In this version, Icarus' leg, as seen in the more famous version, appears in the water, but Daedalus is depicted as flying in the air as the shepherd gazes at him.

So we have two copyists. There are two forgeries, two versions of a perhaps lost original of whose existence we can never be certain. For these two copies are in oil, whereas Bruegel's other paintings on canvas were in tempera. On this account we deal with an instance of some fortunate mis-archiving, a sort of wound, a contested point in Bruegel archives. The first copyist forged a new perspective to view the world of Bruegel as a Barthesian critic.¹⁰ Roland Barthes believed that the book is a world and "the critic experiences in relation to the book the same conditions governing discourse as the writer experiences in relation to the world." Therefore, the copyist and for that matter the forger as critic works in no man's land in between the world where the artist creates a 'virtual' original and his own copy as a possible actualization of that work. In the encounter with this extraordinary copy it is irrelevant, from a certain point of view, whether we look at an original or copy because the point is the affective experience of looking at a work that belongs to the discursive world of Bruegel. However, from what might be called an 'economic-epistemological' point of view the question of the

originality of a work matters, although these two points are in a dialectical relation to each other because of the bearing they have on the awe caused by confronting a master's original. Even thematically the choice of Icarus is significant. Icarus is a result of an affair between a noble inventor and a female slave. Icarus's fate is at once the effect of two transgressions: a slave's son who, heedless of his father's warning to keep a middle course over the sea and avoid closeness with the sun, caused his fragile wings to melt and underwent his terminal fall. The other copyist, the author of the less known and underestimated version, responded in a way to the wound created by the first forger. In his frame, Daedalus himself appeared in the sky as the shepherd stares at him as if this spectacular event could never be reduced to a mere splash in the sea, quite unnoticed and ignored by the figures present in the picture. So, the second copyist might be said to try to repair the frame broken by one of the most interesting cases of mis-archiving in the art history.

Archiving Nonexistent Material

'The Hals Mystery' is a curious and thought-provoking essay by John Berger on a nonexistent painting of a nude by seventeenth century Dutch master Frans Hals.¹¹ This essay was originally published in a small British journal *New Society* in December 1979. Berger considers Hals "the only painter whose work was profoundly prophetic of the photograph", not because his paintings bear many resemblances to photographs, rather that they think like cameras. But in 'The Hals Mystery', Berger describes in detail a nude painting of the Dutch master as though it existed in reality. He guesses that it was painted sometime between 1645 and 1650, and claims that the year 1645 was a turning point in Hals' career as a portrait painter: "He was in his sixties. Until then he had been much sought after and commissioned. From then onwards, until his death as a pauper twenty years later, his reputation steadily declined." So the nonexistent work Berger chose to describe and analyze art historically and aesthetically was to be the last effort of the painter to recuperate his lost popularity. He had become a person without any means of support, who depended

upon an aid from public welfare funds or charity. In his last years, Hals suffered from poverty and his final paintings depicted the governors of the Alms House in Haarlem in which he was obliged to live. Berger regards these paintings as “masterpieces of controlled plebeian anger.[...] He became the first painter to capture the spiritual poverty of the emergent capitalist class.”¹²

Berger tries to describe as closely as he can the large, horizontal canvas which Hals could have created to rid his destitution: ‘The reclining figure is a little less than life size’. According to Berger’s narration if this painting should ever find its way to a saleroom, ‘it would fetch—given that its subject matter is unique in Hals’ oeuvre—anything between two and six million dollars. One should bear in mind that, as from now, forgeries may be possible.’ Berger then begins to speculate about the identity of the model, i.e. the Hals’ mystery: she lies there naked on the bed, looking at the painter. Who is she? Hals’ mistress? The wife of a Haarlem burgher who commissioned the painting? A prostitute who begged Hals to do this painting of herself? Or one of the painter’s own daughters? Who knows? The point is that “part of the power of nakedness is that it seems to be unhistorical. Much of the century and much of the decade are taken off with the clothes. Nakedness seems to return us to nature.”¹³ By this act of detailed description Berger archives nonexistent, non-historical material in an extant historical archive and registers the wound of nature on the body of history. This mode of archiving can be justly called “redemptive”, because it is a way to redeem a revolutionary whose “careless working methods often led to the pigment cracking” and so created a mysterious field, a sort of gray zone, where nature (or chemistry) and history meet, collide and invoke each other. In Berger’s words, “Artists cannot change or make history. The most they can do is to strip it of pretenses.”¹⁴ Berger repeats the Beckettian gesture in relation to the archives: as we cannot eliminate the archive all at once, we should at least do our best to bore one hole after another in it or make open and deepen its wounds, until what lurks behind it—be it something or nothing—begins to seep through; this, again in Beckett’s terms, means that it is

hoped that the time will come when existing archives are best used where they are most abused.

To return to Berger's view of Hals as a forerunner of photography, one can interpret the fabulous nude by Hals in the light of Barthesian distinction between the photographic *studium* and *punctum*. While the first denotes the cultural, linguistic, and political interpretation of a photograph, a photograph's *punctum* is that accident which, in Barthes' terms "pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me), for *punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole—and also a cast of dice."¹⁵ In this sense, the Hals nude can be regarded as a hole he could have bored in the potentially photographic world of his paintings. The nude is in a way excluded by culture and belongs to another time-rhythm. However, Barthes deepens his conceptualization of *punctum* and elaborates it beyond a "personally touching detail which establishes a direct relationship with the object or person within [a photograph]" referring to the real collective core of *punctum*, a sort of the wound of wound: "I now know that there exists another *punctum* (another *stigmatum*) than the 'detail.' This new *punctum*, which is no longer of form but of intensity, is Time, the lacerating emphasis of the *noeme* (*that-has-been*), its pure representation."¹⁶ The nudity as non-representable presence of Nature in the symbolic frame of Culture, as the nexus of social relationships determined by historical elements which in turn is the excess of personal links with the individual onlookers, bores a hole of Time of natural-history in the body of figurative paintings-photographs of Hals. So Berger excavates a so-called private repertoire of a great artist-archivist of the seventeenth century to discover a lost object, a deep wound, a smile of nature, a kind of grin of the Cheshire cat of the archive of an extraordinary oeuvre—a bright promise of happiness within the life of an artist just in the moment he entered a permanent decline in his success and fame. But, as the French poet Joe Bousquet put it, "My wound existed before me, I was born to embody it".¹⁷ Every archive can be said to come into being to embody a wound, a Natural presence in the archives, or an event that is actualized and then waits

for us, invites us in. Therefore an archive always has to apprehend the wound that it bears deep within its own body in its eternal truth as a pure event and let what lurks behind its body begin to seep through.

Now we can revive one of the recurrent figures with whom Walter Benjamin ponders the dialectic between reconstruction and recuperation, the figure of the collector, one who, being neither a miser nor a banker, resists the dispersion to which objects are prone and attempts to rescue them from their functional role in use and exchange value; a revolutionary archivist who struggles to salvage “the dead from the oblivion”¹⁸ to which the fascistic-totalizing mode of archiving in our world would consign them.

As all of aforementioned examples demonstrate, this process of preservation is also a form of destruction, for to redeem objects means to dig them loose from the historical strata in which they are embedded, purging them of the accreted cultural meanings with which they are encrusted. This new figure of archivist as collector-forger not only bores holes in the body of archives he committed himself to exhaust consistently, but also to find, or rather forge, there some nonexistent materials embodying the wounds that preexisted the archives themselves.

1

In this article I use the word ‘wound’ in a roughly Deleuzian sense as formulated in *The Logic of Sense*. In ‘Twenty-First Series of the Event’, Gilles Deleuze claims that doctrines come from wounds. He then refers to French poet, Joe Bousquet, who at the end of the First World War was paralyzed for the rest of his life. He, Deleuze writes, “apprehends the wound that he bears deep within his body in its eternal truth as a pure event”.

Despite the crucial differences between Deleuze’s philosophy and Jacques Lacan’s theoretical framework, one can say that there is a common logic in their respective elaborations on the notions of wound and trauma: trauma is the Greek word for ‘wound’: an event in a person’s life which is intense and unable to be assimilated. The traumatic event creates a strange time structure that Freud called *Nachträglichkeit*, a situation in which the determining event of a neurosis can be understood only long after it has happened. This event lives deep within the subject as a wound which waits to be understood some day.

2

Beckett, Samuel, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn, Grove Press, (New York 1984).

3

One is tempted to compare the status of these kind of art forgers with that of historians of philosophy, described as such by Deleuze in his discussion of the enigmatic relationship between philosophy and repetition: "Rather than repeat what a philosopher says, the history of philosophy has to say what he must have taken for granted, what he didn't say but is nonetheless present in what he did say" (See Deleuze, *Negotiations.1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, Columbia University, (New York 1995), 136). The art forger who forges a non-existing work of art points in a way to something perhaps unknown which is nonetheless present in the forged artists' actual works and, more importantly, recollects the way the latter's products were made.

4

See for example Edward Dolnick's 2008 book *The Forger's Spell: A True Story of Vermeer, Nazis, and the Greatest Art Hoax of the Twentieth Century*. Dolnick describes Meegeren as "the most successful art forger of the twentieth century." He details the historical condition of occupied Holland where Meegeren created his forgeries and grew rich while his countrymen starved.

5

On the vexing question of the artistic status of 'good forgeries' perhaps the best article is one written by Alfred Lessing and printed in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (vol. 23, 1964). Lessing claims that from an aesthetic point of view, it makes no difference whether or not a painting is authentic. Ironically Meegeren himself declared at his controversial trial, "Yesterday this picture [of mine] was worth millions of guilders, and experts and art lovers would come from all over the world and pay money to see it. Today, it is worth nothing [...]. But the picture has not changed. What has?" See "What is Wrong with a Forgery?" in Warburton, Nigel ed., *Philosophy Basic Writings*, (New York 2005), 536-549.

6

See Ormsby, Erik, 'The Forger as Huckster: Two Books on Han van Meegeren' *The New York Sun*, (August 2008).

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ibid., 393—398.

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Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida, Reflectio ns on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, Hill and Wang, (New York 1982), 26—27.

16

ibid., 96.

17

See Deleuze, Gilles, *The Logic of Sense*, trans Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, Columbia University Press, (New York 1990), 148.

18

In 1937 Walter Benjamin published an essay on a relatively insignificant German Social Democratic intellectual-turned-historian and collector of caricature and erotica. Benjamin called his essay 'Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian'. For Benjamin, "the collector is at once bourgeois, fetishistic, and antiquarian, and also the historical materialist in the most literal manner" (See Steiner, Michael P., "The Collector as Allegorist: Goods, Gods, and the Objects of History' in *Walter Benjamin and t he Demands of History*, ed. Steiner, Cornell University Press (Ithaca, 1996), 88). This essay reflects

Benjamin's unique attitude toward the past, focusing on "the special detail to be preserved for a projected future" (See Benjamin, Walter, 'Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian', in *Essential Frankfurt School*, ed., Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, Continuum, (New York 1982), 225—252).

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After Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fall of Icarus, 70.0x 111.5,
Canvas, KMSKB_MRBAB, Brussels



After Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fall of Icarus, 62.5 x 89.7
cm, Panel, Brussels, Uccle, Van Buuren Museum.

The Split Narrative of Privacy

Babak Afrassiabi

February 4th, 2004

After having been away for almost a year, Golrokh Kamali, the protagonist in *Sagkoshi*, a film by Bahram Beyzai, returns to Tehran on the morning of the Islamic Revolution. At her entrance into the city of Tehran, she realizes that her home has been confiscated; she wonders if she will recognize her belongings any more. Tehran is hurriedly being reconstructed, soldiers run around the streets and walls are being painted over with new slogans. For her accommodation, she is taken to a hotel room that is facing a construction site. The view from the window, where men are welding steel and constantly pass along, is present in all the shots taken from inside the hotel room. The view to the outside is a constant reminder of rapid (patriarchal) change, but more importantly, it places the room within view from outside. This of course inverts the architectural functioning of the window as a screen to the outside world – rotating, as it were, the window/screen 180 degrees, turning her privacy into a spectacle, gazed at from her window to the outside. (Her telephone conversations are constantly tapped by the hotel manager.) The room may be the exclusive spatial privacy of the female protagonist, but it is implicitly occupied by the outside world. In more than one scene we see the outside in its reflection in the mirror inside the room. The extension or the infiltration of the construction site into the hotel room signifies forced reconstructions of the private space as a necessity for ideological change; a continuous overlapping of the one onto the other is a way of maintaining total transparency in both fields.

In Iran, life in the private space has long been in contradiction with that in the public space. Obligations of behavior, mannerisms and appearances in public spaces have all contributed to its incongruity with life in private spaces. As a result certain inevitable overlapping moments of the two domains have come to effectuate their

experience as highly schizophrenic and conflicting. One true manifestation of such moments, of the “clash” between the private and the public, is to be traced in the representation of the home (as the most private) and the appearances of its inhabitants in Iranian movies. (How often have we seen a couple, either represented as married and/or being married in real life, appearing in their home, as they would have had to appear if in a public space, obeying strict codes of modesty?) This is a phenomenon often talked about and looking at its politics of display can help us to understand the representational level on which the private and the public come to contradict each other and how this contradiction finally entangles each domain even in real life.

On the one hand, the represented space is characterized as a private territory (the home within the film), but on the other hand (a less fictive one), since it is publicly displayed, it is considered a public domain. The public screening of the privacy of home is seen as its entrance into the public field with all its codifications. What is being undermined and deferred in this process of translation is the fictiveness of the screened privacy and consequently that of the modesty implied in it. Only when the *fictive* privacy of the home is perceived as the continuation of the *real* of the public domain can it become subject to codifications of appearance and behavior implied in public spaces. By its enunciation as a public domain, the image of the home is bared open to the entrance, or rather, the invasion of the dominant gaze of modesty. The image of the home is reframed within codes regarding public space, and automatically stripped of any privacy. In the end the modified image communicates more than anything the presence of the dominant gaze looking back onto us as viewers, from inside the image. The dominant gaze constantly re-enters and re-establishes itself within the image of the private, becoming an inevitable part of the image, or the image itself. By constantly eliminating the boundaries between public and private, as well as the distinctions between fiction and reality, it expands its territory as far as representations of privacy and private narratives.

The (ideological) desire for a modest depiction of private spaces is kept alive through a refusal to admit the fictiveness of their cinematic modesty, the disavowal of the gap between the modified image of the private and its reality beyond control. As all disavowals are, by their very nature, split into two, the dominant gaze establishes itself on the very basis of the split between the refusal to admit the fictiveness of the image of the private and the belief in its modesty as the actual modification of the private real. However, the result is at once the disavowal and the unwanted affirmation of the lack in the modesty of the private... the lack of inconsistency between the modified image and its true referent. But more so, the lack of the dominant gaze within private spaces as truly lived.

In the end the screened space of the home is neither completely public, since it takes place within the private walls of a home, nor commonly private, since it is represented in regard to the obligatory laws implied in public appearances. This displaces the scene of the home from the totality of the fictional narrative of the film, but what is actually taking place is suppression by way of replacement, the replacement of the *mise-en-scène* of the private with that of the public and the denunciation of the image of the private as already a mismatch that constantly needs adjustment; a way of suspending the referent real of the home by representing it in its ideal proper image.

The attempt is one of balancing out the two spaces of public and private and finalizing them into a single ideal (transparent) space.

(The fact that Golrokh Kamali is living in a hotel room is not a coincidence. Within the narrative of the film, the hotel room is a transitory space between the private as personal to private as collective, from who she was to who she should become. What is interesting however, is the way she inverts this space into one from which she operates her revolt towards this very process of translation and modification.)

If the cinematically modest representation of privacy is finally one beyond both the fictive narrative of the film and the reality of the private, we might conclude, it is an image wiped clean of its identificatory references. The inhabitants of this space are

momentarily placed outside their true roles. But instead they are given an extra role to play, a role within a role, one that refers not to the narrative of the film but rather to that proper, ideal appearance.

This extra, exterior role imposes a break in the film, but with it, there comes to emerge an extra level of identification, one that refers to a space exterior to that depicted in the film. As a viewer one easily identifies with the roles played, however false: the message is communicated and sent through, just like a TV commercial between two sequences of a film, but this time present throughout the film.

This exterior role played by the actors communicates those codes that are imposed onto appearances and mannerisms in the public space, those we are implying onto ourselves even while we are watching the film in a cinema theater. We both experience the presence of the same gaze in the space we inhabit, either in front of the camera or in front of the cinema screen. This is a level of identification that is beyond any fictive realm. We, as spectators, identify the gaze inside the image with that in the outside public world.

However, this moment of disruption within the film, the cut introduced into the narrative, is a moment of truth: the manifestation of the extremity of the division and incongruity between the private and the public, which has come to exist as the result of a lack of correspondence between the two for a long time. Far more than this, it represents the internalized split within each space, the gap with the other. The experience of private spaces remains one defined by constant shifts between privacy as lived and as gazed at. The presence of the gaze is felt in every private space even when it is not there, threatening to eliminate the privacy.

In front of the screen, one is caught in a space between the gaze looking onto us as inhabitants of public space, and the gaze present in the image of the private looking back onto us as viewers. Other than a position of control the gaze provides itself with its own depiction, a reflection of itself in the screened image, staging a fictive unification between the public and the private space. In this sense the kind of identification that is at work is one between the gaze and its

own projection onto the image; we as viewers only activate it. As such we are deprived of any personal relationship with private or public spaces. What is passed onto us is, however, a rupture, one that we carry around going from one space to the other.

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Still from Sagkoshi by Bahram Beyzai

Life is elsewhere: Telegram and the Writing of Immediacy

Nima Parzham

December 29th, 2017

Solitude cannot be uttered without immediately ceasing to be. It can only be written at a distance, protected from the eye that will read it.

“Of Solitude as the Space of Writing”, Edmond Jabès¹

Apparently the increasing and hasty tendency of individuals to be in social media is accompanied with often the same individuals' growing criticism of these media with the theme of rupturing social, familial and other relationships. It seems that here again we are facing another example of the famous definition of late capitalism: they know what they do and they still do it. However, one should not forget that the pervasive spread of virtual relations does not leave such a great range of choices for us; we defenseless subjects, we vulnerable isolated atoms. What can one do to resist against this trend? The first answer that crosses one's mind is avoiding them. In fact my personal choice with regard to Facebook was this act. But after a while when a friend told me that “those who are not in Facebook are still in Facebook”, it made me think again. Although this remark was clearly indicating a presence through absence or with the mediation of absence, after the emergence of Viber, WhatsApp and finally the widespread use of Telegram, I was faced with more empirical aspects of this powerful determinism: one who still persists on avoiding virtual relations would eventually realize that day by day he is becoming more alienated from the social environments in his daily life, and gradually he notices that he cannot understand the jokes of his acquaintances with one another since he is not aware of the common background of their remarks. Therefore, he finally comes to this understanding that it is a while that he is not able to satisfy some of his needs and he realizes that transferring files,

photos, movies and important personal, professional and general news is only carried out via the virtual media, whether at workplace or among his friends and family. Here we are facing the ridiculous and banal actualization of Rimbaud's famous line: "Life is elsewhere!" It will not take long that if one is still concerned with resistance, he is obliged to decide to experience these virtual relations in a controlled and careful manner instead of avoiding them. Probably in most cases there is not a long way from this point to severe addiction.

However, where does this addictive satisfying feeling of experiencing Telegram come from? What void does Telegram fill in our lives?

Undoubtedly one has to be suspicious of this common sense idea about the virtual social media, which most often is part of the addiction process to them, that "they ruin the immediate and alive familial and social relationships". The issue at hand is certainly more complex. We all know that in modern society dominated by capitalism, human beings are transformed to isolated atoms, a kind of extreme individualism which apparently and logically is supposed to create a beautiful and diverse plurality of colorful differences.

Paradoxically, the more this plurality of differences is expounded and diversified, the differences themselves become less significant to the point that the afore-mentioned process eventually homogenizes this plural spectrum and leads to a type of herd uniformity. Adorno and Horkheimer, in a passage entitled "Isolation by Communication" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, provide an excellent example to explain this process:

The railroad has been supplanted by cars. The making of travel acquaintances is reduced by the private automobile to half-threatening encounters with hitchhikers. People travel on rubber tires in strict isolation from one another. What is talked about in one family automobile is the same as in another; in the nuclear family, conversation is regulated by practical interests. Just as every family with a certain income spends the same percentage on housing, cinema, cigarettes, exactly as statistics prescribe, the subject matter of conversations is schematized

according to the class of automobile.² (p. 184)

The emergence of Telegram should be considered in the background of this logic. What Telegram steals from people's lives is not alive and organic social relationships. What this claim hides is that these organic relations in modern society have been already transformed and to a great extent have become ruptured and fragmented. In fact it is common that people warn one another in gatherings not to trade away these moments of gathering around for virtual socializing. What Telegram steals from people is not only their fragmented and often worthless daily socializing but more importantly their solitude, where the rupture of relations and the poverty of collective experience manifest itself as a void. Telegram transforms the individuals' solitude to virtual socializing.

But the most important evidence for this claim is the theme residing in the heart of virtual media phenomenon: Writing.

Today the discussions of leading left thinkers about voice have convinced us increasingly that Derrida hastened to identify voice with the "metaphysics of presence" in order to defend writing, and he ignored the enigmatic and amazing nature of voice. However, the structural significance of writing should not be forgotten. Human sound is based on the immediacy of presence. Speaking presupposes the presence of the speaker and the listener. Writing, on the other hand, rests upon the absence of one of them in the presence of the other. Therefore, writing is indeed a kind of positive organization of absence. With regard to the immemorial link between immediacy and ideology, it is clear that writing has in fact more ability to resist against the domination of ideology, and the improvisation and immediacy in most conversations make them more vulnerable in this respect. Compare the written war of words between two thinkers in the successive volumes of a monthly magazine to the face to face debate of the same thinkers. Although the dramatic feature of the latter might render it more effective in some aspects, the former, no longer restrained to the fast rhythm imposed by the logic of present

conversation, has at least the condition and the capability to be more coherent and more resistant to the sophistries caused by repartee and flattery. As mentioned before, if Telegram not just steals the worthless daily socializing of people but also and more importantly their solitude, it can be claimed that Telegram tries to transform absence and writing to, respectively, presence and speech. Thus, our experience of the act of writing in Telegram is often close to the experience of present conversation with regard to the amount of immediacy, timing, and irresistible acceleration of rhythm. In Telegram, the metaphysics of presence haunts writing like a specter and changes its nature. Writing in Telegram is a haunted writing, a writing captured in the immediate logic of speech which has become its midday shadow.

This is how social media extracts surplus value from our social relations in the same society that renders these relations impossible. That is why these networks at the same time become a tool to produce these relationships virtually for the sake of filling the apparent void in humans' solitude which reveals the absence of these relationships. Therefore, social networks tame and domesticate humans' solitude and cover up its cracks.

But does a controlled and careful participation in Telegram or showing some degree of subjective resistance even have a meaning and is it possible? Although clearly it seems way more optimistic, it should not be forgotten that the presence and participation of human subjects in this programmed and systematic environment ultimately contains an amount of tension in the subject which renders impossible the complete assimilation of the subject in the system. That this amount of subjectivity would be able to tame and control this pre-programmed environment by a certain strategy or discipline might be possible in a determinate level yet not with much success. In such a case, subjects (in both senses, i.e. agents and the ones who are subjected) should be able to reduce as much as possible the acceleration of that torrent of naked texts which are emptied out the historical substance of language, carrying the mud of passing conversations. They have to try to still preserve their fragile solitude,

put limits on their presence in the limitless and indeterminate space of these networks, and (using Badiou's words) become their own "relentless censors"³. They have to exorcize haunted writings. However, beyond all these speculations, certainly the most important issue is that the subjects desiring to resist should instead of flattering themselves that they are resisting within virtual networks recall during their presence in social media that life is really elsewhere.

Writing is organizing absence. We should use writing, like translation, in a more general sense. If Telegram transforms the void, which has been resulted from the absence of real social relations and collective and alive traditions of resistance, to immediate writing or "metaphysics of presence", we should look to save writing in a more general sense. But what does writing in a more general sense mean? Is it not that in psychoanalysis symptoms are the writings of language which are inscribed violently on the subjects' bodies? Is it not that Benjamin talked of a prose which would break "the chains of writing" and is "festively celebrated"⁴? What does releasing writing from its chains mean and how can it lead beyond the text to a festive celebration in agora? Can one speak of the writing of politics? In that case, what does the writing of politics, and not politics of writing, mean?

The writing of politics is not the politics or strategy of writing; if writing is the positive organization of absence, then the writing of politics is a writing which organizes the absence of politics. The writing of politics means the formulation of the absence of immediate politics before or after its contingent and Evental emergences and reveals itself in a social manifestation which is the positive organization of that absence. In other words, the writing of politics is organization, i.e. the positive and practical registering and formulating of the remained traces of politics in the time of its absence from social manifestations. The writing of politics is "the elsewhere" in which the residue of people's faulty lives takes shelter in the hope of salvation so that it might break the chains of writing and can be experienced like a festive celebration.

Translator: Farid Dabirmoghaddam

1

The Little Book of Unsuspected Subversion. Trans. Rosmarie Waldrop. California: Stanford University Press, 1996.

2

Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. California: Stanford University Press, 2002.

3

Badiou, Alain. "Third Sketch of Affirmationist Art". *Polemics*. Trans. Steve Corcoran. Verso, 2006. p. 148

4

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Imaginary Futures and the Archive

Norman Klein

October 18th, 2011

Pages: The archive is usually the site of the past. It holds documents that have somehow survived over time and now have come to represent traces for a collective memory of a nation, a people or a social group. But more than that, the archives of our time have become sites of re-archiving and of reproducing documents. For example, electronic archives such as Youtube or Facebook, where a single document is posted and reposted time and again through a process of cut-and-paste. If archives are incomplete, it is no longer because of the documents that did not survive the passing of time, but of what is still to be inserted or re-invented into them. The archive can be understood as the open-ended site for the production of anticipated memories and connectivities. In his article 'Archive Aspiration', which takes the example of the diasporic archive, Appadurai writes that the migrant archive is the main site of negotiation between collective memory and desire.¹ This characteristic of the archive (which according to Appadurai is the intensified form of all archives) is precisely what official institutional or ideologically driven archives tend to suppress. In our time there seems to be an increased desire to produce undecidable 'documents' that form the endlessly open and flexible archive. Clearly this change in the experience of the archive requires a revision of historiography and cultural research. In your view, what are the implications of this?

Norman Klein: Traditionally, as an instrument of power, the archive has been defined as an official collection of documents, where surveillance and control are its dominant function. Appadurai shifts that definition into something that is less stable, and can be migratory. Archive then is mediated, as in the tracking of immigrants or migrants within a globalized economy. That would suggest a more invaded archive, where social memory and material culture intersect

somehow (in ways as yet to be discovered, perhaps a field of research that needs archiving, let us say). In my work on archive, that direction is not entirely helpful. It presumes a distinction that almost dissolves for me, for example: whether a place where documents are official (a legal record) or an attic where family remnants have been assembled for a private purpose. The archive is a fictional act, a making of story out of a pile of traces.²

1. More to the point, I like to see 'archive as a verb'. It is the "act of assemblage," as Margo Bistis writes (for the soon to be published *Imaginary Twentieth Century*).³ We start then with very different examples, and wind up in the archiving of the migratory.

2. Let us open to the first page of a novel, or view the first five minutes of a feature film. There may be a back-story. In fact (as fiction) back-story is essential to the ambiance of reading. It is the unspoken that came before. The diegesis, or filigree of events before, must be implied, as if the story were racing against time and dissolving memory. In tragedies set in a post war situations, like the women of Troy (Euripides), the characters reenact the unspoken, the lost decade when war stole their lives. But they must reenact the unspoken within a single day. They are essentially archiving dramatically. They are forced to condense meaning, one might say, only enough memory to keep the ghost of their dead husbands alive, but not too much to bear. They must archive selectively.

3. Official records are much the same, in many respects. Mediation is even more obviously an archiving. We are given a construction, but allowed to also see the bones of the house. As one researches through a collection, a database, there is always a haunted ideology, of course. What is left out tells us more than what is included. No matter how complete the archive may seem, it is partial. It may seem thorough, but that may be in order to hide something more important. Rarely does a researcher find the heart of the matter in a collection. More likely, the heart has been consumed or partially removed. Otherwise, the collection would not have survived. It is like a plate of food after

it has been eaten. We study the plate for signs of what was eaten.

4. Unquestionably, the impact of the Internet has accelerated archiving to the point of madness, in many cases. 'The fat finger' can generate a stock market crash. Records can be deleted in a thousandth of a second. Filters of all kinds can reassemble data into a thousand shapes. Archiving has almost become sculptural.

5. In a larger sense, as archiving turns increasingly into a migratory blogospheric process, we are living inside the 'end of the political Enlightenment', at least in the West – the end of the tradition of common law and rule-of-law as an equalizer, as a shared code. There are many reasons for this ending. One that occurs to me as I type away late at night is the following: Archiving takes place in a fraction of a second, too fast for anyone to study. Then, a day later, the truth is old news, too old to be studied. We live in an autistic knowledge culture, incredibly migratory. At the same time, the migrations of real people due to globalism are just as easily forgotten – on the spot, in a second. It was always easy to be ignored when you are marginal; but now, through fictive archiving, media culture pretends to notice. We think we are actually keeping track, but archiving is more often an act of erasure and forgetting. It is hard work to archive second by second.

6. Archiving is a scripted space: it seems to privilege the person navigating through it. But in fact, the design is predetermined. Thus, the oligarchs and owners of the program usually win.

We try to find a balanced view: This new migratory form of archiving does offer the viewer a chance to intervene in the official record, to comment on real facts as social media. Of course, much of that is just a way of barking at the moon. Where does political illusion meet political action, where does migratory knowledge liberate us today? And yet, particularly now, as group hysteria, the migratory (collective) act of archiving has actually dissolved the official record. It overwhelmed official facts with shared hysterical

facts. In the US, archiving turned into mob action, into collective schizophrenia; into ten thousand unofficial lies and racist innuendoes, guided by wealthy right-wing investors.

Archiving today – as a verb – easily covers up the official record. It promises to replace the rule of law by folkloric intervention. It promises to “tea-party” it, to have non-lawyers remake the law. That sounds liberating... Perhaps some day, this will be a liberationist act. Right now, it merely glorifies capitalist risk. It is another artificial theology about market domination. It hopes that deregulation will increase imperialism, even at home. In some ways, it will, of course, but not as imperialism once was. Now, erasure by way of archiving makes all forms of imperialism easy to camouflage, even when you are begging to become a serf, asking to be colonized. In other words, the Tea-party movement wants to accelerate their own feudalistic future – and ours along with it, all to save the white male (from what is not always entirely clear). Thus, archiving, as a collective wiki style of memory, has become a vigilante act in our time. It turned social memory into a blizzard of factoids that poisoned what remained of our national politics.

A confession: I must admit, however, that poisoning the system is charming (I remember trying my best during my youth). It is so pleasant, that the true facts of the matter are hardly relevant. Who really cares? It is more fun to intervene, to archive on your own. You feel for the moment as if you are transforming hegemony, not reinforcing it. Archiving becomes a theatrical copy of revolution. It becomes solidarity on behalf of your own self-immolation. You can actually dissolve a government this way, without offering the slightest alternative. Migratory archiving travels too fast to make actual policy, only to dismantle infrastructure. It is a kind of *grand peur*, like the summer of 1789 in France, but without anything else; so the global investors win everything.

Thus, obviously, while complaining about immigration, Americans should look at their own self-migratory insanity. Immigrants are in

no way responsible for the insidious way that Americans are dismantling themselves, hiring themselves out as serfs. That is so evident, the joke is literally on us.

7. Here I would like to shift my discussion to archive as storytelling, with a tradition going back centuries, even millennia. I often compare archive – as a verb – to the picaresque novel (characteristic of seventeenth and eighteenth century fiction). Picaresque is episodic, filled with the bones of lost places, what I call a wunderroman, a fictional archive that operates a bit like a curiosity cabinet. The character journeys into a manic stillness. You adapt to a world that refuses to change, but is never at rest. The world will simply not evolve; it is frozen somehow, but filled with conmen and swindlers. The picaresque is a road story about the picaro (or man of the road), who wound up on another path, every bit as diabolical as the first. Archiving then turns into tragicomedy, rather like Marx's description of the Revolution of 1848 in France.⁴ Outwardly, the revolution seems a liberation of the lower classes, the layers of proletariat (and certainly proletarian revolution is what Marx had promised in the Communist Manifesto, only months before). But Marx as journalist was forced to notice that the revolution provided the same capitalist forces a new way to tighten their grip, to look more 'modern', but just as relentless.

8. If we stay on the literary aspects of archiving, many other directions emerge. Here are a few: Migratory implies a more reader-oriented telling, a less formal, more unedited structure – at least in our off-the-cuff, Internet civilization. However, underneath the instant genius and bushwah on our monitor, underneath all this hyperlinking, real Trojan women are still waiting, surviving, adapting, in migratory nightmares around the world.

9. The problem can be summarized simply enough: Archive has grown extremely relevant in our time. Databases have matured into new instruments of power. But the search engines that turn data into archive are endlessly transitioning (always in migration, unlike old-fashioned 'archives'). They are risky; they often pose as liberation,

but are often more like mob rule governed by wealth and risk capitalism.

And yet, the liberating possibilities of archiving should not be ignored. The archival act is often a collective action – as a new form of social memory. Perverse as it may be, this magnetic impulse must somehow be harnessed better. To coin a phrase from American history, we must assume a frontier vigilance about knowledge and manipulation when we study archiving.

As I roll toward the conclusion, I'll return briefly to the immigrant (as the son of immigrants who has spent most of his life in immigrant neighborhoods in the U.S.). All residents in the US – citizens and immigrants alike – are becoming foreigners in their own economy. That is why citizens here feel increasingly like immigrants, particularly since the Crash.

10. Thus the shift of archive to a verb reminds us that a new hazardous civilization is emerging. Capital is migrating even faster. The nation state is being restructured even faster. The official record migrates into vapor, as social media. Rupert-Murdoch style news turns into proxy government, pretending to keep honest records. In terms of knowledge, we in the US are forced to be hunters and gatherers, inside a drought. This is the story – the archiving – that I have decided to track. I believe that it will eventually lead to the remaking of the American political system altogether. But that will take a long time, decades.

I hear dogs barking outside at nothing at all, just keeping each other company. I hear people leaving the evangelical church down the block. Cars roaring up and down the hillsides mix with a helicopter far away. I collect the moment, find the noise relaxing.

* * *

Pages: You refer to archive an empty plate of food that we study for

signs of what was eaten, gatherers inside a drought. Yet you see the possibility of tracking new narratives of the moment, of redeeming the erased to allow new social memories? Can you give examples of your own work with archives?

Norman Klein: I will conclude by offering an alternative form to archive. To present this alternative, I will first clarify what I am not doing (1), then give a summary of an ongoing project (2).

1. Current theories about the archive often evolve from their earlier 'public meaning'. That is: the archive was a 'public record' that officials used to enforce policies to. In nineteenth century Europe, the state (national and regional) made an enormous fuss about its archives becoming more available. They were presumably a point where power and 'objectivity' met as good government, as freedom of information. Archives became shrines to the illusion (and occasionally the fact) of democracy.

To go back even further, we know that Baroque Europe (in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) was already obsessed with official archives as tools for the purification of the Catholic Church (the Counter Reformation) and as signals of a shift in how power operated. For example, the census was a tool that bourgeois royal tax farmers (as they were called) used in France. Tax farmers paid money to the king to replace the regional power of nobility to collect taxes. With their census records, tax farmers could even get bank loans, based on how much they would skim from the revenues.

So the official archives after the Revolution (for all to see) were presumably a step toward the rights of man. But there remains the fundamental role of archive:

1a. No matter how open or repressed, the official archive was the last word, like a verdict in court. There was no way to correct the verdict, whether a census, or a tax record, or a marriage. It was a secular cognate of the divine word: its matter-of-fact was equivalent

to the word of God.

2b. As a related example, particularly for the period after 1850 in Europe, there was a cognate to the archive that should be mentioned here: the atlas.

The atlas was a pictural (or even picturesque) archive that served as a visual mapping of place (a city, a country, an ethnicity). After 1850, these became enormously popular, in hundreds of editions, almost like books of hours had been in the fifteenth century. The visual atlas was a form of armchair tourism, infinite in detail, and heavily populated with human facts (what an exotic people did for a living, their customs, their topography, their psyche, etcetera). The most famous 'private' visual atlas was probably the Kahn archive of the world, 1908-31, sponsored by the Parisian banker Albert Kahn; a 'map' of the world that contained thousands of photographs and films, mostly as long shots and pans— processional more than dramatic imagery.⁵

That suggests a definition of atlas within my argument for this essay: Like an official archive, the atlas is also presumably 'complete'. It is presented as thorough, like a map where no place can be ignored. It was a science of the actual, particular to the era dominated by European colonialism.

2. Now we shift. Obviously the official archive and the atlas are both fictions in how they are programmed. There is no need to argue that. But what if we emphasize the archive as fictional, as Balzac did in his 'Human Comedy' (twenty novels as a master atlas of French life 1815-30; a history of mores, he called it).

Where does that kind of human comedy take us today – with the Internet as our archive; browsing as the archive-as-verb; computer graphics as precision-tooled fictions that can archive anything?

This month, after six years of work, I am completing a gigantic

archival project. Along with the curator (and co-director) Margo Bistis, I have invented a novel that includes an archive of 2,200 images. Broadly speaking, it is a story about how the twentieth century was imagined before it happened.⁶

But the major instruments of this archive are a 60,000 word novel (to be published as a book), and a massive interface that intermingles with the book, and will be available through a password on line. The interface requires 40,000 gigabytes, includes interpretive maps (one for each of the twelve chapters), its own music/sound archival score, its own voiceovers. It is thus a tripartite archive, an engine with three gears: novel in print; interface on line; historical web site.

The purpose of this archive is to remain thoroughly incomplete, like collective memory itself. The more factual it gets, the more fictional it becomes. The story does make sense, from plot point to plot point: it delivers 'endless' facts in very coherent streams, easy to track. However, the facts inside these streams are about events that cannot be proven; though they probably happened. I say probably if you want to believe the novel; and certainly the archive is utterly 'true', in its way. It does contain real documents, from real magazines, collections, even official archives for some of it, like the Library of Congress (in Washington, D.C.), or special collections from major libraries.

Let me thread the needle for a moment: After all, a story that is a 'lie' must be based on some version of the truth, or else it is just a lie. That is closer to, let us say, speculative science fiction. There, the author often promises non-truth, and delivers thoroughly; to the reader's delight— that's a fact. *The Imaginary Twentieth Century* is not speculative in that way.

If I tell you, the reader, that everything I write for the next two pages will be a complete lie, that would also be a fact. But *The Imaginary Twentieth Century*¹ must overlap fact/fiction much more. It must be an unstable lie, an incomplete that someone – a character in the story

– planned that way.

A summary statement is needed here, before I fall into a Zeno's Paradox: In *The Imaginary Twentieth Century*, many of the historical events did occur, though an atlas of these events turns out to be a kind of wallpaper, to hide cracks in the plaster behind it.

Part of the reason is its principal 'theme', a trope that returns often — about the collective act of misremembering. There were hundreds of thousands of pictures about the twentieth century before it took place. But no more than five per cent of these imaginings were truly acted out. Put another way: the future is always a caricature of the present. It is the present as a future of the past. Otherwise, who can plan at all?

However, as soon as the 'real' future— real events — intrude, these earlier conjectures, even from months before, suddenly look quaint.

However, the imaginary futures do not disappear; they leave a residue of actions not taken. This residue finds its way into science fiction and techno curiosities — on film, in devices at world's fairs, in Shanghai, or in Epcot at Disney World.

To recap: Archive is often collective memory. It is material culture; which is quite different from a divine instrument of the state. Collective memory is about displacement, erasure, evasion and distortion. To some degree, in archives, fact and fiction coexist strangely, in what historians used to call the collective psyche.

The archive still needs a story, a construction of course. In *The Imaginary Twentieth Century*, the story centers on a woman and her four confused suitors — and her uncle, a political insider. The story has a time frame, 1893-1925. But its narrative pleasure lies in its incompleteness. The archive that it presents is a gigantic record of political hoaxes, and the engineering of half-truths. The pleasure of navigating these lies not simply in the places one locates, in plot points one finds— but in the 'futures' hidden there: the blank spaces

in between; clues that were edited out.

The imagery itself (2,200 scans) are almost purely about the missing.

If they were a piano, they would be the black keys. Imagine an archive, then, in a stream where misunderstanding is just as believable as fact. As the uncle often explains, fiction is much more believable than 'the truth of the matter'.

Imagine an archive that belongs clearly to our commodified, half-baked world today, where real violence is often imaginary, as perverse as that sounds — where the fact and fiction coexist like crosswinds; but have real consequences. Real simulated money disappears, real lives are lost. We live very much in an archive based on misremembering.

The archive is more than ever a construction: breaths between. It is now supposed to be the instrument of power that we all share in social networks. But it is very often the same misery, much as it always was. Now archiving is presumably an open source; but the more open it is, the more forgetful and fictional it becomes, just like those official records centuries ago. We are all tax farmers now, but only some of us ever collect.

We can broaden this a bit further: Archiving lies at the heart of all storytelling. The program that guides it is an author. It speaks to us through narrators. Sometimes we are a narrator. Increasingly, due to the Internet, there are many narrators at once; and often highly unreliable authors, who can shape the data, add non-facts easily, decide which events should be remembered.

So the final question remains for the reader to interpret: Will this fictional/factual mode of archiving offer the democratic action that open source used to suggest? Or is it merely another way for public instruments of power to operate? Today, I am reading about the assassination attempt on a U.S. congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, in Tucson Arizona. Much of the evidence is on line, left by the

assassin.

His rambling are as mad as anything one could imagine. This is a fiction I would have trouble even inventing; and I can lie fairly comfortably. The spaces between, the breathing apparatus of the archive, has always been a tool of assassins. We are none of us surprised. But the humanity behind it, the attempts to take charge of collective archiving, will dominate our civilization for decades.

Culturally, the future of how archive incubates will be a primary job for writers, artists and critics; and librarians, scholars, media designers. It is like the reinvention of the novel itself; and perhaps even political democracy itself. One likes to hope.

Footnotes

1- Archive and Aspiration, Arjun Appadurai, *Information is Alive: Art and Theory on Archiving and Retriving Data*, Joke Brouwer, Arjen Mulder, Susan Charlton, V2-NAi Publishers, 2003

2- Appadurai's essay is linked to theories of the 1990's, where archiving was closely linked to computer databases. For example, my first media novel—very much about fiction/fact and archive-- was called a "database novel" by the publisher; and I essentially agreed back then (*Bleeding Through*, 2003). But I learned so much about archiving from all my projects, I now feel quite differently. While the nineties impulse to expand on "data-sampling" continues (in conferences and papers on the Digital Humanities, and research on science-and-media mapping)-- along with continued philosophical responses to Benjamin, Foucault, Derrida and others-- I am convinced that the *literary* possibilities of archiving still remain mostly undeveloped. I am increasingly asked to train artists and designers in this literary potential, through seminars at Cal Arts and at Art Center, for example. Through these seminars, I can see changes toward archiving-as-literature in only the past five years. Quite suddenly, it seems, as if passing a threshold, social media have

changed how students see archives. The act of retrieval has become as intuitive as epistolary traditions were in 1700. In that sense, the way that we handle social media could evolve into a kind of novel in the sense that letters and diaries did circa 1900. As a digital culture, since 2000, we have moved from multi-tasking to clustering (that is, from ten directions at once, to ten functions toward the same task). As a result, the transitive and sculptural possibilities are spectacular. Many of my students have tried to build mechanisms that capture this topology, this architectonic engine that is archiving. As a final point in regard to the task of archiving (re Appadurai and others), there is one more field that needs to be mentioned: archiving as mnemonic architecture, in new work on memory theaters (far beyond earlier studies, like *The Art of Memory* by Frances Yates). That is: sculptural work on collective memory as environments (by artists like Deborah Aschheim, for example). This, of course, is also a response to the video mapping of memory itself by scientists involved in memory and the brain; the archiving of memories turns into set of trails and clusters that can be filmed and built.

3- For more information, and updates on *The Imaginary 20th Century Project*, see the web site

www.imaginary20thcentury.com

4- Karl Marx, the opening page of *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*, in numerous editions.

5- The most recent study on Kahn's archive: Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). This monograph is part of yet another field in archiving that refers back to Aby Warburg's work in the 1920's-- to art history and photo collections as scripted environments (also related to the history of art installations since the early sixties, and various installation artists

who specialize in archival method, like Peter Friedl). There is also the ongoing crisis in archiving brought about by lapsed platforms, where video art disappears when a new device or software erases an older system. This has generated all sorts of ironies in artwork, because our collective memory through media often vanishes, as if it were set on fire by Apple or Microsoft or Adobe, as if the computer business were like the fire that destroyed the ancient library of Alexandria.

6- www.imaginary20thcentury.com.

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From the French illustrated magazine *Pêle-Mêle*, circa 1901. Image courtesy of The Imaginary 20th Century.



Officer (at top of Bridge, excitedly): CAN YEZ HANG ON DOWN THERE WHILE I GET HELP?
Mr. Straphang: CERTAINLY! WE'RE ALL FROM BROOKLYN.

From *Life Magazine*, 1910. In that year, cars were finally allowed to dominate the road at more than miles per hour. Here they spill the past off the Brooklyn Bridge.
Image courtesy of The Imaginary 20th Century.

Geo-Archive

Mariam Motamedi Fraser

October 23rd, 2013

ACCUMULATION

What is Oil? Oil is a fossil fuel. Most of the oil extracted today was formed from prehistoric organisms whose remains settled at the bottoms of oceans and lakes millions of years ago. As layers of sediment covered them, the pressure on them increased which in turn increased the temperature. This process changed their chemical composition, eventually transforming them into oil. (EDF Energy, <http://www.edfenergy.com/energyfuture/oil>)

- Pierre Fernandez Arman, *Le Coeur en Verre Vers*, 1969, Resin and Objects, 25 x 25 x 25 cm

Pierre Fernandez Arman: Usually a sculptor makes an original statement by cutting away in space. I didn't invent a new way to cut space, it was more an accumulation. Objects have a tendency to auto-compose themselves. Collected in a box you shake hundreds of them—they take up certain positions, interlocking in certain ways, and I made my sculptures from that.

Cv/Visual Arts Research Archive: How did you fix the objects?

Arman: Firstly I held them with wire, nails, glue, and ultimately polyester and Plexiglas cases.

Cv/VAR: And concrete?

Arman: The use of concrete came later, and I was thrilled by that because it gave a geological, fossilized aspect to the objects.

(Cv/Visual Arts Research Archive Series 47, Arman: Conversations with Objects, Cv Publications, (London 1989/2011), 9.)

Primary Sedimentation [...] This is the primary phase of archival sedimentation, in which people and organizations create, discard, save, collect, and donate materials of potential and archival interest. For example, an active scholar's research, writing, and teaching over a lifetime of work generate a large mass of correspondence, manuscripts, lecture notes, and other materials. Academics also acquire a lot of other people's flotsam along the way: files of college memos, committee reports, books, publishers' catalogs [sic], drafts of technical articles sent by colleagues, scholarly journals, unclaimed student papers, and so forth. [...] To explore some of the possibilities and their consequences, let's now follow the material of a hypothetical scholar through this first and often unreflexive phase of archival sedimentation. (M. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques*, Sage (London, 1993), 9-10.)

DESTRUCTION, PARTIAL

In the early 1950s, Pièrre Fernandez Arman was taking photographs of 'natural accumulations' such as shoals of fish or logs. Some years later, in 1960, he proceeded his friend Yves Klein's 1958 exhibition 'Le Vide' (The Void) with a show called 'Le Plein' (The Full). In this show, Arman filled the gallery with trash. This was Arman's first foray into what was to become the poubelles.

Cv/VAR: Still, even nowadays people say, 'But it's just garbage'

Arman: Oh yes, sure. But yes and no. I discovered something when I made a garbage work in 1970, of refuse embedded in plastic. When people have been protected from the terrible aspects of garbage, the smell, the sticky texture, they can look at it with interest. I remember a workman came to my apartment, he was not at all involved in art. I could see him looking with some interest and curiosity because it was

a new way to look at it.

Cv/VAR: The violence of destruction of objects in your work increased in the early '60s.

Arman: Well it may look like that, but you have to remember it was a controlled destruction, partial not total. It considered the dying of things, and to recycle and rebuild something from that. It was not a destruction that would obliterate completely. (Cv/Visual Arts Research Archive Series 47, Arman: Conversations with Objects, Cv Publications, (London 1989/2011), 8.)

Our hypothetical academic succumbs to periodic urges to 'clean house', resulting in the physical rearrangement of some materials and the discarding of many others. Her potential archive deposit now erodes in unpredictable ways long before an archivist ever has a chance to evaluate what might be worth keeping. What she keeps and what she tosses has a direct bearing on what traces of her life's work future researchers may someday encounter in an archive. Our scholar keeps most of her correspondence, but she tosses out literally hundreds of letters from publishers and journal editors who rejected the manuscripts of her now well-known anthropological books and articles.

Erosion can also be accidental.

Flood, fire, and other mishaps can wreck havoc. (M. Hill, Archival Strategies and Techniques, Sage, (London, 1993), 11.)

[C]an you even imagine what kind of ultra-unthinkable ecological catastrophe must have happened on earth in order that we have these reserves of oil? ('World Renowned Philosopher Slavoj Žižek on the Iraq War, Bush Presidency, the War on Terror, & More', Democracy Now (12 May 2008). <Slavoj Žižek, http://www.democracynow.org/2008/5/12/world_renowned_philosopher_slavoj_zizek_on>).

ASSEMBLAGE

Initially, the poubelles contained garbage and discarded objects. But Arman also created portraits by persuading some of his friends to give up their favourite possessions, or by taking them.

For the next several weeks, whenever I couldn't find things, like my brand new Vuitton 'envelope' bag—which I had never used—or my lion's-head ring with a diamond, or even certain pairs of shoes, I would run and inspect the portrait to find the 'missing' items. They were locked in, glued together on a wooden panel and sealed in a Plexiglas box for all eternity along with the three cigarettes (I smoked, but not much), a copy of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, some costume jewellery, my favourite perfume (at the time 'White Line') and records by Jean-Pierre Rampal and Janis Joplin.
(<http://www.armanstudio.com/arman-new-46-de.html>)

- Richard Hamilton *Interior*, 1964-1965, Colour Silkscreen, 57 x 79 cm.

*This image was developed from a photograph, a still from a film, that Richard Hamilton found lying (garbage, discarded) on a classroom floor in Newcastle Polytechnic. It is one of a number of images of interiors that followed from the artist's *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* (1956). In 1992, the BBC invited Hamilton to show, in a short slot on a half-hour television programme, how an artist might make use of a computer in their work. Hamilton decided to use a *Quantel Paintbox* to recreate the experience of making the famous 1956 collage.*

Looking for a subject, I turned to the old collage that seemed due for an update. It provided an opportunity to assess how life had changed since 1956, so the list of items I deemed of importance then would be a logical starting point: man, woman, humanity, history, food, newspapers, cinema, TV, telephone, comics, words, tape recording, cars, domestic appliances, space. (Richard Hamilton: *Painting by*

Numbers, Alan Cristea Gallery, (London 2006), 11.)

While various writers connect oil with consumerism, they do so in a rather general way. This chapter tries to detail these links and especially to demonstrate the upward shift in the connections between consumerism and oil dependence within the recent neoliberal period. Overall almost all aspects of contemporary consumption entail the extensive long-distance travel of objects and of people. Consuming very many miles is central to contemporary consumerism. (J. Urry, *Societies Beyond Oil: Oil Dregs and Social Futures*, Zed, (London, New York, 2013), 54.)

In a quite extraordinary (and much scrutinized) passage, it is the historian's act of inhalation that gives life [...] But we can be clearer than Michelet could be, about exactly what it was that he breathed in: the dust of the workers who made the papers and parchments; the dust of the animals who provided the skins for their leather bindings.

He inhaled the by-product of all the filthy trades that have, by circuitous routes, deposited their end products in the archives. And we are forced to consider whether it was not life that he breathed into 'the souls who had suffered so long ago and who were smothered now in the past', but death, that he took into himself, with each lungful of dust. (C. Steedman, *Dust*, Manchester University Press, (Manchester, 2001), 27.)

PERMISSION

When individuals die, the first broad phase of archival sedimentation comes definitely to a close. The deceased write no more, discard nothing more, nor ever again tamper with the structural order of their papers and files. A new phase of sedimentation begins in which other people, third parties, do as they will with the surviving physical traces that sociohistorical investigators like yourself might someday like to analyze (M. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques*, Sage, (London, 1993), 14.)

It is very difficult to imagine surviving physical traces that do not yield to analysis, or which might be resistant to interpretation. It is very difficult, to imagine an archive that might not give permission. That might, yet, potentially object to being read.

- William Henry Jackson Mount of the Holy Cross, 1873,
Photograph, 42 x 53.5 cm

This is a photograph of a mountain, Mount of the Holy Cross, which is famously obliged to have seen upon it a cross. How is it possible not to interpret the crevice that is 750 feet wide, together with the one that is 1500 feet long, as the brand of a religious belief, burned in ice upon a mountain? How is it possible not to read a cross? Almost, it reads itself.

Almost.

Externality and framing describe the way in which 'insides' and 'outsides' emerge, and change, in relation to highly political and material processes. The very patterning of elements [...] appear [...] because of (disputable and unstable) acts of separation and division, not because 'values' are imported from a pre-given outside to be applied to an equally given inside (A. Barry and D. Slater, 'The Technological Economy', *Economy and Society*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2002), 175-193; 182-183).

Almost it reads itself. Or, perhaps, it doesn't.

Although designated a national monument in 1929, Holy Cross lost the title in 1950 on account of low visitation and the relative inaccessibility of the best vantage point, which is on top of Notch Mountain. Today, designation as the Holy Cross Wilderness protects the mountain and its vicinity. Controversy lingers as to whether the right arm of the cross has deteriorated or been damaged in recent decades or whether William Henry Jackson took his photographs during a year of superb snow conditions. (J. Agnew, *Colorado Above*

Treeline: Scenic Drives, 4WD Trips, and Classic Hikes, Westcliffe Publishers (Englewood, CO, 2002.)

IN THE CREST OF AN UNDERGROUND FOLD

Oil and gas seeps are natural springs where liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons (hydrogen-carbon compounds) leak out of the ground. Whereas freshwater springs are fed by underground pools of water, oil and gas seeps are fed by natural underground accumulations of oil and natural gas. This is a vertical slice through the Earth's crust, showing folded layers of sedimentary rocks holding oil and gas in the crest of an underground fold. Sometimes oil leaks out of the fold and forms a natural oil seep at the land surface. (United States Geological Survey, <http://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/seeps/what.html>)

In 2009, by chance, I came upon an archive in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It turned out that I was to be involved with this archive, in different ways (reading, researching, preserving, writing inventories) over a period of approximately four years. The archive is named after the unpublished manuscript, Noorafkan, which lies at its heart. Noorafkan, or Irradiant in translation, was written by a Lori tribesman called Ali Mirdrakvandi during the 1940s while Iran was occupied by British and American forces. In the end, I too wrote a book, based on my work with the archive. My book is called Yeki Nabud (One There Wasn't).

Peter leaps up out of his chair and retrieves from his desk a pile of papers that lie at all angles to each other.

Of course it is very hard to identify what precisely is the meaning of Irradiant, he says. There are obviously level upon level of interpolation and addition within the main story. Yet it is quite clear that it reflects a form of Zoroastrianism, or even pre-Zoroastrianism, that is by no means orthodox - a form that allowed very much more power to the devilish Ahriman than is given to him either

in the Avesta or in the Pahlavi books.

Or even in contemporary Zoroastrianism, if I am not mistaken, John Ryley dares to interject.

Peter stares at John as though he had forgotten he was there.

I have done a little reading on the subject myself Professor, Ryley adds. The Zoroastrians of India [...]

You will have read, yes, Peter says, and very good. The Parsis. Yes. This precisely is my point. I hazard that Irradiant recounts the battle between an older, pre-Zoroastrian cosmogony - in which much greater emphasis lies on the power of Darkness, the devil, that is, on Ahriman - and the more familiar Zoroastrian myth, as found in Parsiism, which privileges Ohrmazd, the power of Light and Goodness and Truth. Just as Lionish God - an authentic successor to the dark Ahriman - is not the ultimate victor in Irradiant, so the Zoroastrian myth proves that Ahriman must in the end be destroyed.

Is it possible ever to know in advance, to plan or to anticipate, what will be remembered, forgotten, or what will be discarded?

Memory is chemical and biological. [...] In the 1940s U.S. libraries—prompted by pioneers such as William Barrow and the Council on Library Resources—began laminating and de-acidifying their collections with alkaline salts to prevent the embrittlement of pages of acidic paper by hydrolytic degradation. Some books had to be sacrificed so that others could be saved. Specific notions of value meant that Richard Smith's PhD research at the University of Chicago in the late 1960s destroyed multiple remaindered copies of *Cooking the Greek Way* as he developed a solvent-based de-acidification process that could treat other books without their paper

swelling and their ink bleeding. (M. Ogborn, 'Archives', in S. Harrison, S. Pile and N. Thrift, eds., *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture*, Reaktion Books (London, 2004), 240.)

Is it possible even to begin to imagine what, by design, by chance, or by accident, will be held in the crest of an underground fold?

Again Peter is up and out of his seat. And consider this, he insists. In the Avesta, the Zoroastrians, or worshippers of Ohrmazd, refer to themselves as *ašavan-* 'followers of Truth,' while their opponents, or 'demon-worshippers', are called *dregvant-* (*drvant-*), 'followers of the Lie'. Dregvant, Mr. Ryley. *Drvant*. Does it mean anything to you? Does it sound familiar? It must, it must! As I said to Ali myself all those years ago, his name, *D(i)rakvand*, surely derives from the *drugwant*, which translates as the people of the lie. Ali's ancient ancestors perhaps, were a people who believed in a pre-Zoroastrian religion that bore a striking resemblance to Roman Mithraism and which undoubtedly conferred greater powers to the devil than did the Zoroastrianism with which we are familiar from the Avesta and Pahlavi books and, as you say, from Zoroastrians today. They must have shown some resistance towards the new religion, might even have refused to convert to it. *Drugwant*. I surmise that this was the name given to pre-Zoroastrian pagans.

One of the greatest challenges in managing digital records is their preservation. Apart from anything else, digital records have not been around long enough to assess their longevity and develop techniques to ensure their survival. A lot of research is being done in this area and keeping informed about current thinking is a good start for your digital preservation strategy. Doing nothing is not an option, particularly for those digital records which cannot be rendered into paper formats, for example databases. (M. Crockett and J. Foster,

John Ryley is quiet, while he tries to untangle the implications. Finally, he says: I do feel, Professor Kessler, that it would be in keeping with the spirit of Irradiant if the question as to what the book 'is' remained open for as long as possible. If not forever. If it were never, in fact, decided upon. It could be literary work, or a whimsical tale for children, or perhaps it is, as you suggest, material for scholarship in the tangled field of Mithraic Studies. Academics like to decide one way or another. Either/or. I say: Irradiant is a story, as all these things are. The problem, I find, is that too much head-knowledge, and knowledge of the past, puts us at risk of losing the Eternal Now, which is where the serious and the hilarious are One. The Eternal Now, Peter repeats. Quite so. He looks down at the palms of his hands, and then turns them over and examines his nails. Mostly, the Professor finds John Ryley's views a little too romantic to stomach. Romantic. Exotic. Maybe even Cosmic.

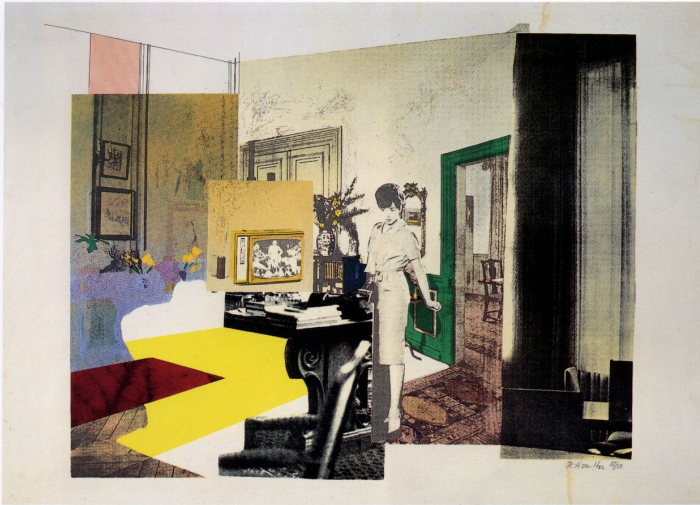
(For more details on the Irradiant project, see M. Motamedi Fraser, 'Once upon a Problem', in L. Back and N. Puwar, eds., Live Methods, Wiley-Blackwell (London, 2013). This extract from Yeki Nabud is inspired by: Robert C. Zaehner, 'Zoroastrian Survivals in Iranian Folklore, Iran Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, 3 (1965), 87-96; R.C. Zaehner, 'Zoroastrian Survivals in Iranian Folklore', Iran Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, 30, (Oxford, 1993), 65-75; J. Hemming, 1994 (21 October), letter to A.D.H. Bivar, owned by Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MSS Ind Inst Misc 40).

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102 ۱۰۲
پی. ای. یو. فوناندز آرمان
قلب شیشه‌ای کرم
رزین و اشیاء
25×25×25 cm. ۲۵ × ۲۵ × ۲۵ سانتیمتر

Pierre Fernandez Arman, *Le Coeur en Verre*, 1969, Resin and objects, 25 x 25 x 25 cm.



88 AA
Richard Hamilton ریچارد همیلتون
Interior, 1964-1965 فضای داخلی
Color silkscreen چاپ سیلک رنگی
57×79 cm. ۵۷ × ۷۹ سانتیمتر

Richard Hamilton, *Interior*, 1964-1965, Color Silkscreen,
57 x 79 cm.



William Henry Jackson
Mount of the Holy Cross
Photograph
42 x 53.5 cm

William Henry Jackson, *Mount of Holy Cross*, 1873,
Photograph, 43 x 53.3 cm.

Above images are from the Western collection of
TMOCA. Source: Masterpieces of the World's Great
Artists, catalogue published by Institute for Promotion of

Contemporary Visual Art, Tehran in collaboration with
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009

When Historical

Nasrin Tabatabai, Babak Afrassiabi

May 18th, 2011

Editorial Note

– What determines our place in history? If it is the past, there we also find the material support with which we reconstitute our historical place. Our relation to history remains retrospective, but also anticipatory.

– Events begin with a break from history. But they soon are recaptured by it and fetishized as historical triumphs or failures. Still something remains of past events that, although conditioned by history, is irreducible to it: a surplus that finds way to our time, something *untimely* that forces us to actively anticipate a renewing in past events.

– To anticipate a different turn of events in an already historicized past is to retroactively assume its fate as still undecidable. This opens an irreconcilable temporal gap in the continuity of the present, an extra-historical space in which history can be reenacted between unverifiable fact and assertive fiction.

– Such a-historical enactment retraces the past as an indeterminate sequence in order not only to reconstitute a different past but also to recondition the present. This is not purely recalling a certain past event to criticize the present (which if it was, it would as well reconfirm its fate as equally unalterable).

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In 1948 the painter Jalil Ziapour with writer Gholam-Hossein Gharib, playwright Hassan Shirvani and composer Morteza Hannaneh, established

the Khorous Jangi (Fighting Cock) association. With their motto "fighting against traditionalism and the worshiping of the old that is far from the reality of present time", they organized weekly seminars to introduce modern painting and analyze the condition of Iranian art. They also published a magazine in which they printed critical articles to spread avant-garde art in Iran. The association soon gained credit among those interested in art and became a centre for the gathering of more radical artists in Iran at the time.

The magazine bore the same name as the association's. Its content propagated the thoughts and artistic ideas of its founders. It contained of articles on contemporary art, music and dance, short stories, plays, poems and reviews. Khorous Jangi is among the first publications to introduce and discuss avant-garde art (specifically Cubism and Surrealism) in Iran.

In the first year between 1948 and 1949 the association published, in small edition, five issues of its magazine. From its sixth issue, the magazine was renamed Kavir (Desert). Two issues were published under this name. In 1950 the poet Houshang Irani joins the group, at which point the magazine regains its original name. Four issues were published in this period with their back cover always containing the association's new manifesto titled Nightingale Butcher. After this period the magazine is again renamed, this time to Panje Khorous (Cock's Claw). Continues on Pages 17-57-73-113

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Front cover of the magazine Khoroos Jangi, First Period,
1949-1950