ON LONGING

Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection

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5. OBJECTS OF DESIRE

Part I. THE SOUVENIR

The Selfish

When the body is the primary mode of perceiving scale, exaggeration must take place in relation to the balance of measurement offered as the body extends into the space of immediate experience. But paradoxically, the body itself is necessarily exaggerated as soon as we have an image of the body, an image which is a projection or objectification of the body into the world. Thus the problems in imagining the body are symptomatic of the problems in imagining the self as place, object, and agent at once. We have seen that there are a number of ways in which the body and the world, the experienced and the imagined, mutually articulate and delimit each other. First, the bodily grotesque of carnival offers the possibility of incorporation: the image is not detached from the body here; rather, it moves within the democratic space of carnival, that space of the face-to-face communication of the marketplace. But in the miniaturized world of the freak show, the body is taken from movement into stasis. Through the transcendent viewpoint offered by this variety of spectacle, the body is made an object and, correlatively, is something which offers itself to possession. Hence, while the freak show may seem, at first glance, to be a display of the grotesque, the distance it invokes makes it instead an inverse display of perfection. Through the freak we derive an image of the

normal; to know an age's typical freaks is, in fact, to know its points of standardization. Microcosmic thought—the use of the body as a model of the universe and of the universe as a model of the body—is another example of the image's role in the creation of the body. Starting from assumptions of perfection and balance, microcosmic theories make the body metaphoric to the larger "corporeal" universe. It is clear that in order for the body to exist as a standard of measurement, it must itself be exaggerated into an abstraction of an ideal. The *model* is not the realization of a variety of differences. As the word implies, it is an abstraction or image and not a presentation of any lived possibility. Hence, in the case of the human models of advertising, we are given anonymity rather than identity. Indeed, when a model's name becomes known it usually means that he or she is about to become "animate" as an actor or actress. In contrast to this model body, the body of lived experience is subject to change, transformation, and, most importantly, death. The idealized body implicitly denies the possibility of death—it attempts to present a realm of transcendence and immortality, a realm of the classic. This is the body-made-object, and thus the body as potential commodity, *taking place* within the abstract and infinite cycle of exchange.

Within the development of culture under an exchange economy, the search for authentic experience and, correlatively, the search for the authentic object become critical. As experience is increasingly mediated and abstracted, the lived relation of the body to the phenomenological world is replaced by a nostalgic myth of contact and presence. "Authentic" experience becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience, the beyond in which the antique, the pastoral, the exotic, and other fictive domains are articulated. In this process of distancing, the memory of the body is replaced by the memory of the object, a memory standing outside the self and thus presenting both a surplus and lack of significance. The experience of the object lies outside the body's experience—it is saturated with meanings that will never be fully revealed to us. Furthermore, the seriality of mechanical modes of production leads us to perceive that outside as a singular and authentic context of which the object is only a trace.

Here we might take Hegel as our model: "The truth is thus the bacchanalian revel, where not a member is sober; and because every member no sooner becomes detached than it *eo ipso* collapses straightway, the revel is just as much a state of transparent unbroken calm. . . . In the entirety of the movement, taken as an unbroken quiescent whole, that which obtains distinctness in the course of its process and secures specific existence, is preserved in the form of a self-recollec-

tion, in which existence is self-knowledge, and self-knowledge, again, is immediate existence."[1] The rending of the body of the god takes place in the delirium of immediate experience. In this act of distortion, dismemberment, and ultimately composition, the social is constituted: we have only to think of the authentic con game offered by Chaucer's Pardoner and the fantastic restoration of the relics of the crucifixion as they served to delineate the West from what it was not.[2]

It is no accident that the closing pitch of the freak show is often manifested by the souvenir. Consider this pitch from the end of the giant and half-lady show at Strate's Carnival, Washington, D.C., in 1941. The giant, Mr. Tomainey, says:

> And notice the size of the hands—watch the hand please—and the size of the ring I have here, so large you can pass a silver half a dollar right through the center of the ring
> Watch this, a silver half a dollar right through the giant lucky ring, believe it or not
> Right through the center of the ring
> Now each one of these rings have my name and occupation engraved on them, and I'm going to pass them out now for souvenirs, and this is how I do it
> I have here a little booklet, tells you all about our married life, has the life story, photographs of both of us and ten questions and answers pertaining to our married life and
> Now all you care to know about us two is in this booklet
> Now we sell the booklet for 10¢ and for each and every booklet we give away one of these giant lucky rings
> Now if you care to take home an interesting souvenir of the circus, hold up your dimes and I'll be very glad to wait on you
> 10¢ is all they are.[3]

The souvenir both offers a measurement for the normal and authenticates the experience of the viewer. The giant begins with the two authenticating signs of origin: the graph itself and the mark upon the world made by his labor. As we saw in the discussion of the bodily grotesque, the freak show as spectacle permits a voyeurism which is at once transcendent and distanced. Thus a miniaturization is effected through the viewer's stance no matter what the object is. Furthermore, the marriage of the freaks presents a proportionality of extremes; the cultural sign triumphs over the limits of the natural. This souvenir domesticates the grotesque on the level of content, subsuming the sexual facts to the cultural code. But the souvenir also domesticates on the level of its operation: external experience is internalized; the beast is taken home. The giant's ring is lucky because it has survived, because it marks the transference of origin to trace,

moving from event to memory and desire. Like all wedding rings, it is a souvenir of the joining of the circle, the seamless perfection of joined asymmetrical halves. But in this case there is a second displacement of that event in the proportional joining of disproportionate parts. The giant represents excess; the half-lady, impoverishment. And the audience is now witness to this spectacle of culture forcing nature into the harmonic.

We might say that this capacity of objects to serve as traces of authentic experience is, in fact, exemplified by the souvenir. The souvenir distinguishes experiences. We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of narrative. Through narrative the souvenir substitutes a context of perpetual consumption for its context of origin. It represents not the lived experience of its maker but the "secondhand" experience of its possessor/owner. Like the collection, it always displays the romance of contraband, for its scandal is its removal from its "natural" location. Yet it is only by means of its material relation to that location that it acquires its value. In this is the tradition of "first-day covers" for stamps and the disappointment we feel in receiving a postcard from the sender's home rather than from the depicted sight. The souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia. The souvenir generates a narrative which reaches only "behind," spiraling in a continually inward movement rather than outward toward the future. Here we find the structure of Freud's description of the genesis of the fetish: a part of the body is substituted for the whole, or an object is substituted for the part, until finally, and inversely, the whole body can become object, substituting for the whole. Thus we have the systematic transformation of the object into its own impossibility, its loss and the simultaneous experience of a difference which Freud characterizes as the fetishist's both knowing and not knowing the anatomical distinctions between the sexes. Metaphor, by the partiality of its substituting power, is, in fact, attached to metonymy here. The possession of the metonymic object is a kind of dispossession in that the presence of the object all the more radically speaks to its status as a mere substitution and to its subsequent distance from the self. This distance is not simply experienced as a loss; it is also experienced as a surplus of signification. It is experienced, as is the loss of the dual relation with the mother, as catastrophe and *jouissance* simultaneously.[4]

The souvenir is by definition always incomplete. And this incompleteness works on two levels. First, the object is metonymic to the scene of its original appropriation in the sense that it is a sample. If I save the ribbon from a corsage, the souvenir is, in Eco's terms, a homomaterial replica, a metonymic reference existing between object/part and object/whole in which the part is of the material of the original and thus a "partial double."[5] Within the operation of the souvenir, the sign functions not so much as object to object, but beyond this relation, metonymically, as object to event/experience. The ribbon may be metonymic to the corsage, but the corsage is in turn metonymic to an increasingly abstract, and hence increasingly "lost," set of referents: the gown, the dance, the particular occasion, the particular spring, all springs, romance, etc. Furthermore, a souvenir does not necessarily have to be a homomaterial replica. If I purchase a plastic miniature of the Eiffel Tower as a souvenir of my trip to Paris, the object is not a homomaterial one; it is a representation in another medium. But whether the souvenir is a material sample or not, it will still exist as a sample of the now-distanced experience, an experience which the object can only evoke and resonate to, and can never entirely recoup. In fact, if it *could* recoup the experience, it would erase its own partiality, that partiality which is the very source of its power. Second, the souvenir must remain impoverished and partial so that it can be supplemented by a narrative discourse, a narrative discouse which articulates the play of desire. The plastic replica of the Eiffel Tower does not define and delimit the Eiffel Tower for us in the way that an architect's model would define and delimit a building. The souvenir replica is an allusion and not a model; it comes after the fact and remains both partial to and more expansive than the fact. It will not function without the supplementary narrative discourse that both attaches it to its origins and creates a myth with regard to those origins.

What is this narrative of origins? It is a narrative of interiority and authenticity. It is not a narrative of the object; it is a narrative of the possessor. The souvenir as bibelot or curiosity has little if any value attached to its materiality. Furthermore, the souvenir is often attached to locations and experiences that are not for sale.[6] The substituting power of the souvenir operates within the following analogy: as experience is to an imagined point of authenticity, so narrative is to the souvenir. The souvenir displaces the point of authenticity as it itself becomes the point of origin for narrative. Such a narrative cannot be generalized to encompass the experience of anyone; it pertains only to the possessor of the object. It is a narrative which seeks to reconcile the disparity between interiority and exteriority, subject

and object, signifier and signified. We cannot be proud of someone else's souvenir unless the narrative is extended to include our relationship with the object's owner or unless, as we shall see later, we transform the souvenir into the collection. This vicarious position, we might note, is that of the owner of the heirloom. For example, consider the plot of John P. Marquand's novel *The Late George Apley—A Novel in the Form of a Memoir*, in which a family bitterly quarrels over the disputed possession of "a badly worn square of carpet upon which General Lafayette inadvertently spilled a glass of Madeira during his visit to Boston." Such a memento is a souvenir of everyone in the family and of no one in the family. Its possession is a statement of membership, not in the event, but in the prestige generated by the event. The narrative of origins generated is in effect a genealogy, as Veblen suggested when he wrote that anything giving evidence that wealth has been in a family for several generations has particular value to the leisure classes. The function of the heirloom is to weave, quite literally by means of narrative, a significance of blood relation at the expense of a larger view of history and causality. Similarly, the wide availability of high-quality photographs of various tourist sights does not cancel out the attraction of taking one's own pictures of public sights or the continual production of tour books with titles such as "My France."

In his work on tourism, Dean MacCannell notes that while sights and attractions are collected by entire societies, souvenirs are collected by individual tourists.[7] Describing some typical souvenirs, MacCannell writes:

> In addition to matchbooks, postcards, pencils and ashtrays that carry the name and/or the picture of a sight, there are the less common items such as touristic dish towels and dust cloths overprinted with drawings of Betsy Ross' House or Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace. These are not intended to serve their original purposes, but are fixed instead so they can be hung on kitchen walls. There is also a special type of square pillow covered with a white silklike cloth, fringed in gold braid, that is made to serve as the canvas for little paintings of sights like Niagara Falls. These latter items are spurious elements that have come out of the closet, occupying visible places in the domestic environment.[8]

Whether or not such items are "spurious" is beside the point. From a different point of view, what is being effected here is the transformation of exterior into interior. Spatially, as any postcard tells us, this works most often through a reduction of dimensions. The souvenir reduces the public, the monumental, and the three-dimensional into the miniature, that which can be enveloped by the body, or into the two-dimensional representation, that which can be appropriated

within the privatized view of the individual subject. The photograph as souvenir is a logical extension of the pressed flower, the preservation of an instant in time through a reduction of physical dimensions and a corresponding increase in significance supplied by means of narrative. The silence of the photograph, its promise of visual intimacy at the expense of the other senses (its glossy surface reflecting us back and refusing us penetration), makes the eruption of that narrative, the telling of its story, all the more poignant. For the narration of the photograph will itself become an object of nostalgia. Without marking, all ancestors become abstractions, losing their proper names; all family trips become the same trip—the formal garden, the waterfall, the picnic site, and the undifferentiated sea become attributes of every country.

Temporally, the souvenir moves history into private time. Hence the absolute appropriateness of the souvenir as *calendar*. Such a souvenir might mark the privatization of a public symbol (say, the Liberty Bell miniaturized), the juxtaposition of history with a personalized present (say, the year 1776 posited against today's date with its concurrent private "dates"), and the concomitant transformation of a generally purchasable, mass-produced object (the material souvenir) into private possession (the referent being "my trip to Philadelphia"). That remarkable souvenir, the postcard, is characterized by a complex process of captioning and display which repeats this transformation of public into private. First, as a mass-produced view of a culturally articulated site, the postcard is purchased. Yet this purchase, taking place within an "authentic" context of the site itself, appears as a kind of private experience as the self recovers the object, inscribing the handwriting of the personal beneath the more uniform caption of the social. Then in a gesture which recapitulates the social's articulation of the self—that is, the gesture of the *gift* by which the subject is positioned as place of production and reception of obligation—the postcard is surrendered to a significant other. The other's reception of the postcard is the receipt, the ticket stub, that validates the experience of the site, which we now can name as the site of the subject himself or herself.

We must distinguish between souvenirs of exterior sights, souvenirs such as those MacCannell lists, which most often are representations and are purchasable, and souvenirs of individual experience, which most often are samples and are not available as general consumer goods. In fact, if children are the major consumers of mass-produced souvenirs, it is most likely because they, unlike adults, have few souvenirs of the second type and thus must be able to

instantly purchase a sign of their own life histories. The souvenir of the second type is intimately mapped against the life history of an individual; it tends to be found in connection with rites of passage (birth, initiation, marriage, and death) as the material sign of an abstract referent: transformation of status. Such souvenirs are rarely kept singly; instead they form a compendium which is an autobiography. Scrapbooks, memory quilts, photo albums, and baby books all serve as examples. It is significant that such souvenirs often appropriate certain aspects of the book in general; we might note especially the way in which an exterior of little material value envelops a great "interior significance," and the way both souvenir and book transcend their particular contexts. Yet at the same time, these souvenirs absolutely deny the book's mode of mechanical reproduction. You cannot make a copy of a scrapbook without being painfully aware that you possess a mere representation of the original. The original will always supplant the copy in a way that is not open to the products of mechanical reproduction.[9] Thus, while the personal memento is of little material worth, often arising, for example, amid the salvage crafts such as quilt-making and embroidery, it is of great worth to its possessor. Because of its connection to biography and its place in constituting the notion of the individual life, the memento becomes emblematic of the worth of that life and of the self's capacity to generate worthiness. Here we see also the introduction of the metaphor of texture. From the child's original metonymic displacement to the love-object, the sensual rules souvenirs of this type. The acute sensation of the object—its perception by hand taking precedence over its perception by eye—promises, and yet does not keep the promise of, *reunion*. Perhaps our preference for instant brown-toning of photographs, distressed antiques, and prefaded blue jeans relates to this suffusion of the *worn*.

Distance and Intimacy

The double function of the souvenir is to authenticate a past or otherwise remote experience and, at the same time, to discredit the present. The present is either too impersonal, too looming, or too alienating compared to the intimate and direct experience of contact which the souvenir has as its referent. This referent is authenticity. What lies between here and there is oblivion, a void marking a radical separation between past and present. The nostalgia of the souvenir plays in the distance between the present and an imagined, prelapsarian experience, experience as it might be "directly lived." The

location of authenticity becomes whatever is distant to the present time and space; hence we can see the souvenir as attached to the antique and the exotic.

The antique as souvenir always bears the burden of nostalgia for experience impossibly distant in time: the experience of the family, the village, the firsthand community. One can better understand the antique's stake in the creation of an intimate distance if the antique is contrasted to the physical relic, the souvenir of the dead which is the mere material remains of what had possessed human significance. Because they are souvenirs of death, the relic, the hunting trophy, and the scalp are at the same time the most intensely *potential* souvenirs and the most potent antisouvenirs. They mark the horrible transformation of meaning into materiality more than they mark, as other souvenirs do, the transformation of materiality into meaning. If the function of the souvenir proper is to create a continuous and personal narrative of the past, the function of such souvenirs of death is to disrupt and disclaim that continuity. Souvenirs of the mortal body are not so much a nostalgic celebration of the past as they are an erasure of the significance of history. Consider the function of such souvenirs in the contagious and malevolent magic of voodoo. Or consider the enormous display of hunting trophies staged as "The International Competitive Show" by Hermann Göring in 1937 as a premonition of the death camps and their attempted negation of meaning. In contrast to the restoration offered by such gestures as the return of saints' relics, these souvenirs mark the end of sacred narrative and the interjection of the curse. Ironically, such phenomena themselves can later be reframed in an ensuing metonymic displacement such as the punk and kitsch appropriations of fascist material culture.

Cataclysmic and apocalyptic theories of history and personality refuse the continuity of experience. But in antiquarianism we see a theory of history informed by an aesthetics of the souvenir. Antiquarianism always displays a functional ambivalence; we find either the nostalgic desire of romanticism or the political desire of authentication at its base. For the royal antiquarians of Norway, Sweden, and England during the Renaissance, the collection of antiquities was generally politically supported and politically motivated. Such collection was most commonly used to authenticate the history of kingdoms. In the case of John Leyland, for example, who was appointed king's antiquary in 1533, the same year that Henry VIII declared himself head of the Church of England, a survey of British antiquities was to serve the surrogate purpose of secularizing and localizing that

history. Camden's *Brittania* (1586) similarly was intended to supplant papal history with national history. However, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the motivation of antiquarianism became more complicated. On the one hand, Henry Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares* (1725) was designed to expose the pagan and papist relics surviving among the common people in order to ridicule such practices. On the other hand, John Aubrey's *Brief Lives and Miscellanies* and his studies of the "natural histories" and antiquities of Surrey and Wiltshire, all assembled in the 1690's, were, if we can forgive the anachronism, a premonition of a later romanticism, for in Aubrey's works antiquities are symbolic of a dying English past that should be respectfully recorded and studied.

Aubrey's reverence for the past may well have come from the turmoil of the present's revolution. As commercialism and industrialism transformed the British landscape, the artifacts and architecture of a disintegrating rural culture became the objects of middle- and upper-class nostalgia. Early in the nineteenth century, James Storer and I. Greig wrote in the advertisement for their *Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet, Containing a Series of Elegant Views of the Most Interesting Objects of Curiosity in Great Britain* (1807–1811): "By the continuance of such patronage, the Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet will be hastening to preserve the lineaments of the most venerable remains of Antiquity which Time is increasingly whittleing away by nearly imperceptible atoms."[10] Antiquarian societies—first appearing in Britain in 1572, suppressed during the reign of James I, and reinstated in 1718—continued to be popular into the late nineteenth century. Yet, as was the case with Aubrey, they were subject to particular historical circumstances that varied the ways in which they formulated their values. Their suppression during the Jacobean period was a consequence of their dangerous capacity to revive the political allegiances of chivalry as they revived a more generalized taste for the chivalric past. Similarly, the specific content of nationalism changed over time and space. Between the time of Camden and the time of the Victorian antiquarians, nationalism became romantic nationalism in England, a veneration of pastoralism, decentralization, and a collective "folk spirit." But in the New World, for example, antiquarianism centered on the discovery of a radical cultural other, the Native American, whose narrative could not easily be made continuous with either the remote past or the present as constructed by non-native historians. The Englishman Joseph Hunter explains in the preface to his *Antiquarian Notices of Lupset, the Heath, Sharlston, and Ackton, in the County of York* (1851):

> There are two sorts of countries that divide the face of the globe, *new countries* and *old*. . . . which of these two sorts of countries would a man of reflection, a man of taste, a man whose heart beats with moral perceptions and feelings, choose to dwell in? . . . I conceive it to be one of the advantages which the fortune of my birth reserved for me, that I was born in an *old country*. . . . I love to dwell in a country where, on whichever side I turn, I find some object connected with a heart-moving tale, or some scene where the deepest interests of a nation for ages to succeed have been strenuously agitated, and emphatically decided [Hunter's ellipses].

In works such as Hunter's, the antique is linked to the childhood of the nation, to the pastoral, and to the origin of narrative.

It is a logical development of the souvenir's capacity for narrative that by 1846 the term *folklore* had replaced the term *antiquity*. As the evolutionist Andrew Lang wrote: "Now when we find widely and evenly distributed in the earth's surface the rude flint tools of men, we regard these as the oldest examples of human skill. Are we not equally justified in regarding the widely and evenly distributed beliefs in ghosts, kelpies, fairies, wild women of the forests (which are precisely the same in Brittany as in New Caledonia) as among the oldest examples of the working of human fancy?"[11] Oral traditions were thus seen as the abstract equivalent to material culture. Whereas oral tradition obviously cannot "age" in the same sense that the physical artifact can, legends and tales were considered by antiquarians of the survivals school as examples of earlier stages of civilization residing amid the discourse of the present. For such a theory of oral traditions to exist, it was necessary that a distinction be made between dialect and standard, between decentralized and centralized languages—what had begun to develop was the abstract language of science and the state. Forsyth's *Antiquary's Portfolio* (1825) promised that within its pages "the philosopher will meet with entertainment of a nobler kind, by being enabled to contrast the deplorable state of the human mind at remote periods, with the present happy triumph of unfettered reason, and of a religion that is comparatively pure and perfect."[12]

Thus the antiquarian seeks to both distance and appropriate the past. In order to entertain an antiquarian sensibility, a rupture in historical consciousness must have occurred, creating a sense that one can make one's own culture *other*—distant and discontinuous. Time must be seen as concomitant with a loss of understanding, a loss which can be relieved through the reawakening of objects and, thereby, a reawakening of narrative. In a poem, "Time's Footsteps," printed in the first volume of *The Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer* (1882), H. R. Wadmore wrote:

> The book, the picture, helmet with its crest,
> The shield, the spear, the sword, the armour bright,
> All on the past can shed a flood of light;
> The crozier of the bishop now at rest.
>
> All that is past we seek to treasure here,
> All that may make the past a thing of life;
> And we would save what else in worldly strife
> Might perish, though the present hold it dear.

Accompanying this awakening of objects is the objectification of the peasant classes, the aestheticization of rural life which makes that life "quaint," a survival of an elusive and purer, yet diminished, past. In contrast to the historian, who looks for design and causality, the antiquarian searches for material evidence of the past. Yet at the same time, the antiquarian searches for an internal relation between past and present which is made possible by their absolute disruption. Hence his or her search is primarily an aesthetic one, an attempt to erase the actual past in order to create an imagined past which is available for consumption. In order to awaken the dead, the antiquarian must first manage to kill them. Thus, in this aesthetic mode, we see repeated Lacan's formulation that the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing and that this death constitutes in the subject the eternalization of his or her desire.[13]

Every aspect of peasant and rural life, from tools to architecture to dialect to "being" itself in the form of "the character," becomes under antiquarianism a potential souvenir. And the impulse of such souvenirs is to simultaneously transform nature into art as they mourn the loss of "pure nature" at a point of origin. By the Romantics, antiquarianism is completely bound up with the picturesque. Francis Grose's journal, *The Antiquarian Repertory*, published between 1775 and 1784, advertised itself as "a miscellany, intended to preserve and illustrate, several valuable remains of old times, adorned with elegant sculptures." Here is status, stasis, statue, once again: the antique is transformed into the tableau through the prints and plates that accompany the texts of such antiquarian works. Indeed, antiquarian books are often billed as "portfolios" or "cabinets." William Henry Pyne's *Microcosm; or, A Picturesque Delineation of the Arts, Agriculture, and Manufactures of Great Britain in a Series of a Thousand Groups of Small Figures for the Embellishment of Landscape* (1845), for example, was designed "to present the student and the amateur with picturesque

representations of the scenery of active life in Great Britain." Such a work transforms labor into abstraction, nature into art, and history into still life just as eighteenth-century and Victorian souvenirs of nature (sea shells, leaves, butterflies placed under glass), as well as contemporary "snow balls" (those souvenirs in which representations of locations are placed along with particles of "snow" or glitter within water-filled plastic spheres), eternalize an environment by closing it off from the possibility of lived experience. They deny the moment of death by imposing the stasis of an eternal death.

Because the world of the souvenir offers transcendence to the viewer, it may be seen as a miniaturized one, as a reduction in physical dimensions corresponding to an increase in significance, and as an interiorization of an exterior. But while the miniature object often speaks to the past, it encapsulates the time of production. Miniature objects are most often exaggerations of the attention to detail, precision, and balance that is characteristic of artisanal culture—a culture which, with the possible exception of microtechnology (the major contemporary producer of miniatures), is considered to have been lost at the dawn of industrial production. The antiquarian is nostalgic for use value, for objects that characterized the preindustrial village economy. Such objects, surviving their original contexts, are seen as traces of the way of life that once surrounded them. Hence we see that popular form of restaurant décor in which preindustrial hand tools are tacked on the walls as if they were prints or paintings.

Yet once the miniature becomes souvenir, it speaks not so much to the time of production as to the time of consumption. For example, a traditional basket-maker might make miniatures of his goods to sell as toys just as he makes full-sized baskets for carrying wood or eggs. But as the market for his full-sized baskets decreases because of changes in the economic system, such miniature baskets increase in demand. They are no longer models; rather, they are souvenirs of a mode of consumption which is now extinct. They have moved from the domain of use value to the domain of *gift*, where exchange is abstracted to the level of social relations and away from the level of materials and processes.[14] The opening to *Silas Marner* (1861) articulates the beginning of a similar transition: "In the days when the spinning wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses—and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread lace, had their toy spinning wheels of polished oak—there might be seen, in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men who, by the side of the brawny countryfolk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race." For Eliot this transition was, as she had written in *Adam Bede* (1859), the movement from "Old Leisure" to "amusement": "Leisure

is gone—gone where the spinning wheels are gone, and the packhorses, and the slow waggons, and the pedlars, who brought bargains to the door on sunny afternoons. Ingenious philosophers tell you, perhaps, that the great work of the steam-engine is to create leisure for mankind. Do not believe them; it only creates a vacuum for eager thought to rush in."[15] The spinning wheel has split along class lines in the first case, from use value into toy; in the second it has disappeared as a tool entirely. Eliot here offers a premonition of an entire way of life transformed from production to consumption—the specter, foreshadowed in the picturesque, of culture as a commodity: the culture of tourism. We see this same transformation from industrial production to the spectacle over and over again in the current crisis of late capitalism. Flint, Michigan, for example, recently announced that it would solve its Depression-level unemployment problem by creating an Auto-World, a Disneyland of the automobile industry which is expected to draw tourists from all parts of the globe.

Separation and Restoration

The delicate and hermetic world of the souvenir is a world of nature idealized; nature is removed from the domain of struggle into the domestic sphere of the individual and the interior. The souvenir is used most often to evoke a voluntary memory of childhood, a motif we find either in souvenirs, such as scrapbooks, of the individual life history or in the larger antiquarian theme of the childhood of the nation/race. This childhood is not a childhood as lived; it is a childhood voluntarily remembered, a childhood manufactured from its material survivals. Thus it is a collage made of presents rather than a reawakening of a past. As in an album of photographs or a collection of antiquarian relics, the past is constructed from a set of presently existing pieces. There is no continuous identity between these objects and their referents. Only the act of memory constitutes their resemblance. And it is in this gap between resemblance and identity that nostalgic desire arises. The nostalgic is enamored of distance, not of the referent itself. Nostalgia cannot be sustained without loss. For the nostalgic to reach his or her goal of closing the gap between resemblance and identity, *lived* experience would have to take place, an erasure of the gap between sign and signified, an experience which would cancel out the desire that is nostalgia's reason for existence.

In the cultivation of distance which we find in the uses of the souvenir—the distance of childhood and the antique—the third facet

is distance in space—the souvenir of the exotic. Just as authenticity and interiority are placed in the remote past, the exotic offers an authenticity of experience tied up with notions of the primitive as child and the primitive as an earlier and purer stage of contemporary civilization. Jean Baudrillard writes in *Le Système des objets* that the exotic object, like the antique, functions to lend authenticity to the abstract system of modern objects, and he suggests that the indigenous object fascinates by means of its anteriority. This anteriority is characteristic both of the exotic object's form and its mode of fabrication and links it to the analogously anterior world of childhood and its toys.[16] Thus the authenticity of the exotic object arises not in the conditions authored by the primitive culture itself but from the analogy between the primitive/exotic and the origin of the possessor, the authentic "nature" of that radical otherness which is the possessor's own childhood. In Baudrillard's terms, modern is "cold" and the antique and the exotic are "warm" because contemporary mythology places the latter objects in a childhood remote from the abstractions of contemporary consumer society. Such objects allow one to be a tourist of one's own life, or allow the tourist to appropriate, consume, and thereby "tame" the cultural other.

Just as in reverie, narrative is used to invent the symbolic, so by a similar process travel writing functions to miniaturize and interiorize those distanced experiences which remain outside contemporary lived relations. The tourist seeks out objects and scenes, and the relation between the object and its sight is continued, indeed articulated, in the operation of the souvenir. Robert Jennings and Company's tourist books from the 1830's are typical of this romantic genre. In *The Tourist in Biscay and the Castilles,* Thomas Roscoe writes of Bayonne: "Being involuntarily detained, we employed the leisure thus created in seeking out the picturesque, which generally lurks, like unassuming characters, in quiet and out-of-the-way places. Nor were we by any means unsuccessful in our pilgrimage, though dire was the number of dirty lanes and alleys, both within and without the walls, which we threaded in search of it. In spite of the spirit of improvement, numbers of antique houses, not at all dilapidated, are still found here, and each of these would form an interesting study for the pencil."[17] While Roscoe emphasizes the picturesque, W. H. Harrison, in *The Tourist in Portugal,* has a more antiquarian focus, concluding that the reader has been presented with "all the objects we deemed worthy of his attention . . . and all we know about them."[18] The function of the tour is the estrangement of objects—to make what is visible, what is surface, reveal a profound interiority through narrative. This interiority is that of the perceiving subject; it

is gained at the expense of risking *contamination* (hence the dire and dirty lanes) and the dissolution of the boundary of that subject. The process is later recapitulated more safely within the context of the familiar, the home, by means of the souvenir.

The exotic object represents distance appropriated; it is symptomatic of the more general cultural imperialism that is tourism's stock in trade. To have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a trophy; on the one hand, the object must be marked as exterior and foreign, on the other it must be marked as arising directly out of an immediate experience of its possessor. It is thus placed within an intimate distance; space is transformed into interiority, into "personal" space, just as time is transformed into interiority in the case of the antique object. Consider Gulliver's souvenirs of his adventures: from Lilliput the cattle, sheep, gold pieces, and "his Majesty's picture at full length"; from Brobdingnag "the small collection of rarities"—"the comb I had contrived out of the stumps of the King's Beard; and another of the same Materials, but fixed into a paring of her Majesty's Thumb-nail, which served for the Back," the collection of needles and pins, some combings from the queen's hair and her rings, a corn cut from a maid of honor's toe, his breeches made of mouse's skin, and a footman's tooth. These souvenirs serve as evidence of Gulliver's experience and as measurements of his own scale just as the giant's ring and booklet serve to authenticate the audience's experience. Like all curiosities, these souvenirs function to generate narrative. More than the souvenirs of Lilliput, which are most often whole and animal and serve as models and representative elements of sets, the souvenirs of Brobdingnag are partial and human; they are samples of the body which simultaneously estrange us from the body. But unlike the souvenirs of mortality discussed earlier, these souvenirs are taboo items collected from the body's refuse. These beard stumps, nail parings, hair combings, and corns do not diminish the body by their absence or appropriation; rather, they speak to its dual capacities of excess and regeneration. They transform the human into the other and yet allow the possessor to intimately know that other in parts. Gulliver's souvenirs of Brobdingnag are not "ordinary": they speak to his degree of involvement with the Brobdingnagians—his partial yet intimate vision. They are "authentic" souvenirs in the same way that the objects of magical tasks in fairy tales ("you must bring me three hairs from the giant's head") are evidence of an experience that is not vicarious but lived within an estranged or dangerous intimacy. They acquire their value only within the context of Gulliver's narrative; without such a narrative, they are not only meaningless, they are also exaggerations of the disposable.

Unlike the ancient object, which, though it arises from the distant past, is endowed with a familiarity more "warm" than the present, the exotic object is to some degree dangerous, even "hot." Removed from its context, the exotic souvenir is a sign of survival—not its own survival, but the survival of the possessor outside his or her own context of familiarity. Its otherness speaks to the possessor's capacity for otherness: it is the possessor, not the souvenir, which is ultimately the curiosity. The danger of the souvenir lies in its unfamiliarity, in our difficulty in subjecting it to interpretation. There is always the possibility that reverie's signification will go out of control here, that the object itself will take charge, awakening some dormant capacity for destruction. This appropriation of reverie by the object forms the basis for certain horror stories: "The Monkey's Paw," or the ghost stories of M. R. James, for example. In such tales curiosity is replaced by understanding only at the expense of the possessor's well-being.

In most souvenirs of the exotic, however, the metaphor in operation is again one of taming; the souvenir retains its signifying capacity only in a generalized sense, losing its specific referent and eventually pointing to an abstracted otherness that describes the possessor. Nelson Graburn, writing on "fourth world arts," has suggested:

> As "civilized societies" come to depend more and more upon standardized mass-produced artifacts, the distinctiveness of classes, families, and individuals disappears, and the importation of foreign exotic arts increases to meet the demand for distinctiveness, especially for the snob or status market. One gains prestige by association with these objects, whether they are souvenirs or expensive imports; there is a cachet connected with international travel, exploration, multiculturalism, etc. that these arts symbolize; at the same time, there is the nostalgic input of the *handmade* in a "plastic world."[19]

Thus such objects satisfy the nostalgic desire for use value at the same time that they provide an exoticism of the self. Ironically, the demand for such objects creates a souvenir market of goods distinct from authentic traditional crafts, that is, crafts designed in light of use value. And these souvenir goods are often characterized by new techniques of mass production. There is thus a directly proportional relationship between the availability of the exotic experience and the availability of "exotic objects." Once the exotic experience is readily purchasable by a large segment of the tourist population, either more and more exotic experiences are sought (consider travel posters advertising the last frontier or the last unspoiled island) or, in a type of reverse snobbery, there is a turning toward "the classic" of the consumer's native culture. In those cities where one finds a wide range of "ethnic" restaurants frequented by those not of the same ethnicity, one is also likely to find restaurants advertising "classic American cuisine," a phrase which itself cannot work without a French deglazing.

For the invention of the exotic object to take place, there must first be separation. It must be clear that the object is estranged from the context in which it will be displayed as a souvenir; it must be clear that use value is separate from display value.[20] There is perhaps no better example of this process than the radical generational separation in America which results in certain nostalgic forms of lawn art. While we see the exotic and the cultural other explored in forms such as pink flamingos and slumbering Mexicans, the most common forms are antiquarian ones such as wagon wheels, donkey carts, sleighs, and oxen yokes. These metonymic forms are the articulation of abandoned use value. Prominently displayed, they speak to the industrialization of the occupants of the house, occupants who have become tourists of their parents' ways of life.

Yet to create "tourist art" is to create display value from the outset and to by-pass this gradual transformation. Separation is accomplished spatially rather than temporally here. Thus it is necessary to invent the pastoral and the primitive through an illusion of a holistic and integrated cultural other. As for tourist souvenirs themselves, they increasingly tend in both form and content to be shaped by the expectations of the tourist market that will consume them. Graburn points out that since makers of souvenirs must compete with imported, manufactured souvenirs, native arts tend toward smaller sizes—not simply small souvenirs, but miniatures of traditional artifacts, as we saw in the basket-maker example earlier. Among the advantages of miniaturized articles are "applicability for decorative use, economy of materials, and a doll-like, folkloristic quality not associated with the real article."[21] Those qualities of the object which link it most closely to its function in native context are emptied and replaced by both display value and the symbolic system of the consumer. William Bascom has found that in African art this tourist influence has resulted in three stylistic trends, all arising out of Western aesthetic principles. First, there is a tendency toward Western ideas of naturalism and realism; traditional modes of stylization were replaced by nineteenth-century European conventions of the picturesque. Second, there is a tendency toward an opposite extreme: the grotesque. Bascom concludes that this work "may reflect both European preconceptions about the savagery or strength of African sculpture as well as the influence of German Expressionism on European artistic taste." The third tendency is toward gigantification. Yoruba carvers, for example, reproduce bells or clappers used in Ifa divination—bells that

are normally 8–16 inches long and 1 inch in diameter—in versions that are 3 feet long and 3 inches in diameter. Gigantification allows the maker to charge more for his product, yet at the same time may involve less labor because it requires less attention to detail.[22] Similarly, Graburn writes that "Eskimo soapstone sculptors and Cordova *santeros* calculate that far less time and effort is spent making large, expensive carvings than the more typical small ones."[23] Thus the tourist aesthetic ensures that the object is continually exoticized and estranged. And, ironically, objects that are originally valued by tourists precisely because of their connections to a traditional, holistic, and paradisal culture are transformed, exaggerated, and modified by the fluctuating demands of that same tourist market.

In the uses of the souvenir, the other side of separation is restoration—here the false promise of restoration. The souvenir must be removed from its context in order to serve as a trace of it, but it must also be restored through narrative and/or reverie. What it is restored to is not an "authentic," that is, a native, context of origin but an imaginary context of origin whose chief subject is a projection of the possessor's childhood. Restoration can be seen as a response to an unsatisfactory set of present conditions. Just as the restoration of buildings, often taking place within programs of "gentrification" in contemporary cities, has as its basis the restoration of class relationships that might otherwise be in flux, so the restoration of the souvenir is a conservative idealization of the past and the distanced for the purposes of a present ideology. We thus might say that all souvenirs are souvenirs of a nature which has been invented by ideology. This conclusion speaks not only to the display of Victorian sea shells under glass but also to the broader tendency to place all things natural at one degree of removal from the present flow of events and thereby to objectify them.

The only proper context for the souvenir is the displacement of reverie, the gap between origin/object/subject which fields desire. Whereas the collection is either truly hidden or prominently displayed, the souvenir, so long as it remains "uncollected," is "lost," removed from any context of origin and use value in such a way as to "surprise" and capture its viewer into reverie. The actual locale of the souvenir is often commensurate with its material worthlessness: the attic and the cellar, contexts away from the business and engagement of everyday life. Other rooms of a house are tied to function (kitchen, bath) and presentation (parlor, hall) in such a way that they exist within the temporality of everyday life, but the attic and the cellar are tied to the temporality of the past, and they scramble the past into a simultaneous order which memory is invited to rearrange: heaven

and hell, tool and ornament, ancestor and heir, decay and preservation. The souvenir is destined to be forgotten; its tragedy lies in the death of memory, the tragedy of all autobiography and the simultaneous erasure of the autograph. And thus we come again to the powerful metaphor of the unmarked grave, the reunion with the mother with no corresponding regeneration of the symbolic.

Part II. THE COLLECTION, PARADISE OF CONSUMPTION

Context Destroyed

The souvenir involves the displacement of attention into the past. The souvenir is not simply an object appearing out of context, an object from the past incongruously surviving in the present; rather, its function is to envelop the present within the past. Souvenirs are magical objects because of this transformation. Yet the magic of the souvenir is a kind of failed magic. Instrumentality replaces essence here as it does in the case of all magical objects, but this instrumentality always works an only partial transformation. The place of origin must remain unavailable in order for desire to be generated.

All souvenirs are souvenirs of nature, yet it is nature in its most synthetic, its most acculturated, sense which appears here. Nature is arranged diachronically through the souvenir; its synchrony and atemporality are manipulated into a human time and order. The pressed flowers under glass speak to the significance of their owner in nature and not to themselves in nature. They are a sample of a larger and more sublime nature, a nature differentiated by human experience, by human history.

In contrast to the souvenir, the collection offers example rather than sample, metaphor rather than metonymy. The collection does not displace attention to the past; rather, the past is at the service of the collection, for whereas the souvenir lends authenticity to the past, the past lends authenticity to the collection. The collection seeks a form of self-enclosure which is possible because of its ahistoricism. The collection replaces history with *classification*, with order beyond the realm of temporality. In the collection, time is not something to be restored to an origin; rather, all time is made simultaneous or synchronous within the collection's world.

The souvenir still bears a trace of use value in its instrumentality, but the collection represents the total aestheticization of use value. The collection is a form of art as play, a form involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context.

Like other forms of art, its function is not the restoration of context of origin but rather the creation of a new context, a context standing in a metaphorical, rather than a contiguous, relation to the world of everyday life. Yet unlike many forms of art, the collection is not representational. The collection presents a hermetic world: to have a representative collection is to have both the minimum and the complete number of elements necessary for an autonomous world—a world which is both full and singular, which has banished repetition and achieved authority.

We might therefore say, begging forgiveness, that the archetypal collection is Noah's Ark, a world which is representative yet which erases its context of origin. The world of the ark is a world not of nostalgia but of anticipation. While the earth and its redundancies are destroyed, the collection maintains its integrity and boundary. Once the object is completely severed from its origin, it is possible to generate a new series, to start again within a context that is framed by the selectivity of the collector: "And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." The world of the ark is dependent upon a prior creation: Noah has not invented a world; he is simply God's broker. What he rescues from oblivion is the two that is one plus one, the two that can generate seriality and infinity by the symmetrical joining of asymmetry. While the point of the souvenir may be remembering, or at least the invention of memory, the point of the collection is forgetting—starting again in such a way that a finite number of elements create, by virtue of their combination, an infinite reverie. Whose labor made the ark is not the question: the question is what is inside.

This difference in purpose is the reason why the scrapbook and the memory quilt must properly be seen as souvenirs rather than as collections.[24] In apprehending such objects, we find that the whole dissolves into parts, each of which refers metonymically to a context of origin or acquisition. This is the experience of objects-into-narratives that we saw in the animation of the toy and that becomes, in fact, the "animating" principle of works such as Xavier de Maistre's *Voyage Autour de Ma Chambre:* "Mais il est aussi impossible d'expliquer clairement un tableau que de faire un portrait ressemblant d'après une description."[25] In contrast, each element within the collection is representative and works in combination toward the creation of a new

whole that is the context of the collection itself. The spatial whole of the collection supersedes the individual narratives that "lie behind it." In an article on the aesthetics of British mercantilism, James H. Bunn suggests that "in a curio cabinet each cultural remnant has a circumscribed allusiveness among a collection of others. If the unintentional aesthetic of accumulating exotic goods materialized as a side effect of mercantilism, it can be semiologically considered as a special case of eclecticism, which intentionally ignores proprieties of native history and topography."[26] The aesthetics of mercantilism, which Bunn places within the period of 1688–1763, is thus in an important way the antithesis of the aesthetics of antiquarianism. The antiquarian is moved by a nostalgia of origin and presence; his function is to validate the culture of ground, as we see in works such as Camden's *Britannia*. But the mercantilist is not moved by restoration; he is moved by extraction and seriality. He removes the object from context and places it within the play of signifiers that characterize an exchange economy.

Because the collection replaces origin with classification, thereby making temporality a spatial and material phenomenon, its existence is dependent upon principles of organization and categorization. As Baudrillard has suggested, it is necessary to distinguish between the concept of collection and that of accumulation: "Le stade inférieur est celui de l'accumulation de matières: entassement de vieux papiers, stockage de nourriture—à mi-chemin entre l'introjection orale et la rétention anale—puis l'accumulation sérielle d'objets identiques. La collection, elle, émerge vers la culture . . . sans cesser de renvoyer les uns aux autres, ils incluent dans ce jeu une extériorite sociale, des relations humaines."[27] Herein lies the difference between the collections of humans and the collections of pack rats. William James reported that a California wood rat arranges nails in a symmetrical, fortresslike pattern around his nest, but the objects "collected"—silver, tobacco, watches, tools, knives, matches, pieces of glass—are without seriality, without relation to one another or to a context of acquisition. Such accumulation is obviously not connected to the culture and the economy in the same way that the collection proper is connected to such structures. Although the objects of a hobbyist's collection have significance only in relation to one another and to the seriality that such a relation implies, the objects collected by the wood rat are intrinsic objects, objects complete in themselves because of the sensory qualities that have made them attractive to the rat. James found the same propensity for collecting intrinsic objects among "misers" in lunatic asylums: "'the miser' *par excellence* of the popular imagination and of melodrama, the monster of squalor and misanthropy, is simply one of these mentally deranged persons. His

intellect may in many matters be clear, but his instincts, especially that of ownership, are insane, and their insanity has no more to do with the association of ideas than with the precession of the equinoxes."[28] Thus James concludes that hoarders have an uncontrollable impulse to take and keep. Here we might add that this form of insanity is, like anal retentiveness, an urge toward incorporation for its own sake, an attempt to erase the limits of the body that is at the same time an attempt, marked by desperation, to "keep body and soul together."

Although it is clear that there is a correspondence between the productions of art and the productions of insanity in these cases, it is equally clear that the miser's collection depends upon a refusal of differentiation while the hobbyist's collection depends upon an acceptance of differentiation as its very basis for existence. Thus the "proper" collection will always take part in an anticipation of redemption: for example, the eventual coining-in of objects or the eventual acquisition of object status by coins themselves. But the insane collection is a collection for its own sake and for its own movement. It refuses the very *system* of objects and thus metonymically refuses the entire political economy that serves as the foundation for that system and the only domain within which the system acquires meaning. Baudrillard as well concludes that because of the collection's seriality, a "formal" interest always replaces a "real" interest in collected objects.[29] This replacement holds to the extent that aesthetic value replaces use value. But such an aesthetic value is so clearly tied to the cultural (i.e., deferment, redemption, exchange) that its value system is the value system of the cultural; the formalism of the collection is never an "empty" formalism.

Inside and Outside

To ask which principles of organization are used in articulating the collection is to begin to discern what the collection is about. It is not sufficient to say that the collection is organized according to time, space, or internal qualities of the objects themselves, for each of these parameters is divided in a dialectic of inside and outside, public and private, meaning and exchange value. To arrange the objects according to time is to juxtapose personal time with social time, autobiography with history, and thus to create a fiction of the individual life, a time of the individual subject both transcendent to and parallel to historical time. Similarly, the spatial organization of the collection, left to right, front to back, behind and before, depends upon the creation of an individual perceiving and apprehending the collection

with eye and hand. The collection's space must move between the public and the private, between display and hiding. Thus the miniature is suitable as an item of collection because it is sized for individual consumption at the same time that its surplus of detail connotes infinity and distance. While we can "see" the entire collection, we cannot possibly "see" each of its elements. We thereby also find at work here the play between identity and difference which characterizes the collection organized in accordance with qualities of the objects themselves. To group objects in a series because they are "the same" is to simultaneously signify their difference. In the collection, the more the objects are similar, the more imperative it is that we make gestures to distinguish them. As an example of this obsession with series, consider Pepys's library:

> Samuel Pepys, who arranged and rearranged his library, finally classified his books according to size. In double rows on the shelves the larger volumes were placed behind the smaller so that the lettering on all could be seen; and in order that the tops might be even with each other, this neat collector built wooden stilts where necessary and, placing those under the shorter books, gilded them to match the bindings! Subject and reference-convenience were secondary in this arrangement, except insofar as the sacrosanct diary was concerned, and this, which had been written in notebooks of varying size, Mr. Pepys, reverting to reason, had bound uniformly so that its parts might be kept together without disturbing the library's general arrangement-scheme.[30]

Pepys's collection must be displayed as an identical series (the stilt arrangement) and as a set of individual volumes ("so that the lettering on all could be seen"). The necessity of identity at the expense of information here is an example of Baudrillard's suggestion that formal interest replaces real interest. That this is often the motivation of the bibliophile is also made clear by the buying of "books" that are joined cardboard bindings decorated to look like matched sets of volumes, yet in fact are empty.

The collection is not constructed by its elements; rather, it comes to exist by means of its principle of organization. If that principle is bounded at the onset of the collection, the collection will be finite, or at least potentially finite. If that principle tends toward infinity or series itself, the collection will be open-ended. As an example of the first type, William Carew Hazlitt's suggestions for the coin collector hold:

> There are collectors who make their choice and stand by it; others who collect different series at different times; others whose scheme is

> miscellaneous or desultory. To all these classes increased facility for judging within a convenient compass what constitutes a series, its chronology, its features, its difficulties, ought to be acceptable. To master even the prominent monographs is a task which is sufficient to deter all but the most earnest and indefatigable enthusiasts: and, as usual, no doubt, collections are made on a principle more or less loose and vague. At any rate, the first step should be, we apprehend, to reconnoitre the ground, and measure the space to be traversed, with the approximate cost.[31]

As an example of the second type, consider C. Montiesor's suggestion that children collect clergymen's names: "There were the coloured clergy—Green, Black, White, Gray, etc. The happy clergy, in the state of—Bliss, Peace, Joy, etc. The virtuous clergy—Virtue, Goodenough, Wise, etc. The poor clergy, who possessed only a—Penny, Farthing, Ha'penny. The moneyed clergy; these were—Rich, Money, etc. The bad clergy—Shy, Cunning, etc."[32] Here we might also remember Walter Benjamin's project of collecting quotations, a collection which would illustrate the infinite and regenerative seriality of language itself.

Any intrinsic connection between the principle of organization and the elements themselves is minimized by the collection. We see little difference between collections of stones or butterflies and collections of coins or stamps. In acquiring objects, the collector replaces production with consumption: objects are naturalized into the landscape of the collection itself. Therefore, stones and butterflies are made cultural by classification, and coins and stamps are naturalized by the erasure of labor and the erasure of context of production. This impulse to remove objects from their contexts of origin and production and to replace those contexts with the context of the collection is quite evident in the practices of Floyd E. Nichols of New York City, a collector's collector. Rather than exhibit his many collected items according to type, Nichols would group objects together so that they told a story: "For instance, with miniature cat, mice, whiskey glass, and whiskey bottle, he dramatizes the proverb, 'One drink of moonshine whiskey would make a mouse spit in a cat's face,'" and "To miniature camels he attached a number 5 needle, the wire being shaped so that when it was pulled away from the needle, the camel mounted on the traverse section of the wire passed completely through the eye of the needle."[33] Nichols's practice exemplifies the replacement of the narrative of production by the narrative of the collection, the replacement of the narrative of history with the narrative of the individual subject—that is, the collector himself.

Whereas the space of the souvenir is the body (talisman), the periphery (memory), or the contradiction of private display (reverie), the space of the collection is a complex interplay of exposure and hiding, organization and the chaos of infinity. The collection relies upon the box, the cabinet, the cupboard, the seriality of shelves. It is determined by these boundaries, just as the self is invited to expand within the confines of bourgeois domestic space. For the environment to be an extension of the self, it is necessary not to act upon and transform it, but to declare its essential emptiness by filling it. Ornament, décor, and ultimately decorum define the boundaries of private space by emptying that space of any relevance other than that of the subject. In a suggestive essay on the etymology of the terms *milieu* and *ambience*, Leo Spitzer traces the notion of authentic place as moving from the classical macrocosmic/microcosmic relation between man and nature, in which space is climate, protector, and effecting presence; to the medieval theory of gradations, in which social position becomes the natural place of being; to the late-seventeenth-century notion of the interior: "It is in such descriptions of an interior setting that the idea of the 'milieu' (enclosing and 'filled in') is presented most forcefully; we have the *immediate* milieu of the individual. One may remember the vogue which paintings of the same type enjoyed in the preceding century—intérieurs depicting the coziness and comfort of well-furnished human dwellings. . . . The world-embracing, metaphysical, cupola that once enfolded mankind has disappeared, and man is left to rattle around in an infinite universe. Thus he seeks all the more to fill in his immediate, his physical, environment with things."[34]

If this task of filling in the immediate environment with things were simply one of use value, it would be quite simple. But this filling in is a matter of ornamentation and presentation in which the interior is both a model and a projection of self-fashioning. The contradictions of the aesthetic canon are contradictions of genealogy and personality: harmony and disruption, sequence and combination, pattern and variation. Consider Grace Vallois's extensive advice in *First Steps in Collecting Furniture, Glass, and China:*

> There is to me something distinctly incongruous in seeing a large Welsh dresser (never originally meant for anything but a kitchen) occupying the entire wall of a little jerry-built twentieth century dining room, and adorned with the necessary adjuncts of everyday life, biscuit boxes perhaps, and a Tantalus stand. Sometimes the dresser is promoted to the 'drawing room' so called, and thrusts its grand, simple old lines, among palms in pots, an ugly but convenient Sutherland table for tea, or crowning atrocity, one of those three-tiered stands for cake and bread and butter. These things may be convenient, but they do not go

> with the old dresser! . . . It is not necessary to have everything of the same period, that, to my mind, is dull and uninteresting. An ancestral home is necessarily built up bit by bit, each generation has added something and left their impress in the old house. I like to see Jacobean chairs living amicably with Sheraton cabinets, and old four posters sharing floor space with 17th century Bridal chests, and 18th century Hepplewhite chairs. That is as it should be, and appeals to me far more than a perfect 18th century house, where everything inside and out seems to speak of Adam.[35]

Ironically, Booth Tarkington's parody of collectors in *The Collector's Whatnot* contains a similar essay by one "Angustula Thomas" on "pooning," or arranging, the collection. Angustula advises: "Don't adhere too closely to periods. If you have acquired a few *good* pieces of Egyptian furniture of the Shepherd King Period for your living-room, they may be easily combined with Sheraton or Eastlake by placing a Mingg vase or an old French fowling-piece between the two groups; or you may cover the transition by a light scattering of Mexican pottery, or some Java wine-jars."[36] These texts, either "sincere" or parodying, imply that possession cannot be undertaken independent of collection and arrangement. Each sign is placed in relation to a chain of signifiers whose ultimate referent is not the interior of the room—in itself an empty essence—but the interior of the self.

In order to construct this narrative of interiority it is necessary to obliterate the object's context of origin. In these examples eclecticism rather than pure seriality is to be admired because, if for no other reason, it marks the heterogeneous organization of the self, a self capable of transcending the accidents and dispersions of historical reality. But eclecticism at the same time depends upon the unstated seriality it has bounded from. Not simply a consumer of the objects that fill the décor, the self generates a fantasy in which it becomes producer of those objects, a producer by arrangement and manipulation. The rather extraordinary confidence with which Vallois addresses her audience, which is assumed to have access to the "controlled variety" of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antiques that she "likes to see," is the confidence of the managerial classes, whose own role in the production of history is dependent upon the luxury of the collection of surplus value. Here we might consider the structural meaning of the "flea" market as dependent upon the leisure tastes and discarded fashions of the host culture: the market economy. Similarly, Balzac's original title for his novel of collecting, *Cousin Pons*, was *Le Parasite*. As we know from the antics of that poor relation, the economy of collecting is a fantastic one, an economy with its own principles of exchange, substitution, and replicability

despite its dependence upon the larger economic system. Balzac's narrator tells us: "The joy of buying bric-à-brac is a secondary delight; in the give-and-take of barter lies the joy of joys."[37] The term *à-bric-à-brac*, which we might translate as "by hook or crook," implies the process of acquisition and exchange, which is the (false) labor of the collector. Herein lies the ironic nostalgia of the collection's economic system: although dependent upon, and a mirroring of, the larger economy of surplus value, this smaller economy is self-sufficient and self-generating with regard to its own meanings and principles of exchange. Whereas the larger economy has replaced use value through the translation of labor into exchange value, the economy of the collection translates the monetary system into the system of objects. Indeed, that system of objects is often designed to serve as a stay against the frailties of the very monetary system from which it has sprung. The collection thereby acquires an aura of transcendence and independence that is symptomatic of the middle class's values regarding personality.

When one wants to disparage the souvenir, one says that it is not authentic; when one wants to disparage the collected object, one says "it is not *you*." Thus Spitzer's model of the self as occupying the interior in conjunction with objects is not a completely adequate one, for the contained here *is* the self; the material body is simply one more position within the seriality and diversity of objects. Private space is marked by an exterior material boundary and an interior surplus of signification.

To play with series is to play with the fire of infinity. In the collection the threat of infinity is always met with the articulation of boundary. Simultaneous sets are worked against each other in the same way that attention to the individual object and attention to the whole are worked against each other. The collection thus appears as a mode of control and containment insofar as it is a mode of generation and series. And this function of containment must be taken into account as much as any simple Freudian model when we note the great popularity of collecting objects that are themselves containers: cruets, pitchers, salt-and-pepper shakers, vases, teapots, and boxes, to name a few. The finite boundaries these objects afford are played against the infinite possibility of their collection, and, analogously, their finite use value when filled is played against the measureless emptiness that marks their new aesthetic function.

In other cases, categorization allows the collection to be finite—indeed, this finitude becomes the collector's obsession. The *New York Times* for March 16, 1980, carried an account of a man who was (and probably still is) searching for three antique Tiffany postal scales; he

owns six of the nine that are said to exist and has paid a special finding service to look for the missing trio of scales. William Walsh's *Handy-book of Literary Curiosities* recounts a comparable story:

> There is a story of a wealthy English collector who long believed that a certain rare book in his possession was a unique. One day he received a bitter blow. He learned that there was another copy in Paris. But he soon rallied, and, crossing over the Channel, he made his way to the rival's home. "You have such and such a book in your library?" he asked, plunging at once *in medias res*. "Yes." "Well, I want to buy it." "But, my dear sir—" "I will give you a thousand francs for it." "But it isn't for sale; I—" "Two thousand!" "On my word, I don't care to dispose of it." "Ten thousand!" and so on, till at last twenty-five thousand francs was offered; and the Parisian gentleman finally consented to part with this treasure. The Englishman counted out twenty-five thousand-franc bills, examined the purchase carefully, smiled with satisfaction, and cast the book into the fire. "Are you crazy?" cried the Parisian, stooping over to rescue it. "Nay," said the Englishman, detaining his arm. "I am quite in my right mind. I, too, possess a copy of that book. I deemed it a unique."[38]

This story is, by now, a legend of collecting (Baudrillard, via Maurice Rheims, recounts it as happening in New York).[39] It is an account of the replacement of content with classification, an account of the ways in which collection is the antithesis of creation. In its search for a perfect hermeticism, the collection must destroy both labor and history. The bibliomaniac's desire for the possession of the unique object is similarly reflected in the collector's obsession with the aberration. D'Israeli records that Cicero wrote thus to Atticus requesting his help in forming a collection of antiquities: "In the name of our friendship suffer nothing to escape you of whatever you find curious or rare."[40]

The collector can gain control over repetition or series by defining a finite set (the Tiffany postal scales) or by possessing the unique object. The latter object has acquired a particular poignancy since the onset of mechanical reproduction; the aberrant or unique object signifies the flaw in the machine just as the machine once signified the flaws of handmade production. Veblen's critique of conspicuous consumption similarly concluded that the handmade object's crudity was, ironically, a symptom of conspicuous waste. "Hand labor is a more wasteful method of production; hence the goods turned out by this method are more serviceable for the purpose of pecuniary reputability; hence the marks of hand labor come to be honorific, and the goods which exhibit these marks take rank as of higher grade than the corresponding machine product. . . . The appreciation of those evidences of honorific crudeness to which hand-wrought goods owe their superior worth and charm in the eyes of well-bred people is a matter of nice discrimination."[41] Thus a measured crudity of material quality is presented in tension with an overrefinement of significance. This tension is further exaggerated by the juxtaposition of the unique and singular qualities of the individual object against the seriality of the collection as a whole.

The collection is often about containment on the level of its content and on the level of the series, but it is also about containment in a more abstract sense. Like Noah's Ark, those great civic collections, the library and the museum, seek to represent experience within a mode of control and confinement. One cannot know everything about the world, but one can at least approach closed knowledge through the collection. Although transcendent and comprehensive in regard to its own context, such knowledge is both eclectic and eccentric. Thus the ahistoricism of such knowledge makes it particularistic and consequently random. In writings on collecting, one constantly finds discussion of the collection as a mode of knowledge. Alice Van Leer Carrick declares in the preface to *Collector's Luck* that "collecting isn't just a fad; it isn't even just a 'divine madness': properly interpreted, it is a liberal education."[42] Indeed, one might say inversely that the liberal arts education characteristic of the leisure classes is in itself a mode of collection. The notion of the "educational hobby" legitimates the collector's need for control and possession within a world of infinitely consumable objects whose production and consumption are far beyond the ken of the individual subject. Although the library might be seen in a semiotic sense as representing the world, this is not the collector's view; for the collector the library is a representative collection of books just as any collection is representative of its class of objects. Thus, for the collector, the material quality of the book is foregrounded, a feature parodied by Bruyère: "Of such a collector, as soon as I enter his house, I am ready to faint on the staircase, from a strong smell of Morocco leather; in vain he shows me fine editions, gold leaves, Etruscan bindings, and naming them one after another, as if he were showing a gallery of pictures! . . . I thank him for his politeness, and as little as himself care to visit the tan-house, which he calls his library."[43]

Yet it is the museum, not the library, which must serve as the central metaphor of the collection; it is the museum, in its representativeness, which strives for authenticity and for closure of all space and temporality within the context at hand. In an essay on *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, Eugenio Donato has written:

> The set of objects the Museum displays is sustained only by the fiction that they somehow constitute a coherent representational universe. The fiction is that a repeated metonymic displacement of fragment for

> totality, object to label, series of objects to series of labels, can still produce a representation which is somehow adequate to a nonlinguistic universe. Such a fiction is the result of an uncritical belief in the notion that ordering and classifying, that is to say, the spatial juxtaposition of fragments, can produce a representational understanding of the world.[44]

Thus there are two movements to the collection's gesture of standing for the world: first, the metonymic displacement of part for whole, item for context; and second, the invention of a classification scheme which will define space and time in such a way that the world is accounted for by the elements of the collection. We can see that what must be suppressed here is the privileging of context of origin, for the elements of the collection are, in fact, already accounted for by the world. And we can consequently see the logic behind the blithe gesture toward decontextualization in museum acquisitions, a gesture which results in the treasures of one culture being stored and displayed in the museums of another. Similarly, the museum of natural history allows nature to exist "all at once" in a way in which it could not otherwise exist. Because of the fiction of such a museum, it is the Linnaean system which articulates the identities of plants, for example, and not the other way around. The popularity of tableau scenes in the natural history museum and the zoo further speaks to the dramatic impulse toward simultaneity and the felicitous reconciliation of opposites which characterize such collections.

In her book on collecting, which she wrote for children, Montiesor recommends that "every house ought to possess a 'Museum,' even if it is only one shelf in a small cupboard; here, carefully dated and named, should be placed the pretty shells you gather on the seashore, the old fossils you find in the rocks, the skeleton leaves you pick up from under the hedges, the strange orchids you find on the downs. Learn what you can about each object before you put it in the museum, and docket it not only with its name, but also with the name of the place in which you found it, and the date."[45] Thus we have directions for the homemade universe; nature is nothing more or less than that group of objects which is articulated by the classification system at hand, in this case a "personal" one. When objects are defined in terms of their use value, they serve as extensions of the body into the environment, but when objects are defined by the collection, such an extension is inverted, serving to subsume the environment to a scenario of the personal. The ultimate term in the series that marks the collection is the "self," the articulation of the collector's own "identity." Yet ironically and by extension, the fetishist's impulse toward accumulation and privacy, hoarding and the

secret, serves both to give integrity to the self and at the same time to overload the self with signification. Bunn, in his article on British mercantilist culture, has suggested that this surplus of significance can, in fact, *saturate* the collector: "Although the chance removal of a cultural token cauterizes its source, it also overwhelms unintentionally the semiological substructure of its host."[46] For an example of this process by which the host is overwhelmed, we might remember the haunting picture of Mario Praz at the conclusion of *La Casa della Vita;* gazing into a convex mirror which reflects a room full of collected objects, Praz sees himself as no bigger than a handful of dust, a museum piece among museum pieces, detached and remote.

The boundary between collection and fetishism is mediated by classification and display in tension with accumulation and secrecy. As W. C. Hazlitt wrote, "The formation of Collections of Coins originated, not in the Numismatist, but in the Hoarder. Individuals, from an early stage in the history of coined money, laid pieces aside, as (nearer to our day) Samuel Pepys did, because they were striking or novel, or secreted them in the ground, like Pepys, because they were thought to be insecure."[47] In the hoarder the gesture toward an incomplete replacement (the part-object)—the gesture we saw at work through the substitution of the souvenir for origin—becomes a compulsion, the formation of a repetition or chain of substituting signifiers. Following Lévi-Strauss's work on totems, Baudrillard concludes that the desire and *jouissance* characterizing fetishism result from the systematic quality of objects rather than from the objects themselves: "Ce qui fascine dans l'argent (l'or) n'est ni sa matérialité, ni même l'equivalent capté d'une certaine force (de travail) ou d'un certain pouvoir virtuel, c'est sa *systématicité;* c'est la virtualité, enfermée dans cette matière, de substitutivité totale de toutes les valeurs grâce à leur abstraction définitive."[48] In the collection such systematicity results in the quantification of desire. Desire is ordered, arranged, and manipulated, not fathomless as in the nostalgia of the souvenir. Here we must take into account not only Freud's theory of the fetish but Marx's as well.

The fetishized object must have a reference point within the system of the exchange economy—even the contemporary fetishization of the body in consumer culture is dependent upon the system of images within which the corporeal body has been transformed into another point of representation. As Lacan has noted, the pleasure of possessing an object is dependent upon others. Thus the object's position in a system of referents—a system we may simultaneously and variously characterize as the psychoanalytic life history or as the points of an exchange economy marking the places of "existence"—and not any

intrinsic qualities of the object or even its context of origin, determines its fetishistic value. The further the object is removed from use value, the more abstract it becomes and the more multivocal is its referentiality. The dialectic between hand and eye, possession and transcendence, which motivates the fetish, is dependent upon this abstraction. Thus, just as we saw that in its qualities of eclecticism and transcendence the collection can serve as a metaphor for the individual personality, so the collection can also serve as a metaphor for the *social* relations of an exchange economy. The collection replicates Marx's by now familiar account of the objectification of commodities:

> It is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.[49]

In this passage we find a description of the process by which the alienation of labor emerges—the abstraction of labor power within the cycle of exchange, an abstraction which makes the work of the body perceivable in terms of its signifying capacity. This estrangement of labor from its location in lived relations is perceivable in the operation of the souvenir as the souvenir both mourns and celebrates the gap between object and context of origin. It is, in other words, by means of the alienation of labor that the object is constituted. Yet Marx's model of the process of fetishization focuses upon the inversion by which the self as producer of meanings is seen as independent of that production. We must extend this description a degree further in order to see the final stage of this alienation, a stage in which the self is constituted by its consumption of goods.

What is the proper labor of the consumer? It is a labor of total magic, a fantastic labor which operates through the manipulation of abstraction rather than through concrete or material means. Thus, in contrast to the souvenir, the collection presents a metaphor of "production" not as "the earned" but as "the captured." The scene of origin is not a scene of the transformation of nature; it is too late for that. Nor is it simply a scene of appropriation, as it might be through the exercise of the body upon the world. We go to the souvenir, but the collection comes to us. The collection says that the world is given; we are inheritors, not producers, of value here. We "luck into" the

collection; it might attach itself to particular scenes of acquisition, but the integrity of those scenes is subsumed to the transcendent and ahistorical context of the collection itself. This context destroys the context of origin. In the souvenir, the object is made magical; in the collection, the mode of production is made magical. In this belief in fortune we see a further erasure of labor. As Veblen noted in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, "The belief in luck is a sense of fortuitous necessity in the sequence of phenomena."[50] The souvenir magically transports us to the scene of origin, but the collection is magically and serially transported to the scene of acquisition, its proper destination. And this scene of acquisition is repeated over and over through the serial arrangement of objects in display space. Thus, collected objects are not the result of the serial operation of labor upon the material environment. Rather, they present the seriality of an animate world; their production appears to be self-motivated and self-realized. If they are "made," it is by a process that seems to invent itself for the pleasure of the acquirer. Once again, an illusion of a relation between things takes the place of a social relation.

The souvenir reconstitutes the scene of acquisition as a merging with the other and thus promises the preimaginary paradise of the self-as-world even as it must use the symbolic, the narrative, as a device to arrive at that reunion. But the collection takes this movement even further. In its erasure of labor, the collection is prelapsarian. One "finds" the elements of the collection much as the prelapsarian Adam and Eve could find the satisfaction of their needs without a necessary articulation of desire. The collector constructs a narrative of luck which replaces the narrative of production. Thus the collection is not only far removed from contexts of material production; it is also the most abstract of all forms of consumption. And in its translation back into the particular cycle of exchange which characterizes the universe of the "collectable," the collected object represents quite simply the ultimate self-referentiality and seriality of money at the same time that it declares its independence from "mere" money. We might remember that of all invisible workers, those who actually make money are the least visible. All collected objects are thereby *objets de lux*, objects abstracted from use value and materiality within a magic cycle of self-referential exchange.

This cycle returns us to Eliot's distinction between "old leisure" and "amusement." Crafts are contiguous to preindustrial modes of production, and thus use value lies at the core of their aesthetic forms; analogously, the production of amusement mimes the seriality and abstraction of postindustrial modes of production. For example, one might think of square dancing, like bluegrass music, as an imita-

tion of the organization of mechanical modes of production in its patterns of seriality, dispersal, and reintegration. Within contemporary consumer society, the collection takes the place of crafts as the prevailing form of domestic pastime. Ironically, such collecting combines a preindustrial aesthetic of the handmade and singular object with a postindustrial mode of acquisition/production: the ready-made.

Metaconsumption: The Female Impersonator

This ironic combination of preindustrial content and postindustrial form is only one in a series of contradictions under which the collection operates. We must look more closely at the type of consumerism the collection represents. In presenting a form of aesthetic consumption, the collection creates the conditions for a functional consumption; in marking out the space of the ornament and the superfluous, it defines a mode of necessity. And yet it is not acceptable to simply purchase a collection *in toto;* the collection must be acquired in a serial manner. This seriality provides a means for defining or classifying the collection and the collector's life history, and it also permits a systematic substitution of purchase for labor. "Earning" the collection simply involves *waiting*, creating the pauses that articulate the biography of the collector.

Furthermore, the collection cannot be defined simply in terms of the worth of its elements. Just as the system of exchange depends upon the relative position of the commodity in the chain of signifiers, so the collection as a whole implies a value—aesthetic or otherwise—independent of the simple sum of its individual members. We have emphasized aesthetic value here because a value of manipulation and positioning, not a value of reference to a context of origin, is at work in the collection. Thus, just as we saw that the material value of the souvenir was an ephemeral one juxtaposed with a surplus of value in relation to the individual life history, so the ephemeral quality of the collected object can be displaced by the value of relations and sheer quantity. Every coin dissolves into the infinite meaning of face, the deepest of surfaces, yet every coin also presents a point of enumeration; the accumulation of coins promises the amassing of a cyclical world that could replace the world itself. In the face of an apocalypse, gold and antiques are gathered, just as we earlier saw Crusoe deciding to take the money after all.

And on the other side of this scale of values, we must consider collections of ephemera proper—collections made of disposable items such as beer cans, cast-off clothing, wine bottles, or political buttons.

Such collections might seem to be anticollections in their denial of the values of the antique and the classic as transcendent forms. Yet such collections do more than negate. First, through their accumulation and arrangement they might present an aesthetic tableau which no single element could sustain. For example, collections of wine bottles or cruets placed in a window mark the differentiation of light and space. In this way, they, too, might function as "intrinsic objects" like the nails and glass fragments collected by the wood rat. Second, collections of ephemera serve to exaggerate certain dominant features of the exchange economy: its seriality, novelty, and abstraction. And by means or by virtue of such exaggeration, they are an ultimate form of consumerism; they classicize the novel, enabling mode and fashion to extend in both directions—toward the past as well as toward the future.

Kitsch and camp objects offer a simultaneous popularization of the antique and antiquation of the fad; they destroy the last frontier of intrinsicality. Baudrillard has suggested in a brief passage on kitsch in *La Société de consommation* that kitsch represents a saturation of the object with details.[51] Yet this saturation would be a feature of many valued objects, including both souvenirs and "classic" items for collection. Rather, it would be more accurate to say that the kitsch object offers a saturation of materiality, a saturation which takes place to such a degree that materiality is ironic, split into contrasting voices: past and present, mass production and individual subject, oblivion and reification. Such objects serve to subjectify all of consumer culture, to institute a nostalgia of the populace which in fact makes the populace itself a kind of subject. Kitsch objects are not apprehended as the souvenir proper is apprehended, that is, on the level of the individual autobiography; rather, they are apprehended on the level of collective identity. They are souvenirs of an era and not of a self. Hence they tend to accumulate around that period of intense socialization, adolescence, just as the souvenir proper accumulates around that period of intense subjectivity, childhood. The seriality of kitsch objects is articulated by the constant self-periodization of popular culture. Their value depends upon the fluctuations of a self-referential collector's market, just as all collections do, but with the additional constraint of fashion. Furthermore, whereas objects such as hand tools had an original use value, the original use value of kitsch objects is an elusive one. Their value in their context of origin was most likely their contemporaneousness, their relation to the fluctuating demands of style. Hence kitsch and camp items may be seen as forms of metafashion. Their collection constitutes a discourse on the constant re-creation of novelty within the exchange economy. And in

their collapsing of the narrow time and deep space of the popular into the deep time and narrow space of the antique[52] they serve an ideology which would jumble class relations, an ideology which substitutes a labor of perpetual consumption for a labor of production.

The term *kitsch* comes from the German *kitschen*, "to put together sloppily." The kitsch object as collected object thus takes the abstraction from use value a step further. We saw that the collection of handmade objects translates the time of manual labor into the simultaneity of conspicuous waste. The desire for the kitsch object as either souvenir or collected item marks the complete disintegration of materiality through an ironic display of an overmateriality. The inside bursts its bounds and presents a pure surface of outside. The kitsch object symbolizes not transcendence but emergence in the speed of fashion. Its expendability is the expendability of all consumer goods, their dependence upon novelty as the replacement of use value and craftsmanship.

Camp is perhaps a more complex term. *The American Heritage Dictionary* (what title better speaks to a nostalgia for standard?) tells us that the term has obscure origins, but has come to mean "an affectation or appreciation of manners and tastes commonly thought to be outlandish, vulgar or banal . . . to act in an outlandish or effeminate manner."[53] In all their uses, both *kitsch* and *camp* imply the imitation, the inauthentic, the impersonation. Their significance lies in their exaggerated display of the values of consumer culture. Fashion and fad take place within the domain of the feminine not simply because they are emblematic of the trivial. We must move beyond any intrinsic functional argument here that would say that the subject is prior to the feminine. Rather, the feminine-as-impersonation forms a discourse miming the discourse of male productivity, authority, and predication here. And the further impersonation of the feminine which we see in camp marks the radical separation of "feminine discourse" from the subject. This separation has arisen historically as a result of capital's need to place subjects heterogeneously throughout the labor market. And thus this separation has resulted in a denuding of the feminine, making the discourse of the feminine available to parody. The "eternal feminine" presents a notion of the classic, a notion of transcendence necessitated by the political economy: the camp is its parody. And this parody reveals the feminine as surface, showing the deep face of the feminine as a purely material relation, that relation which places women within the cycle of exchange and simultaneously makes their labor invisible. The conception of woman as consumer is no less fantastic or violent than its literalization in the *vagina dentata* myth, for it is a conception which

functions to erase the true labor, the true productivity, of women. Yet this erasure forms the very possibility of the cycle of exchange.

If we say that the collection in general marks the final erasure of labor within the abstractions of late capitalism, we must conclude by saying that kitsch and camp, as forms of metaconsumption, have arisen from the contradictions implicit in the operation of the exchange economy; they mark an antisubject whose emergence ironically has been necessitated by the narratives of significance under that economy. It is only by virtue of the imitation that the popular classes have the illusion of *having* at all. The imitation as abstraction, as element of series, as novelty and luxury at once, is necessarily the classic of contemporary consumer culture. This imitation marks the final wresting of the market away from the place we think we know, firsthand, as nature.