“Reality,” writes Lyotard, “succumbs to this reversal: It was the given described by the phrase, it became the archive from which are drawn documents or examples that validate the description.” It is, then, this reversal that constitutes the regime of the instrumental archive and its evidential effects—a regime that, as we have seen, implicates not only a certain practice of photography but also a practice of history. It is this regime that gives this practice of photography and this practice of history their disciplinary authority to call on the “mute testimony” of the “document.” The regime is, indeed, the condition of this testimony, insofar as it governs the court and works to exclude what cannot be spoken within its rules of knowledge and to repress the heterogeneity of phrase regimens by the imposition of a definitive and final discursive frame.

In this sense, the instrumental regime draws a defining line around the “document,” determining what is interior to it and what is exterior, what is internal evidence and what is background, what is text and what is context, what is structure and what is history. For the instrumental archive, the weighting of this ratio may be precisely fixed, but drawing the line, of course, opens endless opportunities for the to-and-fro of debate, according to whether, in marking the division, the critical edge is given to the interior or to the exterior, to what is inherent or to what is environment. Yet in the interminable advances and retreats of this methodological debate—as familiar in art history as in social science—
both sides betray a marked ambivalence and a mutual dependency, since, as we saw, structural analysis always leaves history waiting in another place, while social histories flee the interior only to take their stand elsewhere on the internal guarantees of a document.

A great deal, then, is left hanging on the frame, as a technology of discipline and a technology of history. Let us therefore try to meet it squarely.

**The Image**

Where to begin? Perhaps where a certain kind of art history has always asked us to begin: with the work itself— with the image—in this case an image of two crowds, in which I shall try to clear a space to make something visible. Or perhaps I shall only be making visible that space itself, a space that is already there. The image is John Baldessari’s: a 4 foot × 2½ foot gelatin silver print made in 1984 and first published on the cover of the fall 1985 issue of *Journal,* in the context of a “Special Feature” edited by Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe and John Johnston under the title *Multiplicity, Proliferation, Reconvention.* 2 Johnston you may know as a translator of Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault. Gilbert-Rolfe is a painter and critical theorist who, at the time, was teaching at the California Institute of the Arts, where Baldessari had also been on the faculty since 1970.

The focus of concern in Gilbert-Rolfe’s and Johnston’s “Special Feature” is that play of displacement which is at work within all languages and institutional structures, continually undoing the constraints they impose against proliferation and multiplicity, displacing the bounded space of sign and system into a network of heterogeneous connections and disseminating references. We may note in passing that Gilbert-Rolfe and Johnston make a point of listing Baldessari’s cover work in their table of contents and remark on it in their editorial essay, in relation to what they describe as that “multiplicity which occurs through subtraction, or more exactly, . . . the role of subtraction in the production of multiplicity.” 3 They write,

The title of the work of John Baldessari’s [sic] reproduced here is *Two Crowds with Shape of Reason Missing* (1985), which in a sense [so they tell
us] says it all. Difference here is heightened by what is announced as a reduction of difference, the withdrawal of identity from each crowd.  

Clearly, we are engaging a complex theoretical apparatus and perhaps a host of associations has already begun to crowd Baldessari’s image. But, for the moment, let me draw a line around this lucid thesis that the editors insert into the heart of Baldessari’s picture and add only

that the work in fact appears twice in the *Journal* feature: first on the cover, as I have said, and then, somewhat strangely, as a “detail” placed like an illustration on the third page of an essay by Michel Feher titled “Mass, Crowd, and Pack.” On this page, Feher discusses Freud’s concept of narcissism and its importance to the theory of the primal horde and that horde’s ambivalent relation to its dominant leader. Only overleaf, not on page 47 but on page 48, does Feher go on to contrast Freud’s account with what he calls “Elias Canetti’s masterpiece,” *Crowds and Power*, a book Baldessari is also reported to have been reading prior to 1986, perhaps as early as 1984, the year in which he made the first version of the work that the editors of “Multiplicity, Proliferation, Reconvension” have cropped and pasted into Feher’s text.

So Feher and Canetti can be added to the crowd. And we might go further, if we recognized the lower half of Baldessari’s image as an altered version of a well-known news photograph of the proclamation of war in Berlin, on August 1, 1914. We might note that, in his chapter “The Crowd in History,” Canetti, too, represents this moment:

On the outbreak of the First World War the whole German people became one open crowd. The enthusiasm of those days has often been described. Many people in other countries had been counting on the internationalism of the Social Democrats and were astounded at their failure to act. They forgot that the Social Democrats, too, bore within them this forest-army symbol of their nation; that they themselves had belonged to the closed crowd of the army and that, whilst in it, they had been under the command and influence of a highly disciplined and immensely effective crowd crystal, the Junker and officer caste. Their membership of a political party carried very little weight in comparison with this.

But those first August days of 1914 were also the days in which National Socialism was begotten. Hitler himself is our authority for this. He later described how, at the outbreak of war, he fell on his knees and thanked God. It was his decisive experience, the one moment at which he himself honestly became part of a crowd. He never forgot it and his whole subsequent career was devoted to the re-creation of this moment, but *from outside*. Germany was to be again as it was then, conscious of its military striking power and exulting and united in it.
We might immediately want to ring the terms “open crowd,” “closed crowd,” and “crowd crystal”: terms that figure importantly in Canetti’s elaborate typology and collective psychology of crowd formations, terms that may, in turn, be suggestive for Baldessari’s choice of images.8 The “closed crowd,” for Canetti, like the ceremonial congregation in the top half of Baldessari’s picture, establishes itself by accepting its limitations, renouncing growth, and putting its stress on permanence and stability.9 But “the open crowd”—like the crowd in Berlin, metonym for “the whole German people”—is what Canetti calls “the true crowd, the crowd abandoning itself freely to its natural urge for growth.”10 It is a crowd that wants to grow, it wants density, and it wants direction; its constant fear of disintegration means that “it will accept any goal” and will continue to exist “so long as it has an unattained goal.”11 Within such formations, “crowd crystals” are “the small, rigid groups of men, strictly delimited and of great constancy, which serve to precipitate crowds.”12 The uniformed soldiers visible in each frame of Baldessari’s image exemplify this type of grouping, which is, Canetti tells us, “all limits”:

everyone belonging to it constitutes part of its boundary, whereas the closed crowd has its boundary imposed on it from outside, if only by the shape and size of the building where it meets.13

There is clearly space for speculation here, and Baldessari himself was to return to the same ground in the following year, extending his thoughts to a further five images, titled Crowds with Shape of Reason Missing, which he published in 1986, again as a contribution to a theoretical anthology: the first issue of Zone, edited by Michel Feher and Sanford Kwinter and devoted to the city.14 I could go on; we are not at the end of it. Even so, let me cut off this discussion here so that we can find our way back along the route from where I began, with an image—“Two Crowds (with Shape of Reason Missing)” (with or without parentheses)—cutting it out and pasting it in place, opening in its interior the outline of an interpretation, probing its edges, even where they bleed, and giving it a frame, with all that hangs on it: the name of an artist, a title, a date, a location, a provenance of sorts, sources and influences, lines of derivation and anticipation, a whole personal history in the future anterior, as
Althusser would have said. All familiar enough: habits of art history. But what this might make us think is that, if such framing marks the beginning, then it began before I started to speak and was in place or, better perhaps, described a place in which the work might find itself and be found. And if such a frame was always already there in advance, though with the shape of its reason missing, then what is ruled out is that this chapter had a proper beginning, an institution proper to itself. Let me draw a line and try to begin again.

The Frame

The crowds are everywhere, or so it seems. Filling every corner, or all but one, they press forward in rapt attention, concentrating their gaze, held back in each case only by two lines of soldiers in full ritual dress. Held back, that is, from the whiteness of a void in which each crowd’s desire is projected but its reason is repressed. Now an oblique line, now an ellipse, this void is, at once, a space the crowd creates and a space on which it converges, a space to which the crowd gives meaning and a space that is its reason for being.

Even Baldessari’s knife, in paring away a layer of truth in the image and cutting the sutures that seem to stitch the viewer in, does no more
than formalize what is already there in the source pictures as a white space of meaning—a circular clearing, an aisle—where the crowd closes on or opens to the spacing of a performance. In one place, the crowd must accommodate to the divisions and limits of a preexistent architectural script. In the other, we seem to see the ancient shape of pure spontaneity, bound by no outer limit, with a vortex at its center across which, as in an arena, the crowd is exhibited to itself in an intensifying spiral of self-identification. And if we are troubled by images of a crowd that has lost its reason, we can, on the other hand, see that the crowd supplies its own logic and its own architecture, more than a backdrop to history to set off the significant players, more than a context lacking focus, more than disorder wanting sense. If the crowd is called forth by the event, it also constitutes a necessary stage and indispensable setting as, in more or less violent passivity, it asserts its role of spectator as the condition of a spectacular event that, in Baldessari’s image, we can as yet only imagine: a performance of meaning in which some other may pronounce “I do,” perhaps, or “I declare.”

“I do” and “I declare”: the pronouncements of marriage and war. We are in the classic space of the performative, here, in which, according to John Austin, utterance and context saturate each other as meaning is enacted to produce an effect that cannot be said to have existed before or outside language. To speak is to act, but only here, in this well-understood social setting, before the appropriate witnesses.
Writing on Austin’s lectures on *How to Do Things with Words*, Jacques Derrida, however, rejects Austin’s notion of the performative as a singular and original event of meaning in which the conscious intention of the speaker is unambiguously realized within the framework of a “total context.” For Derrida, the conventionality that determines meaning extends not just to the circumstance of the statement but also to what he calls “a certain intrinsic conventionality of that which constitutes the locution itself, that is, everything that might be quickly summarized under the problematic heading of the ‘arbitrariness of the sign.’” This “extends, aggravates, and radicalizes the difficulty,” since it compels recognition that “Ritual is not an eventuality but, as iterability, is a structural characteristic of every mark.” The opposition between singular, univocal statement-events and statements that do not have the same specific context dependence is not, therefore, to the point. The “performative,” too, is a coded or “iterable” inscription, of which intention, consciousness, presence, and meaning are not preconditions but can only be analyzed as effects.

It follows that what must also be displaced is the concept of or quest for an “exhaustively determinable” context of meaning: a context for which a conscious intention must provide the determining focus. Yet Derrida’s point is not that the inscription Austin calls “performative” is valid outside its context but “on the contrary that there are only contexts without any centre of absolute anchoring.” It is not that there is no relative specificity of the effects of consciousness, of speech, of presence, and of the performative: “It is simply that these effects do not exclude what is generally opposed to them term by term, but on the contrary presuppose it in dissymmetrical fashion, as the general space of their possibility.” There is no primal scene or last instance of meaning, only spacing and temporizing—a play of *différance*—that erodes all closures and opens an abyss in the midst of the performative act, deconstructing the presence of event and context.

For Foucault, too, the discursive event—though event nonetheless—is neither discrete nor dissolved into the formless unity of contextualization, the intentionality of a subject, or some great external causal process. Instead, it is traced on what Foucault calls “those diverse converging, and sometimes divergent, but never autonomous series that
enable us to circumscribe the ‘locus’ of an event, the limits to its fluidity and the conditions of its emergence.”

The event is not what fits a hole in a context, but neither does it carry its reason in itself. The fundamental notions to be brought to the analysis of the discursive event are no longer those of consciousness and continuity, but neither are they those of sign and structure. Foucault’s conception of discourse is not, therefore, to be confused with the structuralist model of language as an available resource with the potential to generate all possible, and no impossible, statements. All possible statements do not occur, while others continue to be reinscribed and to furnish criteria for policy and individual conduct, regardless of assessments of their value and use. It is this rarefaction of discursive events that interests Foucault: their “rules of appearance” and “conditions of appropriation and operation,” which immediately raise the question of power and focus attention on the strategic role of discursive systems, on the domains of objects and forms of knowledge they make possible, and on the administrative effects they engender.

There is, then, at least this much in common with Austin’s performatives: that discourse for Foucault is not a purely linguistic phenomenon, for the elements of a discursive system may not be in words at all. (Confessional rituals, for example—whether in the church or in the analyst’s office—involves not just certain kinds of speaking and hearing but also specially designed spaces, particular techniques and bodily postures, and special kinds of priestly or psychoanalytical training. And we can readily see how this could be extended to the rituals of connoisseurship or art historical judgment, as to other scenes where it is the attentiveness of the eye, rather than that of the ear, that is in play.) It is not, then, a matter of the history of ideas. The field of discourse is a field of material acts. “Violent, discontinuous, querulous, disordered even and perilous,” as Foucault describes it; it is a field that takes shape under a set of incitements and constraints that operate to control, select, organize, and redistribute the production of discourse and “to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality.”

In “The Discourse on Language,” Foucault’s inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, such incitements and constraints are divided into the categories of “exterior” and “internal” rules: on the one hand, rules
of exclusion, prohibition, division, and rejection, governing the hazards of the appearance of discourse; on the other hand, rules of identity, typology, origin, and disciplinary formation, and rules of employment and subjection, distributing speakers among discourses and discourses to subjects. Foucault’s stress on “exteriority” and “external conditions of existence” as fundamental principles of the genealogy of discursive formations may seem problematic here, reiterating a division of internal and external that he rejects in the traditional history of ideas. In effect, however, this stress functions as a rhetorical counter to notions of “signification” as the determinant effect of a deep and exhaustive structure, and it takes Foucault into a territory that he now defies his critics to call “structuralism.”

What is crucial in this new territory is the emerging theme that the production of discourse is inseparable from the action and generation of power effects. And already, at the time of his lecture “The Discourse on Language,” before the writing of Discipline and Punish, Foucault’s conception of this relation of power and sense is not focused only on negation—on cutting out, rarefaction, and the prohibition of certain objects, practices, and performances of discourse. Equally, it seeks to follow the ways in which the operations of power on and in discourse are productive: productive of reason and truth; productive of textual hierarchies, unifying principles, and orders of discourse; productive of subjects and fellowships of discourse. Not only is the formation of a field of sense an effective formation of control, but control is also effective as a formation of sense. It is a violence that is done to us and that we do to things. But it is a field of violence that takes effect as an incessant, scattered, and discontinuous production of discourse that would evade “its character as an event” or series of “events” that always “have their place.”

Power and place: the terms of analysis of discourse have begun to pass from the rules of formation of statements, what governs them and the ways they govern each other, to a politics of sense, to an analysis of the “discursive régime,” which can no longer be confused with a formal paradigm and for which the appropriate model is not the linguistic system but war and battle: “relations of power, not relations of meaning.” As in Derrida’s analysis of the frame or parergon, it no longer has any meaning, therefore, to ask whether the structures Foucault enumerates
are “inside” or “outside”: They institute discourse, and their location eludes both an internalizing formalism and a sociologism of the external.

The convergence of views between Derrida and Foucault is striking here, despite the two philosophers’ well-documented disagreements.38 Inside and outside, event and context, work and setting, the structural and the empirical: These coupled terms—familiar to us as those that fix the polarities of an interminable methodological debate in art history—are radically displaced by Foucault’s conceptualization of the discursive event and the discursive field. Yet the effects of these dualisms persist, with all that depends from the separations they inscribe, between the pure interiority of form and the determinant exteriority of context and “social” history. To understand what supports this seemingly unsurmountable separation, we must look to the apparatus that keeps it so squarely in place:

to the action of what Derrida calls the frame, which, one can argue, is precisely an apparatus—a dispositif—in the fullest sense of Foucault’s term.\textsuperscript{39}

It is the frame, Derrida argues, that “gives rise to the work,”\textsuperscript{40} in that it produces the distinction between the internal and proper sense and the circumstances, which organizes all Western philosophical discourse on art and meaning.\textsuperscript{41} Yet the frame also troubles the very division it brings into existence. Like the supplement, the frame is an adjunct that is neither inherent nor dispensable. Marking a limit between the intrinsic and the extrinsic, it is neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below. Its thickness and depth separate it both from the integral inside of the so-called work itself and from the outside, from the wall or the space in which the work is sited, then, “step by step, from the whole field of historical, economic, political inscription in which the drive to signature is produced.”\textsuperscript{42} The frame thus stands out against the two grounds that it constitutes—the work and the setting—and yet, with respect to each of these, it always dissolves into the other.\textsuperscript{43} This oscillation marks its presence and effaces its effect. The frame is all show, and yet it escapes visibility, like the labia that, to the in\textsuperscript{192}bibulating eye Freud gives the little boy, already present the desolate spectacle of “nothing” to be seen, enframing the sight of pure difference.\textsuperscript{44} The frame, too, is seen and not seen, disavowed, already at work in fixing the look and the givenness of difference, yet always denied or multiplied to infinity.

Across this denial, however, the work of the frame—this supposed adjunct to the work itself—returns. As Derrida insists:

That which puts in place—the instances of the frame, the title, the signature, the legend, etc.—does not stop disturbing the internal order of discourse on painting, its works, its commerce, its evaluations, its surplus-values, its speculation, its law, and its hierarchies.\textsuperscript{45}

The instability of difference always betrays itself. What is put at issue is the structure of the institution itself, and

No “theory,” no “practice,” no “theoretical practice” can intervene effectively in this field if it does not weigh up and bear on the frame, which is the decisive structure of what is at stake, at the invisible limit to (between)
the interiority of meaning (put under shelter by the whole hermeneuticist, semioticist, phenomenologicalist, and formalist tradition) and (to) all the empiricisms of the extrinsic which, incapable of either seeing or reading, miss the question completely.46

Note the terms here: “formalist tradition” and “empiricisms of the extrinsic.” Once more, the familiar polarities and unsettleable differences of art history are drawn out and reinscribed within the institution on which they hang. Once more, we find ourselves at a cutoff point, in a bounded space, up against the frame.

The Apparatus

Like the populous settings engraved by Antonio Fantuzzi that exemplify the frame in Derrida’s text, the crowd in Baldessari’s image is both present and absent. Describing a void, it belongs to a whole surrounding apparatus of presentation. Yet, in opening that space as a space of discourse, it is traced on the very constitution of what is presented as the event of meaning itself. This elusive limit between event and setting is scored out here by the cut of a knife that pointedly inverts the relation of image and mount. We see, however, that Baldessari has cut into his images more than once. The cut in each interior visibly frames a void that puts before us the question of the intrinsic and the extrinsic, event and setting, meaning and context. But Baldessari has also made a cut a second time, in a way that is obvious yet escapes us, cropping out unwanted meanings and spatial cues to give each print the edge of authority and the finality of a frame. So if we extend the logic of Baldessari’s staging of the event of representation, what we have here are the shapes of two reasons for which the larger crowds are missing: the crowds that gather beyond the edges, beyond the crop marks, beyond the viewfinder of the camera at the scene, beyond the limits of the film set or the street, beyond whatever frame. What crowds must we now imagine into which these pictures may be fitted as the shapes of reason?

Each cut marks a threshold: “the decisive structure [as Derrida says] of what is at stake.”47 It is the historical trace of an institution of knowledge, where the object of knowledge takes its place in an architecture of
presentation or places this architecture in question. It is the uncertain edge at which a proper attention—looking, listening, reading—is invoked and engaged or frustrated. It is the never-settled threshold at which a legitimized discourse is allowed to begin—like the discourse of art history, shall we say, mounting its precious or even delinquent objects in the white spaces of the modern museum, the university lecture hall, or the pages of the publishing industry and bringing to bear the full authority of its gaze.

Another crowd gathers around another void: a vacant white oblong waiting the projection of meaning, for which it has been prepared in advance. It is along its edges that a historical deconstruction might begin to operate with effect, on “the decisive structure” of the institution itself, on the order of externality and interiority it demarcates, and on the laws, evaluations, structures of knowledge, forms of spectacle, and types of commerce this order makes possible. What might be the outlines of such an operation? How might one begin to “bear on the frame” in art history, the frame of art history?

The function of the frame, like that of the prepared ground, is, as Meyer Schapiro has told us, “an advanced artifact” presupposing a long historical development. Not until late in the second millennium BCE did the variable elements of frame and ground come together to constitute that closure and smoothness through which the image, in the West, acquired what Schapiro calls “a definite space of its own,” marking a “fundamental change in art which is basic for our own imagery, even for the photograph, the film and the television screen.” Yet, Schapiro argues, just as the cropped rectangular picture without frame or margin became a commonplace of photographic illustration that seemed to appeal to immediacy and the momentary gaze, so “The frame was dispensable when painting ceased to represent deep space and became more concerned with the expressive and formal qualities of the non-mimetic marks than with their elaboration into signs.”

If Schapiro is right, then this would seem to be an end to it: The frame falls as artists strive to overthrow every convention in their restless search for that new idiom which is the mark of their freedom. (We might think of Jackson Pollock in Hans Namuth’s photographs, if Baldessari had not been there before us and, taking his knife to Pollock’s image,
marked the space of the heroic artistic subject as another candid void.)

But Schapiro is short of the mark, because his analysis is confined to the frame as a nonmimetic element of the image-sign. But, for Derrida, the frame is not a semantic element of a historically developed signifying system but, rather, the margin of certainty where the supposed interiority of such a system is set in place, at the price of disclosing that system’s incompleteness to itself. Beyond this, what Schapiro also neglects is that, as part of the very process by which the authority of pictorial conventions and hierarchies of genre came to be weakened, the function of the frame had been absorbed into the wall and, more extensively, into the space of the gallery and then of the museum itself.52

Like the frame, the space of the museum encloses and displays. It cuts an inside from an outside, closing that inside on itself as pure interiority and surrounding it with value—of which the gilt of the frame is an embracing sign. What defines the museum as frame is thus the constitution of the space that constitutes art yet effaces itself in the visibility of its works. At the same time, as Jean-Claude Lebensztejn has shown, the museum can only make this cut by excluding what remains as other, its heterogeneity reduced to the status of nonart. “Everything the museum excludes from its space [Lebensztejn writes] becomes, by this exclusion, an undefined murmur, a level of noise against which art defines its difference.”53 “Such, in the last instance, is the function of the museum. It gives art its proper status by separating it from the remainder and, by its integrative function, conceals the cut that gives it the status of art.”54 Yet this remainder continues to taint the enclosure that guarantees the pure, hygienic space of art. Within the museum, the reserve collection, closed as it is to the public and consigned to secondary status, marks the trace of this undisplayable surplus. And in the silent galleries themselves, the very wall that stands for the infinite void in which art is apparently self-enclosed and self-defined also doubles as the **murmur**—the white noise of that unnameable production through whose exclusion, by the action of the frame, the wall, and the space of the museum, art is defined.

The canonicity of the museum collection is therefore haunted by a loss, and the pure interiority of its art is always tarnished by the trace of its other. It is this loss that the museum would make good in the imaginary of what Stephen Bann has called the museum’s “poetics”.55
Figure 59. Installing the exhibit French Paintings from the Collections of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon and Mrs. Mellon Bruce at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., 1966. Gallery Archives, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Figure 60. Installation view of the exhibit Kazimir Malevich, 1878–1935 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., 1990. Kathleen Buckalew, Gallery Archives, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 61. Installation view of the exhibit The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting, Waterloo Gallery at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1985. Gallery Archives, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
figures of a desire to restore the wholeness of history in the ideal totality of the historicist construction or in the reconstitution of an enveloping illusion of authenticity. We may note that the rhetorical polarities of this “poetics” hang, once again, on the oscillation of the frame across the spaces it divides and defines, from work to context. At one pole, the metonymic sequences of masterpieces, schools, nations, and centuries, in which disjunct paradigmatic objects, each systematically isolated in its frame, are joined by the continuous wall in syntagmatic chains, from wall to wall and gallery to gallery. At the other pole, metaphoric representations of an imaginary totality in which the frame, itself now a sign of periodicity, links the picture to a larger ensemble or syntagma of authenticity—a contextuality offered to experience, rather than a rationalist reconstruction of an ideal progression. And between these poles—which are rarely present in their singular form—the narrative conflation of artist and oeuvre serves as a kind of relay: presenting an ordered stylistic sequence, governed by evolutionary law, as a lived totality of which

Figure 62. Entrance to the exhibit Matisse: The Early Years in Nice, 1916–1930 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., 1986–87. Gallery Archives, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Figure 63. Exhibition panel from the exhibit Kazimir Malevich, 1878–1935 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., 1990. Kathleen Buckalew, Gallery Archives, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
the index is the signature—that tear in the space of the enframed, which repeats itself countless times, in the label, in the catalog, in the spin-offs of the marketing machine, and in the lure of the name that draws us on through the sequential installation of the monographic show, from the street to the entrance and from room to room, to the exit that marks a death and the end of a series.

In the signature is written the promise of authenticity and order, the presence of the author and the integrity of the oeuvre, singularity and exchangeability, the unique and the taxonomic combined. But what is also inscribed is the promise of identification with an exemplary subject—a mirror for our selves—for the frame of the museum means meaning and knowledge, pleasure and perception, but also the structure of identification and subjection. The frame is a frame of differentiation that directs and delimits the field of visuality, setting in place a distance and separation that regulates desire and positions the viewing subject—a subject whose enjoyment of the look is exercised only through submission to the authority of the other: the gaze of the museum.

Thus, if pleasure is in play in the museum, it is also at work. It is invoked to be organized. The museum orders subjectivities just as it does the objects it selectively displays. And this goes beyond the explicit moral mission, developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, to join curatorship of culture to a pedagogy that will displace “idle curiosity” and cultivate the useful disposition of leisure—a mission in which each display case, frame, and label would be, as George Goode wrote in 1893, “a perpetual lecturer . . . constantly on duty in every large museum.” It was not only on this level of consciously articulated policy, however, that the museum effectively took shape as an apparatus of visual ordering and visual training: a space for the ordered production of knowledge and pleasure, where spectacle and discipline met.

Emerging across these two intersecting regimes of power, sense and vision, between the formations of spectacle and discipline, the museum, which took form as a sanctuary against the unceasing dispersal of space and time, was marked as the product of the double and conflictual drives of Western modernization. At one level, just as the museum in the West became, in a sense, a condition of everyday life through the “ordering up of the world itself as an endless exhibition,” so too, within its walls, it
Figure 64. Visitors to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., 1947. Gallery Archives, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
was fully invested in the new economy of spectacle, reproduction, and accelerating exchange that transformed the operation of visuality in the capitalist states of western Europe and in the colonialist culture they extended to the rest of the world. At the same time, the institution of the museum was equally and inseparably implicated in what Jonathan Crary has seen as those “new forms by which vision itself became a kind of discipline or mode of work.”60 As in the disciplinary reconfiguration of the hospital, factory, prison, and school, which Foucault has described,61 the museum instituted a new disposition of bodies and spaces that worked to procure a docile consumption in what might otherwise have been a dangerously contentious public space. Within this space, the museum set in place a new technology for managing attention, partitioning and cellularizing vision, fixing and isolating the observer, and imposing a homogeneity on visual experience. In its effects, it belonged with the development and marketing of a whole set of nineteenth-century optical and photographic products and devices, from the diorama to the stereoscope and, later, the cinema. Such technologies shattered the structure of existing fields of vision. But this was the condition for their reframing or, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, their “re-territorialization” into new institutions, new hierarchies, and new forms of exchange.62

The founding of art history as an academic discipline was also part of this reterritorialization. It, too, depended on the deployment of new technologies of vision, as much as it did on new modes of reproduction, circulation, indexing, and storage and on the creation of new public spaces for a culturally mobilized urban population. Yet the founders of modern art history, as Jonathan Crary has pointed out, excluded from their purview the very nineteenth-century art production whose making, consumption, and effectiveness depended on the apparatuses of vision, display, and reproduction that also made the academic practice of art history possible.63 Only later were the categories and models developed in the analysis of the figurative art of antiquity and the Renaissance extended to the incorporation of more-recent phases of artistic production. A conflict is clearly sensed. Yet the paradox is not, as Walter Benjamin would have it, that nineteenth-century art history faced technical developments that promised to destroy forever the aura or cult value that had hitherto surrounded the work of art.64 It is, rather, the reverse: that
the technologies that marked so profound a discontinuity in the history of vision should themselves have furnished the apparatus to enframe “art” as integral, coherent, and structured internally by conventions whose authority and continuity could not be in doubt.

Once again, however, in tracing the “rules of appearance” and “conditions of appropriation” of academic art history, we are dealing with a multiple and overdetermined process. While art history emerged only through the discourses and technologies that shaped the museum, it was equally caught up in the emergence of an educational apparatus whose strategic aims and techniques of training were, in turn, to rechannel their effects into the workings of the museum. What I am thinking of here goes far beyond the usual treasured histories and anecdotes of émigré scholars and university traditions. It is the shaping of art history within the social dispersion of practices of cultural self-improvement, within the deployment of aesthetic disciplines in the school system, and within the tertiary-level training not only of a cohort of expert technicians and cultural bureaucrats but also of a cadre of “critical minds” capable of serving as trainers and exemplars in a new system of visual attentiveness as a technique of self-regulation.

A model for such a history can be found in Ian Hunter’s remarkable “genealogy” of modern English criticism and literary education as “a specialised sector of the apparatus of popular education.”65 This apparatus itself was formed within the field of disciplinary techniques to which I have already referred. That is, it emerged in the dissemination of an unprecedented machinery of administration and regulation that began to surface in western Europe at the end of the eighteenth century and that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had largely succeeded in reconstituting the everyday life of whole populations. The target of such administrative regulation was a new conception of the individual, whose health, moral conduct, criminal and sexual tendencies, and culture were constituted as the objects of new forms of governmental attention that aimed at reshaping the “moral and physical” order of the populace but that were made operative through forms of individual conscientiousness and disciplinary self-regulation.66

It is within this field of local disciplinary tactics that the deployment of “culture” in education has to be understood. For it was through
this deployment that what Ian Hunter calls the “aesthetico-ethical practice” of a minority caste⁶⁷ acquired a new function by its insertion into the morally managed disciplinary environment of the public school. In the teaching of literature and criticism—and, by extension, in the teaching of art and art appreciation—an elite culture of the self was thus linked to the machinery of normalization and the corrective technologies of the public sphere, harnessing the ethical authority of the cultivated sensibility to an apparatus of governance through which the population internalized the disciplinary norms of “social” life as the seemingly spontaneous and individual project of self-realization. What such training worked to produce was not lovers of literature or art but a highly specific profile of cultural attributes necessary to the mobilization of a body of citizens or, as the British will have it, subjects. And, here, we might also remember that—as with the development of the museum—this educational strategy was and remained a national project, tying the teaching of language and literature, art and art history, into the differing forms of cultural articulation of the nationalist State.

In directing attention to the strategic effects of the museum apparatus, art history, and its pedagogical practice, I would want to stress, however, that there is no need here to conjure up a panoptic consciousness or a logic of ideology and the class State. We are dealing, for the most part, with piecemeal historical changes and technical transformations, local programmatic imperatives that take hold on the individual and the population in multiple and dispersed ways. There is no single rationality and no single outcome: no nineteenth-century observer, as Jonathan Crary would still have it, despite his doubts,⁶⁸ and no unified or stabilized discipline of art history; though that is not to say there are not always traceable limits to the possible, thinkable, or permissible mutations the field can undergo. However, we can very well think of art history, as Ian Hunter does of English literary studies and criticism, as a complex of administrative, pedagogical, ethical, and aesthetic techniques, invested in disciplinary technologies and articulated by supervisory goals that seek to exert specific effects on the constitution of a “social” field.⁶⁹ We might also want to note, in passing, the corollary that, if it is not fruitful to speculate on art history as if it assumed a singular form, then neither is it useful to expect it to respond to any single theoretical or
political diagnosis or intervention. There is not only one hammer to take to this frame.

The End
These are no more than the tracings of outlines, no more than indications of possible directions. But they may be enough to show how far we would have to travel from a conception of art history as an array of methodologies, tractable to theoretical correction and ideology critique. Such indications describe a space of thinking made possible by the overlaying of the model of the apparatus and the model of the frame, that is, by the mutual pressures of Foucauldian genealogy and Derridean deconstruction. This may be surprising, especially since it implies an unfamiliar deconstruction, at least to those critics and proponents who have equated the insistence that everything is discourse or text with the unlikely belief that everything happens in books. (Some of the more fruitless standoffs in recent art historical debates begin here. But the aim, on all sides, has mostly been a coup in the boardroom and business as usual.) Yet Derrida has been clear enough that

It is because deconstruction interferes with solid structures, “material” institutions, and not only with discourses or signifying representations, that it is always distinct from an analysis or a “critique.” And in order to be pertinent, deconstruction works as strictly as possible in that place where the supposedly “internal” order of the philosophical is articulated by (internal and external) necessity with the institutional conditions and forms of teaching. To the point where the concept of institution itself would be subjected to the same deconstructive treatment.70

What follows for art history is not a form of conventional institutional history. But neither is it an endless metacommentary, generating a universe of tertiary texts that float in a self-sufficient space without coordinates, detached from the realm of the social and political. The very terms of this commonplace accusation merely repeat the action of the frame that deconstruction puts at issue. In their very implied promise of another space of genuinely political critique, necessarily “outside”
textuality, these terms effectively remove the institution from the reach of political judgment. The deconstruction of the oppositions of internal to external, work to commentary, the rhetorical to the literal, texts to action, discourse to politics, and theory to practice transforms the concept of the institution and changes the conceptual space in which the political is thought.\textsuperscript{71} It displaces those politics that seek to ground themselves on criteria that cannot themselves be grasped as political, because they are presented as the state of things, the literal or the real. It insists on the necessity of political judgments and strategic choices, not on the basis of the decoding of a hidden social content but on the basis of a positional calculation of the power effects of discursive practices on and in the field of sociality.

If deconstruction of the institution of art history withdraws from “social” critique, it does so, therefore, precisely in order to foreground the question of political and ethical practice, precisely in order to drive home the stakes of the discipline. But stakes are not interests. They are not the markers of what lies behind, so that this political practice cannot take the form of an unmasking. But neither can it stop at a mapping or traversal of the spaces, boundaries, closures, fractures, and linkages of the institutional formation. To question art history’s finalities is to open the question of its ends. And when it is open, the question of ends compels contesting voices to speak to the stakes on which they are banking and to which they would have art history tied.

So art history is always tied to the stake. It seems we must prepare ourselves, therefore, for pain and suffering. The space in the crowd threatens to be that of a martyrdom. But what of the instability of structures? And what of dissidence, deviance, or resistance as pleasure and even joy?

Let us plunge into the crowd one final time. Back into the crowd of Canetti—the title of whose book, \textit{Masse und Macht}, might more literally be translated as “Masses and Power.” For Canetti, the crowd or mass does not conform to its image either in Marxism or in psychoanalysis, even in their structuralist variants. It is not the collective subject or the figure of the future whose allotted task in vulgar Marxist teleologies is to actualize a necessary moment of the historicist dialectic. Neither is it the regressive, infantile, primitive horde of psychoanalysis, bound by
terror and guilt in submission to a masterful father-leader, on whom the horde projects a common ego ideal. No more is it the subject of structuralist interpolation, in which Freud's narrative of identification is transferred to the structure of the Law and the Ideological State Apparatus. By contrast, Canetti's account, as Michel Feher reads it, “does not consider mass in terms of revelation, regression, or submission, but in terms of the will for power.”72 The crowd is not contained by submission to the systematics of destiny or authority but is a contagious, turbulent pack—“a true incarnation of a multiplicity of disseminating effects”—that breaks out whenever “events” call it forth and the systems that have worked to conjure its powers away find they have only the effect of focusing and exacerbating the crowd’s disruptive drives.

This crowd does not, therefore, surge from “in itself” to “for itself,” toward its own as yet undisclosed, historical reason. This crowd is not slave to a void into which it has projected the fantasized power of its own imaginary figure. This crowd is a pack, beyond all reason and restraint; a force field without shape that propagates the void only as the trace of its own internal limit, as unassignable drive turns into decline. This crowd is not, then, the model of a structuralist system; nor is it the docile subject of an omnipresent disciplinary power. It is dangerous and motile. It breaks all formal bounds. It erupts, like the crowd of White residents and servicemen in downtown Los Angeles who, over several nights in June 1943, savagely beat and stripped young Mexican American pachucos on the street in what, by a telling reversal, came to be dubbed the “zoot-suit riots.”

This last image of the crowd framing the victims of racist policing in Los Angeles is one that we have encountered before. It may bring into the picture not only memories of more-recent events but also the terms of my earlier argument.74 What this might signal here is that, if the crowd as a structure of closure is never predictable, stable, or fixed, then neither is the event of meaning ever stripped bare or contained en masse and utterly exhausted by its frame. The violence in Los Angeles was, as we saw, fired by a suit of clothes that insisted on drawing attention to itself, flaunting its excess and perversion of the proper form.75 The language of the zoot suit, the language of Caló, the mestizo language of pachucos and pachucas, crossed over all borders. It evaded the spaces of
separatism and segregation. It was mobile and inventive and disassembled the codes and protocols of Anglo and Mexican speech, dress, and culture to release a play of identity and difference that fitted no known frame.

In the face of the regimes that frame and enclose our lives, this is, then, more than resistance as negation, more than inversion, more than the recoil of suffering, constraint, and loss. It is the burden of lack lived as the exhilaration of incompleteness; the pain of silence turned into exuberance beyond speech. I therefore offer the pachuca and pachuco again as shapes of another reason for a deconstructive art history on which their strategy will not be lost. As Lyotard said, the way beyond capital’s hegemony and the “bloody impasses” of the great doctrinal systems lies not in the terror of legitimation through tradition or myth, which in the end amount to the same thing. It comes

Figure 65. “These youths, one stripped of all his clothes, the others badly beaten, fell victim to raging bands of policemen who scoured the streets in Los Angeles on June 7, 1943, ferreting out and beating zoot-suited young hoodlums they blame for the numerous recent unprovoked assaults. Fifty or more zoot suiters had their clothing torn from them, police reported.” Photography courtesy of AP Images/Harold P. Matosian.
when human beings who thought they could use language as an instrument of communication learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence (and of pleasure which accompanies the invention of a new idiom), that they are summoned by language, not to augment to their profit the quantity of information communicable through existing idioms, but to recognize that what remains to be phrased exceeds what they can presently phrase, and that they must be allowed to institute idioms which do not yet exist.77

Perhaps there is even an echo of Meyer Schapiro in this: If we are to live, we are all constrained to strike against the frame.