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THE INTERIOR STRUCTURE OF THE ARTIFACT

WHEN one suddenly finds oneself in the midst of a complicated political situation, it is hard not only to assess the "rightness" and "wrongness" of what is taking place but even to perform the much more elementary task of identifying, descriptively, what it is that is taking place. The fact that torture, whose activity has a structure accurately summarized by the word "*stupidity*," should ever even for a moment successfully present itself to the outside world as an activity of "*intelligence-gathering*" is not an aimless piece of irony but an indication of the angle of error (in this case, 180°) that may separate a description of an event from the event itself.

The instability of our powers of perception and description may be even greater in situations that are not so simply, starkly, radically immoral as this one. That war, relentlessly centered in the reciprocal activity of *injuring* and only distinguishable from other means of arriving at a winner and loser by the specific nature of injury itself, should so often be described as though *injuring were absent* from or, at most, secondary to its structure, again indicates the ease with which our descriptive powers break down in the presence of a concussive occurrence, and may lead one to worry how we can set about to answer ethically complex questions about war when even the phenomenology of the event so successfully eludes us. The two historical moments contemplated in the previous chapter, though introduced primarily for their revelations about making, themselves include instances of the same perceptual problem. In the Old Testament scenes of hurt, what should be recognizable as simple and unequivocal acts of divine *immorality* (the willful and repeated infliction of human hurt) are instead perceived as revelations of his *superior morality*: the problem is presented not as the artifact's unreality, unbelievability, but as the people's disobedience; the pain-filled solution is presented not as analogical verification but as punishment. So, too, in the young industrial world described by Marx, the exclusion of the women and men who are the *creators* of made objects from the benefits of those

objects is perceived as resulting from their *inferior creativity* (spiritedness, interest in education, capacity to create good lives, capacity for risk-taking and adventure). In each of the four instances, central rather than peripheral attributes are eclipsed and displaced not simply by alternative attributes but by attributes that are their very antithesis. The recurrence of such inverted descriptions suggests the existence of a general phenomenon that goes beyond these four instances: as physical pain destroys the mental content and language of the person in pain, so it also tends to appropriate and destroy the conceptualization abilities and language of persons who only observe the pain.

Political power—as is widely recognized and as has been periodically noticed throughout this book—entails the power of self-description. The mistaken descriptions cited above are in each instance articulated either by or on behalf of those who are directly inflicting, or actively permitting the infliction of, bodily hurt. But the failure to recognize what is occurring inside a concussive situation cannot be simply explained in terms of who controls the sources of description, for an observer may stand *safely* outside the space controlled and described by the torturer, by the proponents of a particular war, by the priests of an angry God, or by a temporally distant ruling class. Our susceptibility to the prevailing description must in part be attributed to the instability of perception itself: the dissolution of one's own powers of description contributes to the seductiveness of any existing description.

In turn, the instability of our descriptive powers results from the absence of appropriate interpretive categories that might act as "perceptual stays" in moments of emergency: we enter such events unaccompanied by any pre-existing habits of mind that would make it possible to go on "seeing" what is taking place before our eyes. The possible character of those needed-but-missing interpretive categories is suggested by the preceding chapters, for each of the human events examined there was found to be inextricably merged with questions of making and unmaking: torture and war are not simply occurrences which incidentally deconstruct the made world but occurrences which deconstruct the structure of making itself; conversely, western religion and materialism suggest that the ongoing work of civilization is not simply making *x* or *y* but "making making" itself, "remaking making," rescuing, repairing, and restoring it to its proper path each time it threatens to collapse into, or become conflated with, its opposite. These same interpretive categories would, if themselves unfolded and developed, also make it possible to enter and understand other concussive events, whether arising on the unreachable ground of a distant past or on the more important (because reachable and repairable) ground of an approaching future.

It is part of the work of this book to suggest that achieving an understanding of political justice may require that we first arrive at an understanding of making and unmaking. As in an earlier century the most searing questions of right and

wrong were perceived to be bound up with questions of "truth," so in the coming time these same, still-searing questions of right and wrong must be re-perceived as centrally bound up with questions about "fictions." Knowledge about the character of creating and created objects is at present in a state of conceptual infancy. Its illumination will require a richness of work far beyond the frame of any single study: like the activity of "making," the activity of "understanding making" will be a collective rather than a solitary labor.

Although an array of attributes belonging to "making" have emerged in the present discussion, they can be summarized in three overarching statements. First, the phenomenon of creating resides in and arises out of the framing-intentional relation between physical pain on the one hand and imagined objects on the other, a framing relation that as it enters the visible world from the privacy of the human interior becomes work and its worked object (Chapter 3). Second, the now freestanding made object is a projection of the live body that itself reciprocates the live body: regardless of the peculiarities of the object's size, shape, or color, and regardless of the ground on which it is broken open (the sands of the Old Testament, the plains of nineteenth-century industrialism, or the vibrant and shifting ground on which we now stand), it will be found to contain within its interior a material record of the nature of human sentience out of which it in turn derives its power to act on sentience and recreate it (Chapter 4). Third, as is implicit in the overlay of the first two statements, the created object itself takes two different forms, the imagined object and the materialized object: that is, "making" entails the two conceptually distinct stages of "making-up" and "making-real." In the first of these, the imagination's work is self-announcing while in the second she completes her work by disguising her own activity. This may also be phrased in the following way: the imagination first "makes a fictional object" and then "makes a fictional object into a nonfictional object"; or, the imagination first remakes objectlessness (pure sentience) into an object, and then remakes the fictional object into a real one, one containing its own freestanding source of substantiation. Thus the benign pretense that "nothing" is "something" becomes the even more benign pretense that "something" is not a pretense but has all the sturdiness and vibrancy of presence of the natural world (which it is at that moment in the midst of displacing). Recognizing the two as two conceptually (and often chronologically) distinct stages is especially important because—as has become evident in the preceding pages—the deconstruction of creating and aping of its activity may occur either at the "making" stage (where the decomposition and displacement of objects by made objects becomes instead the decomposition and displacement of objects by made pain) or at the "making-real" stage (where benevolent procedures of verification and reality-conferring are displaced by the procedure of borrowing the "realness" of the live human body).

Even if these three overarching statements are an accurate description of the

structure of creating, they make visible that structure only in its skeletal outline. That structure has tens—in all probability hundreds—of smaller attributes that themselves require clarification. The closing pages of this book will briefly consider two of them. It is important to keep the scale of what will be discussed in perspective. If, for example, the skeletal structure summarized above were visually depicted as a large and miraculous suspension bridge, then all of what now follows would be the equivalent of describing, for example, the character of the metal in a few of its pins or the pressure in its weave of cables in one small section of its gigantic tracery. Once inside any one attribute (which may itself turn out to consist of many still smaller attributes), one may of course become lost in its own intricacies and complexities; but what we are lost in is a few square inches of something far more magnificent in scale.

The two attributes that will in this chapter be attended to are the following. Returning to the idea that a made object is a projection of the human body, Section I will summarize briefly the multiple ways in which this has been formulated in earlier pages, and will then explore and assess the legitimacy of the most radical formulation, demonstrating that artifacts are (in spite of their inertness) perhaps most accurately perceived as "a making sentient of the external world." While there is no part of making that is empty of ethical content, this particular attribute carries within it a very special kind of moral pressure. Section II will focus on the relation between the made object as a site of projection and the same object as a site of reciprocation. Although projection and reciprocation are (except in deconstructed making) *inseparable* counterparts, they are *not equal* counterparts: the work of reciprocation is ordinarily vastly in excess of the work of projection. The kinds of problems that arise when the two are wrongly assumed to be equal will be briefly introduced to underscore the importance of taking as a normative (or model) object one whose capacity to disembodify the human being greatly exceeds the degree of intensified embodiedness required to bring the object into being. Each of the two sections will, then, attend to some aspect of the nature of projection and reciprocation (the second of the three-part skeletal structure of making summarized above). It is thus the incompleteness of the emerging model of making that is being acknowledged in the brief chapter which brings the present study to its end.

I. Artifacts: the Making Sentient of the External World

The recognition that a made object is a projection of the human body has been formulated throughout these pages in three different ways. The first of the three makes the relation between sentience and its objectifications compellingly visible by describing the phenomenon of projection in terms of specifiable body parts.

When, for example, the woven gauze of a bandage is placed over an open

wound, it is immediately apparent that its delicate fibers mime and substitute for the missing *skin*, just as in less drastic circumstances the same weave of threads (called now "clothing" rather than "bandage," though their kinship is verbally registered in the words "dress" and "dressing") will continue to duplicate and magnify the protective work of the skin, extending even its secondary and tertiary attributes so that, for example, any newly arrived observer would not say people come in hues of yellow, pink, brown, and black but that they come in forest green and white, kelly green and gold, yellow and brown stripes, pink and black squares, varying shades of magenta, mauve, red, orange, blue—in other words, they are creatures whose color tends on the average to change every twenty-four hours, and thus creatures that must be described as independent of any fixed surface color.² As the skin has many equivalents in the external made world, so does every other body part. Eyeglasses, microscopes, telescopes, and cameras are, as Freud notes in passing in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, projected materializations of the *lens* of the human eye.³ Freud's own work is primarily devoted not to skin or lens but to a third body part that he has taught us habitually to recognize in successive circles of sublimation: people living in a post-Freudian era effortlessly and unembarrassedly identify the *phallus* in dream objects, domestic objects, and civil objects. It is apparently "out there" in dream sticks, dream vultures, materialized pipes, hats, drills, swords, skyscrapers, obelisks, and rockets, where it is companioned by equally pervasive materializations of its female counterpart, the *womb*, which reappears in multiple forms of sheaths, shields, dwelling-places, and shelters. Similarly, the human *heart*, generously lending its name⁴ to anything that in its location or significance is perceived to be central ("the heart of the matter," "the heart of the poem," "the heart of the problem," "the heart of the experiment," "the heart of the city," "the heart of the nation"), has also lent its structure of action to a mechanism which was invented in ancient Egypt and Rome to bring the benefits of water to a waterless terrain, was then reinvented and developed in the sixteenth century to clear underground coal and metal mines of dangerous waters, and went on to have hundred of other modifications and uses. In turn, the pump, as Jonathan Miller observes, provided a freestanding technological model which allowed William Harvey to identify correctly the "pumping" action of the bodily organ whose existence preceded by many centuries that of its artificial counterpart.⁵ Again, the *electrical nervous system* of the live body has, according to Jeremy Bernstein, its materialized objectification in the computer. While the translation of skin into clothing, phallus into obelisk, or heart into pump may in each instance have originally arisen out of unconscious acts of projection, the translation of nervous system into computer was highly self-conscious. In his celebrated work on the computer, John von Neumann consciously drew on the work of two physiologists who had analyzed the structure of the body's neuronal system.⁶ The bodily sources of culture are, then, multiple: skin, lens, phallus,

womb, heart, and nervous system form a very partial list, to which there can be added many others, such as hand, ear, lungs, stomach, skeleton, teeth, leg muscles, and hinge joints, some of whose cultural objectifications have been encountered in earlier chapters.

The second way of formulating the phenomenon of projection is to identify in the made object bodily capacities and needs rather than the concrete shape or mechanism of a specifiable body part. The first formulation has the advantage of making the relation more graphic and thus more immediately apprehensible, yet it has three obvious disadvantages. First, certain complex characteristics of the embodied human being have no (or as yet, no known) physical location or mechanism. The printing press, the institutionalized convention of written history, photographs, libraries, films, tape recordings, and Xerox machines are all materializations of the elusive embodied capacity for *memory*, rather than materializations of, for example, one cubic inch of brain matter located above the left ear. They together make a relatively ahistorical creature into an historical one, one whose memory extends far back beyond the opening of its own individual lived experience, one who anticipates being itself remembered far beyond the close of its own individual lived experience, and one who accomplishes all this without each day devoting its awakened brain to rehearsals and recitations of all information it needs to keep available to itself. Similarly, we routinely speak of certain artifacts as "expressing the human *spirit*," a statement that would be impossible to formulate in terms of bodily location. Second and conversely, many inventions exist that have no specifiable precedent in the body: perhaps the wheel astonishes us in part because we do not "recognize" it—that is, because we intuitively sense that it has no prior existence within the boundaries of our own sentient matter (the ball and socket joint and the rotary mechanism of some insect wings notwithstanding). Although machine tools have been widely described as taking over the work of the muscles, any one-to-one equation is often impossible. The work of the steam engine in magnifying the bodily capacity for *movement* does not require a mechanistic equivalent in the body; it is perhaps enough simply to know that, for example, at the moment the steam engine first burst forth into John Fitch's imagination, he was, by his own account, limping.⁷ Third and most important, even if every made object did have a bodily counterpart (an improbable proposition given the fragile dimensions of the human body and the robust dimensions of culture), it would even then be more accurate to formulate the projection in terms of "attributes" rather than "parts," since creating is undertaken to assist, amplify, or alter the felt-experience of sentience rather than merely to populate the external world with shapes and mechanisms already dwelling within us.

Even when a given artifact bears an obvious kinship to a bodily part, it will usually be more productive to articulate that kinship in terms of sentient attributes. So, for example, all of the artifacts invoked a moment ago as mimetic of "parts"

can now be reinvoked as mimetic of "attributes." What most amazes Jeremy Bernstein as he meditates on the computer is not that it is an external materialization of our electrical and neuronal pathways but that it is an external materialization of our interior capacity for *self-replication* and *self-modification*. Only a small fraction of Freud's work can be summarized in terms of the projected shapes of phallus and womb, whereas almost all of it can be summarized in terms of the projection of sentient *desire*: it is the presence of complex structures of desire that he has taught us to recognize in dreams, in externalized patterns of family and civic behavior, in the art works of Sophocles and da Vinci, in the materialized and verbalized products of civilization. Similarly, Marx's writing—in which the shape of hand and back have, if only implicitly, something of the same primacy that phallus and womb have in the writings of Freud—must be centrally described in terms of the bodily capacity for *labor*: he teaches us to recognize human labor in successive circles of self-extension, from its obvious presence in single, individually crafted objects, to its less obvious, because more collective, presence in money, and so on out through increasingly sublimated economic and ideological structures. Because Freud and Marx are generally recognized as the two cultural philosophers of greatest importance to the modern world, it is appropriate to notice that the work of each has been primarily devoted to making an embodied attribute (desire, labor) the recoverable referent of the freestanding structures of civilization that are their materialized counterparts.

One final example of the difference between formulating the phenomenon of projection in terms of concrete body parts or instead in terms of more elusive interior attributes is the phenomenon of projection itself. That is, while the human being is a seeing, moving, breathing, hearing, hungering, desiring, working, self-replicating, remembering, blood-pumping creature (who projects all these attributes outward), he is therefore also a projecting creature. This has, here and there in earlier pages, been expressed in terms of discrete bodily location: the human being has an outside surface and an inside surface, and creating may be expressed as a reversing of these two bodily linings. There exist both verbal artifacts (e.g., the scriptures) and material artifacts (e.g., altar) that objectify the act of believing, imagining, or creating as a sometimes graphically represented turning of the body inside-out. But what is expressed in terms of body part is, as those cited contexts themselves make clear, more accurately formulated as the endowing of interior sensory events with a metaphysical referent. The interchange of inside and outside surfaces requires *not* the literal reversal of bodily linings but the making of what is originally interior and private into something exterior and sharable, and, conversely, the reabsorption of what is now exterior and sharable into the intimate recesses of individual consciousness.

When the pure fact of "projection" is articulated in terms of bodily location (inside and outside surfaces), it takes a much more extreme form than when the

projection of any specific attribute (e.g., vision) is articulated in terms of bodily location: as startling as it is to think of the lens of the eye being lifted away from the body and carried out into the external world, it is much more alarming to contemplate, however briefly, the turning of the body inside-out. This greater extremity of imagistic representation occurs because the overall framing fact of projection (which moves between the extreme boundary conditions of physical pain and created objects) is more radical than the projection of any specific intermediate attribute. That is, a particular dimension of sentience will, by being projected, undergo an alteration in degree: the power of vision is amplified when supplemented by microscope and telescope, as the problem of hunger is diminished and regulated through the strategies of artifice. But the inclusive phenomenon of projection entails not simply an alteration in degree but a much more extraordinary form of revision in which the original given is utterly eliminated and replaced by something wholly other than itself. What is wholly absent in the interior (the missing objects in the pure sentient condition of utter objectlessness) is made present (through objectification), as conversely, what is wholly present in that interior state (pain) is (when projection is successful) now made absent. Thus, the reversal of inside and outside surfaces ultimately suggests that by transporting the external object world into the sentient interior, that interior gains some small share of the blissful immunity of inert inanimate objecthood; and conversely, by transporting pain out onto the external world, that external environment is deprived of its immunity to, unmindfulness of, and indifference toward the problems of sentience.

This last statement carries us forward to the third and, in the end, most accurate way of formulating the phenomenon of projection; for it calls attention to the fact that it is part of the work of creating to *deprive the external world of the privilege of being inanimate*—of, in other words, its privilege of being irresponsible to its sentient inhabitants on the basis that it is itself nonsentient. To say that the "inanimateness" of the external world is diminished, is *almost* to say (but is *not* to say) that the external world is made animate. The rest of this section will try to define that "almost" with more precision.

As one moves through the three ways of formulating the phenomenon of projection, the "body" becomes progressively more interior in its conceptualization. To conceive of the body as parts, shapes, and mechanisms is to conceive of it from the outside: though the body contains pump and lens, "pumpness" and "lensness" are not part of the felt-experience of being a sentient being. To instead conceive of the body in terms of capacities and needs (not now "lens" but "seeing," not now "pump" but "having a beating heart" or, more specifically, "desiring" or "fearing") is to move further in toward the interior of felt-experience. To, finally, conceive of the body as "aliveness" or "awareness of aliveness" is to reside at last within the felt-experience of sentience; and it

is this most interior phenomenon that will now be considered. "Aliveness" or "awareness of aliveness," it will be argued, is in some very qualified sense projected out onto the object world.

When, as in old mythologies or religions, nonsentient objects such as rocks or rivers or statues or images of gods are themselves spoken about as though they were sentient (or alternatively, themselves endowed with the power of sentient speech) this is called "animism." Again, when poets or painters perform the same act of animation, it is called "pathetic fallacy." But as will very gradually become apparent here, to dismiss this phenomenon as mistake or fallacy is very possibly to miss the important revelation about creation exposed there. The habit of poets and ancient dreamers to project their own aliveness onto nonalive things itself suggests that *it is* the basic work of creation to bring about this very projection of aliveness; in other words, while the poet pretends or wishes that the inert external world had his or her own capacity for sentient awareness, civilization works to make this so. What in the poet is recognizable as a fiction is in civilization unrecognizable because it has come true.

It should be registered from the outset that this habit of mind is restricted to neither poetic nor mythological forms of perception. Perhaps no one who attends closely to artifacts is wholly free of the suspicion that they are, though not animate, not quite inanimate. Marx, for example, who periodically in *Capital* rails brilliantly against "animism" and "fetishism," is himself constantly tempted in his analysis of economic objects to describe their attributes in the language of "aliveness."⁸ In fact, as every reader of that volume will have noticed, the pages crediting the "alive-like" character of commodities, money, and capital so vastly outnumber the pages on which this characteristic is successfully bracketed off as "fetishism" or "reism" that we can only think what Marx periodically tells us to think by ignoring what he elsewhere and everywhere shows us to be the case. This is not to say that Marx is himself a fetishist or reist. It is rather to say that Marx and the reists are differentiated not by the former's insistence that objects are inanimate and the latter's insistence that they are animate, but by the radically different implications the two discover in object-animism: the reist takes that apparent-aliveness as a basis for revering the object world; Marx takes that apparent-aliveness as a basis for revering the actual-aliveness of the human source of that projected attribute. Given the ease with which these two positions might become confused in a reader's mind, Marx had every reason to avoid the "aliveness" idiom altogether in his own account of artifacts. That he did not do so suggests that he could not do so, that the idiom is, for reasons that will eventually become clear, unavoidable.

One additional instance of overtly fetishistic animism will be cited here to underscore from the outset that this habit of perception is neither exclusively ancient (the event took place in 1976) nor exclusively poetic (the event is emphatically anti-poetic), and thus cannot be attributed to acute sensitivity nor, as

it is sometimes phrased, to romantic sentimentality. The Brookings Institute study, *Force Without War*, describes an 18 August 1976 incident in which "two American officers supervising the pruning of a tree in the Korean demilitarized zone were attacked by North Korean soldiers and killed." This event gave rise to a series of actions, culminating in the following: "Finally a few days after the initial incident, a large force of American and South Korean soldiers entered the demilitarized zone and cut down the offending tree while armed helicopters circled overhead and B-52 bombers flew near the border."⁹ The elaborately dramatized assumption of object-responsibility might be formulated as a legal statute: any tree that protests being pruned by taking (or by permitting in its vicinity the taking of) human life will be subject to the penalty of death by more-radical-pruning. Were it not framed on one side by the deaths of two men and on the other side by the absence of armed conflict which it perhaps helped to prevent, the incident could be simply enjoyed for the spectacular scale—a large force of soldiers, helicopters, B-52s—on which its atavistic premises are unembarrassedly acted out. It is introduced here not to credit the animistic impulse (for it is more likely to expose that impulse as foolish), but simply to suggest the multiplicity of paths by which animism is arrived at: one may get there by way of the darkness of superstition, the exquisite insight of poetry, the rigors of economic analysis, or the strategic resourcefulness of military frustration.

The eventual goal here is to identify exactly what within our willful recreation of the external world repeatedly beguiles us into crediting it with awareness and hence with responsibility for its actions. The answer to this question will be coaxed into clarity by first turning back to the Old Testament where the inner logic of the animistic impulse is unfolded before our eyes in stark outlines, and then turning forward to contemporary legal formulations of object-responsibility where the same inner logic is articulated in a more familiar idiom.

It was earlier observed that material objects in the Old Testament fall into two categories, graven images and passover artifacts, the first of which confer on God a body and the second of which relieve man of his body. The entry of God's body and man's body into the material artifact can be stated, as it has been in the opening half of this sentence, as though it were a symmetrical occurrence when of course it is not. The coming into being of the passover objects is eagerly accepted by humanity, while the making of graven objects is never overtly accepted, often condemned and destroyed, by God. This asymmetry of response occurs because the artifacts made by God relieve man of the necessity of being wounded; whereas those made by man wound God: with them, man is literally¹⁰ relieved of his pain; by them, God is literally put in pain.

This juxtaposition only appears to entail human harshness if one forgets that it is not human tissue that is put in pain, that these are not two autonomous actors conferring on the nature of created objects, but that God himself is the original created object, now itself being altered. The putting of the Original

Artifact in pain acts out the essential premise of the entire undertaking of the imagination: it is the benign, almost certainly heroic, and in any case absolute intention of all human making to distribute the facts of sentience outward onto the created realm of artifice, and it is only by doing so that men and women are themselves relieved of the privacy and problems of that sentience. This intention was surely present in the initial apprehension, invention, of "a God" capable of rescuing them from their own sentience (capable, that is, of existing as a metaphysical referent to which their individual sentient experiences could be referred and thus reread in terms of a collective or communally shared objectification), and then again present in the introduction of graven images which bring forth an intensification of that projected sentience in order to bring about in him a more compassionate accommodation of their own sentience.

The story that is told provides the language in which the story of the making of all the artifacts of civilization can be retold. A chair, as though it were itself put in pain, as though it knew from the inside the problem of body weight, will only then accommodate and eliminate the problem. A woven blanket or solid wall internalize within their design the recognition of the instability of body temperature and the precariousness of nakedness, and only by absorbing the knowledge of these conditions into themselves (by, as it were, being themselves subject to these forms of distress), absorb them out of the human body. A city, as though it incorporates into its unbroken surfaces of sand and stone a sentient uneasiness in the presence of organic growth and decay (the tyranny of green things that has more than once led people to the desert whose mineral expanse is now mimed in every modern urban oasis) will only then divest human beings of that uneasiness, divest them to such an extent that they may even come to celebrate and champion that green world, reintroducing it into their midst in the delicate spray of an asparagus fern or in a breathtaking framed photograph of the Andes. A clock or watch, as though it were itself sentient, as though it knew from the inside the tendency of individual sentient creatures to become engulfed in their own private bodily rhythms, and simultaneously knew of their acute and frustrated desire to be on a shared rhythm with other sentient creatures, will only then empower them to coordinate their activities, to meet for a meal, to meet to be schooled, to meet to be healed, after which the clock can be turned to the wall and the watch can be taken off, for these objects also incorporate into their (set-asideable) designs an awareness of sentient distress at having to live exclusively on shared time.

The naturally existing external world—whose staggering powers and beauty need not be rehearsed here—is wholly ignorant of the "hurtability" of human beings. Immune, inanimate, inhuman, it indifferently manifests itself in the thunderbolt and hailstorm, rabid bat, smallpox microbe, and ice crystal. The human imagination reconceives the external world, divesting it of its immunity and irresponsibility not by literally putting it in pain or making it animate but

by, quite literally, "making it" as knowledgeable about human pain as if it were itself animate and in pain. When the roar of the flood waters comes, water and rocks and trees are mutely indifferent, but when the mythmaker recounts the story of the flood, the tree is invested with the capacity of compassionate speech: "I too feel the waters rising, and see that you will drown; take hold of this branch." His fiction of object-responsiveness anticipates the actuality of object-responsibility, for though the tree does not speak, when it is itself remade into raft or boat (as when the indifferent rocks are rearranged into a dam), the world outside the body is made as compassionately effective as if every line and nuance of its materialized design were speaking those words. We come to expect this of the world. Thus, the tree in Korea was inappropriately unsusceptible to "pruning," to being domesticated, civilized, remade. Had it been a proper tree, it would have heard the North Korean planes approaching, seen the men beneath its branches, and sent up some form of protective shield. At the very least, it would have given a signal ("They are coming: leave, run, hurry") as civilized trees, with their radar branches, routinely do. This expectation is as old as the human imagination. The "tree of knowledge," the "tree of life," is the "tree of artifice." The tree in Eve's garden never said to her, "I see how frightened, overwhelmed, you are by believing yourself to be nakedly exposed to One who has no body, and advise you to cover yourself as you are when you stand hidden here within my branches." But when she remade the tree into an apron of leaves, she restructured the grove into a structure of materialized compassion.

Thus, the literalness of the claim that creation entails the projection of the "awareness of aliveness" becomes immediately intelligible. A material or verbal artifact is not an alive, sentient, percipient creature, and thus can neither itself experience discomfort nor recognize discomfort in others. But though it cannot be sentiently aware of pain, it is in the essential fact of itself the objectification of that awareness; itself incapable of the act of perceiving, its design, its structure, is the structure of a perception. So, for example, the chair encountered so often in the previous chapter, can—if projection is being formulated in terms of body part—be recognized as mimetic of the spine; it can instead—if projection is being formulated in terms of physical attributes—be recognized as mimetic of body weight; it can finally and most accurately, however, be recognized as mimetic of sentient awareness, as will be elaborated below.

If one imagines one human being seeing another human being in pain, one human being perceiving in another discomfort and in the same moment wishing the other to be relieved of the discomfort, something in that fraction of a second is occurring inside the first person's brain involving the complex action of many neurons that is, importantly, not just a perception of an actuality (the second person's pain) but an alteration of that actuality (for embedded in the perception is the sorrow that it is so, the wish that it were otherwise). Though this interior event must be expressed as a conjunctive duality, "seeing the pain and wishing

it gone," it is a single percipient event in which the reality of pain and the unreality of imagining are already conflated. Neither can occur without the other: if the person does not perceive the distress, neither will he wish it gone; conversely, if he does not wish it gone, he cannot have perceived the pain itself (he may at that moment be experiencing something else, such as his own physical advantage, or his own resistance to having to attend to another person, but he cannot be perceiving the pain, for pain is in its essential nature "aversiveness," and thus even within technical medical definitions is recognized as something which cannot be felt without being wished unfelt¹¹). If this complex, mysterious, invisible percipient event, happening somewhere between the eyes and the brain and engaging the entire psyche, could be made visible, could be lifted out of the body and endowed with an external shape, that shape would be the shape of a chair (or, depending on the circumstance, a lightbulb, a coat, an ingestible form of willow bark). The shape of the chair is not the shape of the skeleton, the shape of body weight, nor even the shape of pain-perceived, but the shape of perceived-pain-wished-gone.

The chair is therefore the materialized structure of a perception; it is sentient awareness materialized into a freestanding design. If one pictures the person in *the action* of making a chair—standing in one place, moving away, coming back, lifting then letting fall his arm, kneeling then standing, kneeling, half-kneeling, stooping, looking, extending his arm, pulling it back—and if one pictures all these actions as occurring without a tool or block of wood before him, that is, if one pictures only the man and his embodied actions, what one at that moment has before one is *not the act of perception* (his seeing of another's discomfort and wishing it gone) but *the structure of the act of perception visibly enacted*. What was originally an invisible aspect of consciousness (compassion) has now been translated into the realm of visible but disappearing action. The interior moment of perceiving has been translated into a willed series of successive actions, as if it were a dance, a dance entitled "body weight begone." Perhaps as he dances, his continual bodily readjustments relieve him of his awareness of his own weight; or perhaps as he dances before his pregnant wife, he (by his expression of concern) half-relieves her own problem of body weight, assuring her that she is not alone, engulfed, in her adversity. In any event, the dance is not the original percipient event but that percipient event endowed with a communicable form.

If, now, the tool is placed back in his hand and the wood placed beneath that tool, a second translation occurs, for the action, direction, and pressure of his dance move down across the tool and are recorded in the surface of the wood. The two levels of projection are transformations: first from an invisible aspect of consciousness to a visible but disappearing action; second, from a disappearing action to an enduring material form. Thus in work, a perception is danced; in the chair, a danced-perception is sculpted.

Each stage of transformation sustains and amplifies the artifice that was present at the beginning. Even in the interior of consciousness, pain is "remade" by being wished away; in the external action, the private wish is made sharable; finally in the artifact, the shared wish comes true. With each successive recreation, compassion is itself recreated to be more powerful: in the end, it has made real what it at first only passively wanted to be so. For if the chair is a "successful" object, it will relieve her of the distress of her weight far better than did the dance (or alternatively, far better than a verbalized expression of sympathy). Even if, however, it relieves her distress only to the same degree as the expressive dance, it has two striking advantages over its antecedent action. First, the chair itself memorializes the dance, endures through time: to produce the same outcome, the dance would have to be repeated each day, thus requiring that the man enter and sustain the aversive intensity of labor (his sharing of the pain) without cessation, and thereby only redistributing, rather than diminishing, the pain itself. This does not mean that "active sentient compassion" (live human caring) and "compassion made effective" (the freestanding artifact) are at odds with one another, that we are in any sense asked to choose between friendly human presences or instead the companionship of objects. The existence of the second merely extends the range of subjects that can be entered into by the first: when both persons are free of the problem of her weight, they share endless other concerns, work to eliminate other pains, so that increasingly the pleasure of world-building rather than pain is the occasion of their union.

The second advantage of chair over sympathetic expression is that once it is in existence, the diminution of the woman's problem no longer depends on the goodwill of whatever other human being co-inhabits her world. She may have the good fortune to have a compassionate mate; she may instead have an indifferent one; it is also not impossible that she may have one who wishes her ill. The general distribution of material objects to a population means that a certain *minimum* level of objectified human compassion is built into the revised structure of the external world, and does not depend on the day-by-day generosity of other inhabitants which itself cannot be legislated. This is why, as the films of Ingmar Bergman so frequently suggest,¹² the first act of tyrants and other egoists is often to replace a materially bountiful world (with its implicit, if anonymous, human wish for the individual's basic comfort) with a starkly empty one in which each nuance of comfort depends on the vagaries of the egoist's own disposition. This is also why a woman imprisoned under a hostile regime in Chile once clung passionately to a white linen handkerchief slipped to her from another country, for she recognized within the object the collective human salute that is implicit in the very manufacture of such objects;¹³ just as this same salute has been recognized by many prisoners of torture who mention (often with an intensity of gratitude that may at first sound puzzling) the solitary blanket or freshly white-washed walls one day introduced into their midst by the quiet machinations of

the International Red Cross.¹⁴ It is almost universally the case in everyday life that the most cherished object is one that has been hand-made by a friend: there is no mystery about this, for the object's material attributes themselves record and memorialize the intensely personal, extraordinary because exclusive, interior feelings of the maker for just this person—This is for you. But anonymous, mass-produced objects contain a collective and equally extraordinary message: Whoever you are, and whether or not I personally like or even know you, in at least this small way, be well. Thus, within the realm of objects, objects-made-for-anyone bear the same relation to objects-made-for-someone that, within the human realm, *caritas* bears to *eros*. Whether they reach someone in the extreme conditions of imprisonment or in the benign and ordinary conditions of everyday life, the handkerchief, blanket, and bucket of white paint contain within them the wish for well-being: "Don't cry; be warm; watch now, in a few minutes even these constricting walls will look more spacious."

Although the Old Testament account of the artifact as the meeting place of man's body and God's body may to a secular mind sound alien, one basis for the formulation is that the artifact is a conflated projection of the fact of physical pain (our bodies) and a counterfactual wish (our gods), that itself makes the realness of pain unreal by making the unrealness of the wish real (embodied). A lightbulb transforms the human being from a creature who would spend approximately a third of each day groping in the dark, to one who sees simply by wanting to see: its impossibly fragile, milky-white globe curved protectively around an even more fragile, upright-then-folding filament of wire is the materialization of neither retina, nor pupil, nor day-seeing, nor night-seeing; it is the materialization of a counterfactual perception about the dependence of human sight on the rhythm of the earth's rotation; no wonder it is in its form so beautiful. There would be no need to introduce this example into the expansive company of all the preceding examples except that in this one instance we overtly reveal our recognition that the artifact is a materialization of perception by the widely shared convention of inserting it back inside a drawing of the human head where it stands for the moment when a problem is reconceived in terms of its solution. Itself a materialized projection of an *instance* of that form of perception, it is now, iconographically, pushed back into its original location, where it comes to stand for the *generic* event of problem-solving. A much less widely shared manifestation of this same phenomenon is the tendency of certain artists to reinsert an artifact into a portrait of the human interior at a moment when they are attempting to express some difficult-to-express event in the history of the live human body: so in the pages of Miguel Asturias, a man dies when the "penny-whistle of his heart" gives way (he could not have said "pump," for had it been a pump, it would not so easily have given way),¹⁵ as in the pages of Charles Dickens, the body in its final minutes is made to contain within its interior a wagon (or in another instance, a clothes press), whose labored movements now

objectify the labored and exhausting efforts of the dying body to breathe, to work, to pump, to stay alive.¹⁶ These objects are mimetic not simply of body parts but of percipient awareness: Asturias and Dickens transport them back into the body at a moment when they are attempting to elicit the reader's compassion because the objects are themselves already compassion-bearing.

These examples are unusual because in them our recognition that external objects are mimetic of percipient awareness is overtly announced. More often, the recognition is expressed by indirection and inversion: that is, rather than overtly celebrating such objects when they successfully perform this work of mimesis, we disapprove of, discredit, and even "punish" them if they fail to perform that mimesis. This habit of *taking object-awareness as the norm and object-unawareness as an aberrant and unacceptable occurrence* reveals the depth of our expectations more eloquently than would any overt celebration. Though this expectation has many manifestations, it is nowhere so clear as in the law.

The "statutes of homicide" in Plato's *Laws* begin by requiring that a person convicted of murder be put to death: his body will be taken outside the city and stoned, and then carried to the frontier (873).¹⁷ This same course of action is then extended to animals which, upon conviction of having killed a person, "shall be put to death and cast out beyond the frontier" (873e). The same action is then extended to inanimate objects:

If an inanimate thing cause the loss of a human life—an exception being made for lightning or other such visitation of God—any object which causes death by its falling upon a man or his falling against it shall be sat upon in judgment by the nearest neighbor, at the invitation of the next of kin, who shall hereby acquit himself and the whole family of their obligation—on conviction the guilty object to be cast beyond the frontier, as was directed in the case of a beast [as well as of a person]. (873e, 874a)

Two observations are immediately relevant to the present discussion. First, when Plato exempts certain objects from this statute ("an exception being made for lightning and other such visitation of God"), he might have said, "an exception being made for those aspects of the naturally given world that are beyond the reach of civilization." That is, "lightning and other such visitation of God" are privileged not because they are unpunishable (though they are, of course, unpunishable: the lightning cannot be carried beyond the edge of the city) but because of the prior fact that, unlike most aspects of the external world, they are unsusceptible to being reconceived and remade by the human imagination, and thus, unlike most aspects of the external world, cannot be held responsible for their ignorance about and thus harm done to human tissue: that they are unpunishable (i.e., unregenerate) is itself only one form of the larger fact of their being unreconstructable (i.e., unregenerate in the wider sense). Second, it may seem that the sequence in the statutes from persons, to beasts, to objects

would permit one to dismiss the inclusion of objects by some version of the following argument: Plato's expectations about the responsibilities of living presences (human animals and other animals) at the last minute spill over into the realm of the nonliving. It is therefore worth noticing that Plato might have, with equal intelligence, presented the sequence in the reverse order. Thus the statutes might have read as follows:

In civilization, the inanimate external world is reconceived and invested with the responsibility of existing as though it had sentient awareness. Any object, therefore, which exposes its absence of sentient awareness (announces its inanimate objecthood or its object stupidity) by lethally hurting a human being will not be permitted to continue dwelling within civilization and will be carried to the frontier. Further, should a sentient animal lapse into this same object stupidity and kill someone, it will, upon conviction, be deprived of the sentience it has already been guilty of lacking and will be removed from civilization. Finally, as unlikely as it is that any human being should ever lapse into this object stupidity, should this happen, the person will, upon conviction, be similarly deprived and removed.

It should be recalled here, as at a very early point in this book, that the word "stupidity" is not being used as a term of rhetorical contempt for those who willfully hurt others but as a descriptive term for the "nonsentience" or "the lack of sentient awareness," or most precisely, the "inability to sense the sentience of other persons" that is incontestably present in the act of hurting another person. Maximum expectations (e.g., aliveness) begin with persons and may be extended to objects, but minimum expectations begin with objects and may be extended to persons. The sequence of the statutes can be inverted because, in some very real way, the logic underlying civilization's prohibition of homicide proceeds from objects to persons: if this most *minimal* expectation (not to kill a person) can be required of even the only animate-like, inanimate world, how much more reasonable is it to require this minimal expectation of things that are actually animate (beasts) and finally of persons themselves. In other words, if civilization can ask an object not to act like an object, surely it can ask a person not to act like an object.

Oliver Wendell Holmes in his opening lecture on liability in *The Common Law* attends to the presumption of object-responsibility in American and English legal procedures, as well as in their German and Roman antecedents. He finds that "if a man fell from a tree, the tree was deodand. If he drowned in a well, the well was to be filled up,"¹⁸ and notices that the animistic impulse tends to be especially pronounced if the object has the attribute of "motion." While motion is present in a moving cart, a falling house, and endless other objects, it is especially characteristic of a ship that comes to be regarded as "the most living of inanimate things," regarded that way to such an extent that, according to Holmes, it is impossible to decipher the complexities and apparent contradictions of maritime law unless one recognizes as the key to the code, the

presumption of aliveness: "It is only by supposing the ship to have been treated as if endowed with personality, that the arbitrary seeming peculiarities of the maritime law can be made intelligible, and on that supposition they at once become consistent and logical."¹⁹

Holmes's overall purpose in this essay is to demonstrate that the concept of liability as it occurs in both criminal law and the law of torts originates in a moral impulse and invokes a moral standard, even though in its modern transformations the explicitly moral language comes to be rephrased in a more "external or objective" idiom.²⁰ While, for example, in modern damage suits the presumption of object-responsibility is presented in terms of owner- or manufacturer-responsibility, it was originally the object itself that was blamed. Nor can this object-blaming be understood as a short cut to, or substitute for, owner-blaming, for Holmes cites court decisions in which this interpretation is explicitly rejected: Chief Justice Marshall, for example, writes, "This is not a proceeding against the owner; it is a proceeding against the vessel for an offense committed by the vessel."²¹ It may be as accurate to think of modern owner-blaming as a way of reaching the object, as to think of older object-blaming as a way of reaching the owner. Again, while in a modern proceeding the goal of the suit is compensation, Holmes draws on many historical instances to persuade us that the original goal was not compensation but revenge, revenge against whatever fragment of the external world inflicted death or pain.

Although the identification of the psychological and moral phenomenon of revenge successfully works to clarify Holmes's point, it may at first work to obscure ours, and should therefore be attended to for a moment longer. Damage suits usually arise when someone has been killed, paralyzed, or caused prolonged pain, yet the revenge impulse is visible even when one has been only very modestly hurt and is more familiar to us in this form: it is present in the "hatred for anything giving us pain, which wreaks itself on the manifest cause, and which leads even civilized man to kick a door when it pinches his finger."²² The problem with the revenge vocabulary is that it may mislead us into thinking that it is only at the instant of being hurt that the person projects sentient awareness onto the object, that the act of animism arises within, and is carried outward by, the retaliatory act of revenge: the man is pinched and in the next split-second he projects aliveness onto the door and assumes it will suffer as much by being kicked as he just suffered by being pinched. But it seems instead the case that the act of revenge is itself premised on the prior assumption of animism and must be seen within a much wider frame. Our behavior toward objects at the exceptional moment when they hurt us must be seen within the context of our normal relations with them. The ongoing, day-to-day norm is that an object is mimetic of sentient awareness: the chair routinely relieves the problem of weight. Should the object prove insufficiently mimetic of awareness, insufficiently capable of accommodating the problem of weight (i.e., if the chair is uncomfort-

able—an animistic phrase we use to mean if “the person is uncomfortable in the chair”), the object will be discarded or set aside. Only now do we reach the third and most atypical occurrence in which the object neither eliminates the problem of sentience, nor even simply passively fails to eliminate the problem of sentience, but instead actually amplifies the problem of sentience by inflicting hurt: the legs of the chair suddenly break beneath the weight of the person and he is hurt. The very reason the chair’s object-stupidity strikes all who witness its collapse as a surprise, an outrage, is that it has normally been wholly innocent of such object-stupidity. In fact, it is crucial to notice that if the person now picks up a fragment of that object and hurls it against the wall (as though it could be made to feel the hurt it just inflicted), the person is actually continuing to act out of the context of the normal situation (in which the chair indeed has the mimetic attributes of sentient awareness) rather than out of the immediate moment (in which the chair has just exposed its object-obliviousness).

Thus the moment of revenge merely occasions the dramatization of the ongoing assumption of animism rather than occasioning the animism itself. The retaliatory drama that takes place between Holmes’s man-pinching door and door-kicking man must be seen within the wider frame of the fact that nine times out of ten (or, if the man is skilled at opening doors, nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand), the door has acted as though it were percipiently aware, and has done so because its design is a material registration of the awareness that human beings both need the protection of solid walls and need to walk through solid walls at will. The door not only seems capable of transforming itself back and forth between the two states of wallness and nonwallness but, more remarkably, seems capable of understanding which of the two states the man wants it to be at any given moment—it recognizes what he wants not by requiring from him elaborate paragraphs of self-revelation but only a minimal signal, the turning of his wrist. If the door exists in a realm where people can be anticipated to be incapable of performing this signal (such as when they are carrying groceries), the door may be free of even this small form of communication: it may “sense” that the person wants it to disappear merely by “noticing” that the person is walking in its direction.

The fact that object-awareness is the acceptable, expectable, and uncelebrated condition of civilization, while object-unawareness is the unusual and unacceptable condition is stressed here because it is possible to forget that when one encounters an object in a legal proceeding, one will be encountering it only in its aberrant condition. The brass-knobbed door whose magically correct sense of timing seems “sensitive” to human sentience will never turn up in court; the door that merely fails to be fully sensitive to sentience (e.g., blows open whenever it rains) will never turn up in court but will instead be endured, repaired, or replaced; it is only the door that by pinching produced blood-poisoning, or the door that let a three-year-old walk into a dangerous boiler room, that may end

up there, and if it ends up there, the jury may decide that the door *should have known better* or, alternatively, that the manufacturer should have made the object to be an object that *knew better*. Although our cultural expectations about artifacts are visible in the wording of legal statutes (e.g., Plato), and more clearly visible in philosophic meditations on the moral psychology underlying such statutes (e.g., Holmes), they are most clearly exposed in the structure of the product liability trial itself. Such trials are characterized by three major attributes, the third of which is most important to the present discussion.²³

First, though such a trial is often astonishing in the range of subjects it comes to include, that diverse subject matter will be organized around the skeletal structure of a discrete action, the path of an accident, a sequence of occurrences that (for the plaintiff) carried the whole world from being normal to being abnormal. Here is such a sequence: a man is standing and an eleven-year-old girl is sitting in the kitchen of their home which is attached to a second room that serves as a grocery store; the man moves away from the sink, walks to the stove, tries to light it, fails, tries again to light it, and there is an explosion (or, in the Sicilian-English of the man that was to echo throughout *Foresta v. Philadelphia Gas Works*,²⁴ “explosione”). One may accurately say that this sequence of actions has the same structural centrality to the trial that a plot (which Aristotle identified as the soul of drama) has to a play, except that it differs from a plot in the following important ways.²⁵

While the duration of a play (e.g., three hours) is much briefer than the duration of the action it represents (the plot may extend over several years and is ordinarily not shorter than twenty-four hours), the duration of a trial (lasting between several days and several weeks) is much longer than the action it represents: the real-life duration of the action cited above was approximately forty-five seconds, and the generic “product liability” story is often one encompassing an action of between fifteen and ninety seconds. Although the relatively short play contains a relatively long story, within the play itself the two are made commensurate: the plot of *Oedipus Rex* begins and ends exactly when the play *Oedipus Rex* begins and ends. Similarly, the relatively long trial and its relatively short story will be made commensurate: the “path of the accident” will be enduringly present from the trial’s opening through its closing days. But rather than (as in the play) being told once, it will be told ten, or forty, or two hundred times, sometimes in its forty-five second entirety, and other times in one of its ten-second or five-second subunits. The lawyer for the plaintiffs will introduce it in some form in the opening argument. One of the plaintiffs may be asked, by either or both lawyers, to tell the story in its entirety. The defense attorney may later ask, “The first time you tried to light the stove, Mr. Foresta, did you notice . . .,” and now for the next forty minutes the jury will be suspended in contemplation of the interior intricacies of that ten-second interval. Emergency hospital workers, though not present in the home, will find themselves

retelling the story, for among the many things they will be asked is the question, "What were you told when the man and the child were first brought to the hospital?" Nor, once we enter the days of medical testimony, is it only the final unit of the story, "explosion," which is held before the jury's eyes, for the injured bodies will themselves bear the record of earlier intervals. Although, for example, three-quarters of the surface of the girl's body has been burned, they will hear that there is a discrete narrow white band of healthy tissue across part of her torso where the metal back of the chair intervened between stove and child: the jury is transported back to and recalls the beginning of the story; with new clarity and concreteness they understand the opening sentence, "a man is standing and an eleven-year-old girl is sitting . . ." So, too, during the many days when the gas itself, the stove, and the plumbing fixtures are described and assessed (the suit has been brought against PGW, but PGW has brought suit against Roper and Mars who are for a time co-defendants), the story will re-emerge many times. When a fire expert, for example, is called upon to deduce the cause of the explosion, he must, in order to make the deduction, verbally reconstruct the story and its timing in its entirety once more. The story must be told, and retold, and retold, because only by entering it countless times and from countless directions does the jury learn what it must learn: was someone hurt (but this is not all), was there a defective product (but this is not all), most important for the legal question that must be answered, given the first two, is it the case that the second is the proximate cause of the first; did the two meet on "the path of the accident," did the two meet at "the crossroad of the catastrophe"?

This is, of course, the most crucial difference between the "unifying plot action" of a play and the "unifying plot action" of the trial. The action of the first is complete and cannot be altered; its audience must passively bear it. The action of the trial is incomplete and can be mimetically altered; its audience, the jury, is empowered to in some sense reverse it, and it is *only* because this possibility exists that the story is being retold. That is, the audience of *Oedipus Rex* or *Hamlet* can only mentally reverse it: they will be engaged in the counterfactual wish, let Oedipus not move down that road, let him not marry the Queen, let Polonius this time not be behind the curtain, let Hamlet at least not act moronic to Ophelia.²⁶ But the trial audience, the jury, is there to "make-real" what the audience of a play can ordinarily only "make-up."

The overall skeletal action may be summarized in this way. In the generic plot of a liability trial, the world has slipped from the ordinary to the extraordinary by the short path of a passive and unfathomable slippage that is resurrected into recoverable intelligibility by being subdivided into a sequence of discrete actions (standing, sitting, lighting, failing, not smelling gas, lighting again, exploding, and so forth). Implicit in this mimesis of restorability is the belief that catastrophes are themselves (not simply narratively but actually) reconstructable, the belief that the world can exist, usually does exist, should in this instance have existed,

and may in this instance be "remakable" to exist, without such slippage. This belief in the counterfactual is on one level shared by everyone present in the courtroom, all of whom, by their participation in a civilization that conducts such trials, credit the possibility that this *may*, in this particular case, be the appropriate legal outcome. But the varying populations within the courtroom are also differentiated by their varying relations to the counterfactual. That is, everyone (whether present for the defense or the plaintiff) will—like the audience in a play—have the *passive wish* that what is so were otherwise: no one hearing the story twenty-one times will, as they sense it about to resurface in its twenty-second iteration, be empty of the thought, "let it not be so," "let her this time not have been so burned." But it is the very particular burden of the plaintiff's counsel to raise that collective passive wish into an objectifiable form, or object form, by showing that it is in the nature of responsible human making or manufacture that this need not have been so: while the wish, "let her not have been hurt," may be translated into, and may float aimlessly among, many other equally passive wishes (let her not be in the kitchen, let them not have moved to the United States, let Mr. Foresta not have a daughter, let the man not move toward the stove), the plaintiff's lawyer must show that the only site of an actual reversal is the artifact, and the only sensible wish, "let the gas not be defective." Finally, it is the particular burden of the jury (one not shared by anyone else in the courtroom) to determine whether it is legally appropriate to *further* objectify the counterfactual by "bringing in" (that is, bringing into the about-to-be completed action of the trial) a verdict for the plaintiff, to *further* make-real or materialize the counterfactual by endowing it with the material form of monetary compensation.

That "the making real of the counterfactual" is centrally at issue in the legal contest and differentiates the defense and plaintiff positions becomes most overt in the closing arguments. The lawyer for the defense will often in such a case attempt to persuade the jury that they are powerless in this regard²⁷ by saying some version of the following statement: "A terrible accident has happened; we all wish it weren't so; but there is nothing anyone can do that will change the fact that it happened." The lawyer for the plaintiff, in contrast, will often take great care to remind the jury that they indeed have at this moment a very special power—"I try to give jurors a feeling of royalty," explains one of New York City's leading plaintiff lawyers²⁸), that some of the remaining body damage can be reversed and undone by medical care, that the problems of medical costs can be reversed by being paid for, that the problems of being out of work can be reversed or diminished by being paid for, that even the objectlessness of acute suffering can in some sense be mimetically reversed by a more bountiful object world,²⁹ that, in effect, the first two hundred recitations of the story they have heard can be displaced by a two-hundred-and-first recitation in which the story of the failure of artifice can be displaced by a story about the medically and psychologically curative strategies of artifice. If the jury brings in a verdict for

the plaintiff, and if they then bring in a compensatory award,³⁰ they by their first action announce that the story they have heard is the story of object-irresponsibility ("product liability"), and they by their second action act to convert the story about object-irresponsibility into a story about object-responsibility.

Even in what Holmes identifies as the earlier strategy of "revenge" (against the offending object) rather than "compensation" (for the offending object), there is a mimesis of counterfactual reversal. To kick the door a split second after it has inflicted pain is to immediately change the location of hurt from its human victim to its cause, and thus is to (however ineffectively) mimetically undo or reverse the path of the prior action. Compensation, though again only a mimetic rather than an actual undoing, comes closer to actualizing it, for it quite literally allows the external environment of the hurt person to be reconstructed into one where objects relieve rather than amplify the problems of sentience. This outcome is clearer if one moves from the first attribute of such a trial, its unifying action or story, to its second and third major attributes, the human and inhuman characters in the story.

As noted earlier, the range and complexity of information brought before the jury is often very great, and only the comparative simplicity of the gradually clarified story line works to control and contain that information. During the course of this trial, for example, the jury will be educated about many different institutions: they will mentally enter into the interior of two different Philadelphia hospitals, one Philadelphia courtroom, and three different businesses. They will learn about the complex construction of one particular stove, of one brand of stove, of American stoves in general, and of Sicilian stoves, as they will learn also about the complex construction of a bed that can suspend the body in the air while only touching a small portion of its surface. They will learn about the difficulties nurses have working on a hospital floor where there is every day a child crying; they will learn about first-generation immigrant employment; they will learn why Lady Justice is blindfolded; they will learn about the path of gas through underground pipes and into homes; and they will learn about the opportunism of microorganisms toward a body that is missing its protective skin (let Janice not have been hurt). They will come to understand the difference between the "beyond a reasonable doubt" of a criminal suit and the "tipping of the scales" of a civil suit; they will come to understand that there is a legal distinction between "a service" and "a product," as they will also come to understand whether gas in particular is a service or a product. They will hear precise descriptions of intricate feats of surgery that have already occurred, and of many more that are going to occur; they will hear descriptions of the medical difference between being severely burned on parts of your body (the man) and being severely burned over a great deal of your body (the girl); and they will hear descriptions of the special medical difficulty of repairing tissue that is covering bones that are still growing (let her not have been hurt). They will

learn about clear arguments, about unclear arguments, about court interruptions, and about the way the presence of co-defendants changes the question from "is some object responsible" to "which of the three objects is responsible." They will learn that gas is itself odorless and that gas is routinely odorized to signal a person that it is leaking; they will learn that small gas leaks are benign and omnipresent; they will learn that gas cannot be *so* odorized as to call attention to itself when it is leaking a little but must be odorized *enough* so that it will call attention to itself if it is leaking a lot (let the gas not be leaking a lot; let the gas that is leaking a lot be odorized enough to be noticeable). They will learn a great deal about the role of judge, and about this particular judge; they will see that it is the way of a judge to allow different versions of different facts, as they will also see that out of hundreds of facts there comes to be one privileged fact about which this judge will tolerate no second version.³¹ They will learn that once human flesh has healed, a black rubberized suit that is worn over the head and body by day and by night can eventually reduce two-inch thick scar tissue to half-inch thick scar tissue (let Janice not have been hurt), as they will also learn what Philadelphia school children say about a scarred body and a black rubber suit. They will learn about a mechanical device by which the gas company monitors the amount of "odor" in gas (let the gas have been odorized), as they will also learn that because of the imprecision of such instruments, the gas company has employees that personally conduct what is called a "sniff test" (let the gas have been odorized); they will learn that a "sniff test" happens twelve times a day every day throughout the year in random homes in every neighborhood of the city, as they will also learn that no "sniff test" had been regularly conducted anywhere in this particular neighborhood for nine days preceding the explosion (let there have been a sniff test, let them not have been hurt).

The jury will learn these things, and many more things, and in much greater detail than can be recited here; but as this list makes clear, there are, in the midst of so much complexity, only two real subjects, the nature of the human body and the nature of artifice, the ease with which "hurting" occurs and the responsibility with which "making" must therefore occur.

As the conflict of a play requires a protagonist and an antagonist, so the contest of the trial requires a plaintiff and a defendant. But though in a product liability suit the structural positions of plaintiff and defendant can be named by many different names (the names of the attorneys, the names of the persons and the companies they respectively represent), the two that will at every moment stand side-by-side are the human body and the artifact: the man, the girl, and the gas, as elsewhere a woman named Sophie and her industrial cleaning cart, as elsewhere a boy who climbs chestnut trees and an electric cable, as elsewhere a man who installs compressors and the compressor, as elsewhere other individuals and other objects; washing machine, forklift, soft-drink bottle, grain hopper, or

headrest. As in other contexts of deconstructed making encountered at earlier moments in this book, the juxtaposed extremes of body and construct signal a radical dislocation in the structure of creation. Two characteristics of this distress-filled drama of object responsibility are apparent from the miscellaneous catalogue of courtroom subjects enumerated above.

First, though it was earlier stressed that in a court case we are encountering cultural expectations about objects in their unordinary because unfulfilled form, it is also true that even within the court case "civilization" has entered in its benign and ordinary form. The plaintiff's attorney need not remind the jurors what an artifact ordinarily is, for what it ordinarily "is" is everywhere before their eyes. The allegedly defective gas is not a solitary "product" in an empty room: it is surrounded by verbal and material artifacts, stoves, schools, neighborhoods, legal arguments, special beds, philosophic categories like "stoicism," psychological rubrics to explain how young adolescents perceive the world, the image of Lady Justice, rubber body suits, company structures, underground pipelines, skilled acts of surgery, the chairs on which they are sitting, the institutionalized role of judge. That made things *ordinarily exist on behalf of* sentient persons need not be overtly called attention to, for the courtroom itself is benignly cluttered with "evidence" of the ordinary. Further, though there is a dispute taking place, the dispute is not about whether made things ought to accommodate sentience: the defense attorneys do not argue that made things ought not to do so, nor that they ought not to be *expected* to do so: they assume that objects should (at least up to a certain point³²) do so, and argue that this particular object did fulfill its responsibilities, though they will allow that there may have been some other object in the kitchen that did not do so (and, importantly, *should* have done so). So, too, the defendant gas company itself makes manifest the shared norm of civilization at large, for in its worries about too much and too little odor, its odometers, its titrologs, and its usual procedure for the twelve-times-a-day-every-day-every-neighborhood "sniff test," it demonstrates its own assumptions about the level of responsible awareness that must be built into the design of a particular product. The sometimes bitter antagonism, contradictions, interruptions, arguments and counterarguments are, then, all taking place within the frame of shared object expectation.

Second, what becomes clear in the legal contemplation of objects is not simply that they must internalize within their design an active "awareness" of human beings but that this "awareness" is not limited to, or coextensive with, their use. Up to this point, the fact that objects are mimetic of sentient awareness has been articulated only in terms of the specific sentient problem the object exists to eliminate: the chair must "know" about the problem of weight; the lightbulb must "know" about the problem of seeing at night. But it here becomes noticeable that artifacts must know a great deal more about their human makers than the particular needs they accommodate: while the gas must know (that is,

must be itself a material registration of the awareness) about the problem of being cold and the problem of allowing raw objects to enter the body, it must know other things as well; it must "know" that it is in its original state unsmellable by human beings; it must "know" that it is, when unsmellable, dangerous to those human beings. The miming of sentient awareness is made more pronounced by the fact that it is often the knowledge of some sensory attribute of persons that the object is legally expected to have, and by means of which it is expected "to communicate" with, or announce its presence, to persons. As in this trial the "smellability" of gas became a central issue, so in other cases it is sometimes the seeability or the audibility of the object that becomes crucial, even though the object was not primarily invented to assist vision or audition.³³ The object may even be required to communicate verbally with persons by bearing a written label. A stepladder, for example, not only "knows" (incorporates into its design the knowledge that) human beings are shorter than they often need to be, but also "knows" that human beings tend to overstep themselves when lost in trying to be taller than they are: the top step may bear the words, "Do not step onto this step" (i.e., "I know that you will fall, even if you do not know that at this moment"). An object must be *self-aware*: its design must not only anticipate how it will be used (and even, how it might be oddly used) but how it will be installed and eventually removed. The Beloit manufacturers of compressors will genuinely merit our deepest respect when they demonstrate the many blueprints of the object's interior that show the way the makers made it to be both useful and safely useable; but when the plaintiff's lawyer asks to see the blueprint of the precautionary design for the weld and brace that would bear the weight of the person installing the compressor, and there is none, we may guess that these earnest craftsmen will eventually lose this case and that, among other things, they will have to return to and supplement their already great labor of design research.³⁴

The frequency of suits in the United States has led some observers to identify us as the most litigious of societies, and it is with good reason that this widespread habit of "legal action" is so often lamented. Though there are many cases in which someone has been terribly hurt, there are others in which the plaintiff has not been hurt, or has been hurt but not by the defendant product, and sometimes the person bringing suit has such a history of suits that the trial comes to seem a deeply unpleasant way of attempting to raise money. American jurors have, however, repeatedly shown themselves to be skilled at distinguishing among these different kinds of suits: the jury system is itself an artifact that exists to allow society to have the benefits of appropriate legal action while protecting it from conscious or unconscious misuse of such an action. The cultural habit of suing, though perhaps partly anchored in the contemporary psychology of "blaming,"³⁵ can also be understood in other ways. When large awards are brought in, they almost always go to individuals who have been severely hurt; further,

in the majority of suits, the defendant is a large entity such as a company (and it is not the defendant manufacturing company but its usually even larger insurance company that pays the award).³⁶ For this reason, the United States courts themselves have observed that such suits must be understood not only in the idiom of *legal action* but in the idiom of *economic redistribution*: the extreme costs to individuals of living in a complex industrial society are redistributed to that sector of society that can absorb those costs (or, as it might be reformulated here, the extreme vulnerability of sentience is projected out onto the object world of the company structure where losses and gains will be registered in profit fluctuation rather than alterations in embodied consciousness).³⁷ If the present litigious era is someday in the far future looked back upon, the account given of our legal reflex will probably not be entirely negative, for it will no doubt be remarked that the century of unprecedented making and manufacture was also a century of unprecedented speculation about the ethical responsibilities inherent in the act of manufacture, the act of making, the act of creating. For this reason, the product liability trial (which will one day be turned to for its cultural revelations the way we now gaze back on the Greek stage) has been presented here less as a *legal action* or a form of *economic redistribution* than as a form of *cultural self-dramatization*: the courtroom is a communal arena in which civilization's ongoing expectations about objects are overtly (and sometimes noisily) announced; the trial does not occasion the expectation but merely occasions the objectification of the expectation; and though it may be itself a concussive and exceptional occurrence, it only makes audible what is actually a very quiet, very widely shared, very deep, and in its own way quite magnificent intuition about the nature of creation.

Thus, after looking at objects in a legal context, one can return to objects in nonlegal contexts and see them more clearly. Everyday artifacts (which may never have been the subject of litigation nor even consumer pressure) are themselves usually characterized by forms of materialized awareness that go far beyond their most immediate use: the door to the boiler room that includes in its design a childproof latch is not only able to "understand" and accommodate the timing of the person's erratic wish that it be now-a-wall-now-not-a-wall, but is also able to "differentiate" small persons from persons in general, and "knows" that the former is a special subcategory of the latter whose wishes should not be accommodated. Sometimes in a technological and automated society, the mimesis of sentient awareness may become so elaborate that the object may become frightening: the computer has startled and disturbed one generation of adults, though the offspring of those adults seem to perceive the computer as perfectly consistent with, rather than disruptive of, the ordinary external object world. Computers differ only in the elaborateness rather than in the fact of mimesis, and they are not singular even in their elaborateness. Novels, for example, produce this same inanimate fiction of speaking, feeling, thinking, and

are perhaps less startling and suspect only because we have lived with them a much longer time. What is (to return to an earlier subject) peculiar about the charge of "pathetic fallacy" is that it is only invoked by a literary commentator if the artist has made a tree speak, but is not invoked in the more extreme and (for an artist) habitual act of making a nonexistent presence (Catherine, Tess, Anna) speak, and speak with such complexity and palpable sentience. What is of still more importance to notice, however, is that the apparent knowingness of the computer (which is the projected knowingness of both its hardware and software designers) and the apparent knowingness of Tess (which is the projected knowingness of her maker) are themselves only radical versions of the apparent knowingness that surrounds us everywhere in the recreated external world (and that is again the projected knowingness of its collective makers). What is it that this aspirin bottle—with its long history in the bark of the willow tree and the bowl of the Indian peacepipe—"knows" about the human world? It knows about the chemical and neuronal structure of small aches and pains, and about the human desire to be free of those aches and pains. It knows the size of the hand that will reach out to relieve those aches and pains. It knows that it is itself dangerous to those human beings if taken in large doses. It knows that these human beings know how to read and communicates with them on the subject of amounts through language. It also knows that some human beings do not yet know how to read or read only a different language. It deals with this problem by further knowing how human beings intuitively and habitually take caps off bottles, and by being itself counterintuitive in its own cap. Thus only someone who knows how to read (or who knows someone else who knows how to read) can take off the cap and successfully reach the aspirin which, because the person not only knows how to read but has been made to stop and be reminded to read, will be taken in the right dosage. It contains within its design a test for helping to ensure responsible usage that has all the elegance of a simple three-step mathematical proof. Civilization restructures the naturally existing external environment to be laden with humane awareness, and when a given object is empty of such awareness, we routinely request that the garbage collector (himself a direct emissary of the platonic realm of ideal civilization) carry it away to the frontier, beyond the gates of the beloved city.

The aspirin bottle with its counterintuitive lid has been chosen as a final representative artifact in order to recall and underscore the fact that it is the work of the object realm to diminish the aversiveness of sentience, not to diminish sentience itself. The mental, verbal, and material objects of civilization collectively work to vastly extend the powers of sentience, not only by magnifying the range and acuity of the senses but by endowing consciousness with a complexity and large-mindedness that would be impossible if persons were forever engulfed in problematic contingencies of the body.

It is not objects but human beings who require champions, but the realm of

objects has been briefly celebrated here because they are themselves, however modestly, the champions of human beings. The interior structure of the artifact is being attended to in this discussion for two reasons. First, human indifference to other persons is often explained and implicitly excused by pointing out that those who are indifferent are absorbed by their material wealth. But it is a deconstruction of the very nature of material wealth to permit, let alone excuse, this inattention. We sustain this deconstruction by simultaneously surrounding ourselves with material objects in everyday life while philosophically divesting ourselves of them, verbally dismissing and discrediting the importance of the material realm. This act of philosophic divestiture does not work to diminish or even regulate our own desire for objects but only works to permit us to be free of worrying about the objectlessness of other persons. If we cling to objects, we should trust our own clinging impulse; and once we trust that impulse we will acknowledge that such objects are precious; and once we confess that they are precious we will begin to articulate *why* they are precious; and once we articulate why they are precious, it will be self-evident why our desire for them must be regulated and why their benefits must be equitably distributed throughout the world. It is by crediting them that we will reach the insight that we only pretend to reach when we discredit them.

Second, it is assumed here that the project of understanding the nature of human responsibility will be assisted by coming to understand the human imagination. But the action of the imagination is mysterious, invisible, and only disclosed in the material and verbal residues she leaves behind. The interior structure of the object has been attended to because it contains the material record of the interior of this invisible action. Thus it is the work of the imagination (rather than the object) to make the inanimate world animate-like, to make the world outside the body as responsible as if it were not oblivious to sentience. This is only one attribute in a composite portrait that contains many, many attributes, and which can only be uncovered in piecemeal fashion. This solitary attribute carries with it two others. The imagination is not, as has often been wrongly suggested, amoral: though she is certainly indifferent to many subjects that have in one era or another been designated "moral," the realm of her labor is centrally bound up with the elementary moral distinction between hurting and not hurting; she is simply, centrally, and indefatigably at work on behalf of sentience, eliminating its aversiveness and extending its acuity in forms as abundant, extravagantly variable, and startlingly unexpected as her ethical strictness is monotonous and narrowly consistent. The work of the imagination also overlaps with another interior human event that is usually articulated in a separate vocabulary, for it has become evident that at least at a certain moment in her life cycle, she is mixed up with (is in fact almost indistinguishable from) the phenomenon of compassion, and only differs from compassion in that in her maturer form she grows tired of the passivity of wishful thinking. These attributes

are surrounded by many others, a small number of which will emerge in the following section, which returns to the interior of the object world.

II. The Artifact as Lever: Reciprocation Exceeds Projection

A perception about human sentience is, through labor, projected into the free-standing artifact (chair, coat, poem, telescope, medical vaccine), and in turn the artifact refers back to human sentience, either directly extending its powers and acuity (poem, telescope) or indirectly extending its powers and acuity by eliminating its aversiveness (chair, vaccine). The first has no meaning without the second: the human act of projection assumes the artifact's consequent act of reciprocation. In the attempt to understand making, attention cannot stop at the object (the coat, the poem), for *the object is only a fulcrum or lever across which the force of creation moves back onto the human site* and remakes the makers. The woman making the coat, for example, has no interest in making a coat per se but in making someone warm: her skilled attention to threads, materials, seams, linings are all objectifications of the fact that she is at work to remake human tissue to be free of the problem of being cold. She could do this by putting her arms around the shivering person (or by hugging her own body if it is her own warmth on behalf of which she works), but she instead more successfully accomplishes her goal by indirection—by making the freestanding object which then remakes the human site that is her actual object. So, too, the poet projects the private acuties of sentience into the sharable, because objectified, poem, which exists not for its own sake but to be read; its power now moves back from the object realm to the human realm where sentience itself is remade. We every day speak of reading the works of Sappho, Shakespeare, Keats, Brontë, Tolstoy, Yeats, as though by doing so we gain some of the "sensitivity" and "perceptual acuity" projected there; people even announce that they are reading Keats, for example, as though this makes them Keats-like, which is in some sense accurate. Like the coatmaker, the poet is working not to make the artifact (which is just the midpoint in the total action), but to remake human sentience; by means of the poem, he or she enters into and in some way alters the alive perception of other persons.

Projection and reciprocation are (except in deconstructed making) so entailed in one another that one can rarely be speaking of one without simultaneously speaking of the other. In this section, however, they will be spoken of separately so that their interaction can be more clearly apprehended. The action of the one may have attributes not shared by the other. Furthermore, when a given artifact is undergoing successive revisions, it may be something about the nature of projection that is being revised or instead something about reciprocation. For

example, if the woman finds a better needle or better window light, this may ease the action of projection without altering (either amplifying or diminishing) the action of reciprocation (the second coat, though more easily made, may be only equally good at warming as the first). Alternatively, a new synthesis of natural and artificial fibers may amplify the action of reciprocation (bringing greater warmth to the wearer) without altering in any way (either making more difficult or more easy) the nature of the projective action of coatmaking. It will also often happen that what affects one will affect the other: if her new needle makes the projective act easier, she may decide to make coats for two neighbors; thus the object's power to remake sentience (or, more accurately, the woman's power to reach beyond the object and act indirectly on human sentience) has been amplified even though each of the two coats in isolation brings the same warmth as the earlier coat made with the original needle. The sites of projection and reciprocation are, then, conceptually distinguishable even though the actions themselves are inseparable. This is true whether the made object is a coat, a god, a poem, a marriage oath, a vaccine, or a crop of corn.

Although the made objects that will be introduced as illustrations in this section are solitary and concrete artifacts, and therefore only very fragmentary pieces of the civilization at large (a single coat, a single poem), what is exposed about the two counterpart actions *may* be equally descriptive of a large assembly of objects such as exists in a library, a philosophic tradition, or a marketplace, or even of an immense and collective artifact such as a nation-state. It may therefore be helpful to suggest, very briefly, the way the sites of projection and reciprocation inhere in a large artifact like the nation-state before turning back to the realm of diminutive objects.

During the period of the Carter administration, there was in the United States a great deal of attention to the nature of human rights in other countries. One result of this attention was that people came to understand that a particular right present in one country might be absent in a second country, but that that second country might itself have successfully established a different right, not yet emphasized in the first country. In other words, more appropriate than the question, Does this particular country have this particular right?, is the question, What is the overall pattern of rights within the given country and how much is presently being done to supplement those existing rights with additional rights formerly absent?³⁸ This second way of perceiving the question is especially relevant in understanding relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, since comparative legal and political analysts have shown that the United States Constitution emphasizes certain "procedural rights" (right to vote, freedom of speech, free press, right of assembly), while the Soviet Constitution emphasizes "substantive rights" (the right to eat, the right to a job, the right to medical care, the right of education); further, such analyses have shown that the recent exten-

sion of rights in the United States has come to include greater attention to substantive rights (the "right to work," for example, is a relatively young concept in this country), while there is evidence that Russia has begun to attempt to include a greater attention to procedural rights. This distinction between *procedural* (U.S.A.) and *substantive* (U.S.S.R.) rights has sometimes been formulated as a difference between "civil and political rights" on the one hand and "social and economic rights" on the other; it has also often been formulated as a difference between "individual rights" and "collective rights."³⁹

Within the context of the present discussion, however, it is appropriate to notice that this difference can also be formulated in terms of the distinction between the sites of projection and reciprocation. The individual, procedural, civil rights of the United States all attempt to protect the site of projection: the individuals' autonomy over their own participation in the collective artifact (the state) or, more precisely, the individuals' power to determine what kind of political artifact they will collectively project, is ensured by the rights of assembly, voting, free press, and so forth. Through these procedures, the nature of the artifact (the nation) is itself held continually open to revision and modification. The artifact's action of reciprocation (its ability to feed them, clothe them, cure them) is, of course, greatly influenced by the projective act itself, greatly determined by the particular polis that each generation creates. But there has not until recently existed a separate set of rights explicitly directed toward the action of reciprocation; the reciprocating powers of the made-world have been allowed to "fall where they may"; only relatively new social legislation has worked to guarantee that the disembodied powers of the artifact be equitably distributed, that, for example, a minimum level of medical care not be available to one sector of the population and unavailable to another. Conversely, the collective, substantive, social and economic rights of the Soviet Union have been explicitly directed at the site of reciprocation, for they work to ensure that whether the beneficent disembodied powers of the artifact are very great or very small, they are in any event equally distributed across the population. *What the state is* (projection) is, comparatively speaking, out of the hands of the citizens, but *whatever the state is*, its benefits (reciprocation) are in the hands of all its citizens. Thus the constitution of one country stresses rights that are conceptually and chronologically prior to the made object (the polis) while the constitution of the other country stresses rights that are posterior to the made object (polis).⁴⁰ The often repeated observation that Marx conceived of his strategies for socialism as taking place in Britain rather than Russia is important for just this reason: he emphasized the rights of reciprocation because he was imagining their being introduced into a country where the rights of projection were already in place, or on their way to being in place. This brief example has been contemplated here only to illustrate the way in which the attribute of the diminutive artifact

may be equally characteristic of a vast one: like a coat, a nation-state is an intermediate object between the inseparable (however conceptually distinguishable) actions of projection and reciprocation.

The artifact as a material and visible locus between two actions—or, more precisely, the artifact as the materialized site at which the human action of creating now moves back on the human creators themselves—can be more clearly apprehended if the object is seen as one in a series of three: weapon, tool, artifact. The modification of weapon into tool was at earlier points (Chapters 3 and 4) presented as the alteration of a two-ended object into an object with only one end: what in the weapon are the double sites of pain and power become in the tool a single site where sentience and authority (the changed vocabulary reflects the unification, for pain made active and self-objectifying is more accurately called “sentience” and power made sentiently aware and therefore responsible is more accurately called “authority”) occur together at one end and together act on a nonsentient surface.⁴¹ Although this change is a very great one, and although it is certainly one that “literally” occurs, to summarize that change in terms of the new object now “having only one end” is itself a metaphorical description, since the object (hammer, hoe) is of course still a two-ended object. But the near-literalness of the summarizing description becomes more evident in the subsequent transition from a tool to an artifact, for the artifact (which is itself like the transitional few inches between the handle and head of the hammer or between the handle and blade of the hoe) has within its material form no ends (e.g., chair) or at most only a residual record of ends (e.g., lamp), and only has for its end points the *single site* of the human beings out of whom it came into being and back toward whom it now moves. It is as though hammer and hoe have been bent in the middle, and now any action introduced at one end arcs back on to the very site out of which the action arose.

Thus the artifact is in this section called a “lever” or “fulcrum” in order to underscore that it is itself only a midpoint in a total action: the act of human creating includes both the creating of the object and the object’s recreating of the human being, and it is only because of the second that the first is undertaken: that “recreating” action is accomplished by the human makers and must be included in any account of the phenomenon of making. What the human maker projects into the made object may change from object to object (as a counterfactual perception about seeing is projected into the telescope while a counterfactual perception about skin is projected into the bandage), but what he or she will have always projected there is the power of creating itself: the object (coat, telescope, bandage) is invested with the power of creating and exists only to complete this task of recreating us (making us warm, extending vision, replacing absent skin with a present skin). It is precisely because objects routinely act to recreate us that the confusion (encountered in Chapter 4) arises in which the object is seen as a *freestanding* creator. Though, for example, human beings are

themselves the creators of the Artifact (God), God now comes to be perceived as the creator of human beings; and, of course, the Object *is* their creator, for by making this Artifact they have recreated themselves, altered themselves profoundly and drastically. There would be no point in inventing a god if it did not in turn reinvent its makers: all that is untrue is that the power of recreation originates in the object, a mistake that occurs by attending only to the second half of the total arc of action. Again, Marx has described the way in which in British capitalism, the women and men who make commodities, money, and capital come to be wrongly perceived as themselves commodities made by the capitalist system. But this designation of people as commodities is a pernicious misinterpretation of a phenomenon that is on another level accurate: as Marx himself sees, made objects exist to remake human beings to be warm, healthy, rested, acutely conscious, large-minded (but not to remake them into commodities, which they only appear to do if the economic system is seen as a freestanding object that is itself uncreated, and this misinterpretation may be used to excuse the fact that the object world does not feed, clothe, and warm them). The conception that artifacts create people is right. The conception that that creative power originates in the artifact is wrong. Only the second half of the total arc of action is being seen.

This phenomenon is complicated by the fact that in many situations it is advantageous to eclipse from attention the first half of the arcing action. For example, a god can much better work to recreate its people if its ability to recreate them is not recognized as only an extension of their own projective actions—if, that is, the god is not recognized as a fiction or made thing. In fact, in general it is the case that when an artifact goes from what has been called here the “made-up” state to the “made-real” stage, one way in which this is done is by eclipsing or erasing the first half of the arcing action. This is why artifacts that are purposely allowed to remain in the made-up stage—artifacts that are not only permitted but intended to be recognizable as fictitious—have pronounced signatures attached to them, signatures assuring that the first half of the arcing action will be remembered, whereas artifacts that are not intended to be self-announcingly fictitious usually have no such signature attached to them. When “Ode to Autumn” acts on us, we know that it is actually John Keats who acts on us, whereas when with the same coming of autumn our coats begin to act on us, we do not overtly recognize that it is actually Mildred Keats (or any other specified coatmaker) who has reached out through the *caritas* of anonymous labor to make us warm.

Although the issue of signatures is a very complex one, in general one can say that at the moment an artifact is performing its reciprocating action, we are aware of the chronologically prior act of projection to varying degrees, and this “varying degree” depends on what the object was invented to do. If the invented object can only perform its task by seeming to have an ontological status, or

degree of reality, *greater* than human beings themselves, then it will be important that the earlier arc of action be not only *unrecognizable* but even *unrecoverable*. Clearly, a god falls into this category, as would a divine right monarchy whose state laws must be accepted as though a naturally (or supernaturally) existing given of the world. Such objects will therefore be devoid not only of any personal signatures but also of the general human signature that tells us they are man-made. The object must have no seams or cutting marks that record and announce its human origins. The second and by far the largest category of objects contains artifacts (both material and verbal) that work by seeming real, or by interacting with persons without any question of their realness or unrealness: they (clothes, language) do not have a reality greater than or even nearly equal to human beings, but they are not so unreal as to be immediately recognizable as "made"; they are not, as it were, framed by their fictionality. While (like the objects in the first category) they are not on a day-to-day basis *recognizable* as invented, their inventedness is not (unlike the objects in the first category) *unrecoverable*. That is, as one maneuvers each day through the realm of tablecloths, dishes, potted plants, ideological structures, automobiles, newspapers, ideas about families, streetlights, language, city parks, one does not at each moment actively perceive the objects as humanly made; but if one for any reason stops and thinks about their origins, one can with varying degrees of ease recover the fact that they all have human makers, and this recognition will not jeopardize their usefulness. Though these objects (like those in the first category) usually have no *personal* signatures affixed to them, they will (unlike those in the first category) have a *general* human signature. Though the name of Mildred Keats will not be in the coat, there may be a label on the seam or the interior of the collar that says ILGWU, and even when there is no label, the seams and collar themselves will, on inspection, announce that the coat has a human maker. Thus, even had we never discovered the group signatures on the casing-blocks of the Meidum pyramid—"Stepped Pyramid Gang," "Boat Gang," "Vigorous Gang," "Sceptre Gang," "Enduring Gang," "North Gang," "South Gang"⁴²—the seams and materials of the pyramid themselves announce the agony of human labor entailed in their construction. The individual person who is one of the life-risking builders of the Golden Gate Bridge will, as he crosses that object fifty years later, think to himself, "I've got my fingerprints all over that iron";⁴³ the rest of us, periodically struck with the recognition that this dazzling object is "made," will see the fingerprints too, though we will not know to whom they belong. The signature will be general, not specific.

Though different kinds of occasions will prompt the recoverable recognition that such objects are man-made, one of the most common is the moment when the object needs repair, revision, or reinforcement—a moment when its ongoing reality has slipped a little, and thus its fictionality or madeness comes into view. Thus one ordinarily thinks only of the warming (reciprocating) action of the

coat, and the prior action of coatmaking comes before the mind only in the season when the seams are torn and the buttons need replacing. We ordinarily use language without contemplating its "madness" (and such contemplation would intrude on our ability to get through a day of utterances), but when one has an infant in whom the labor of "making" language is beginning, or a friend who has lost language facility because of a small stroke and who must relearn, reform, this capacity, its "madness" will be strikingly apparent. The citizens in a democracy, like the citizens in a divine right monarchy, will on a day-to-day basis interact with its political and legal structures as though they are a freestanding natural given of the world, but when a problem arises, or when the election booths suddenly reappear on the horizon of daily life, we will be reminded that we have our fingerprints all over this country, that its construction and revisions have a human origin, entail human responsibilities, bear a general human signature.

All of the objects cited here as representative of the second category are ones that habitually exist in a state of "realness" rather than "madness," but the moment of needed repair calls attention to the fact that they are "made-real," and may also even remind us that before they were "made-real" they were "made-up." That is, each of the objects cited above was not only invested with a freestanding material or verbal form, but was before that mentally invented (if given a material or verbal form at this stage, it will be less substantial, more schematic, than in its made-real stage). Thus the coat not only has a maker but before that, a designer; the Golden Gate Bridge not only had builders but architects; the democracy, too, had designers and architects. What is crucial to notice is that while the "makers" are only recoverably visible in a generalized human signature (ILGWU, Enduring Gang, the voters), the designers are usually known by an individual signature. Though Mildred Keats's name is absent from the coat, in a new season when the design for the coat is first introduced, the designer's name will be announced at fashion shows, mentioned by buyers, and that name may even appear in the coat itself. Though it would be difficult to track down the names of the bridgebuilders, the architects' names will be a matter of public record and more easily accessible. Though the builders of a country are collective and anonymous, the names of the designers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are well known: we even refer to those designers as "signers." This consistent difference between individual signatures at the made-up stage and general human signatures at the made-real stage is sometimes attributed to the fact that the first act is more difficult, entails more unusual talents, or is (rightly or wrongly) for some mysterious reason more greatly honored. But it seems more probable (especially when this distinction within the second category is itself seen within the larger pattern of the three categories) that this simply results from its structural position: at the stage where something is made-up, we allow the presence of an individual signature that

reminds us it is "made" (the coat pattern, blueprint, and constitution have no chance of being taken for a coat, a bridge, or a country, so nothing is jeopardized by the signature that confesses its madeness); at the stage, however, where these objects must function as "real" or self-substantiating, they perform this work much more successfully if they are not at every moment confessing their origins as human projections, and thus will have either no signature or an only recoverable, generalized human signature.

As this second and largest category of *real* objects is framed on one side by a very, very small category of objects that are *super-real* (that is, artifacts that only function by seeming to have greater reality and authority than persons), so it is framed on the other side by another very, very small group of objects that are overtly *unreal*, the category of art. While the "madeness" of objects in the first category is both *unrecognized* and *unrecoverable*, and the "madeness" of the objects in the second category is *unrecognized* but, on reflection, *recoverable*, the "madeness" of the objects in the third category is not simply *recoverable* and *recognized* but *self-announcing*. Poems, films, paintings, sonatas are all framed by their fictionality: their made-upness surrounds them and remains available to us on an ongoing basis; though there may be moments when we forget their inventedness, this moment will be as atypical of our interaction with this object as, conversely, remembering the inventedness of the coat is atypical of our interaction with that object. Consequently, while the objects in the first category *have neither a personal nor general human signature*, and the objects in the second *have a general but not* (except in the brief making-up stage) *a personal signature*, the objects in the third *have personal signatures*. In fact, so inseparable from the artifact is the affixed signature that the object will often be named by the signature: pointing to two objects in the room, a person will say, "This is a Millet, and this is a Caro," just as when the person places the needle at the edge of the record he is likely to look at expectant eyes and say, "Mozart."

These three categories are introduced only to underscore the fact that at the moment when an artifact is recreating us, or reciprocating us, or being useful—that is, at the moment when an artifact is performing the second half of the arcing action—whether or not the first half of that action is visible will depend on whether that visibility will interfere with its reciprocating task. That visibility will jeopardize the work of the objects in the first category, will not jeopardize but will interfere with the work of the objects in the second category, and will neither jeopardize nor interfere but will instead assist the work of the objects in the third category (since those objects exist both to celebrate and help us to understand the nature of creating).

When, then, one is standing in the midst of the second half of the arcing action, the visibility of the first half will vary. When, however, one is attending to the first half of that action—that is, when one is attempting to understand the

nature of creating—it will always be misleading to look at it in isolation; it can only be understood when seen in conjunction with its second half. It is, again, for this reason that the object is referred to here as a "lever": for regardless of which of the three categories it belongs to, and regardless of whether it is a god, coat, poem, nation-state, bridge, or vaccine, the concrete object will always be only the *midpoint* in the total action. But the descriptive word "lever" is also used here in order to call attention to another major attribute of the overall phenomenon: the midpoint, the discrete object, is also the site of a magnification. As will become evident in the following discussion, the action of reciprocation is ordinarily vastly in excess of the action of projection.

The large discrepancy between the degree of alteration that occurs at the active end of a weapon or a tool, and what occurs at the passive end of weapon or tool was noticed in an earlier chapter. So the change in the position of a finger at one end of a gun may bring about a change from life to death in the body at the other end. The degree of embodied alteration that occurs when a person shoots an arrow is vastly exceeded by the degree of alteration that the arrow in turn brings about: the wound in the tissue of the animal shot is not only a qualitatively more significant alteration than the arm, hand, and back contractions that brought it about but also has a much greater temporal duration. The pull and force of the arms on a rake have an outcome at its other end whose reach and duration exceed the reach and duration of the embodied raking motion: it is not just the vegetation beneath the radius of the arms that has been acted upon, but an area with a larger radius, and the effects of that action will continue to be visible hours and even days after the arms themselves have stopped their action. If one woman presses down on a piece of crumpled linen and a second woman with the same degree of force presses down across an iron onto a piece of linen, the first piece will be virtually unaltered while the second will be transformed into a smooth surface because the intervening tool has magnified her action. Although large changes occur in the transformation of a *weapon* into a *tool*, the phenomenon of magnification is one element that remains constant. Although there are again large changes in the transformation of the *tool* into a freestanding *artifact*, this phenomenon of magnification once more remains constant, for the degree to which the object *disembodies* or recreates the human makers will ordinarily greatly exceed the degree of heightened aversive *embodiment* required by the projective act of creating the object.

If one returns to the woman in the midst of her action of coatmaking, it is clear that her translation of a counterfactual wish ("perceiving her own susceptibility to cold and wishing it gone") into the projective act of labor requires the embodied aversiveness of controlled discomfort. Arms, mind, back, eyes, fingers, will all be concentrated on bringing about a certain outcome: the sustained mental and physical attention to seams, shapes, materials, is itself an interiorized objectification of the original counterfactual wish (which she may not even self-

consciously think of at this point—her mind is filled not with thoughts of wind and snow and shivering but with getting this unwieldy edge of material to align itself with this other edge). But while her making of the coat (the first half of the total arc of action) requires a deepened embodiment, the coat's remaking of her (the second half of the total arc of action) will bring about her disembodiment, divesting her body of its vulnerability to external temperatures and therefore also freeing her mind of its absorption with this problem. In the total arc of action, then, she is first more intensively *embodied* (projection) and then *disembodied* (reciprocation); but clearly the level of the second is much greater than that of the first. If the second were the exact equivalent of the first—if the second relieved her of discomfort precisely to the same degree to which she had earlier willfully subjected herself to discomfort—it would have been senseless to make the coat: she might as well have remained wholly passive before her environment. Instead, the work of the second is vastly in excess of the first. The embodied discomfort, exhaustion, and concentration of projection has eliminated not merely discomfort but the possibility of dying when freezing temperatures arrive. One may argue that without the coat, she will not necessarily die, that she can, for example, stay near a fire (itself a made object). But this only leads to a similar conclusion: with the embodied discomfort of coatmaking she has eliminated the enslavement entailed in the necessity of never moving beyond the five-foot radius of the fire.

Even if, therefore, one is juxtaposing one hour of projection against one hour of reciprocation, the second is, in the nature of the alteration brought about, much greater than the first. But the introduction of the temporal element calls attention to a second form of excess: for several weeks of the discomfort of projection, she is reciprocated by fifteen months (i.e., three winters) of freedom from susceptibility to the cold. If the two were temporal equivalents, she might perhaps do just as well to perform the embodied motion of coatmaking (what was in the preceding section called the dance of labor) without making the object, for she could by this method of intense movement stay warm. But these patterned calisthenics would in actuality have to be sustained continuously throughout the season of ice and snow, itself an impossible proposition; and she could not, as she could in the aversiveness of labor, control and regulate the level of aversiveness by choosing when she would rest and when work; the timing of her actions would now be beyond her personal will and wholly dictated by the vagaries of the external world.

There is also a third, immediately apparent form of excess. The object may extend its reciprocating benefits to those wholly exempt from the process of projection. In hours when she sits by the fire, her brother, neighbor, or child can wear the coat; for what originated as a wholly interior counterfactual wish has been objectified into a sharable outcome. If material and verbal artifacts only reciprocated their specific makers rather than human-beings-as-makers-in-gen-

eral, they would have almost the same absolute privacy as sentience itself. They are instead by nature social.

The fact that the object's reciprocating action includes but is not limited to its maker leads to a fourth form of excess: exchange. If the woman makes a second coat and trades it for the making of a wall (or alternatively, trades it for money with which she then buys a wall), then her projective action of coatmaking has brought her not only warmth but security. Although it seemed at first that she knew how to make one thing, it turns out that this set of concentrated gestures actually enables her to (indirectly) make many objects (a wall, a month's worth of food, an ointment to cure rashes, a pennywhistle), objects that in turn remake her in many different ways (she is now a warm, secure, well-enough-fed, and rash-free music-maker). Just as persons are not locked into the private boundaries of fixed sentient attributes, so made objects are not locked into the concrete boundaries of their sensuous attributes. As the human being may transform herself from a creature forever experiencing herself as vulnerable to the cold, to one primarily experiencing herself as a gifted coat-and-music-maker, so the coat (because of its inherent freedom of reference—that is, because it refers to the temperature instability not only of its maker but of its maker's brother, neighbor, and child) is transformable from an object with one set of sensuous attributes (e.g., soft blue cloth; an irregular two-feet by three-feet trunklike shape; an opening at the bottom and again at the top; movability) to an object with a different set of attributes (e.g., hard regular surfaces; rectangular eight-feet by five-feet shape; no openings; unmovability). Thus when the woman invested her own powers of creating in the object, the object became capable not only of *recreating her* (as well as other persons) but of *recreating itself* to be whatever object the woman in that week most wanted it to become.

Any artifact will ordinarily be characterized by at least one of these four, and usually all four, forms of excess.⁴⁴ The most celebrated artifacts of civilization—the isolation and construction of sulphuric acid, a Beethoven sonata, the U.S. Constitution, the smallpox vaccine, Genesis, the telephone, Arabic numerals, and so forth—will, despite the agonized years (and in some cases, several lifetimes) of labor that may have been entailed in the act of projection, be so extravagantly excessive in their referential powers that the calculus of projection and reciprocation will seem almost funny: one may turn away from the contemplation of magnitude with something of the resignation with which one surrenders in the attempt to picture the magnitude of interstellar distance. It is no doubt for this reason that when people study one particularly spectacular instance of invention, they sometimes conclude that the general phenomenon of invention could not possibly originate in the perception of need, for the vast and unanticipated benefits of the object bear no resemblance to anything conjured up by the narrow word “need.” But what is at present most important to notice is this: not only the most celebrated but the most ordinary and routine artifacts are

characterized by excess. This is true to such an extent that one may accurately say that an artifact is this capacity for excessive reciprocation; what the human being has *made* is not object *x* or *y* but this excessive power of reciprocation. Thus the normative model must be one in which the total arc of action has in its second half a largesse not present in the first half; the total act of creating contains an inherent movement toward self-amplifying generosity.

It is crucial to recall that what is being presented here as a descriptive model is not a model of the relations between persons but of the relation between persons and the realm of made objects. People perform acts on behalf of (and also give objects to) other people from whom they may or may not anticipate any reciprocation: though a wholly unconditional love may be as unusual as a wholly unrequited love is distressing, human acts toward others routinely occur within a wide and benign framing asymmetry. So, too, the number of persons has the same fluidity of direction; it is ordinary to see five persons acting on behalf of one, as it is also ordinary to see one acting on behalf of five. The issue of reciprocity between persons is a complex and important subject, but is emphatically not the subject under discussion here. Whatever its characteristics, they cannot be derived from the model of the relation between persons and objects.

The model introduced above is called "normative" because it is almost omnipresent in the artifacts of civilization, whether the given artifact happens to be an uncelebrated or celebrated object. This is not to say that the human action of projection never occurs without the consequent and amplified object action of reciprocation. For example, in situations of survival, projection and reciprocation may be agonizingly close to one another; and it is for this reason that there will often be in such a situation a question about whether to go on in the projective act—e.g., expending labor on trying to locate beneath the frozen ground the remnants of potatoes for the next meal—since the aversive expenditure of energy may be only equal to, or even more than, the caloric restoration that the potatoes will bring. This situation, however, in which the two events are near equivalents, is not the model for artifice: it is an emergency measure and is itself a moment of failed or failing artifice. Similarly, there are countless instances in which one must perform the projective labor, often over many years, without knowing whether the made thing (a new technological invention, a new medical cure, a new philosophic treatise, a new country) will be invested with amplified referential activity, or indeed with any referential activity at all. It may be that an individual who devotes his life to finding the cause of yellow fever will not find the cause but will have contributed to an eventual discovery that has a collective authorship. But it may also be that he is pursuing a path of investigation so in error (and perhaps even a path whose erroneousness is already known on other continents) that it will not have contributed to the collective outcome; or it may be that he will find the cause but will die before he has time to make his way back up the river and tell anyone. There are many positive,

and even laudatory, descriptive terms that apply to this situation, for there is no question that the projective act of creation often requires great risk, great courage, great spirit, and does so regardless of outcome; in fact, it is precisely to the degree that the outcome is unknowable that courage will be personally required of him. But to say this is not to say that the situation is a model (or even, strictly speaking, an instance) of artifice, for it is again a moment of failed artifice or nonartifice. No one knows this better than the person himself, for although he has recreated himself to be courageous (one may even say he has transformed himself from the original human given of expecting reciprocation from acts of making to one who continually "makes" with the recognized risk of in the end never having made), it was of course not this, but the cause and eventual cure of yellow fever for which he labored.

As the normal arc of making is framed on one boundary by the nonnormative models of failure and survival, so it is framed on the other side by an equally nonnormative structure of making that belongs to the realm of extreme well-being and leisure. If, for example, three persons all labor for twelve hours to produce for one person a pastry whose pleasure-bearing power is considered by that person unremarkable and which in any event lasts only three minutes, and whose caloric value lasts only one hour, this event will again not be one in which the reciprocating action of the made object is in excess, or even nearly equal to, the projective labor. It may be that this, too, should be recognized as an instance of failed artifice. But even if (as seems often the case) it is taken as an acceptable, or normal, that is to say, "a successful," moment of artifice, it can be so taken only because of the wider frame of artifacts surrounding it. That is, up until now the discussion has focused on the relation between maker(s) and a single made object; but some objects can only be understood in the context of a multitude of objects.

As has often been noticed, the realm of objects (material, verbal, and mental) tends to be numerically excessive. Although this "numerical excessiveness of objects" is a very different characteristic from the "excess of reciprocating action *within* an object," the former may in part be a reflection of the latter. Because so many of the invisible attributes of creating are themselves objectified and made visible in the materialized structure of the object world, it may be that the inherent, self-amplifying largesse of creating also comes to have a visible (and very positive, though not unproblematic) registration in the tendency toward numerical excess. One of the most eloquent depictions of this tendency is Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. When one recalls this story from a distance, it seems to be a narrative of survival on a remote island outside civilization; when, therefore, one returns to read it again, it is startling to discover that Crusoe's act of world-building, his reconstruction of civilization, is from a very early moment characterized by surfeit. The objects that float to him on a wrecked vessel from an older civilization—like a colony, his own small country is the cultural offspring

of a parent country—are, even in the midst of their scarcity, tokens of superfluity: he finds there, for example, amid many other things, not one but three Bibles. So, too, his own constructions increasingly display this surfeit: his shelter grows increasingly extravagant, soon there are two houses, two boats, and a fence that is rhythmically returned to, extended, fortified, thickened now with earth, now with twining branches. Again, his verbal, computational, and mental world of calendars, journals, dreams, moral categories, and optical perspectives on his dwelling place contain this same tendency toward multiplication. Though the resulting culture of goods can be summarized in pejorative terms (e.g., having and hoarding), or again in a neutral descriptive vocabulary (e.g., the Protestant ethic of work and individualism), there is also something about the nature of making, and the inherent thrust of the civilizing impulse, that Defoe works to expose. Crusoe begins by being a person who “makes” either as a result of acute need (where willed artifice is the only available strategy of self-rescue) or as a result of accident (where artifice entails the human genius of observing a wholly unintended outcome), but increasingly becomes one who willfully “makes” merely to make. That is, in addition to transforming his external world, Crusoe has transformed the nature of *the act of creating itself*; he has remade making; he has remade the human maker from one who creates out of pain to one who creates out of sheer pleasure.

His story is relevant to the three-person twelve-hour pastry. At the point where the object world is characterized by abundance, an object may be invented in which projection is in excess of reciprocation merely to demonstrate and luxuriate in the fact that the structure of creating itself may be remade to be free of its ordinary requirement that reciprocation be in excess of projection: the new inequality of projection over reciprocation (which ordinarily signals emergency, survival, and failure) comes to be the vehicle of announcing one’s very distance and immunity from the realm of fear, death, and failure.

That sense of immunity has been, of course, brought about not by the pastry itself but by the abundance of artifacts in which the ordinary ratio of narrow projection and wide reciprocation is firmly in place: the pastry expresses rather than itself creating the immunity. Through objects, human makers recreate themselves, and now this *newly* recreated self finds that it is no longer expressed in the existing object world, and thus goes on to project and objectify its new self in new objects (which will, in turn, recreate the maker, and so again necessitate new forms of objectification). Thus the continual *multiplication* of the realm of objects expresses the continual *excess of self-revision* that is occurring at the original sentient site of all creation.

This brief excursion into the subject of multiplicity calls attention to the fact that just as a single object has an identifiable structure, so the inclusive realm of abundant objects may have an identifiable structure, though the difficulty and complexity of this subject place it beyond the frame of the present discussion.

If made culture consisted of a handful of objects—a god, an altar, a blanket, and a song—it might be possible to articulate the relations between the objects. Indeed, as was seen earlier, in the Old Testament the number of artifacts in a given passage may be so small, and the chronological sequence in which they come into being so clearly etched, that not only the isolated structure of each but the structure of relations among them can be apprehended.⁴⁵ Once, however, one resides in a deep sea of artifacts, that task becomes much more difficult, and very possibly impossible. What becomes strikingly apparent, however, is the multiplicity of paths by which existing objects sponsor new objects (and in this picture of multiple paths, we gain some glimpse of the massive front on which the imagination is constantly at work, patrolling the dikes of made culture, repairing, filling gaps, extending, reinforcing).

First and most important, as was described above, an existing object, by recreating the maker, itself necessitates a new act of objectified projection: the human being, troubled by weight, creates a chair; the chair recreates him to be weightless; and now he projects this new weightless self into new objects, the image of an angel, the design for a flying machine. Second, just as the sentient needs and acuties are projected into objects, so objects themselves contain both capacities and needs that sponsor additional artifacts. An invention may have a latent *power* that suggests a new application and so requires a new modification of the original invention: as the bodily lens of the eye is projected in a camera, eventually a new kind of camera that can enter into the interior of the human body (and film the events of conception, the passage of blood through the heart, or the action of the retina) comes into being. Conversely, an invented object may have a *need* that now requires the introduction of a new object: once Crusoe successfully “makes” a crop, he must go on to make an object that protects the crop;⁴⁶ once Benjamin Franklin makes a glass harmonica, he must go on to create a case to ensure the longevity of the delicate instrument;⁴⁷ once a “new” virus has been isolated, a new medium may have to be created in which its growth can be observed; once a constitution is in place, many laws and customs arise to protect the constitutional privileges.

Third, as became clear in the previous chapter, a given attribute of the sentient creator (e.g., the capacity for creation itself) may be first projected into an extremely sublimated objectification (e.g., God) which then invites the invention of less sublimated, more materialized objectifications (altars, narratives, temple, ark, branching candelabra, rainbow-as-sign) to mediate between the human maker and the original Artifact. Or instead (as the writings of both Marx and Freud tend to suggest), invention may first occur in a freestanding artifact close to the body (dream object, individual craft object, patterns of family interaction) that then gives rise to successively more sublimated artifacts (market structures, civil structures, ideologies, philosophies, religion). The existence of multiple expressions of a given attribute affects the arc of projection and reciprocation within

any solitary artifact. The movement in either direction will amplify the size of the margin by which object reciprocation exceeds human projection. A materialized objectification may invite a more extended, dematerialized, or verbalized objectification in order to extend the "shareability" or referential breadth of the original thing. Conversely, a verbalized objectification may necessitate the introduction of a more concrete version of itself, which by investing the verbalized abstraction with sensuous immediacy, contracts the projective labor. So, for example, the sense of protective unity sensorially available in a concrete shelter and in the lived patterns of family life may be greatly extended in the concept of "polis"; and, in turn, the projective act of apprehending and holding steadily available to the mind the remote concept of polis (or one's own existence as "citizen") may be assisted and relieved by the comparatively freestanding existence of maps, colored squares of cloth, courthouses, and verbal pledges.

The chronological sequence of object appearance may occur in either direction. If, for example, it were appropriate to think of any one sentient attribute (e.g., seeing) as objectified at a hundred sites of successive dematerialization or sublimation (e.g., crystal ball, eyeglasses, a fiction about a superman who sees through walls, microscope, satellite, prism, mechanism for objectifying invisible parts of light spectrum, medical procedures for eye transplants, speculative accounts of how color vision works, calendars and other objects for visualizing the passage of time, theories of knowledge, phenomenological descriptions of seeing, theological concepts of a providential overseer, astronomical calculations that make visible events that will only actually come to pass in the future—all these would belong not to the same but to many different sites), it would be noticeable that the creation of the various objects does not begin with level one and proceed through one hundred, nor begin with level one hundred and proceed back through one. Instead an object at level three might help to press into existence an object at level ninety-six, and this in turn might occasion the introduction of objects at levels forty-three through forty-nine. Further, a vast array of objects would come into being to express *the relation* between any two (or three, or thirty) levels of sublimation: for example, a fourth level projection of desire (e.g., a verbal recitation of a dream about a vulture) and a sixty-fifth level projection of desire (e.g., the Mona Lisa) might sponsor the creation of a third artifact (e.g., a psychological romance bearing the title "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood"⁴⁸) for the single purpose of expressing the relation between the first two artifacts. Finally, this interaction between existing sites of objectification would occur not just *within* any one sentient attribute such as "seeing" or "desiring" but among the entire constellation of attributes. Rather than speaking only of a twelfth-level projection of vision sponsoring a thirtieth-level projection of vision, one would also have to be speaking of a twelfth-level projection of vision sponsoring a twelfth- (or thirtieth-) level projection of touch (e.g., the existence of print might occasion the invention of braille, just as,

conversely, the tactile qualities of another planet's surface might be translated and relayed back to earth as visual information).

This schematic description is introduced here only to recall the relentless tendency toward self-amplifying objectification that is omnipresent in everyday life. Because the interaction between successive sites of any one tier, or again across tiers, is so habitual, one comes to expect the introduction of a material artifact that incorporates and conflates the disparate interior actions of pump and computer, or instead computer and vaccine,⁴⁹ just as one also comes to expect the introduction of a verbal artifact that articulates the influence of optics on the Miltonic poetics of paradise, or instead demonstrates Walt Disney's unconscious adoption of the biological principle of neoteny in his invention and evolving conception of a famous cartoon mouse.⁵⁰ The introduction of new objects takes place within the frame of already existing artifacts. A particular molecular structure may be dreamed before it is seen; a period of breakthrough in quantum physics may first require as prelude the resolution of an argument about the legitimacy of visual metaphor,⁵¹ and if we complain that the inventor of the relativity theory was, in his devout belief in God, guilty of an inconsistency, we are perhaps allowing a very local conception of "inconsistency" to deflect attention away from what, within the overall strategy of human making, has nothing inconsistent about it.

As in the previous section of this chapter, the interior of the object world has been entered in order to apprehend the invisible interior of the human action of making that is itself recorded in the object. The solitary artifact has been described here as a "lever" because it is only the midpoint in the total arc of action, and because the second half of that arcing action is ordinarily vastly in excess of the first half. It is this total, self-amplifying arc of action, rather than the discrete object, that the human maker makes: the made object is simply the made-locus across which the power of creation is magnified and redirected back onto its human agents who are now caught up in the cascade of self-revision they have themselves authored.

As the object attributes examined in the earlier section worked to expose some of the invisible attributes of the imagination (its attempt to invest the nonsentient world with the responsibilities of sentience; its ethical monotony; its original inseparability from compassion), so here the identification of the object-as-lever exposes additional attributes coexisting with those others. First, the imagination is large-spirited or, at least, has an inherent, incontrovertible tendency toward excess, amplitude, and abundance. Perhaps because it originally comes into being in the midst of acute deprivation, it continues to be, even long after that original "given" has disappeared, a shameless exponent of surfeit. This inherent largesse may manifest itself in a wholly benign form (e.g., the excessive reciprocating action within the single object) or instead in a form (e.g., the numerical

excessiveness of objects) that, though essentially benign, is also problematic, and hence must itself be subjected to the problem-solving strategies of imagining. The source of the problem is also the source of the solution; for, as was observed earlier, the principle of excess as it occurs within a solitary object expresses itself *both* in the degree of the object's revisionary powers (the degree to which any one person is disembodied) *and* in its referential breadth (the number of persons who are the potential recipient of its actions; the object's nonspecificity of reference). Object-surfeit and object-sharability are related phenomena (just as, conversely, the original pain against which objectification works is characterized by both "acute deprivation" and "acute privacy"). Thus any problematic manifestation of surfeit, such as the numerical excessiveness of objects, can be eliminated by the translation of surfeit into sharability, by, that is, the distribution of the objects to a larger number of persons. Even if (as sometimes argued) the moral generosity of a people is a late flower of civilization, it is a flower of civilization: the element of largesse is from the beginning contained in the human action of imagining; it is already embedded in the ontological status of human beings as creators, a status that they seem (by most accounts) to have acquired at the first moment they became human beings.

The object-as-lever also exposes a second attribute of the imagination, its nonimmunity from its own action. The imagination's object is not simply to alter the external world, or to alter the human being in his or her full array of capacities and needs, but also and more specifically, to alter the power of alteration itself, to act on and continually revise the nature of creating. This was earlier apparent in the changing circumstances out of which, or on behalf of which, creating arises: the human being who creates on behalf of the pain in her own body may remake herself to be one who creates on behalf of the pain originating in another's body; so, too, the human beings who create out of pain (whether their own or others') may remake themselves to be those who create out of pleasure (whether their own or others'). This continual self-revision visible in the changing circumstances and ends is equally visible in the means, as was apparent in the transformation of weapon into tool and tool into freestanding artifact. Throughout this succession of displacements, the power of magnification remains; but the first object (weapon) acts on sentience, increasing its aversiveness and decreasing its acuties; the second object (tool) eliminates the problematic character of the first by moving away from a sentient surface altogether, and acting on a nonsentient one; now, finally, the third object (artifact) returns to the sentient surface but acts on it in a way opposite to the way it was acted on by the original object, for the artifact works to diminish the aversiveness of sentience and to amplify its acuties. Multiple artifacts collectively continue this same work: culture is the made-lever back across which human evolution occurs.

The recognition of the nonimmunity, or self-revising character, of the imagination, leads to the recognition of a third attribute that is a specific form of self-

revision: the imagination tends to be self-effacing. Though the human power of creating is relentlessly at work in the multiplying realm of verbal and material artifacts, these multiple objects appear to interact with, sponsor, modify, and substantiate one another, thereby eliminating from attention the overtness and omnipresence of the fictionalizing process, and thereby diminishing the recognizability of the "madness" of the made world, permitting one to enter it as though a natural given. Although all the material and verbal artifacts the imagination creates are created on behalf of the small sentient circle of living matter in the thick midst of which it itself resides, it is not in the end surprising to find that the imagination has no objection to the ease with which those artifacts shed their overt referentiality to sentience and become referential to one another. The imagination is not hostile to this activity because through this very activity it perpetuates its own. Although the capacity of artifacts to disembody us only comes about by their being themselves fictional extensions of sentience and so containing within themselves pictures of our own bodies, in their tendency to give rise to successively sublimated versions of themselves they systematically eliminate from their interior the picture of the human body, make progressively more unrecognizable their resemblance to the site of their own creation. Though it is by their being externalized images of the body that they derive the power to disembody, the recognizability of that resemblance would diminish the very work of disembodiment they exist to bring about (for they would exist as ongoing announcements of the problematic character of the body, a problem whose *intensity* would be everywhere signaled in the colossal *scale* of the culture required to accommodate the problem). Though the objects are projected fictions of the responsibilities, responsiveness, and reciprocating powers of sentience, they characteristically perform this mimesis more successfully if not framed by their fictionality or surrounded by self-conscious issues of reality and unreality.

This closing chapter has attempted to provide—as a postscript to the three-part structure of the mental and materialized action of making—a very partial list of the secondary attributes of creating. Artifacts themselves contain and expose some of those attributes, suggesting that the imagination works to distribute the facts and responsibilities of sentience out onto the external world; that the imagination tends to be ethically uniform on the issue of sentience; that the imagination is bound up with compassion; that the imagination has an inherent tendency toward largesse and excess; that the work of the imagination is not here and there, now on, now off, but massive, continuous, and ongoing, like a watchman patrolling the dikes of culture by day and by night; that the imagination forfeits its own immunity and is self-revising; and that, finally, the imagination is self-effacing, and often completes its work by disguising its own activity.

But the nature of creation, however self-effacing, must also be conceptually available and susceptible to description so that the periodic dislocations within its overall structure of action can be recognized and repaired. The collective

effort to understand making, already very old, will always be ongoing. Like the work of making, it keeps itself going: "The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, / and he who smooths with the hammer / him who strikes the anvil" (Isaiah 41:7). Directed against the isolating aversiveness of pain, mental and material culture assumes the sharability of sentience. It holds within itself the universal salutation of Amnesty's whispered "Corragio!" It passes on the password of Isaiah's ancient artisans—"Take Courage!" (41:6).

NOTES

Notes to Introduction

1. Timothy Ferris, "Crucibles of the Cosmos," *New York Times Magazine*, 14 January 1979.
2. Walter Sullivan, "Masses of Matter Discovered That May Help Bind Universe," *New York Times*, 11 July 1977.
3. Virginia Woolf, "On Being Ill," in *Collected Essays*, Vol. 4 (New York: Harcourt, 1967), 194.

4. The emphasis here on "externality" and "sharability" does not mean that any assumption has been made about the reality of the object; for even an only imaginary object (e.g., ghost, unicorn) is usually experienced by the imaginer as existing outside the boundaries of the body; and though it may be less sharable than a real object, it is of course more sharable (nameable, describable) than objectlessness.

Though we may say, "The ghost she speaks of exists only in her own mind," the very fact that she has gotten us to speak that sentence means that the object, though unreal, is externalizable and sharable: she has made visible to those *outside* her own physical boundaries the therefore no longer wholly private and invisible content of her mind. What is remarkable is not that one person should enable another person to see a ghost (for this seldom happens), but that one person should routinely enable another person to see the inside of his or her consciousness.

5. Ronald Melzack, *The Puzzle of Pain* (New York: Basic, 1973), 41. See also revised edition, co-authored with Patrick D. Wall, *The Challenge of Pain* (New York: Basic, 1983).

This analogy is a striking and provocative one: its fertility is manifest in the very fact that it has led Melzack and others to important insights about attributes of pain other than intensity. Strictly speaking, however, it is almost certainly not the case that intensity is to the felt-experience of pain what light flux is to vision, since pain (however variable and multidimensional) is much closer to being one-dimensional than is vision, and much of its aversive and terrifying character arises from that one-dimensionality. In fact, when we attribute "intensity" to something (which we consistently do with pain and only occasionally do with objects of vision or hearing or taste), we usually in part mean that one dimension has become dominant (e.g., the redness of the red, the loudness of the siren, the pain of the pain). That is, it is in the nature of intensity to be wholly self-isolating, to so obsess attention that it breaks apart from any context against which it might be qualified or measured. By this perceptual process the intense becomes the absolute.

While the preceding paragraph calls into question the literal accuracy of Melzack's analogy, it simultaneously confirms the generous work of that analogy. One might say that if pain had a goal, it would be to be felt and known exclusively in its intensity. Those people working to make recognizable its other attributes are working against its insistent, self-isolating intensity, and therefore against pain itself.

embodiedness to produce only as a final outcome an inequality of embodiedness (i.e., inequality in level of injury), carrying with it the inverse inequality in world-extension (i.e., the less injured is the winner, and thus has the greater "right" to determine the disposition of postwar issues).

85. As was visible in earlier chapters, a discrepancy in world-extension thus conceals the deeper discrepancy that is its inversion: the "having of objects" is the "have not" condition of pain, and the "not having of objects" is the "have" condition of pain. The inversion in the "have/have not" language that occurs when one moves from expressing the inequality in terms of objects to expressing it in terms of the body is not a matter of word-play, for which of the two formulations is used influences the way the inequality itself comes to be perceived and explained.

86. *Capital I*, 433. All subsequent references to Marx's writings are exclusively to *Capital I*; page numbers will be cited in the text.

87. At one point (298-300), the capitalist enters *Capital I* long enough to have a three-page-long hypothetical debate with the author; but the capitalist, having been so introduced, is once again subtracted out, for the passage ends by saying that he would actually never have entered into such a conversation, that even the "function" of defending his own point of view is performed by someone else, in this case, by "professors of political economy" who are paid to describe economic conditions in a way sympathetic to the owners.

88. On the "capitalist" as one who is by definition exempt from the process and thus has a personal life, see 423, 667, 741. On the capitalist's potential complexity of personhood in his personal life in contrast to his vacuity of presence in the process of production, see, for example, 343. Marx is only very infrequently ambiguous on this point, as in "Appendix," 990, where he describes workers and owners as equally engulfed in the process.

89. The capitalist's body enters only in the form of a joke, as in Marx's occasionally repeated play on the idea of the worker "tanning" (or not tanning) the capitalist's hide, or giving him a "hiding." For example: "In tanning . . . [the worker] deals with the skins as his simple object of labour. It is not the capitalist whose skin he tans" (425, and see 280, 1007, and elsewhere). Whether this is a *funny* joke is debatable, but insofar as it is a joke, the joke depends wholly on suddenly subverting the capitalist's state of physical exemption and, for a fleeting moment, imagining him as physically vulnerable to the process or to other persons in the process.

90. Unlike the continually differentiated workers, the capitalist tends to be referred to only by the general rubric, "capitalist." If a particular kind of capitalist is specified, that specification is almost immediately retracted. For example, in Part 8 of *Capital I*, Marx speaks separately of the "agricultural capitalist" and the "industrial capitalist," but then adds in a footnote that the distinction is not a precise one: "In the strict sense the farmer is just as much an industrial capitalist as the manufacturer" (914).

91. Ernest Mandel, "Introduction" to "Appendix: Results of the Immediate Process of Production," 944.

92. Mandel, "Introduction," 944. In summarizing the changes in Marx's manuscript, Mandel cites Marx's 31 July 1865 letter to Engels in which he expresses his hope of making *Capital* a "dialectically articulated artistic whole." Marx also tells Engels, "I cannot make up my mind to send off anything before I have the whole thing before me. Whatever shortcomings they may have, the virtue of my writing is that they are an artistic entity, and that can be achieved only by my method of never having them printed until I have them before me in their entirety" (*Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, Selected Letters: The Personal Correspondence, 1844-77*, ed. Fritz J. Raddatz, trans. Ewald Osers [Boston: Little, Brown, 1980], 112).

93. "Appendix: Results of the Immediate Process of Production," 950.

94. "Appendix," 949.

95. The tool has an important place in Marx's writing. It restores the referent because it mediates between worker and artifact, and thus when the image of the tool is held steadily visible, the original site of human projection is held visible as well. For this reason the tool is often taken as a summarizing sign of Marx's work.

In this connection, it is interesting to notice that a potentially profound change in the "signs" of nationhood has occurred in the twentieth century: for the first time, tools appear again and again on the flags of many countries, increasingly coming to displace weapons as the chosen sign of national

self-identification. The overall occurrence is not itself attributable to Marx: although some countries whose national flags bear an image of the tool explicitly seek to identify themselves with Marx (e.g., U.S.S.R.), others have no such identification (e.g., Austria, India). There exist, of course, many sources and precedents: the banners of medieval guilds often contained very beautiful depictions of tools; later, the banners of some of the city companies of England did also; many of the United States' state flags, adopted primarily in the nineteenth century, included plows, mining tools, axes, scythes, sickles, anvils, and rakes (they also included bows, arrows, guns, and swords, but the tools outnumber the weapons); and so forth.

Despite the existence of many precedents and sources, the twentieth-century willingness to make the tool not simply the sign of a group (e.g., guild), city, or region (state), but the sign of the nation-state itself seems a significant change. Prior to the twentieth century, national flags and coats of arms do not include tools; in fact, it is unusual for them to include any man-made object other than swords, shields, and crowns. Two striking exceptions are the red stocking cap of liberation that occurs on the national flag or coat of arms in some Latin American countries (Cuba, El Salvador, Argentina, Nicaragua) and which had already begun to surface in the nineteenth century, and the Irish harp which, though not officially adopted until 1919, occurred earlier in regiment flags. Since this is the first century in which tools have emerged as a major sign of national identification, it is impossible to assess whether that appearance represents a change of very little, or instead, very great significance. Although persons living in the third century A.D. might notice the increasingly frequent appearance of the cross, it would not have been possible for them to guess the scale of the cumulative weight the sign was then in the midst of acquiring.

National flags that have, during at least *some period within* the twentieth century, depicted tools include the following. The hammer of industry and the sickle of farming was adopted by the U.S.S.R. in 1923: it occurs not only on its national flag but also on the flag of each of its fifteen constituent republics such as Georgian S.S.R. and Armenian S.S.R.; these two tools, or some variant of them, occur on the flags of the autonomous republics (the mattock and horsewhip of Eastern Mongolia, the sickle and rake of Tuva, the anchor and pick of the Far Eastern Republic). A hammer and a sickle are held by the eagle of the Austrian national flag. A hammer and a pair of dividers appear on the national flag of the East German Democratic Republic. A spinning wheel (which is at the same time a *charka*) is on the national flag of India. There are a hammer and a hoe on the national flag of the People's Republic of the Congo. There is a hoe on the flag of Upper Volta. A hammer and hoe appear on the national flag of Costa Rica. An armillary sphere appears on the flag of Portugal. Countries whose state arms (but not necessarily their flag) have at some point depicted tools include Liberia, Zambia, Tanzania, Namibia, Gambia, New Zealand, Trinidad, Honduras, and Panama. Countries whose state arms have included the word "work" or "labor" include the Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Dahomey, Zaire, Upper Volta, the People's Republic of the Congo, and Barbados.

In addition to hand tools, flags sometimes include machine tools. The unity of agriculture and industrial work, for example, can be represented by hammer and sickle, or instead by a cogwheel and a sheaf of grain. A cogwheel appears on the national flag of Burma, of Mongolia, and of Bulgaria. It again appears in the state arms of the People's Republic of China, of Botswana, of Poland, of North Vietnam, and of Italy. Larger machine tools, such as a power station, have occurred on either the flag or the arms of Zambia, Romania, and North Korea. (Catalogues of flags consulted include Whitney Smith, *Flags: Through the Ages and Across the World* [Maidenhead, England: McGraw-Hill, 1975]; A. Guy Hope and Janet Hope, *Symbols of the Nations* [Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1973]; and Terence Wise, *Military Flags of the World* [New York: Arco, 1978]).

Notes to Chapter 5:

The Interior Structure of the Artifact

1. On the meaning and use of this word, see Chapter 1, and below, p. 293-96.
2. Judgments about persons that are made on the basis of skin color are atavistic, since such

judgments cannot be made without mentally depriving people of their clothing, divesting them of the habit of self-recreation, and reconceiving of them as beings prior to culture.

3. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), 41, 42.

4. Philip Fisher, noting the way words used to designate parts of the human body (e.g., hand, lips) are also used to designate parts of objects (e.g., a cup's handle and lip), writes, "Imagine that a cultural taboo existed such that no word for a part of the body could also apply to things. Jealous and timid, the human race could fear a contamination from the flow of resemblances and linkages between man and things. That we in fact do the opposite makes possible both the flooding of the world of matter with human meanings and the subsequent recovery of the human image from that world" ("The Recovery of the Body," *Humanities in Society* 1 [Spring 1978], 140).

5. Jonathan Miller, *The Body in Question* (New York: Random, 1978), 208.

6. Jerémy Bernstein, "Calculators: Self-Replications," in *Experiencing Science* (New York: Dutton, 1980), 237, 8.

7. John Fitch, *The Autobiography*, ed. Frank D. Prager (Philadelphia, 1976), 113, cited in Brooke Hindle, *Emulation and Invention* (1981; rpt—New York: Norton, 1983), 28.

8. Marx's attribution of "aliveness" to inanimate objects occurs in two forms, either as a straightforward attribution (see above, Chapter 4), or instead in the form of a complaint that a given object is characterized by "indifference" or "obliviousness" (to complain that a problematic or defective object is indifferent is to imply that a successful object would not be characterized by such unawareness).

9. Barry M. Blechman, Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1978), 2.

10. The word "literally" here refers to the plane of literal and overt events within the narrative.

11. See Chapter 1, 52f. and 62n., and Chapter 3, passim.

12. Though this theme surfaces in complex ways in many of Bergman's films, it is most simply and starkly presented in his late film, *Fanny and Alexander* (1983).

13. Sheila Cassidy, "The Ordeal of Sheila Cassidy," *The Observer* [London], 26 August 1977.

14. These two objects are cited in medical and torture reports (e.g., "Transcript of the Torturers' Trial," 42) read at the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, London, 1977.

15. Miguel Angel Asturias, *Strong Wind*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Dell-Laurel, 1975), 196, and see 7, 8, 9, 22 for similar use of objects.

16. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. Norman Page, introd. J. Hillis Miller (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 690, and *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. and introd. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 379. I would like to thank Deidre Murphy for bringing the Dickens examples to my attention.

17. Plato, *Laws*, trans. A. E. Taylor, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press, 1961), 1432.

18. Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Common Law*, ed. Mark DeWolfe Howe (Boston: Little, Brown, 1881, 1963), 23.

19. Holmes, 25.

20. Holmes, 33.

21. Chief Justice Marshall, as cited by Judge Story (*Malek Adhel*, 2 How. 210), as cited by Holmes, 27.

22. Holmes, 13.

23. The transcripts of cases alluded to in the discussion that follows, as well as other unpublished trial materials (e.g., depositions, closing arguments where not included in the transcript), were made available to me in 1979 through the generous research facilities of two Philadelphia law firms: La Brum and Doak; and Beasley, Hewson, Casey, Erbstein, and Thistle.

Because the subject of this discussion is "object failure," the analysis will draw primarily on cases in which, according to the jury's verdict, the object *did* fail—that is, cases in which the object (or the defendant company) was responsible for the bodily hurt suffered by the plaintiff. However, the three structural elements described here are not dependent on or limited to the point of view of the plaintiff, and need only be inverted to be applicable to a case in which the jury has ruled for

the defendant. For example, the unifying function of "the path of the accident" would be equally characteristic of a trial that had as an outcome a verdict for the defendant, except that (according to the jury) the trial will have demonstrated that such a path did not exist, that the plaintiff and the object never converged on such a path (that the plaintiff was not hurt, or if hurt, was not hurt by the object).

24. Transcript of Proceedings, Janice, Salvatore, and Theresa Foresta v. Philadelphia Gas Works, Roper Corp., Roper Sales, Mars Wholesale, and Roberts Brass, No. 15038-10 (Pa. C.P., Nov. term 1974).

25. It might at first seem that a play and a trial would be differentiated by the fictional content of the first and the historical content of the second. But a play may, of course, have an actual historical action for its subject, just as, conversely, the lawyers in a trial may disagree about the degree to which the subject matter in front of them is fictional or historical. As will be clarified below, however, the play and trial *are*, in the end, distinguished by their respective "fictionality" and "reality," but this distinction applies to the audience's (or jury's) ability to act on the subject matter rather than to the subject matter itself.

26. In very exceptional instances, a work of literature may be intended to bring about actual social action, or may do so whether or not such action was intended (Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is perhaps the most frequently cited example of this very small category). Further, it would probably be accurate to say that the more a literary work has, or is intended to have, this outcome, the more closely it will approximate a trial: thus, for example, Bertolt Brecht, who wanted his plays to have concrete social effects, repeatedly described them as trials, their themes as court pleas, and their audiences as juries.

27. If, of course, the case is one in which there is a question about whether the plaintiff actually suffered any hurt, then the defense will in its closing argument summarize these doubts rather than (as in the kind of case under discussion) accepting the indisputable physical damage as a given and arguing that it is irreversible. Here, the defense may suggest that not only would such juror action *not* undo the accident, but it might also bring harm to the defendant. Because the closing tends to discredit the juror's power to act on the accident itself, it works to credit and invite audience passivity and inaction.

28. Harry Lipsig, quoted by Alan Richman, "For the Afflicted, a Champion in Court," *New York Times*, 25 April 1979.

In *Foresta v. PGW*, Paul R. Anapol opened his closing argument for the plaintiff by comparing the jury's exceptional power to bring in a verdict with Congress's power to make war and peace (Transcript, Vol. 11, pp. 69–72), and throughout the closing he repeatedly returned to the subject of their authoritative capacity to act, as, for example, at the moment when he began to speak specifically about the physical suffering of the plaintiffs (p. 151f.).

This same approach is visible in the closing arguments of Jim Beasley, one of Philadelphia's leading plaintiff lawyers. Throughout his closing for the plaintiff in *Flores v. Lubbock Manufacturing Company* (a case presenting an accident in which the plaintiff had suffered unthinkable kinds of hurt), he repeatedly called on the words of figures like Oliver Wendell Holmes and Theodore Roosevelt to remind the jurors that their present role was perhaps the most important one they would be assigned in their lifetime. Toward the end of the closing, this power of action was increasingly presented in the language of counterfactual reversal: they were invited to transform the catastrophe into "a verdict which is noble" (Transcript of Closing, pp. 13, 15); the final sentences credit the jurors with almost cosmic powers of reversal—"Jimmy and with him, his family, in part can be delivered from this pit of bottomless affliction by your verdict. His sun has been darkened, his moon does not give light, and his star has fallen from the heavens . . . Now let your verdict come with much power and glory to give compensation for his unbearable losses" (21).

29. The plaintiff's lawyer can specify exact figures for medical costs, unemployment, and so forth, but cannot specify a figure, nor even a precise procedure for arriving at a figure, for the physical suffering (nor can the judge; this is left exclusively to the discretion and authority of the jurors). The plaintiff's lawyer will, however, address the subject of monetary compensation for pain. At one time it was permissible for the lawyer to say to the jurors, "How much would you pay *not* to have this happen to you; how much would you pay *not* to be subject to this degree and duration

of pain?" Though no longer allowed in most states, this specific approach is cited here because it is such an overt articulation of the phenomenon of counterfactual reversal toward which the overall efforts of the plaintiff's lawyer are directed: the sentences cited explicitly place the jurors in a temporal position prior to the event and ask them to arrive at a figure that will *negate* the occurrence of the accident (as though the density of the object world acts as a buffer between the body and external agents of pain). This counterfactual reversal of the pain is, of course, present, even when the cited formulation is disallowed. Sometimes in their difficult task of attempting to translate degree and duration of suffering into a monetary form, the jurors will, on their own initiative, think through the translation in terms of a specific object that will enhance the life of the person (for example, the cost of a college education). Thus, world-extension is explicitly poised against the annihilation of world content that earlier occurred in the physical pain. The terms used for the financial award—"damages" and "recovery"—also suggest mimetic reversal.

30. In some cases, both these judgments are made together at the close of the trial; in other cases, the trial is subdivided into two parts, one on the question of liability (after which the jurors arrive at a verdict), then followed by a second part on the monetary question (after which the jurors arrive at a decision about the appropriate size of the award).

In the first arrangement, where the trial is unitary, there is an inconsistency built into the structure of the defense argument: the defense lawyer must argue, "This object (or its maker) was not responsible, and if it was responsible, the award should be as follows," or "We're not liable, but if liable, only for a small amount." Sometimes the judge's charge will take note of this inconsistency: for example, the judge in *Jenkins v. Pennsylvania Railroad* cautions, "Let me say, ladies and gentlemen, prematurely, that because I talk now about damages, you should gain no implication from that that it is my will that you should bring in a verdict for the plaintiff" (Transcript of Proceedings at 318, sec. 171a; No. 3774 [Pa. C. P., Sept. term 1964]; *rev'd*, 220 Pa. Super. 455, 289 A.2d 166 [1972]). The plaintiff lawyer, in contrast, has a structurally consistent argument: "This object was responsible and the award should be as follows." The division of a trial into two distinct parts appears to eliminate the difficult structural inconsistency in the defense argument, since he or she need only move to the second position once the first position has already been lost, and thus the first position is not prematurely undercut by the necessity of simultaneously introducing the second.

31. Because of the consistent and overwhelmingly "self-evident" evidence of the hurt suffered by the plaintiffs, none of the defense lawyers openly disputed the fact or even the degree of hurt. But at one point the PGW attorney introduced a stove expert to testify against one of the co-defendants (not against the plaintiff). This witness had not earlier been present in court and, in making assessments about the stove, spoke somewhat cavalierly, or at least ignorantly, about the degree of injury. Interrupting the proceedings, the judge, as though struck, turned to the witness, and said with the quiet incredulity of one who is deeply offended, "Didn't you know, didn't you know, that 75 percent of this little girl's body was burned?" (It would later be explained that PGW had shown the witness photographs taken long after the healing process was underway and allowed him to misperceive them as pictures taken immediately after the explosion). Ordinarily, a witness's statements of "fact" are called into question or refuted by the attorney on cross-examination, or by the attorney's introduction and questioning of a different witness. Thus this occasion of judicial intervention was a riveting moment in the trial, and one later referred to in the closing argument for the plaintiff (Transcript, Vol. 11, 120, 121), and again referred to by the attorney for Mars (one of the co-defendants) in their closing against PGW (Vol. 12, 72). The judge had, in this moment, not only announced that the witness was in error but, in effect, announced that the freedom and fluidity of interpretation appropriate to so many courtroom subjects was, in some simple and absolute way, deeply inappropriate to this one.

This contrast between the fluidity of verbal constructs and the nonfluidity of certain bodily facts has also been evident in the nonlegal contexts encountered in earlier chapters (see above, 2, p. 127f., 133f.; and 4, 192, 268f.).

32. According to defense attorney Dan Ryan, many lawyers feel that in section 402A of *Restatement of Torts*, the American Law Institute acted to extend greatly (rather than merely to summarize) object expectation in the United States; though the *Restatement* does not carry the force

of law, it has worked to revolutionize the law in areas such as 402A, shifting the legal trend from the side of the property owner to the side of the consumer (Conversation, LaBrum and Doak; Philadelphia, July 1979).

33. Similarly, the issue of smellability was an important issue in *Hennigan v. Atlantic Refining Co.* (Transcript of Proceedings at 1230f., 1240, 1292f., 2477, and passim, 282 F. Supp. 667 [E.D. Pa. Nov. 1967]; *aff'd*, 400 F.2d 857 [Dec. 1968]), just as "visibility" was an issue in *Murphy v. Penn Fruit* (Transcript of Proceedings at Vol. 2, 484 and passim, No. 4172 [Pa. C.P., Apr. term 1973]; *aff'd*, 274 Pa. Super. 427, 418 A2d 480 [1980]).

34. Transcript of Proceedings at Vol. 2, 444-531, *Murray v. Beloit Power Systems*, 79 F.R.D. 590 (D.V.I. 1978).

35. The place of blame and its psychological counterpart, guilt, is difficult to formulate. The judge in such a case will often point out to the jury that there is no question of criminal guilt at issue; but (as defense lawyers have sometimes noted), a verdict against the defendant may carry with it a form of social stigma. In some cases there are, in addition to compensatory damages, punitive damages. In very exceptional circumstances criminal charges may be brought: by the middle of 1979, seventy-six lawsuits had been filed against Ford in connection with its Pinto; seventy-five of them were civil suits; the seventy-sixth was a criminal case including three counts of homicide (Reginald Stuart, "Year-Old Recall of Ford's Pinto Continues to Stir Deep Controversy," *Sunday New York Times*, 10 June 1979).

36. Melvin M. Belli cites the figure of ninety-eight percent in "Ready for the Plaintiff?" (1956; rpt.—New York: Popular Library, 1965), 66.

37. See, for example, *Embs v. Pepsi-Cola Bottling*, 528, S.W.2d 703, 706 (Ky. Ct. App. 1975).

38. Harold J. Berman, "American and Soviet Perspectives on Human Rights," Congress of the International Political Science Association, Moscow, 16 August 1979, published in *Worldview*, November 1979, 20.

39. Berman, 16.

40. An analysis of an extreme historical moment of the failure of reciprocity is given in Chapter 4, iv; and an analysis of a more extreme instance in which persons are deprived of autonomy over the phenomenon of projection is given in Chapters 1 and 2, v.

The failure at either site is a deconstruction of the artifact (whether the made thing is a state or any other political or nonpolitical construct); and thus the emphasis here is on the importance of protecting both sites (as appears to be the growing tendency in the two countries cited). This, however, is not to say that if one could protect *only* one site or the other, one or the other would be equally good; for, as suggested earlier, the site of projection has a primacy. The privileging of this site does not depend on one's allegiance to the concept of democracy, since a democracy is an expression of that primacy rather than the vehicle by which the concept comes into being (see above, Chapter 2, section v). In ordinary circumstances, however, the two so entail one another that if one of the two actions is intact, the other will also be (though perhaps to a lesser degree) intact. If, for example, one enjoys the reciprocating benefits of a fiction, one will tend to enter willingly into creating it and sustaining it; if one is deprived of its reciprocating benefits, one will choose not to enter into it and may actively rebel against it.

41. See 3, 173-76; and 4, 213-21, and passim.

42. I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, illus. J. C. Rose, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 262.

43. Interviews with Craftsmen, *On the Road*, narr. Charles Kuralt, prod. Ross Bensley (New York: C.B.S. News, 1983), C.B.S. broadcast, 26 June 1983.

44. Thus, if reciprocity is received in a symbolic form (e.g., money) rather than in direct access to the completed object, it will be difficult to determine the appropriate amount of "compensation," for she should not be paid simply for the action of coatmaking, nor for the coat, but for the excessive reciprocating power of the coat (the thing she has actually made).

She might only be paid for the difficulty of the action of coatmaking (but this would be the same as if she had each day repeated the warming dance of labor without having ever made an object); she might be paid for the number of days she devoted to making the coat (but the action of the coat lasts not for days but for eighteen months); she might be paid an amount that would accommodate

her own needs, rather than those of both herself and her children (but the coat's referential powers extend to more than one person, as is evident in its entry into the marketplace texture of exchange). If, in summary, she were paid an amount only *the equivalent* of the aversiveness she experienced, this would be the same as her never having engaged in an act of "making" at all, since an act of making, by definition, entails a nonequivalency that benefits the maker.

45. See above, Chapter 4, section iii.

46. Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, ed. and introd. Angus Ross (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 128.

47. Letter "To Giambattista Beccaria," 13 July 1762, in L. Jesse Lemisch, ed., *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings*, Farrand text (New York: Signet, 1961), 248.

48. Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, trans. Alan Tyson, ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1964).

49. For example, the mathematics of imaginary numbers assisted the discovery and work with electricity, just as DNA analysis has drawn on, among other things, Fourier mathematics and the linguistic analysis of the syntactical features of language (Horace Freeland Judson, *The Eighth Day of Creation: The Makers of the Revolution in Biology* [New York: Simon-Touchstone, 1980], 537f.); just as the descriptive model of the repressor mechanism in genes has drawn on the structural model of the computer (Philip J. Hilts, "On Divinity Avenue: Mark Ptashne and the Revolution in Biology," *Scientific Temperaments: Three Lives in Contemporary Science* [New York: Simon, 1982], 188).

50. Stephen Jay Gould, "A Biological Homage to Mickey Mouse," in *The Panda's Thumb: More Reflections in Natural History* (New York: Norton, 1982), 95-107.

51. Arthur I. Miller, "Visualization Lost and Regained: The Genesis of the Quantum Theory in the Period 1913-27," in Judith Wechsler, ed., *On Aesthetics in Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979), 73-105.

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