**Model States**

EVERY generation has apocalyptic visions, can’t imagine

its continuance, as in Rivette’s Paris nous appartient (1960),

where the exiled American communist journalist, experimenting

with Art Brut in his SRO, warns Anne of converging

super-militarized oligarchical death waves.

My apartment is bathed in the sounds of a Red Bull event

by the river, men and women amplified, shouting and generating

excitement that gets shunted into product,

religious techniques, walking back and forth wireless.

A small amount of movement or sound has come

to signify a mouse, a rebuke to systems of control

by which people might be stamped out, round

like a nickel and grey, with tails trailing

and eyes bulging brown.

Citizens shouted very differently among their own remnants

and ruins on 02/15/2003, detourning totalizing yelling

into group demand, stamping the little silver cans

into a huge reflective shield and straining

to articulate what should follow, fighting enervation

with dissolved caffeine and sucrose.

Steve says there’s a study: one can only love 200

in a life, a limit that underlies families and anarchism,

though my beliefs run to the bureaucratic materialism

that underlies communism.

It is at that scale (talking to friends)

and with that result (a kind of communism)

that I wanted to articulate an aesthetics,

given that the aestheticization of politics

is a primary tool of control.

It began: every articulation proposes,

produces, or reifies sets of relations.

The distribution of power thus touches

every articulation, which together form states.

Art is a technique for staging relations as a kind of model.

Art requires provisional affiliation: involuntarily imagining

the consequences of sets of relations.

Provisional affiliation is what can make art disturbing,

because affiliation can never be fully provisional,

which is what lies behind objections to images of violence,

which is why Spielberg claims to employ them only within highly

motivated meaning structures, preferring models of exchange based on art,

as at the climax of Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977),

when a French disco scientist and an enormous extraplanetary craft

undertake a musical rondounder the auspices of a finally indulgent

U.S. military, which holds fire while a highly amplified,

visually interpreted five tone sequence is put forth, which is

tentatively and then forcefully taken up by the hovering vessel,

which goes on to offer fantastical variations upon it at speeds

that only computers and geniuses at the site can process,

finally allowing a large number of MIAs to be disgorged from the hull

without incident, along with a young blond boy who is the focus

of the movie’s driving mother love, counterpoint to Dreyfus’s signature

lone-male sublimations, followed by the letdown

of the anthropomorphic, infantilized aliens.

It said: attempts to operate ‘outside’, while actually impossible,

are represented as criminal, as in Gun Crazy (1949), where the

lovers, on recognizing one another’s interlocking needs, skillsets,

self-presentations and physicalities, and in attempting

to manifest them fully and in concert, discover them to be

unsustainable at the highest levels without constant infusions

of money, triggering feelings of rage and neglect

that spill over into escalations of the types of ‘jobs’ they do,

including killing those who seem to judge their acts, eventually leading

to an escalation in the scale of pursuit that leads to their being cornered,

or isolated without adequate resources or means of further travel, and locked

into an inarticulate choice between imprisonment or death.

Since it’s predicated on finitude, capitalism couldn’t work if

people didn’t die. Because forms get fetishized, due to the

finitude of their material realizations, they change,

seeking fresh access to the energy that inheres in contradiction,

so that at one point, when further shifts seemed impossible,

the ‘dematerialization’ of the art object was attempted,

meaning there was an agreement among artists and others to treat encounters,

procedures, and acts of documentation as art, difficult to conserve.

Jauss’s restatement of beauty (1977), “the form in which aesthetic

experience presents itself,” forces one to talk about specific

instances and encounters, and encodes the impossibility of fully

generalizing about form, or the ends of its realizations.

The aesthetics failed at this point (probably earlier). I fantasized that in nuclear death

the brain is fast enough to complete, before vaporization, the full-replay

that some have reported, since a ‘good death’ requires preparation,

and while the duration of the flashbacks is reportedly long, the time elapsed,

apparently, is not. Time now dominates perception to the point that people

take drugs to restore duration for short periods. States, or dynamic,

non-isolable arrangements of matter, succeed each other;

time’s incrementality marks, and thus represents, different states.

Successive states, forced by brains into three dimensions,

contain six tightly curled further planes, unimaginable but modelable,

exerting their own pulls, manifest in the telepathy heightened

by regular congress between electively affinitive persons.

The more heightened such relations, the more what Holderlin,

in Hyperion (1798) calls soul, comes to the fore, and assumes

classical proportions. To imagine all states, or to pick a state

and then project or calculate its subsequent states from its trajectory,

would be to travel in time, if the body be held stable.

If any one configuration could be isolated and held in stasis,

it might form a ‘stop’ very unlike those for buses, where states

alter during idling in the same manner as when in motion and the same

internal fluctuations within the chassis continue, as in Midnight Cowboy (1969),

where Ratso’s death does not alter the body’s course.

Narrative is a set of proposed links among artificially segmented

perceptions marked by time; narration is the act of proposing

such links, even if untrue, to saturate duration.

Time and duration correlate to truth and fiction,

both of which are required for love, a means of navigating the violence

and involuntariness of attachment, as in Late Spring (1949),

where Chishu Ryu, as the widower father, protects his daughter, Noriko,

who is almost at an age that will make her a less desirable match,

by leading her to believe that he will remarry so that she (played by Setsuko Hara),

will shift her primary attachment from him to her suitor.

Truth is dick shots on craigslist, or the petroleum element

of vegetarian duck. Ethics is a system for weighing competing goods,

and for assigning a value to relations. Nostalgia is the wish

to reinstate collapsed sets. Fate is the coding of a determinate universe,

in the sense of a course by which, given a certain configuration, energy

will dissipate along with the chains of consequence surrounding agency.

Free will is the manner in which senses maximize access to possible relational

configurations, with a pitch toward destruction if unmet.

There is a possible consciousness that might comprehend all possible states,

and thus all time, but it is not necessary to imagine it.

Rabbits, who have brains and bodies, are of course

extraordinary, and their fierce rabbity love,

while occasionally seeming aloof or unintelligible,

is in fact one of the main model states.

Dialects of English use of the subjunctive progressive to mark the unreal,

constantly revised present as never fully experienced, as in Stalker (1979),

where a glass of milk’s movement means either that superhuman powers are acquired

through catastrophe, or that one moves a body without witness in belief.

I was sitting at home in these various states when the clock suddenly

went out and the fridge stopped. “In a few moments, will be clear

whether this was an electromagnetic pulse or a power failure.”

Long durée oddly calm, and then slowly lifted the phone.

It worked.