

majority of the essay focuses on secondary sources, pointing the reader to books from different disciplines that all relate, directly or indirectly, to scientific photography. Grouping the books by themes, methodologies, and disciplines, the essay outlines key works on astronomy, anthropology, spiritualism, human vision, photographic technologies, imperialism, intellectual property rights, feminist scholarship, and the history of collecting. Tucker's integration of this wide-ranging material with dense and previously unpublished archival sources in the main body of the manuscript makes this a resourceful 'go-to' book. However, the lengthy quotations from primary sources occasionally bog down the flow of the text, and at times require further teasing apart. Additional information about the readership of the sources discussed would have been helpful, and a greater analysis of the quotations themselves would have allowed the author to push her points further.

Reading as an art historian, *Nature Exposed* can be frustrating, as discussions of art and visual images are often brief and simplistic. Although the book is filled with fascinating photographs, there is little to no visual analysis outside of a few descriptive lines. Tucker's discussions of portraiture and still life do not engage with the rich history of artistic genres and conventions. This could have enriched the book tremendously as it is, after all, focused on scientific photography as a new genre. A full discussion and clearer definition of this new category and its relationship to other artistic genres would have been fruitful. Yet such an approach to these images was not Tucker's aim. Perhaps this is a different study altogether – one that is best left to historians of art or photography who may be more interested in situating these works within nineteenth-century British visual culture.⁵ Nonetheless, *Nature Exposed* is useful for art historians and others who want to map out a history of science and photography. Unlike art historians, who are often most interested in the type of scientific knowledge that made its way into public consciousness (even though many artists frequented scientific circles, it is more likely that they, and viewers of their work, received information through newspapers, popular science books, plays and novels), Tucker deconstructs the forces that produced scientific fraternities, is more critical of scientific claims, and provides more nuanced and detailed accounts of scientific debates. While Tucker does point out how ideas about bacteria, meteorology, and astronomy trickled down to the public and became embedded in public consciousness, she also gives equal attention to specialised journals and expert opinion. In this regard, her discussion of astronomy is layered and comprehensive whereas Larson's is relatively short and meant to provide a context for Redon's work.

It must be noted that these books are not overtly engaged in current theoretical debates regarding scientific images, image-making, and photography. While Tucker does address Roland Barthes and John Tagg briefly in her introduction, partaking in a critical dialogue

regarding photography is not one of the book's aims. Nor is she interested in the relationship between photography and art. While she does offer new research on women in photography, feminist roots are acknowledged but not pushed. The same is true of *The Dark Side of Nature*, which focuses on nineteenth-century theories and philosophies rather than consciously examining Redon's work through a twenty-first century lens. These omissions do not feel like holes in the books, as this is not what the books propose to do, nor would it be in keeping with their methodological approaches. Rather, both authors produce works that offer new models for future studies of visual images in art and science. Read together, they produce a type of comparative history that allows one to see the conflicts between French and British science, the role of science in patriotism and progress, and importantly, the shared and rich visual history of science produced on both sides of the Channel.

Notes

1. Jennifer Tucker, *Nature Exposed: Photography as Eye Witness in Victorian Science* (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2005), p. 3.
2. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 1990); Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 1990); Caroline A. Jones and Peter Louis Galison (eds.), *Picturing Science, Producing Art* (Routledge: New York, 1998).
3. Key secondary sources on hysteria include Georges Didi-Huberman's *Invention de l'hystérie* (Editions Macula: Paris, 1982 and English translation, MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2004); Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane: A Cultural History of Medicine* (John Wiley: New York, 1982); Jan Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1987); Jann Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1994); Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1994); Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1995); and Elisabeth Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and Its Discontents* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1998).
4. Tucker, p. 20.
5. For a recent example of a history of photography that reframes the medium in relation to science, industry, art, and commercial culture, see Steve Edwards, *The Making of English Photography: Allegories* (Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, 2006).

doi:10.1093/oxartj/kcp008

Of Picassology

C.F.B. Miller

Anne Baldassari (ed.), *The Surrealist Picasso* (Flammarion: Paris, 2006), 264 colour illns, 256 pp., hardback ISBN 2080305093, £40.

Elizabeth Cowling, *Visiting Picasso: The Notebooks and Letters of Roland Penrose* (Thames and Hudson: London, 2006), 72 b&w illns, 400

pp., hardback ISBN 0500512930, £25; (Thames and Hudson: London, 2008), 412 pp., paperback ISBN 0500287465, £16.95.

Christopher Green, *Picasso: Architecture and Vertigo* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2006), 60 b&w, 60 colour illns, 256 pp., hardback ISBN 030010412X, £35.

Peter Read, *Picasso and Apollinaire: The Persistence of Memory* (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2008), 318 pp., hardback ISBN 0520243613, £35.

John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso: The Triumphant Years 1917–1932* (Jonathan Cape: London, 2007), 592 pp., hardback 022403121X, £30 (Pimlico: London, 2009), 608 pp., paperback ISBN 1845951298, £20.

The 'enshrinement', or apologia, is meant to cover up the revolutionary moments in the course of history. (Walter Benjamin)¹

In a clutch of recent books dealing with Picasso's interwar output, one or two gesture towards total interpretations of the oeuvre. The latest instalment of John Richardson's *A Life of Picasso*, subtitled *The Triumphant Years 1917–1932*, continues a project – first mooted almost 50 years ago when the author knew the artist – which has moulded Picasso's popular image. Not coincidentally Richardson has long advocated biographical criticism as the key to the meaning of the work. Volume III duly restates this position. While Richardson has claimed his project to be *amethodological*,² which is to say *natural*, his *Life* nevertheless advances a hermeneutic programme. The three volumes completed thus far represent an achievement that is – to use a term of approval frequently employed by Richardson's reviewers – monumental. But, one might ask, to which Picasso is this a monument? *The Triumphant Years* is readable, entertaining and, within limits, informative. What strikes me as especially limiting is its approach to the artworks. Here I want to address the tacit 'methodology', or ideology, that determines Richardson's exegesis.

First Richardsonian axiom: *the production is subordinate to the genre of portraiture*. Richardson's *Life* began as an attempt to map the artist's 'development through his portraits', focusing on Picasso's 'women'; soon he came to apprehend the entire corpus as (self-)portraiture, its anthropomorphism a persistent, often hidden imagery of the artist and his companions.³ Back in 1980, Rosalind Krauss attacked Richardson's 'art history of the proper name' for reducing the work to a *roman à clef*,⁴ but he has stuck with it, describing, for instance, the 1929 sculpture *Femme au jardin* as a literal '*sculpture à clef*' depicting a woman with whom Picasso once ran off. Portraiture submits the visual sign to maximal dependency on a prior, personal referent, and Richardson's assumption throughout is that each artwork conceals a biographical referent, which it is his task to reveal.

This point of view is germane to the bourgeois traditionalism of the late teens and early 1920s, where

Richardson can identify obscure sitters in naturalistic portraits, such as the old music teacher of Picasso's tragically unhinged acolyte Georges Bemberg. Richardson is in his element amid the glamour of what Max Jacob called Picasso's 'époque des duchesses', recounting 'social history' – his phrase for *beau monde* anecdote – with an insider's insouciance. The Beaumonts, the Murphys, the Marchesa Casati, Coco Chanel, Jean Cocteau – the acid gossip flows (Cocteau gets burnt, as do Clive Bell, André Breton and others), and the world beyond the élite fades into insignificance. There is an impressive accumulation of detail about Picasso's movements during the Ballets Russes years, and the book benefits from the photographic archive of his ballerina wife, Olga. (A fair few artworks are illustrated, though given the cost of Picassian picture rights it seems a waste not to give figure references in the text. On the design front, some readers might wince at the difference in format between this and the previous volumes.)

The second half of the book addresses material that both invites and exceeds Richardson's approach. Biographical positivism has split Picasso's 'surrealist' imagery between Olga and his young blonde mistress Marie-Thérèse, and Richardson rehearses the binary. In 1986 Rosalind Krauss broached the matter with reference to the 'pairing of two women, one fair and one dark' in a 1926 sketchbook, flipping the normal order of priority to argue that there 'is indeed a relationship between art and life, [...] but it goes in the opposite direction from the one supposed by the naïve autobiographical reading of Picasso. Picasso dreamed a type; and then he found her'.⁵ Krauss's point was that Picasso did not meet Marie-Thérèse till 1927, so that the production prompted the biographeme. In order to pooh-pooh this hypothesis as 'fairy-story' nonsense, Richardson travesties it as a *misidentification*, chiding Krauss for falling victim to a book that misdated the lovers' first meeting to 1925. But this bad date was not published until 1988, *two years after* Krauss's essay, which holds to the same chronology as Richardson. Richardson's empiricism will not admit a sign without a prior personal referent, to the extent that it distorts the facts, evading critique and conserving the myth of the artist as a creative individual antecedent to representation.

To denaturalise Richardson's model of autobiography is only to allow that dimension of Picasso's practice its complexity. Krauss's 1998 essay, 'Picasso/Pastiche', argued that the interwar output deployed concealed self-portraiture, and a diaristic form with encrypted and mythologised content, to *simulate* an authorial self that was 'something like the phenomenological subject: the individual who is fully present to himself'.⁶ That is to say, the transcendental signified of Picassian biography might be a fiction of the work. For Krauss, the encoding of persons – specifically Marie-Thérèse, as in those 1927 *Guitars* that encipher her initials – mimes the interpretive protocol of manifest and latent content, and indeed the 'exposure' of a hidden sexual object is

consistent with the modern location of truth in sexuality. Yet it must be said that *identity itself* often founders on Picasso's polymorphous perversity.

At the beginning of *Picasso: Architecture and Vertigo*, Christopher Green historicises the problem of Picasso's self-fashioning by demonstrating how the artist helped to construct his own reception. Revisiting a 1993 article that anticipated Krauss's discussion of the painting-as-diary trope,⁷ Green links the fact that at the end of the 1920s Picasso started dating almost every item, to his collaboration with the publisher Christian Zervos on a catalogue of the *œuvre* (the first volume of which appeared in 1932). To constitute an *œuvre* is to constitute an author, assimilating the production to a chronological *bios*. Zervos was at pains to promote an image of a unified subject transcending the differences of the production. Yet as Green points out, at the same time, in his achronological hang for the 1932 Galeries Georges Petit retrospective, Picasso staged the production as atelic and heterogeneous. As ever, Picasso was Janus-faced, by turns perpetuating the self-present authorial subject, and fragmenting the *autos* of autobiography.

The question of what kind of subject is at issue here brings us to the second axiom of Richardsonian biographism: that *meaning is located in the person of the artist*. The limit of meaning in the work, the radius of reference, is the radius of proximity to the artist's *person*. Genital contact is primary, followed by contact with other humans, animals, and things. Like a monarch's second body or the Lacanian Phallus (the origin of signification), the artist's *person* is less a biological than a metaphysical principle. The body qua humanist idea.

This may be a function of Picasso's status as an Artist or Author:

The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the 'human person'. It is thus logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the 'person' of the author.⁸

It has been pointed out that the sub-genre of the artist's biography, in its Early Modern incarnation, idealised the body of the 'absolute artist'.⁹ Hence Richardson's precursor Vasari tells of Michelangelo's miraculously uncorrupted corpse.¹⁰ The figure of the absolute Artist looms large in Picasso's reception, even to the extent that a Christology emerges from the literature. Picasso himself made the identification more than once. *The Triumphant Years* ends with the artist's own words: 'I am God, I am God, I am God.' This fantasy is cognate with the ideology that underpins Richardson's project. We are dealing with an Artist analogous to Barthes's 'Author-God', exegesis of whose works might release a 'single "theological" meaning'.¹¹ Again, the collusion Barthes outlines

between the Author and bourgeois individualism corresponds with the consumerism of the Picasso brand, whereby a mass-produced car is advertised as able to paint itself free (could there ever be a Citroen Duchamp?). Biography too is a lucrative branch of the Picasso industry. Richardson's interpretation exhibits exactly the positivism Barthes describes. And like the Author's Critic, Richardson mixes positivism with mystification.

Alongside his apparent empiricism, Richardson repeatedly substitutes the 'sacred fire' of inspiration for the historicity of agency. Moreover, he imputes an actual theology to Picasso, referring to the production several times as 'Mithraic'. This association with the ancient Roman mystery religion of Mithraism goes back to a 1930 article where Georges Bataille compared the Picassian viewer with the sacrificed bull of 'Mithraic' rites.¹² Bataille's archaeology was confused; the gruesome *taurobolium* pertained to the public cult of the Magna Mater, rather than the secret rituals of Mithraism.¹³ The text in any case is an example of Bataille's *mythological anthropology*, inscribing an anti-idealist *operation* in Picasso's painting, rather than positing a referent. The referential impulse has led scholars wrongly to identify Mithraic iconography in the 1930 *Crucifixion*, on the basis of Bataille's article.¹⁴ Doubtless Picasso was interested in bull-sacrifice, and late in life referred to the notion that Mithraism was at the origin of the bullfight (a conceit in place at least by Henri de Montherlant's proto-fascist 1926 novel, *Les Bestiaires*).¹⁵ One might conjecture – though Richardson does not – that 'Mithraism' signified to Picasso a decontextualised, atavistic primordium of sacrificial ritual. However, in the early twentieth century, Mithraism was most closely associated with solar monotheism, as a rival and predecessor of Christianity. Given the complete absence of any intra-cult textual record, historical Mithraism remains exceptionally obscure. Since Richardson does not elaborate, making no reference to Mithraism's historical status as Orientalist, homosocial and militaristic, or to its modern historiography, it is difficult to understand his appeals to 'Mithra' (Mithras) as anything more than appeals to *myth*.

Content to upbraid fellow scholars with whom he disagrees, Richardson is freer with his own tendentiousness in deducing iconographical sources on the basis of morphological resemblance. Some claims, however, more than stretch credibility. He states as fact that the Musée Picasso's crucial 1926 *Guitar* assemblage consists of 'a mopping-up cloth that Picasso had spotted on the floor while taking a bath. After cutting a round hole in the cloth, he hammered it onto a canvas from the back so that the points of the nails protrude menacingly from the front'. The unacknowledged debt is presumably to Lydia Gasman's 1981 dissertation, which must be one of the most influential unpublished PhDs (Richardson draws heavily on it throughout the 'surrealist' section of his book).¹⁶ Gasman's source for the bathroom story

was Roger Maillard's 1956 'biographical study', which is suspect not least for conflating two of the large 1926 *Guitar* constructions.¹⁷ Like Richardson, Gasman described the nails as 'hammered into the coarse cloth from the rear of the canvas';¹⁸ on examination, the nails are sandwiched *between* the canvas and the rag, which is *glued* to the support. Richardson also claims that the other important large *Guitar* construction in the Musée Picasso is 'sewn onto the canvas', when it is nailed to a panel.

There is some doubt as to whether the rag *Guitar* should hang vertically or horizontally. Most evidence indicates the vertical; the exhibition history is ambiguous. When, in 1955, he and Douglas Cooper asked Picasso, the artist said horizontal to Richardson and vertical to Cooper; but against the data, Richardson is adamant: 'I stand by what Picasso told *me*' (italics added). Contiguous with the artist's Word, the critic's person is the medium of certitude. Here is the final Richardsonian axiom: *the critic's (this critic's) proximity to the artist authorises the interpretation.*

In old age, when he knew Richardson, Picasso tended to bolster the autobiographical Artist. Witness the statement he gave to Roland Penrose in 1965 about the Tate *Three Dancers* (1925):

While I was painting this picture an old friend of mine, Ramon Pichot, died, and I have always felt that it should be called 'The Death of Pichot' rather than 'The Three Dancers'. The tall black figure behind the dancer on the right is the presence of Pichot.¹⁹

Pichot's 'presence' is a metonym of the humanist Author; likewise, the renaming limits the meaning of the work to a single message from the life, which is at odds with the picture's Dionysian affirmation of indeterminacy. Curiously, Picasso's identification of the Pichot figure, recorded in a Tate publication, is missing from the transcription given in Elizabeth Cowling's otherwise exemplary edition of Penrose's notebooks and letters.²⁰ To be sure, *Visiting Picasso* is an important addition to the historiography, opening up the Penrose archive at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art to academics and amateurs the world over. A scholarly apparatus frames a resource full of telling asides and snippets of conversation jotted down by Picasso's first English biographer-friend. Cowling's lucid commentary weaves the material into a moving 'biography of a friendship'; a double or meta-biography in which firsthand immediacy and objective, sympathetic retrospect intertwine in a narrative of rare honesty and insight.

Picasso scholarship has sometimes been hindered by an uncritical willingness to project backwards from the artist's later statements without due regard for the context of the utterance. Take, for example, Picasso's oft-cited 1955 remark that surrealism had no influence on his work, apart from in 1933, 'at the moment when the serious marital problems began which would soon lead to his separation from Olga'.²¹ For Picasso to foreswear surrealism in

1955 – on the occasion of a *monographic* retrospective – was to disavow a movement to which he had once been close, but from which he was now divided by Cold War politics distinct from those of the interwar years. He would admit only a single moment of influence – and immediately reaffirmed his author-ity with an autobiographeme.

Richardson is openly hostile to surrealism, disparaging the writers en masse as 'poetasters', and Breton in particular as a tyrannical 'weirdo'. To absolve Picasso from the surrealist association, he summons the *arché* of 'sur-réalisme', the neologism Apollinaire applied in 1917 to *Parade*, his play *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, and even a general notion of modernism or 'l'Esprit Nouveau'. Picasso's continuity with this Ur-sur-realism supposedly detaches him from 'the word "surrealist"'. Terminological anxiety is also evident in Anne Baldassari's essay, 'The *Sur*-realist Picasso', which likewise looks to the genesis of the term *sur-réalisme* (which Picasso once claimed to have invented) in the discourse around *Parade* (she gives the ballet a founding role in the formation of Picasso's 'sur-realist' mode). Apollinaire's remark that 'sur-realism' reconciled contradictions resonates with Breton's later formulations of Picasso's art, but amid all this concern with lexical ownership it is important to remember that Apollinaire was no theorist – and neither was Picasso. We should be careful not to hypostatise a labile metalanguage over its objects. If we are to reiterate the dogma of Picasso as cause, it might be more productive to focus on what surrealism took from cubism.

Peter Read's *Picasso and Apollinaire: The Persistence of Memory* (a revised translation of his 1995 study, *Picasso et Apollinaire. Les Métamorphoses de la mémoire*) concludes by stating how 'fully [Picasso] subscribed to Apollinaire's original conception of the term *Surrealism*'. Read is an astute commentator in command of his material; the publication of an English version of what was already a standard work is cause for celebration. Expertly splicing art and literary history, he attends to the pre-war dialogue between Apollinaire's texts and Picasso's images with subtlety and comprehensiveness. The 1918 death of the painter's most cherished friend is only the beginning of the story, cogently related by Read, of Picasso's commission to design a memorial for Apollinaire's tomb in Père Lachaise. Though never realised, the monument project provoked radical shifts in Picasso's sculptural thinking which, in the post-war conflict over Apollinaire's legacy, traversed surrealist territory.

Picasso's connection with surrealism has always been tricky to negotiate, not least since he occupied a paradoxical position of transgressive seniority, straddling the pre- and post-war avant-gardes. Breton, with his liking for genealogy, gave Picasso's cubism a founding role in surrealist painting comparable with that of Lautréamont in writing; but Picasso was a living ancestor, subverting his own recent commodification, disseminating a newly violent and desirous output through surrealist channels

of publication and exhibition. Read rehearses the argument that Picasso was too real for surrealism, quoting his later statement that 'I seek always to observe nature. I cling to resemblance, to a deeper resemblance, more real than the real, attaining the surreal. That's how I understood surrealism, but the word was used in a completely different way'. Defining surrealism as the 'free expression of the subconscious and dreams', Read distances Picasso from automatism because he made preparatory sketches. It must be said that he did not always – witness *The Three Dancers* – and of course other painters in the surrealist milieu, Miró, for example, made preparatory drawings. Read sidesteps the problem nicely with an apothegm: 'Picasso's art is to Surrealism what war is to politics: its continuation by other means'.

Either way, the distinction is unstable. A unique definition or essence of surrealism is as elusive as one of Picasso. For one thing, surrealism was continually redescribing itself. Breton himself pre-echoed Picasso when he called surrealism 'a will to deepen the real, to develop in an ever clearer and more passionate way, a consciousness of the tangible world'.²² Picasso compulsively (dis)figured the (primarily feminine) body, but it was a body reticulated by anti-classicism, infantilism, eroticism; a surrealist body, in the purview of psychoanalysis. Myth and magic were also zones of imbrication; but for Breton the crucial intersection was *dialectical*, in that he understood both Picasso and surrealism to sublimate contradiction.

If you had to choose a presiding motif for surrealism, you could do worse than contradiction. The same goes for Picasso, but, with the exception of David Lomas's *The Haunted Self*, postmodern Anglophone revisions of surrealism have marginalised or repressed his practice.²³ There is little mention of the artist in Hal Foster's *Compulsive Beauty* or Steven Harris's *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s*;²⁴ Rosalind Krauss's enlistment of the Batailleian ('dissident surrealist') anti-concept of the *informe* sidelined Picasso and excluded his painting altogether.²⁵ The past decade has seen some progress. Exhibitions about surrealism have incorporated Picasso (the Tate's *Desire Unbound*, the Pompidou's *La Révolution Surréaliste*, in the context of *Documents* the Hayward's *Undercover Surrealism*); Picasso scholars (Elizabeth Cowling, Lisa Florman) have addressed the 'surrealist' phase.²⁶ Anne Baldassari's 2005 show at the Fondation Beyeler, 'Picasso Surréaliste', generated the luxuriously illustrated (if dodgily translated) book, *The Surrealist Picasso*, augmenting Baldassari's high-spirited catalogue essays with excellent pieces by Etienne-Alain Hubert on the surrealist prosody of Picasso, and Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron on Picasso's place in surrealist magazines.

Until the late 1930s Picasso was politically uncommitted. He did not sign the surrealists' collective declarations. But he published in their magazines, exhibited in their shows, and befriended them. In any case, surrealism was less monolith than assemblage, in its

sociality as much as its production. Breton came to lead the group from the Right Bank, but there were break-aways, not least around the Left Bank studios of Miró and Masson, where jazz, Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky, infra dig to Breton, were the (dis)order of the day. This faction, which included Georges Bataille and Picasso's friend Michel Leiris, would hive off towards *Documents* after the split of 1929. It is disappointing that Richardson provides no new data in this area. *Documents'* offices were on Picasso's street, but there is no mention in *The Triumphant Years* of Kahnweiler's friend Carl Einstein. Richardson accounts for the lacuna of a documented relationship between Picasso and Bataille at that time by speculating unverifiably that the artist suffered from a 'superstitious fear' of the writer.

A reading of Bataille informs the dialogues Christopher Green develops between Picasso's production and various interlocutors (Zervos, Leiris, Henri Rousseau, Braque, Lipchitz, Miró) in *Picasso: Architecture and Vertigo*. Green builds contexts expertly; the chapter on Picasso and the ethnography of magic alone would ensure the book's usefulness for decades to come. But further, Green seeks to construct a thematics pertinent to all of Picasso's work 'from at least the *Demoiselles* in 1907'. Antithesis – Apollo/Dionysus, Beauty/The Monster, Eros/'Thanatos', Europe/Africa, Classicism/Cubism etc. – is the central trope of the Picasso literature. Green proposes a variant: 'architecture' versus 'vertigo'. To an extent the new antithesis, which Green describes as an 'opposition', 'binary', 'confrontational relationship' or 'oscillation', organises its precedents. In effect Green installs a lopsided table of opposites in which the master terms govern two columns of analogues. With 'architecture' go law, civilisation, classicism, Eros, structure, form; while 'vertigo' oversees transgression, eroticism, ecstasy, the sacred, magic, monstrosity, sub-Saharan Africa, the death drive, 'disruption of structure' and the *informe*. While the 'architectural' chain of analogy is conceivably consistent, the terms of the 'vertiginous' are less so. Green calls his scheme 'Batailleian', after Bataille's 1929 *Documents* 'Dictionnaire critique' entry 'Architecture' (supplemented by Denis Hollier's classic study, *Against Architecture*), and a notion of the 'vertiginous' drawn partly from the much later text *Eroticism* (1957), and loosely from the postmodern *informe*. In fact Green could have gone straight to Bataille circa 1930 for a comparable vocabulary, in the 'polarised human impulses' of 'appropriation' (or 'homogeneity') and 'excretion' (or 'heterogeneity'). Located somewhere between use-value and affect, Green's 'vertigo' set recalls the ragbag of *dépenses* signalled by excretion and heterogeneity (forerunners of 'general economy').²⁷

Yet Green demurs from detailed elaboration. He does not survey Bataille's usage of the noun *vertige* (vis-à-vis the abyss, for instance), or pursue the specificity of Picassian painting in the Batailleian text. 'In this book,' he writes, 'vertigo can be many things' (though never

the vernacular Hitchcockian kind, with its suggestive conjunction of desire and fall), and the play of transpositions serves in part to keep Bataille's writing at a distance. Unlike excretion, vertigo, which is emphatically a 'metaphor', defers scatology; but already, at the outset, to inaugurate the rule of metaphor, the law of equivalence, over performatives such as transgression or *informe*, is not only to confuse function with theme, but to assimilate or homogenise the unassimilable or heterogeneous.

That said, this is not a systematic theorisation. Notwithstanding his disclaimers about both terms being affirmative, Green locates 'vertigo' in an opposition that grants 'architecture' ontological priority: 'there can be first architecture, then vertigo'; 'vertigo is created by architecture'. At the same time, the *informe* 'is not simply an equivalent of the vertiginous, but that which creates the conditions for such an experience'. The polemical thrust of Green's rhetoric is indeed on the side of 'architecture', against what he sees as the pernicious 'non-aligned cultural neo-liberalism of our current intelligentsias', exemplified by the Kraussian *informe*. For Green the latter 'requires the comprehensive demolition of "architecture"; requires its total negation within an oppositional relationship that is not strictly dialectical, but rather opposes the two and refuses synthetic resolution'. But the undecidability of the *informe* is not produced by an *opposition* between form and *informe*. The *informe* cannot be held within any opposition, since it is precisely the function of *informe* to undo bivalence – as in the 'textbook case' of the ambivalent 'alteration' of sexual positionalities in Giacometti's *Suspended Ball*.²⁸ Krauss tried to think the *informe* 'not as the opposite of form but as a possibility working at the heart of form'.²⁹

Although Green's attack on postmodern relativism might suggest otherwise, the 'oscillation' he posits as the condition of interchange between 'architecture' and 'vertigo' mimes the aporetic movement of the *informe*, resisting the 'synthesis' of the (caricatural) Hegelian *Aufhebung*. The relationship of this oscillation to vertigo, transgression and *informe*, which in themselves perform movements of spinning, crossing and undifferentiating, is not readily apparent. Green's thematics poses as a dialectics, in that it pretends to opposition (although the diffuseness of the thematic sets renders their bivalence questionable) and then, in the place of contradiction, privileges a third term of 'oscillation'. In order to avoid sublation, Green wants to think architecture and vertigo 'non-dialectically as affirmations that do *not* negate each other' – this despite his characterisation of 'vertigo' as 'disintegration', 'loss of self' and so on. Green does not acknowledge it – it seems to enter his language doubly mediated through the secondary literature on Bataille (primarily Georges Didi-Huberman)³⁰ – but there is a Nietzschean echo here. Green does not work through the tension between dialectics and the affirmation of difference that marks his text; a tension that also marked the internal divisions of the avant-garde in interwar Paris.

Apparently T.J. Clark's 2009 Mellon Lectures about Picasso's interwar production have taken *The Genealogy of Morals* as their key text. Might Picasso studies at last be saying Yes to Nietzsche?

Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, 'Central Park' (trans. Edmund Jephcott and Howard Eiland), in Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, and London, 2006), pp. 134–69, p. 135.
2. John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume 1: 1881–1906* (Jonathan Cape: London, 1991), p. 3.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Rosalind E. Krauss, 'In the Name of Picasso', in Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, and London, 1985), pp. 23–40.
5. Rosalind E. Krauss, 'Life with Picasso: Sketchbook No. 92, 1926', in Arnold Glimcher (ed.), *Je suis le cahier: The Sketchbooks of Picasso* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1986), pp. 113–23, p. 118.
6. Rosalind E. Krauss, 'Picasso/Pastiche', in Krauss, *The Picasso Papers* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1998), pp. 89–210, p. 209.
7. Christopher Green, 'Zervos, Picasso and Brassai, Ethnographers in the Field: A Critical Collaboration', in Malcolm Gee (ed.), *Art Criticism since 1900* (Manchester University Press: Manchester and New York, 1993), pp. 116–39.
8. Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in Barthes, *Image Music Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (Fontana: London, 1993), pp. 142–8, p. 143.
9. See Catherine M. Soussloff, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1997), p. 36.
10. Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (Everyman's Library: London, 1996), p. 754.
11. Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', p. 146.
12. Georges Bataille, 'Soleil pourri', *Documents* 3, 1930, pp. 173–4; translated as 'Rotten Sun' in Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. and trans. Allan Stoekl (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1985), pp. 57–8.
13. The sole surviving detailed account of the *taurobolium* is in Prudentius, *Crowns of Martyrdom* 10.1001-50; see the extract in Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, eds, *Religions of Rome: Volume II, A Sourcebook* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998), p. 161.
14. As I argue in 'Bataille with Picasso: *Crucifixion* (1930) and *Apocalypse*', *Papers of Surrealism* 7, 2007.
15. Geneviève Laporte recalled Picasso describing bullfighting as a 'survival of Mithraism'; Montherlant likewise described bullfighting as a 'survival of Mithraism'. See Laporte, *Un Amour secret de Picasso: Si tard le soir...* (Editions du Rocher: Monaco, 1989), p. 15; Henry de Montherlant, *The Bullfighters*, trans. Edwin Gile Rich (Jonathan Cape: London, 1928), p. 209.
16. Lydia Gasman, *Mystery, Magic and Love in Picasso, 1925–1938: Picasso and the Surrealist Poets* (PhD Dissertation: Columbia University, New York, 1981).
17. See Frank Elgar and Robert Maillard, *Picasso*, trans. Francis Scarfe (Thames and Hudson: London, 1956), pp. 147–8.
18. Gasman, *Mystery, Magic and Love in Picasso*, p. 908.
19. See the Appendix in Ronald Alley, *Picasso: The Three Dancers* (Tate Gallery: London, 1986), pp. 24–5, p. 24.
20. This might stem from the fact that the transcribed text was already an abbreviated transcription of the notebook in question. See Cowling, *Visiting Picasso*, p. 276 and p. 381, n. 169.
21. *Picasso Peintures 1900–1955* (ex. cat., Musée des Arts Décoratifs: Paris, 1955), no. 40.
22. André Breton, 'What is Surrealism?' [1934], in Breton, *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (Pluto Press: London, 1978), pp. 112–41, p. 115.
23. David Lomas, *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2000).

24. Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, and London, 1993); Steven Harris, *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York, 2004).
25. Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 1993); Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (Zone Books: New York, 1997).
26. Lisa Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis: Picasso's Classical Prints of the 1930s* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, and London, 2000); Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: Style and Meaning* (Phaidon: London, 2002).
27. See Georges Bataille, 'The Use Value of D.A.F. de Sade (An Open Letter to My Current Comrades)' [1929-1930], in Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, pp. 91–102; 'The Notion of Expenditure' [1933], in *ibid.*, pp. 116–29.
28. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, p. 166.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
30. Georges Didi-Huberman, *La Ressemblance informe. Ou le gai savoir visuel selon Georges Bataille* (Paris: Macula, 1995).

doi:10.1093/oxartj/kcp014

Art and Politics in Contemporary Latin America

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Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 2007) 84 colour illns, 25 b&w illns, 364 pp., hardback ISBN 978-0-292-71639, \$75.00, paperback ISBN 978-0-292-71629-2, £30.

Olivier Debroyse, ed., *La Era de la Discrepancia/The Age of Discrepancies: Arte y Cultura Visual En Mexico/Art and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1968–1997* (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: Mexico City, 2006) 605 illns in b&w and colour, hardback ISBN 970-32-3829-7, £74.

Andrea Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics: Argentine Art in the Sixties*, trans. Peter Kahn (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 2007) 22 colour plates, 41 b&w illns, 432 pp., hardback ISBN 0-8223-3877-7, \$89.95, paperback ISBN 0-8223-3893-9, £18.99.

The year 1968 has come to have a legendary status in the post-World War II (post-WWII) era, not simply for the revolutionary upsurge of popular protest against government political policies (e.g. the United States in Vietnam; May 1968 in Paris) and government repression of its citizenry (e.g. the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico City and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia). The year is also renowned for a renewed rapprochement between politics and aesthetics (e.g. the Situationist International; Tucumán Arde; the Tupamaros' 'armed propaganda' (Camnitzer, p. 47)).

In Latin America, as elsewhere, 1968 marks a watershed regarding new political situations with new political actors, new developments within the artistic sphere, and

new modes of enacting the always problematic dialectic between art and politics. Yet the 1960s in writing on Latin American art has long suffered three significant problems. First, it is consistently compared detrimentally in English-language histories with art movements in the United States and Europe, as though 1960s Latin American art were but a poor cousin to its betters. Such myopic views blind their believers not only to the particularities of art in the region, but also to those multiple moments when Latin American artists forged innovative paths that set the tone for developments elsewhere. Second, this period in Latin America is still too often viewed within outdated nationalist paradigms. Art historical writing has overwhelmingly tended to repeat the increasingly shopworn 'cultural caudillo' model, in which élite and state rhetorics of nationalist modernisation effectively ignore social and political tensions within individual countries, as well as the increasingly global nature of socio-economic interaction, in favour of presenting a unified national front. In this, art history (especially that written in English) has lagged behind other fields in recognising the cultural effects of the sharp political polarisation due to the Cuban Revolution, the Cold War, and US abandonment of any pretense to democracy in the region in favour of a 'security' platform of anti-communism and neoliberalism. Nor, finally, has English-language art history of 1960s Latin America fully caught up with the challenges posed by postcolonial and dependency theory discourses that counter the modernisation's notion of positive cultural interpenetration between developed and developing nations with a theory of enforced imperialist dependency and penetration.

The three books reviewed here go far toward eradicating the ignorance and misperceptions in the English-speaking world concerning key aesthetic developments of this period and those that followed it. They treat not only the markedly different development trajectory of Latin American art movements from those in Europe and the United States, but also the manner in which the traditional centres of New York and Paris at crucial moments ceased altogether to set the framework. For all three, this has required redefinition of the key terms 'avant-garde,' 'politics,' and 'art,' as well as of the complex relations between different protagonists at regional, national, and international levels. As Andrea Giunta notes in her outstanding study, these decisive terms were constantly in dispute: 'more than mere words: they were arguments, conditions for legitimacy, as well as plunder' (p. 6).

Each of these three books details the struggles over terminologies, practices, and ideologies in the midst of radical social upheaval. Giunta's story centres on Argentine avant-garde and artistic institutions of the post-Perón period, and the quest for international recognition of Buenos Aires as a centre for vanguard aesthetics alongside Paris and New York. Meticulously researched and engagingly written, it analyses the con-