

## Simulation and the 'grand theme' in R.B. Kitaj's *AN EARLY EUROPE*

This text is in four parts. The first is a preliminary description of Kitaj's work *AN EARLY EUROPE*. The second part considers simulation and Kitaj's work in the context of the second exhibition dedicated to his work, in 1965; it looks at examples of his 'Found and assisted objects', collages, screen-prints and paintings. The following part approaches interpretations of *AN EARLY EUROPE*, taking into account both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. The fourth part considers Kitaj's 'grand theme' through *AN EARLY EUROPE* and in the light of the description and interpretation above.

### Preliminary description of *AN EARLY EUROPE*.

*AN EARLY EUROPE* was factured in 1964 and first shown in public at Kitaj's second one-man show in 1965 at the Marlborough-Gerson, New York<sup>1</sup>. The work is a stretched canvas with oil paint, pencil and a pasted-on paper. There are four different areas intrinsic to the work: (a) The pasted-on paper; (b) The central image; (c) The top right-hand image; (d) The connection between the central and top right-hand image. The pasted-on paper is a reproduction from a magazine of a photograph showing detail from a sculpture, *The Three Graces*, by the eighteenth-nineteenth-century sculptor Antonio Canova. The sculpture was modelled in 1815 and carved in marble in 1817.<sup>2</sup> The suffix to the title of *AN EARLY EUROPE*, reported in the Marlborough Gerson catalogue reads: 'Largely After Canova'. The lighting used for the photograph established a distinctive configuration of light and shade. The reproduction of the photograph is printed by screened rota-gravure. The paper reproduction has been crumpled and torn suggesting constant use. It has been pasted onto the canvas, apparently after its use as a basis for the drawing of the central image, in the lower right-hand corner of the picture plane, and has been framed in a cadmium deep red band of oil paint making it discrete from the rest of the plane.

The central and proportionately largest part of the picture plane has been painted with depictions of three figures using similar shapes to the reproduction's detail from the Canova sculpture. The figures are drawn within a perspectively contrived space signified by changes in colour of the depicted side walls, window and back wall. Further perspectival signifiers have been used to indicate a recessed wall to house the window frame. The back wall is signified in two different maroons (one crimson and the other burnt umber and crimson) and in ultra marine; the side walls are black (on the left) and dark green (right side); and the window recesses are a warm grey, dark brown, and dark grey. In addition to

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<sup>1</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *AN EARLY EUROPE*, 1964, 152 x 213 cm (60 x 84"), oil and collage, reproduced in Marlborough-Gerson, 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Canova, *The Three Graces*, 1817, marble, 165 cm (65") high, Woburn Abbey, Duke of Bedford, reproduced in Praz, Mario and Giuseppe Pavanello, Milan, 1976.

the three figures and their depicted hands an extra hand (and possibly another) have been added. *One* at the lower left resting on the left-hand figure's buttock (and the other, if this is correct, which is not certain, on the right-hand shoulder of the right-hand figure). The figures have been painted in a variety of non-representational and representational colours.

The figure on the left has been painted in a flat black and one hand has been painted violet pink. The outlines to mark the arm and chin against the body have been factored from unpainted, primed canvas. The black figure has been given a head garment painted mainly in flat red with a triangular, white (unpainted, primed canvas) section suggesting hair beneath the garment. The garment approximates the outline of the hair represented in the Canova sculpture. The figure's left hand is black and the right is shown as violet pink. (If another hand is to be discerned this is black and partly merges with the black of the wall to the right of the right-hand figure. It is because of this merging that there is no certainty of the hand's depiction.) Part of the black figure has been obscured by two frames that surround the twice shown right hand of the central figure. Unlike the frame around the Canova reproduction, these frames are not fully completed. The rectangular frame around the hand on the figure's shoulder has one corner incomplete, and one over-extended, and the base-line ripples. The lower frame around the yellow hand is triangular and is incomplete at its apex. The frames are painted bands of grey blue and grey brown respectively. Across the brow of the depicted face a light orange line suggests eyebrows and an eye. A second line in grey blue suggests a second eye. Lack of paint (partly revealed primed canvas) indicates the nose bridge and detail of the lips. The top of the head garment has been truncated and an orange line runs along the top edge of the truncation and extends each side of it. The black paint, the breast (visible in the Kitaj, but not in the Canova reproduction) and the head garment suggest a black African woman.

The central figure is painted mainly in pale 'Caucasian flesh' colour and is slightly mottled. The figure is depicted with a leg spread stance similar (but not the same as) the figure depicted in the lower right-hand of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*.<sup>3</sup> The genitals have been suggested by three thin, penciled lines on the pale Caucasian flesh colour. Two breasts are indicated by brown dashes signifying nipple positions. The figure appears to be wearing a cape lined in deep orange and an Indian red and white (again unpainted canvas) cloth around the neck, held there by two lemon yellow bands outlined in Indian red and suggesting straps. The face has a depicted veil concealing the mouth and lower nose in slightly browned white with charcoal marks suggesting the mask is semi-transparent. The facial features include one eye depicted in cadmium red with a cerulean blue spot surrounded by white with a purple spot. A faint purple mark below this suggests a 'beauty' spot or mole and five black lines above the eye suggest hair. On the head is a garment in turquoise paint surrounding an under-wrap, or turban made from a European patterned cloth, which also appears to include suggestions of hair at the top.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907, 244 x 234 cm (96 x 92"), Museum of Modern Art, New York, reproduced in Barr, Alfred H. (ed). New York, 1946.

<sup>4</sup> I have not found a pattern that can confirm, or refute, this assertion.

figure's left hand (if the Canova model can be followed) is lime green, the right hand is depicted twice, once on the black figure's buttock in chrome yellow. Under the central figure's right breast the right-hand figure's left hand, and around the back of the central figure's head and onto the front of her face is the left-hand black figure's hand. The pale Caucasian flesh colour and genital region insists the figure is a white woman. The head garment suggests both a need to protect the head (either because it has recently been washed or, more probably, because of the heat) and an attachment, signified in the patterning, to nineteenth century Europe, perhaps to the period of the Canova sculpture.

The right-hand figure's body is painted in a flat, dark orange oil paint. The face, left shoulder, and the arm are in flat cadmium red. Imposed upon the depiction of the body are ovals in ultra-marine and chrome yellow, which may signify the remains of shadows or possibly discs of coloured light from a camera lens.<sup>5</sup> The figure's left-hand is cerulean blue with penciled finger outlines and is partly under-painted. The face includes a beard in dark orange and unpainted primed canvas. Monastral blue lines indicate eye surrounds, a spot indicates an eyeball and a black spot with a white unpainted trace suggests a second (this has been outlined in black paint). The head is dressed in a pale green cloth with a chrome oxide green band in the style of Arab desert-wear. The head has been incompletely framed three times: once in two tones of brown and then in black. A third broken set of bands appear to be depictions of remnants from masking tape or a simulated wooden drawing frame, and have been superimposed in a gold yellow.<sup>6</sup> Behind the head there is other flat colour: first on the right in Prussian blue and then in raw umber. This proceeds to the central figure's face. It suggests wall decoration. Part of the shaping of this decoration has been made with a compass (or designers' French curve). The right-hand figure's skin colour, beard and dress signifies a male Arab.

The three figures thus appear to signify a common location in North Africa where white European, black African and Arab meet. Considering the work's title this understanding widens to a sign of European, nineteenth century 'orientalism'. The activities, with the moving depictions of some of the hands, suggests a sexual scenario. These are matters that will need clarification below.

(c) The right-hand top part of the picture plane signifies a window that reveals a white landscape. A horizon line and hill have been indicated in pale blue paint. The landscape has been heavily painted in white (the only part of the picture plane that has been heavily painted). Traces of red outlines are discernible in places signifying a change in factual decision. In the foreground of this white plain, two figures have been depicted as black silhouettes, one is walking, the other may be skating. The latter movement is signified by the absence of the right leg below the knee suggesting it is raised behind the

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<sup>5</sup> Their actual extrinsic source (discussed later) turns out to be an illustration of a cave entrance in the *Virgil Codex*, in the Vatican, which F. Saxl in his *Lectures* titles 'The death of Eurydice'. Kitaj refers to this illustration in the catalogue. It is first used by Kitaj for *PARIAH*, 1960, 102 x 127 cm (40 x 50"), Silkeborg Kunstmuseum, Denmark, reproduced in *Creative Camera*, 210, June 1982. It recurs as a 'motif' throughout the exhibition.

<sup>6</sup> They also resemble the fracture of a deck chair's depiction in Kitaj's *PRIEST, ETC.*, *vid.* Livingstone, 1985, plate 35.

thigh, and the left leg below the knee has been depicted in pale blue and curves up below the foot base.<sup>7</sup> The immediate impression is that the figures are on packed snow, not sand, and that it is cold. Cold, that is, in distinction from the apparently hot atmosphere in the central image. The 'area' in this part of the picture plane suggests Europe rather than North Africa (Europe because of the title, rather than North America or Japan).

(d) The fourth area of the plane is a depicted running figure, apparently moving from the central image towards the image of the landscape. In fact the figure's depiction is continuous with parts of the colour of the central image, and part of its outline trails into the central image, and the figure partly overlaps the window landscape. The figure is painted in flat scarlet, purple and chrome oxide green, outlined in light green and with a deep orange head. On the head has been painted a chrome yellow area which, if it wasn't for the strap-like shape descending from it, appears to signify hair. Because of the strap-shape the 'hair' may in fact depict a hat of some kind, perhaps a skier's helmet. The one depicted arm and the hand holds the right hand side of the head. This may signify anxiety, listening intensity, or a will be in silence.

#### **Simulation and Kitaj's New York exhibition in 1965. Introductory comments.**

All the paintings, collages and screen-prints in Kitaj's 1965 exhibition in New York use simulation as an explicit practice. A recurring feature of these simulations is that of making frames around part or all of the picture plane and that of breaking these frames. In the main, Kitaj's works use imagery already available to him as imagery made by others. The only exception in the 1965 exhibition is a reproduction of a 'life drawing' in the exhibition catalogue.<sup>8</sup> The manner of simulation, its order of appearance, varies from direct (unaltered) use of what he labels 'Found and assisted', to improvisations using these materials as sources. The overt references to the manner of simulation are given emphasis by his use of framings, which lay bare part of the process of facture, and make the appearance of the factual marks and shapes discontinuous with its sources. The pattern of connectedness that constitutes his aesthetic function, however, requires a comprehension of his sources as referents. This requirement is understood by Kitaj as his catalogue notes and bibliography partly clarify. Simulation, framing and referentiality may thus be seen as a relationship that effectively describes many of the aspects of Kitaj's art: both his semiotics and pragmatics, and the intersecting planes in which his simulated materials from the 'world as text' are relocated through contextual shifts and dislocated through improvisation.

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<sup>7</sup> This may be confirmed by Kitaj's use of a magazine photograph of silhouettes on snow in his screen-print *OLD AND NEW TABLES*, 1964, reproduced in Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> This assertion cannot be proved in four of the paintings, because they do not appear to have been reproduced. In the 1963 exhibition Kitaj included four life drawings from 1958. Geoffrey Parton's 'List of Works' only includes one of these drawings. *vid.* Livingstone, 1985. The latter reproduces an oil painting, *IVY CAVENDISH*, ca.1958, based on one of these drawings.

### 'Found and assisted objects'

The reproduction of the Canova sculpture pasted onto the picture plane of *AN EARLY EUROPE* may be considered extrinsically in terms of its facture against Kitaj's 'Found and assisted objects'. These objects are the most extreme presentations of simulation in Kitaj's work. There are three in the 1965 exhibition. They are, as Kitaj states, 'Found', and in that sense a presentation of images in the state they were discovered.<sup>9</sup> With these 'Found and assisted objects' Kitaj apprehends Duchamp's understanding where the only change 'found' materials undergo is that of context.<sup>10</sup> *A HISTORY OF POLISH LITERATURE*<sup>11</sup> uses twelve photographs of Polish writers already printed in two horizontal rows, and pastes them onto a board he has prepared with the repeating pattern of what may be a wrapper. The wrapper alternately depicts the devices of a female nude in foliage and a stylised flora. *THE VILLA OF FRANZ VON STUCK*<sup>12</sup> presents an advertisement for the sale by auction of von Stuck's house.

These simulations are particularised by the referential patterns of connectedness they produce through the context Kitaj 'assists' them into. This latter didactic function acts as a level of the aesthetic function in as much as it contributes to his work's patterning. The use of literature and his alignment with dispossession, may all be associated with his *A HISTORY OF POLISH LITERATURE*; just as his references to the history of art, eroticism, and the German political situation at the end of the nineteenth century may be associated with his *THE VILLA OF FRANZ VON STUCK*. All of these referential elements are recurrences in his work during Kitaj's first eight years as a painter.

To comprehend Kitaj's work it is necessary to understand these recurrences as a contribution to the patterns of connectedness that constitute his art. Kitaj's 'Found and assisted objects' work with his aesthetic function in the context of his other works, rather than as isolated simulations. They work extrinsically, rather than intrinsically, as part of the collage that the whole exhibition constitutes. It is collage that provides Kitaj with a richer practice.

### Collages

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<sup>9</sup> One of these, *THE ENCHANTED WANDERER AND PLAN NOW*, does not appear in Geoffrey Parton's 'List of Works' and does not appear to have been reproduced.

<sup>10</sup> An example of a found object by Marcel Duchamp would be *Bottlerack (Bottle Dryer)*, 1914, *vid.* d'Harnoncourt, Anne and Kynaston McShine, 1969. On some occasions Duchamp adds a 'new title' to the object found.

<sup>11</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *A HISTORY OF POLISH LITERATURE*, 1962, 50 x 85 cm (20 x 44"), 'Found and assisted object', Artist's Collection, reproduced in Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1970.

<sup>12</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE VILLA OF FRANZ VON STUCK*, 1960, 41 x 33 cm (16 x 13"), 'Found and assisted object', reproduced in Marlborough-Gerson, 1965.

There are twelve works labeled 'collage' in the 1965 exhibition. Their facture, like the 'Found and assisted objects', uses the 'world as text' and gives them a new context. *I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THE WOMEN OF BUCHAREST*<sup>13</sup> uses torn magazine photographs and handmade patterned papers.<sup>14</sup> The magazine photographs delineate an outer border and one is used as a centre. The patterned papers delineate inner frames. The fragments are pasted around the outside of the patterned framings, and one part exchanges places with that frame. The facture thus immediately presents framing and breaking of that framing. The uneven framings telescope into the centre: the work 'focuses' on a fragment of a photograph of a naked woman exposing her torso. The outer border uses a collage of a mixture of images. The images may be summed up in terms of their referents. Men and women, some in costumes, suggest, with reference to the title, Hungarians and films. Fragments from photographs of naked women, and in one case a man, relate to both photographed sexuality and to Kitaj's facture. With these are associative fragments which include food, a honeycomb, and a jelly mould. A white rose refers to the Resistance movement during World War II and to the patterning of the collage: overlapping and centring petals.<sup>15</sup> The work corresponds in its imagery to *A HISTORY OF POLISH LITERATURE*, and in its sexuality to Frank von Stuck. The references to fragmentalised and voyeuristic sexuality and anti-fascist politics are set against a discourse on patterning. The work like the honeycomb is patterned, and like the jelly mould emphasises the containment of patterning. Both the honey and the jelly then pattern back into the references to sexuality. The use of torn and overlapping papers fractures frames for discrete consideration and as such emphasises the nature of the art as a simulatory and post-photographic discourse. The deliberate breaking of these framings adds a discourse on the alienating potential of discourse itself. The framing, like Brechtian theatre and film montage focuses and exposes the alienation.

Such connectedness produces an art that shifts its sources differently from the kind of collage exemplified by Max Ernst. It is also a pattern that relates succinctly to other collages in the exhibition. In difference from Ernst's proposals, Kitaj's art shows the *deliberate* meeting of partly distinct and partly related realities.<sup>16</sup> This is highlighted by his quotation from I.A. Richards in the catalogue:

'There is no whole to any analogy, we use as much of it as we need; and, if we tactlessly take any analogy too far, we break it down.'

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<sup>13</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THE WOMEN OF BUDAPEST*, 1962, collage, 51 x 76 cm (30 x 20"), reproduced in Marlborough-Gerson, 1965.

<sup>14</sup> Similar to those used as book endpapers in accounting and legal professions, or as folder-backs for the Fine Art trade.

<sup>15</sup> Kitaj lists two prints of 'which originals may or may not occur'. *FOR THE WHITE ROSE* and *LEAFLETS OF THE WHITE ROSE*: 'Projected prints honouring the memory of Hans and Sophie Scholl among others ...' The same rose occurs in Kitaj's *GO AND GET KILLED COMRADE – WE NEED A BYRON IN THE MOVEMENT*.

<sup>16</sup> Ernst, Max, 1948.

Such citation may be exactly placed against the notes to Kitaj's screen-print *WHAT IS A COMPARISON?* again from Richards:

'What is a comparison? It may be several different things: it may be just a putting together of two things to let them work together; it may be a study of them both to see how they are like, and unlike one another; or it may be a process of calling attention to their likenesses or a method of drawing attention to certain aspects of the one through the co-presence of the other ...'

Comparison, like association, is part of Kitaj's aesthetic intention and is displayed throughout his work.

Many of the practices in Kitaj's use of collage and screen-printing impinge upon consideration of *AN EARLY EUROPE*. The use of the 'world as text' and the presentation of this through framings; the photographic reprints and the alienating effects; the systematic displacements and the use of comparison are all elements that contribute to the facture of *AN EARLY EUROPE*. The 'oil on canvas with collage', as Kitaj labels it, brings onto one plane at least four discrete elements and compares them. The undecidable elements, particularly in the central area, are partly attributable to the collage-sensibility with its concomitant ethos of 'the bringing together' of different 'realities'. The overlapping, and thus partial obliteration, of images that collage encourages may be observed as operative in *AN EARLY EUROPE*. The floating ovals on the top of the right-hand figure, for example, are fragments 'collaged' from the painting *PARIAH*<sup>17</sup> (discussed below). The alternation between opaque and transparent, as well as representational and non-representational colour, evident in the central area are common characteristics of screen-printing in the period among Kitaj's works and those of his contemporaries Joe Tilson and Eduardo Paolozzi.<sup>18</sup> Kitaj's use of patterned papers in his collages may also clarify his use of decorative areas in his painting such as the shapes 'behind' the central figure in *AN EARLY EUROPE* and, perhaps, may clarify the depiction of the patterned cloth beneath the turban. Most particularly, the flat colour in *AN EARLY EUROPE* and paintings of the period by Kitaj, clearly suggests that the colour common to the screen-printing he started to practice with Paolozzi and Chris Pater in 1962 has been strongly understood in his use of paint.

It is clear, in retrospect, that from 1962 to 1964 Kitaj's shift in collage and simulation, which parallels Charles Olson's use of recurrence, simulated fragment and spatial transposition, takes on a different and often more complex stance than Kitaj's painting peers who continued to present, for at least another six

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<sup>17</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *PARIAH*, 1960, 102 x 127 cm (40 x 50"), Silkeborg Kunstmuseum, Denmark, reproduced in *Creative Camera*, 210, June 1982.

<sup>18</sup> Joe Tilson, *Vietnam Courier*, 1969, 187 x 126 cm (74 x 50"), screen and oil on canvas on wood, reproduced in Marlborough Fine Art. *Joe Tilson*, 1970 and Tate Gallery. *Eduardo Paolozzi*, 1971.

years, collages of the kind Kitaj had shifted from before 1964.<sup>19</sup> Kitaj's use of earlier value systems, such as perspectival and mediæval figuration, as part of his simulatory facture, adds to his ability to present disruption. Kitaj further increases his disruptive potential, through his use of referentiality; an observation apparent in viewing his 1963 exhibition. This ability can be considered through some of his paintings in the 1965 exhibition.

### Paintings

As has been stated above, all of Kitaj's work in the period may be said to be involved in a discourse that comments upon the 'world as text'. From the earliest and smallest painting in the exhibition, *THE FIRST TERRORIST*, 1957<sup>20</sup>, to one of the most recent and larger, *AN EARLY EUROPE*, simulation can be seen to be one of Kitaj's consistent activities in painting facture. The former painting appears to use a photographic reproduction of a sculpture which features in the later screen-print *THE REPUBLIC OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS*<sup>21</sup>. *AN EARLY EUROPE* uses the reproduction of a work by Canova. Thus in both cases the shift from the Renaissance practice of painting from sculpture to the twentieth century practice of painting from photographic reproduction of sculpture is a shift of discourse. On the one hand, a discourse, like Ariosto's theatre work at Ferrara,<sup>22</sup> create a 'counterfeit' pattern of connectedness to move the viewer's perceptive-mnemonic patterns towards delight and learning. On the other hand, a twentieth century discourse that, like Brecht and German Expressionist theatre,<sup>23</sup> factures an alienating effect, and a simulated pattern of connectedness to move the viewer towards disruption and learning.

Kitaj's facture reaches a conscious complexity because of simulation and its disruption. It is, philosophically, as well as in practice, a process of shifting discourse that uses and comments upon earlier, as well as upon contemporary, discourses. It is a process that shifts the paradigmatic 'norms' of his milieu.

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<sup>19</sup> See for instance, Tilson and Paolozzi, *op.cit.* 18, as examples from 1969. Their use of squared and completed framings compare to Kitaj's *I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THE WOMEN OF BUCHAREST* in 1962, *op.cit.* 13.

<sup>20</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE FIRST TERRORIST*, 1957, 17 x 11 cm (7 x 5"), Artist's Collection, reproduced in Livingstone, 1985.

<sup>21</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE REPUBLIC OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS*, 1964, 122 x 61 cm (48 x 24"), collage, screen-print, Tate Gallery, London.

<sup>22</sup> Both Mantegna and Titian, for instance, made paintings based on sculpture and contributed to scene painting in Ariosto's theatrical work at Ferrara. *vid.* Ariosto.

<sup>23</sup> Max Beckmann worked on German Expressionist theatre and derived framed scenes from it for his paintings. *vid.* Gandelman, 1978.

One way of approaching this can be to understand the proclivity in Kitaj's practice to improvise simulation. *ERASMUS*, 1958, uses Holbein The Younger's marginalia of doodles in Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*<sup>24</sup> and plays with the morphology in a gestural manner: 'Plays' that is, with the philosopher's act of folly. *LONDON BY NIGHT: PART ONE*, 1964<sup>25</sup>, takes an illustration from Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*<sup>26</sup> and improvises on the figuration. In one extreme example, *DISCONSOLATE CHIMERAS/SHADES OF BENIA KRIK*<sup>27</sup>, Kitaj takes a painting of his own, *ISAAC BABEL RIDING WITH BUDYONNY* as source, and factures a detail from it. In another, *A STUDENT OF VIENNA*<sup>28</sup>, like *THE FIRST TERRORIST* and *AN EARLY EUROPE*, he uses a reproduction of a sculpture, this time Antelami's *Statue of Virgil*.<sup>29</sup> However, by far the largest number of paintings in the show use a collage of many simulations, variously improvised.

These paintings (at least 25) overtly present the picture plane as collage painting. They are presented as fragmentary compositions and in a variety of frames and broken frames. Four of these from the period 1957-1962 use a multiplicity of small frames that mix actual torn paper collages with painted improvisations in a scattered ordering as if presenting a notice board or the artist's studio wall. The earliest of these, *SPECIMEN MUSINGS OF A DEMOCRAT* uses illustrations from Francis A. Yates' papers on Lull (such as the winged heart<sup>30</sup>) and factures a collage display with intimate, morphological variations, in parts like a scaled-down version of the practice in *ERASMUS*.<sup>31</sup> The most common use of collage-simulation, however, approaches the Brechtian theatre mentioned above.

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<sup>24</sup> Holbein the Younger's 16th century marginalia in Desiderius Erasmus *In Praise of Folly*, reproduced in Huizinga, 1952 and Livingstone, 1985.

<sup>25</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *LONDON BY NIGHT: PART ONE*, 1964, 145 x 185 cm (57 x 73"), Stedelyk Museum, Amsterdam, reproduced in Marlborough-Gerson, 1965.

<sup>26</sup> Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann, a page from 'The Story of Fidgety Philip' in *Struwwelpeter*, ca. 19th century.

<sup>27</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *DISCONSOLATE CHIMERAS/SHADES OF BENIA KRIK (AFTER ISAAC BABEL)*, 1962, reproduced in Marlborough-Gereon, 1965.

<sup>28</sup> R.B. Kitaj, Detail from *A STUDENT OF VIENNA*, 1961-62, 91 x 91 cm (36 x 36"), James H. Grady, Atlanta, reproduced in Livingstone, 1985.

<sup>29</sup> Benedetto Antelami (?), *Statue of Virgil*, c.1215, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, reproduced in Panofsky, 1960. The other five instances of this singular transformatory practice are all small paintings 25 x 20 cm (10 x 8") of portrait heads, all of which are later used in R.B. Kitaj, *PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHILOSOPHY*, 1963-64, 51 x 76 cm (20 x 30"), screen-print, Tate Gallery, London, reproduced in Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1970.

<sup>30</sup> Title page from Hugo's *Pia Desideria*, showing 'winged heart' reproduced in Yates, 1960.

<sup>31</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE MASTER OF SENTENCES/PREFACE: MED (PORTRAIT OF NORMAN DOUGLAS)* 1964, 122 x 122 cm (48 x 48"), oil and collage, Private collection, reproduced in Los Angeles County Museum 1965 uses a reproduction of *SPECIMEN MUSINGS OF A DEMOCRAT* as part of its collage. The reproduction does not make this clear: the simulation occurs in the bottom left-hand corner of the work.

Eighteen of the forty-four works that use oil paint use this practice. One example from 1961 and three from 1963 can serve to outline this facture and its consequences; *PARIAH; TE DEUM; THE PRODUCTION OF WASTE*; and *THE BABY TRAMP PARIAH*, 1960, which recalls Holman-Hunt's *Scapagoat* and Strindberg's play (*Pariah*), has been factured from four elements. The picture plane divided into framed areas; the oval forms derived from the illustration to the cave entrance in the *Virgil Codex*, and titled by Saxl in his *Lectures* as, 'The death of Eurydice' (LXVII); the body of a dog; and the head of a bearded man.<sup>32</sup> The dog with a man's head was suggested to Kitaj in the same lecture by Saxl, and alludes to the fate of Orpheus after he leaves the cave and is confronted with Dionysus' angry maenads. The portrait head could be Malcolm Lowry's and could be Kitaj's self-portrait.<sup>33</sup> The Pariah dog, like Orpheus is dispossessed. The central area over the dog's body has been factured to give the impression that it has been torn away and the effect is to emphasise the simulatory facture, and not any damage (however referentially accurate) to Orpheus. This is so because the 'torn' frame overlaps with the space depicted as 'behind' the dog's body.

*TE DEUM*, 1963<sup>34</sup>, as Kitaj notes in the catalogue, starts out from a production of Sartre's play translated as *No Exit*. *TE DEUM* through its title can also be related to Hauptmann's play *Wax, A Te Deum* and, because of the long 'e', to tedium. The layout might be German Expressionist theatre, where the initial framing offers different scenarios simultaneously on one stage, as Beckmann's painting derived from this *Simultanbuhune* also did.<sup>35</sup> It is a world already implied by Courbet's *L'atelier du peintre ...* and understood by Eisenstein in his use of montage.<sup>36</sup> Onto this arrangement Kitaj has added his signifiers for simulation: broken frames, bands of colour, incomplete figuration, incongruous perspective. The effect of these signifiers is that of distancing the viewer, and Kitaj, and suggests a

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<sup>32</sup> It is worth noting the recurrence of this cave entrance image in art practice and its shift of use in framing and borders. Holbein the Younger's *Arms of the city of Basle* (c.1530s, reproduced in Hueffer) and the 12th century Bestiary of 'A Panther belching' in reproduced in T.H. White, 1954, are two examples. Hugo's title page for *Pia Desideria* gives another, *op. cit.* 30. There are many examples in Wittkower, 1977 and in T.H. White. The image of stylised cave entrances or gothic arches is often associated with Virgil's grave. Henry Salt, *The Tomb of Virgil, Posillipo*, c.1800 was recently (Spring 1987) displayed in Essex University's gallery as part of its William Blake exhibition. The discussion, too diverse for this paper, would also consider the use of emblems 'around' paintings; an idea that Kitaj's *KENNST DU DAS LAND?* also suggests. Kitaj uses the 'entrance' or archway in *IF NOT, NOT*, 1975-76, 152 x 152 cm (60 x 60") Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, reproduced in Livingstone, 1985, and extends consideration of its metonymic association to death in his *PASSION (1940-45)* series.

<sup>33</sup> The likeness of the head to that of Malcolm Lowry, for instance, has not been corroborated and doesn't offer a convincing resemblance.

<sup>34</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *TE DEUM*, 1963, 122 x 183 cm (48 x 72") National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, reproduced in NMW postcard.

<sup>35</sup> An example of German Expressionist *Simultanbuhune* can be seen in Hilbert's *mise-en-scène* for F. Bruckner's *Die Verbrecher (The Criminals)*, 1928, *vid.* Bergmann and *vid.* Gandlemann.

<sup>36</sup> Courbet exemplified the 'complete', but not 'finished' work in his composite painting *L'atelier du peintre. Allégorie réelle déterminant une phase de sept années de ma vie artistique et morale* (now in Musée d'Orsay, Paris). It was first displayed together with many of the portraits that contributed to its composition, in 1855.

constructed coldness. It recalls the alienating effect produced by such artists as Brecht, Beckmann and Eisenstein as part of their didactic intention. It is the 'tradition' that Kitaj inherits and which, after Walter Benjamin's work on Baudelaire and German theatre, implies the projecting of his work towards an allegorical practice.<sup>37</sup> The collage makes as much chaos of its referents deriving, as it does, from a picture book on Japan; an image of Goethe; a swing-crane; and a figure from Sartre's play.<sup>38</sup> Such disparate insignia is not new to Kitaj, or many in his milieu. This appears to be emphatically acknowledged in his *THE PRODUCTION OF WASTE* (sometimes titled *VALUE, PRICE AND PROFIT*), 1963<sup>39</sup>, which takes a method extant in such collagists as Hannah Höch in the 1920s (e.g. Hannah Höch, *Equilbre*, 1925, collage, Institut für Auslandbeziehungen, Bonn, reproduced in Höch) and turns what appear to have been torn paper collages, into a painted improvisation and simulation of those collages.<sup>40</sup>

*THE BABY TRAMP*, 1963<sup>41</sup>, returns to the mixture of facture: the use of pasted-on paper and oil paint. Part of the simulations derive from stated sources such as the figures of a tramp family in a book by Frank Gray<sup>42</sup>, and parts derive from the images pasted onto the picture plane, such as a tent, which appears as both a photograph and a painted simulation from the photograph.<sup>43</sup> The 1960 *PARIAH* used the gestural mode of facture to simulate. The other paintings mentioned above all display the flat and thin paint application consistent in Kitaj's simulations after the 1963 exhibition. Three of the four paintings mentioned above make a complex use of broken frames and torn lines.

As can be discerned, using *PARIAH* as an example, Kitaj's referents can provide disruption of connectedness without completely breaking any plausible efficacy. His consistency and development are cogent contributions to this efficacy, giving ground for the disruptions whilst holding the disruptions in place. *TE DEUM* holds its disparities, for example, formally through the use of the fragmented, but theatrical stage, of the alienated theatre.

Whilst it is possible to see consistency and development as cogent contributions to Kitaj's overall exhibited patterns of connectedness, without need to show the referentiality of those connections, it is

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<sup>37</sup> Two paintings by Kitaj were to be titled 'After Walter Benjamin' in 1972-74.

<sup>38</sup> The image of Goethe 'from behind' has been derived a drawing in the British Museum.

<sup>39</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE PRODUCTION OF WASTE*, 1963, 152 x 152 cm (60 x 60"), Private collection, reproduced in Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1970.

<sup>40</sup> A more pertinent illustration, than that reproduced as Hannah Höch, *Equilbre*, would be Höch's *Journalisten* in the New Berlin Gallery, West Berlin. There does not appear to be a public reproduction of this.

<sup>41</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE BABY TRAMP*, 1963-64, 183 x 61 cm (72 x 24"), oil and collage, Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, reproduced in Livingstone, 1985.

<sup>42</sup> 'Beggars with Child in Perambulator', photograph opposite page 108 in Gray, Frank, 1931.

<sup>43</sup> vid. Gray 1931.

the referents which provide most of the disruptions and present Kitaj's shift in these patterns that break the 'norms' of his milieu. The painting, collages, and screen-prints in the exhibition work with and against each other. This is partly attributable to his recurrent use of different, but similar inner framing devices, and his re-use of images. In addition he holds the show together, without an intended irony, as a necessarily incomplete action: as a showing of process. In 1963 this was signified by the *WORK IN PROGRESS* painting (in collaboration with Paolozzi), and the unfinished work included in that show. In 1965 this matter takes on new proportions.

The number of works in the exhibition remains, retrospectively uncertain. There are seventy numbered items, plus nine prints listed for which, as Kitaj's catalogue note states, "originals may or may not occur in the exhibition ..." These are all part of Kitaj's screen-print series executed with Jonathan Williams' book *Mahler*.<sup>44</sup> His catalogue also notes, 'Some unnumbered paintings in this exhibition are preliminary to a large work with the interim title: *THE ART/A COMPENDIUM OF SPECULATIVE INSTRUMENTS*. In addition two of the painting reproductions in the catalogue are marked 'First State', and were completed for his subsequent 1965 show at The Lytton Gallery in Los Angeles.

Taken as a whole the exhibition with all its incomplections, projects in progress and tentative listings offers a paradigm of the painting facture itself. It shows how the aesthetic function of Kitaj's practice works. With the catalogue it emphasises the necessarily productive role of the viewer, the viewer as if watching the process of Kitaj's thinking body striving for solutions to problems he has set himself. Just as each painting relies on its lateral context of other works and references, so the exhibition relies on the viewer returning to the works in each new context the opportunity provides. Like footnotes, the use of the catalogue notes, the recurrence of images and the disparate lack of exact matchings of referentiality, assist in promoting an active viewer. The viewer turns back and speculates forward. The aggregation of signs is itself a fragmentary and enigmatic aggregation simulating from a world readily apparent as no longer permanent.

### **Interpretations of *AN EARLY EUROPE***

Which ever part of *AN EARLY EUROPE* is looked at first it becomes apparent that a sequence of intrinsic reading can be established. The figure running from the central image to the window landscape leads the eye at that place from the left to the right. The similarity between the reproduction of the Canova and the central image creates an initial oscillation where the viewer makes a comparison between the two 'areas' for similarities and dissimilarities. Once this activity settles and the viewer is left to consider the picture plane as a whole, a viewing sequence sets in. It begins with the reproduction of the Canova sculpture, as if Kitaj had begun his process there, it then moves to the central image. From

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<sup>44</sup> Five of the screen-prints in the 1965 catalogue are part of the *Mahler* series. Two paintings listed do not occur in Geoffrey Parton's 'List of Works'. They are *EVERY CRIME IN THE CALENDAR* (25 x 20 cm [10" x 8"]) and *GOGOL WITH LEECHES* (122 x 152 cm [48 x 60"]), both 1964. *vid.* Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1970, with regard to the *Mahler* series completed in 1967 as *MAHLER BECOMES POLITICS, BEISBOL*.

the central image the running figure takes the viewer out into the landscape, or rather that would be an order that could offer a logically, feasible reading. It would be part of the inclination of this reading to project the image of Kitaj or the image of the viewer onto the running figure.

Kitaj must have started the painting with the reproduction of the Canova sculpture. The image is of three women represented in carved marble. They suggest the double of, in the first place, and in Canova's manifest intention, 'The Three Graces', and in the second place, perhaps as a latent intention, an image of sexual activity between three women. This latter would appear to be one of Kitaj's readings of the Canova. The second area of the picture plane, the central image, signifies three figures involved in sexual activity. Indeed, the implication is that the scene is that of a North African harem where, to the 'Orientalist', the Arabs and the blacks are despotic and licentious respectively.<sup>45</sup> The central figure of the white woman becomes a figure of pleasure and subjection. This leads into saying subjection itself can be ambiguous. To say she is not having pleasure is to ignore the hand that rests on the black figure's buttock. The changing non-representational colours for the hands, the framing of them when of a different colour from the body they belong to, makes a double emphasis, an emphasis on the caught moment whilst the hand was in movement as if captured in a photographic lens. A second emphasis is on the confusion of the hand's ownership. The central figure is caressed by both the other figures as she clings and caresses them both. It is the central figure who is attended and who attends. Her straps are open: she is exposed to the license that the environment, 'the oriental near east', permits her. She is *Europe* exploiting and exploited. The next 'area' in the sequence runs from this scenario. The runner's hand signifies anxiety, or the wish to not hear of the proceedings. The figure runs back to the cooler climate of a Europe signified as a snowscape.

It is clear from the above that the intrinsic limiting has included some extrinsic elements. The central figure of subjection and subjectivity is *Europe* and overtly so only through the particularity of the title. The implied 'orientalism' is emphasised by this title's juxtaposition with the three racial 'types'. The central figure's head garment, with its European patterning, serves to confirm her cultural origins. It may also confirm the period under discussion. If the Canova is to carry some emphasis, and Kitaj gives it such by offering the catalogue note, 'Largely-After Canova', then the manifest intention of Canova's work, and the period of its facture, must play some part in the viewing proceedings of the work. In the first place Canova's sculpture is a 'classical' subject: 'The Three Graces'. From Greek legend they are *Aglai*a, *Euphrosyne* and *Thalia*: 'the brilliant'; 'she who rejoices the heart'; and 'she who brought flowers' respectively. They are Aphrodite's attendants when she wishes to adorn herself in all her seductions.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Gleyre's painting *Egyptian Modesty*, c.1838-39, shows an Arab man on a horse, lifting the arm of a naked white woman who veils her face in 'modesty'. Beside her, but lying down and looking up in what might be termed 'eagerness' a naked black woman, *vid.* Charles Gleyre, *Egyptian Modesty*, c.1838-39 (76 x 65 cm [30 x 25"]) Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne reproduced in Julian, 1977.

<sup>46</sup> Graves, 1955. There are slight deviations from this legend in Greece, but they do not affect the Renaissance understanding.

The Renaissance understanding shifts the 'Graces' into the role of Venus' handmaidens which became, according to, among others, the book by Panofsky that Kitaj was reading at the time, a Platonised, thus philosophical, understanding of their significance.<sup>47</sup> They qualified as the entity that was Venus, 'so much so', says Panofsky, 'that they were termed a "Trinity" of which Venus was the "Unity": they were held to embody the threefold aspect of Venus, i.e. supreme Beauty'.<sup>48</sup> 'It was possible,' continues Panofsky, 'to replace their traditional names ... by others directly indicative of their coessentiality with Venus. They were called, for instance, *Pulchritudo, Amor, Voluptas*, or *Pulchritudo, Amor, Castitas*.' Earlier Panofsky had noted, 'the nudity of the Graces' was interpreted by Latin writers, 'as a sign of unspoilt loveliness and sincerity'. This is the understanding that survives in Renaissance poetry and theatre, and subsequently into the Enlightenment period of which Antonio Canova is a late exemplar.

Kitaj's central image as an interpretation of 'The Three Graces' thus becomes an essay in transgression of Enlightenment values. What to the Renaissance was 'unspoilt loveliness and sincerity' becomes, perhaps as a consequence of European colonialism, an affair of sexual abandon. What was latent in Canova's representation of 'The Three Graces' becomes manifest in Kitaj. But the reciprocal tendency in Kitaj's art is also at work here. Kitaj's latent signifier is drawn out by the figure running to the window away from the 'hot bed' of the Orient. The figure draws out what has been repressed as he runs for cover from the 'noise'. It is the double violation that is being here signified: the violation of Enlightenment manners and, as concomitant violation, a revealing of the latent meaning of Canova's representation, and thus the Enlightenment's suppressed desire.

Panofsky allows an additional speculation to this interpretation. It is the role of Mercury. In many Renaissance works, that include 'The Three Graces', Mercury symbolises the limitations as well as the possibilities of what human reason can do. Panofsky notes,

'Impervious to the fiery arrow of Cupid and turning his back not only upon the dance of the Graces... but even upon Venus herself, he can dispel but not transcend the mist which befalls 'the lower faculties' of the soul: he may be said to express the dignity, but also the loneliness of one psychological power which is excluded from the precincts of *Amor divinus* and excludes itself from those of *Amor humanus*.'<sup>49</sup>

Which, whether by accident or not, is what Kitaj's running figure implies. The complex of seeing the central figure as *Europe*, or the discussion of the work's Enlightenment attributes, and its argument with them, are co-partners in the same discourse. Writing to Napoleon in 1810, Canova says, 'We began to

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<sup>47</sup> Kitaj was reading Erwin Panofsky's *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, Uppsala, 1972, which his 1965 catalogue cites twice.

<sup>48</sup> Panofsky, 1972. Note also Warburg in Gombrich, 1970 and Wind, 1958.

<sup>49</sup> Panofsky, 1972. It is also worth noting Jonathan Williams' explicit referral to *Amor divinus* in his *Mahler: V Rondo-Finale: 'Blake's Mission://a Flowering Heart/Delight in the Lungs,'* etc.

talk ... of the custom of clothing statues ... The language of the sculptor requires the sublime and either the nude or that style of drapery that is proper to our art ...'.<sup>50</sup> Kitaj's painting is a discourse that considers, not so much Napoleon's imperialism in North Africa, but rather Canova's sublimity. As Canova puts it, 'Let any who want to see flesh look at the *Medici Venus*, at the copies of Praxiteles' *Satyr* and of the *Cupid*...'.<sup>51</sup> It is this discourse of values that simulation invites.

On a different level, Kitaj's painting intrinsically offers the viewer a pragmatic essay in facture. His picture plane, particularly with regard to the central and most prominent image, is a combination of simulation and improvisation. He simulates from the image made from Canova's sculpture and not from the sculpture itself, nor from any image derived from the living conditions (such as an observation of the scene depicted). He copies the outlines made in reproduction of the sculpture, but he does so selectively. The hand under the central figure's breast, the hand partly covering her face, and the profile of the black figure's face, draw directly from the black and white rota-gravure reproduction. Indeed the overall central image follows the overall image in the reproduction fairly closely. His inclusion of the reproduction on the picture plane insists this is an essential part of his painting's statement. In addition to this insistence on the unity of his composition, Kitaj places the work's main imagery inside a perspectival space, in, that is, a 'counterfeit' or theatrical space. It is here that Kitaj transgresses the simulation ethos presented by many of his contemporaries (such as Warhol). This transgression is seminal to Kitaj's aesthetic practice. He selectively copies from the reproduction and improvises playfully against it. The added hand to the black figure's buttock, the change in facial characteristics of the central and right-hand figures; the leg spread of the central figure and the head garments, all serve to shift the Canovan 'manners' into those of an age reflecting upon them. Such improvising is prominent in his use of colour and framing.

The three white 'graces' in the reproduction become both highly coloured by paint and, in two of the depicted figures, of different racial 'types'. What is more, one of the figures becomes male, which radically breaks the potential decorum of the Enlightenment's morality and, in part, exposes its real sensibility.

This making and breaking of attitudes is emphasised by Kitaj's use of framings that are in every case but one, broken and, in one case, presented chaotically. The latter chaotic frame brings emphasis to Kitaj's wish to give hints with regard to his facture. This frame, in gold yellow, placed at the top right and partly over the depiction of the Arab figure, gives the impression of being made as a copy of masking tape or possibly as a copy of a drawing frame, as if the painting's facture involved the use of such tools to assist in the design that preceded the painting facture.

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<sup>50</sup> Canova quoted in translation in Goldwater and Treves 1976: 196.

<sup>51</sup> Goldwater and Treves 1976: 197.

However, this framing has been an overt addition by Kitaj after the facture of the parts that lie beneath it. The addition of the frame has at minimum the function of putting emphasis on Kitaj's facture and consequently his activity of making and breaking. It can also be seen to offer three other functional purposes. Adding the frame in this chaotic state reminds the viewer that sometimes Kitaj frames exactly, (albeit not completely) from an existing image. It reminds the viewer of his simulating act. Its distortion thus suggests to the viewer that part of Kitaj's action is exactly that: a bending of the originating image to suit his didactic function. Secondly, the chaotic frame is a unifying dynamic shape that contradicts the perspectival illusions. It shifts the active, central image pictorially to persuade the viewer to lead off from the central image towards the running figure and thus the window landscape. Thirdly, framing may be understood as a Brechtian device, as a contribution to *Verfremdung*<sup>52</sup> — a deliberate alienating device that at once breaks any illusionary, 'counterfeit' order of appearance sought after by the viewer — and puts the painting in its context as what it is: a factured object derived from different fragments, different foci. These are matters that can be returned to after checking them as values, or loss of values, with the other extrinsic contexts the painting *AN EARLY EUROPE* engages with.

Reading' Kitaj's *AN EARLY EUROPE* provides the viewer with a multiplicity of considerations that involve the viewer's thinking body, and not simply a thinker or a sensualist. This understanding can be spread into other parts of the 1985 exhibition and into much of Kitaj's work in the period that the exhibition surveys. Three of the elements in *AN EARLY EUROPE* may be discerned in other works, and many other works in the show and elsewhere may inform the viewing of *AN EARLY EUROPE*. These elements may be summarised as: simulation; making and breaking; and referential recurrence.

### **Kitaj's grand theme**

The consideration of *AN EARLY EUROPE* could end here, but to do so would be to misunderstand Kitaj's project. The painting interpreted intrinsically denies the grand theme that he appears to project through the patterns of connectedness he presents traces of. A consideration of this theme may be approached through *AN EARLY EUROPE* in the context of its first display, albeit now in the different context that retrospection presents.

Canova's sculpture *The Three Graces* is a discourse which may be interpreted as that of understanding the potential of a post-Enlightenment aesthetics derived from such writers as Schiller. The magazine reproduction from a detail of that sculpture factures a second discourse. Kitaj's improvised simulation in the central image of *AN EARLY EUROPE* becomes a discourse on both the sculpture and its photographic reproduction in rota-gravure. The figure running from that central image, running from that discourse, so to speak, presents a further discourse. These many levels of discourse complex

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<sup>52</sup> Benjamin, 1977.

laterally into the patterns, comparisons and associations with the other works *AN EARLY EUROPE* is presented with in the 1965 New York exhibition.

The grand theme may be summarised in terms of an apparent inability to formulate a reconciliation between the potential values derived from the post-Enlightenment and Kitaj's post-war alienation from that potential. For Schiller the distinction between Beauty and Grace is the distinction between an absolute and an attribute. Canova, like the Renaissance artists discussed by Panofsky above, sees 'The Three Graces' as attributes of Love. Like Beauty, 'strength must allow itself to be heard by the Graces, and the lion have its defiance curbed by the bridle of a Cupid'.<sup>53</sup> Canova appears to stretch this role of Love in his understanding of 'The Three Graces' into what F. Licht calls 'sunny eroticism', and this view may be corroborated by the inspiration from the sculpture's sponsor, ex-Empress Josephine.<sup>54</sup> Canova's attitude towards sculpture and its representation of the sensuous flesh has already been cited above. Beauty, however, does not rely on pure empiricism but is imperative: sensuous-rational humankind, at work in Schiller's middle disposition in *Letter XX*, is enjoined to achieve it. *The Three Graces* by Canova in this sense echoes Schiller's letter to Körner; speaking of the English figure-dance in 1793 he writes: 'It is the most perfectly appropriate symbol of the assertion of one's own freedom and regard for the freedom of others.'<sup>55</sup> in these terms, for Schiller and Canova, Beauty is restorative of an idea of the range of human potentials, which has been narrowed and determined by a single and divided task that most members of society are obliged to perform, a society in which work is structured by the division of labour. Canova's *The Three Graces* and Schiller's discourse on Beauty and Love, thus lead as a consequence onto a discussion of freedom and civil living.

The Ideal State that Schiller, among others, had thought of as fostering the development of all its citizens, was disrupted by the social situation after the French Revolution. The aftermath of the fighting did not produce the liberal State Schiller's friend, Humboldt, anticipated as 'a State interfering as little as possible with the freedom of individuals, but providing the protective framework within which they can flourish'.<sup>56</sup> On the contrary, for Schiller after Louis XVI's execution, 'The (Revolutionary) attempt of the French people ... has plunged, not only that unhappy people itself, but a considerable part of Europe and a whole century, back into barbarism and slavery'.<sup>57</sup>

Canova's sculpture, his figure-dance of freedom, embodies an Enlightenment complex which is thwarted by a European political failure. Of course this over-summarises: it is clear, however, that the manifest discourse available through Canova is not well served by a reproduction of a detail of that

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<sup>53</sup> Schiller's *Letter XXVII* in Schiller, 1967.

<sup>54</sup> Fred Licht, 1983.

<sup>55</sup> Schiller to C.G. Körner, Schiller, 1967.

<sup>56</sup> Wilhelm von Humboldt quoted in Schiller, 1967.

<sup>57</sup> Schiller to his patron in 1793, Schiller, 1967.

sculpture offered, at least potentially, as a simple voyeuristic eroticism. If this is what the magazine reproduction does offer, it does at the same time offer a new discourse. This discourse, even if inadvertently proposed by the magazine's use of the sculpture, is a revelation of Canova's latent content and intention already alluded to in terms of his comments on flesh and his inspirational sponsor: it is the sculpture's discourse on sexuality. Three women, mostly unclothed, are involved in a sensuous movement that goes beyond the norms of the English 'figure-dance'; they are interacting sexually. The sculpture's discourse upon this activity is one of idealisation of this activity, into an understanding of the complexion of Love and Beauty. The magazine's reproduction, however, shifts the emphasis of this potential discourse from that of idealisation to that of voyeuristic identification of the activity with an empirical world. Both the idealisation and the empiricism are active in the sculpture: only the latter is prominent in the reproduction.

The central image in *AN EARLY EUROPE* is a discourse, in the first place, upon both the Canovan sculpture and the magazine's reproduction of the detail of that sculpture. Kitaj uses the morphology of the reproduction's image and improvises upon it to facture his image. His presentation of the central image in the painting, however, insists that his discourse has not ignored the potential ramifications of the original sculpture.

As has already been discussed above, Kitaj's discourse highlights the latent discourse in the Canovan sculpture made manifest by the magazine reproduction. But Kitaj's improvisation of that image has added a further dimension to this discourse. Like Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Kitaj's work comments upon the orientalist harem, the representation of female sexuality, the situation of the white European woman in North Africa 'plunged', as Schiller said referring to Europe, 'back into barbarism and slavery'. Kitaj shifts his attention laterally from that of Picasso's, to include a racial and gender mix not presented by Picasso. Where Picasso's discourse confronts the viewer with women (prostitutes) presented by a woman (Madame), thus offering an exposure of the exploitive use of the images of women, particularly in 'orientalist' or nineteenth century genre paintings, Kitaj's critique of a similar exploitation shifts its emphasis to an ambiguity.<sup>58</sup> The white figure of 'Europe' in the centre is both exploited and exploiting. This repositions the discourse that comments upon the Canovan discourse on Beauty. Kitaj's discourse is not simply an exposure of Canova's eroticism, or voyeurism: the magazine's reproduction is already that. Kitaj's discourse impinges upon the old value of the necessity of limitation for freedom. This is exemplified in Kitaj's figure as that of subjection and subjector. It is in this light that Kitaj's painting begins to contribute to the discourse on the failure of European civilisation and Schiller's understanding of this as the loss of the post-Enlightenment potential: that 'the truth of art is the liberation of sensuousness through its reconciliation with reason'.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> For example *The Judgement of Paris* by Anselm Feuerbach, *vid.* Hinz, 1974, and Ingres' *The Turkish Bath*, *vid.* Nash, 1974. There are many examples in Hinz, 1974 and in Julian, 1977.

<sup>59</sup> Marcuse, 1966.

Kitaj's sensuousness and rationality, his middle disposition, is evident in his freedom to 'play'. His improvised simulations display the freedom to play sensuously with Canova's order of Beauty against a critique of that order and that civilisation which, as Marcuse puts it, 'dealt modern man' a wound, an alienation. Kitaj partly signifies this alienation through the running figure. The figure running from the central image of *AN EARLY EUROPE* thus becomes Kitaj's other. It may be placed besides the dispossessed figures in the 1965 exhibition.

The compositional structure of *AN EARLY EUROPE* set against *TE DEUM* can partly be seen to contribute to an alienating effect in the viewer. *THE PRODUCTION OF WASTE* confirms Kitaj's interest in the breakdown of identities into ambiguities or double significations. Whilst *THE BABY TRAMP* works intrinsically, it also, in the context of the exhibition, offers parallels of dispossession clearly specified by Kitaj. Legros' etching of Rip van Winkle, pasted onto Kitaj's *DISMANTLING THE RED TENT*<sup>60</sup> would be one example. The painting, made after Kennedy's assassination, displays yet another example of civil failure, the dispossessed are thus linked to political radicalism. It is through such use of images that Charlie Chaplin becomes the anti-fascist, as well as clown-tramp, in *BOYS AND GIRLS!*<sup>61</sup> and in *GOOD NEWS FOR INCUNABULISTS*, and aligns to the Resistance movements in World War II, and the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War (for example in *KENNST DU DAS LAND?*). Like *THE FIRST TERRORIST* however, Chaplin is not identified with these latter figures. He takes part in the marginality from society that the dispossessed share. Throughout the exhibition radicalism and dispossession are 'played' by a composite figure, or are juxtaposed with each other in collage.

The figure of Hedda Sterne, as the 'forgotten' member of the 'Irascibles', is set against the character in Babel's story in *DISCONSOLATE CHIMERAS/SHADES OF BENIN KRIK*.<sup>62</sup> The figure of Randolph Bourne, the lone, dwarf and radical writer out of New Jersey is played against von Schwind's folk hero Rübzahl in *RANDOLPH BOURNE IN IRVING PLACE*<sup>63</sup>. The figure of Nobody in *YAMILL* (as well as in *NOTES TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF NOBODY*, which plays with Eliot's essay title 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture') is the Renaissance 'fool' and social radical with padlocked mouth discussed

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<sup>60</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *DISMANTLING THE RED TENT*, 1964, 122 x 122 cm (48 x 48"), oil with etching by Alphonse Legros. The Michael and Dorothy Blankfort Collection, Los Angeles County Museum, reproduced in Livingstone, 1985.

<sup>61</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *BOYS AND GIRLS!* 1964, 21x16, collage, Tate collection, London, screen-print collage, reproduced in Marlborough-Gerson, 1965.

<sup>62</sup> Hedda Sterne also appears in *ISAAC BABEL RIDING WITH BUDYONNY* and the picture of the 'Irascibles' appears in *VERNISSAGE COCKTAIL*, 1967, with her image 'cut out' and removed. vid. Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1970

<sup>63</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *RANDOLPH BOURNE IN IRVING PLACE*, 1963, 152 x 152 cm (60 x 60"), oil and collage, Private collection, Switzerland, reproduced in Marlborough-Gerson, 1965.

by Calmann.<sup>64</sup> Kitaj uses Calmann's illustrations for part of his imagery. The figure in *YAMHILL* is juxtaposed with the building signifying law in America, and inside the ladder in Ramon Lull's treatise on the laws of Nature.<sup>65</sup> The figure of Nobody is a scapegoat and a pariah; in the painting *PARIAH*, like the dogs in *THE NICE OLD MAN AND THE PRETTY GIRL (WITH HUSKIES)*<sup>66</sup>, the figure is again doubly dispossessed.

Kitaj, as if adopting Edgar Wind's idea of the allegorical portrait,<sup>67</sup> with the collage sensibility used by artists such as Höch, in the facture of *PARIAH* plays pariah as mantichore<sup>68</sup> against the caves which hold Eurydice.<sup>69</sup> Pariah is thus also Orpheus (and perhaps Malcolm Lowry). This brings *A STUDENT OF VIENNA (LXI)* into context - the figure of the dispossessed Virgil who consults the cave oracle in times of social danger. The signifier for the cave in the *Virgil Codex (LXVII)* as mentioned above, recurs in the exhibition. It occurs in fragments in *AN EARLY EUROPE*. The alienated figure in *AN EARLY EUROPE* can thus also be Orpheus running from a triple Eurydice, running as if in indecision. The figure, however, has already been seen to be running from the failure of European civilisation, or the inability of that civilisation to reconcile the post-Enlightenment potential, creates as alienation. It is no wonder the figure aligns at this point with the figure of Garcin in Sartre's *No Exit* (in the painting *TE DEUM*): '... There's no need for red-hot poker. Hell is - other people!' <sup>70</sup> Garcin's dilemma, like that of the figure in *AN EARLY EUROPE*, becomes the figure in Hell in Michelangelo's *The Last Judgement* <sup>71</sup> which comes to the fore in Kitaj's simulation of that figure in *THE PERILS OF REVISIONISM* <sup>72</sup> made in the light of the Chinese and Russian ideological struggles.

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<sup>64</sup> Various depictions of *Nobody*: A: Wolfgang Strauch, *Die Niemandt*, c.1570; B: Ulrich von Hutton, *Nemo*, Wittenberg, 1516; C: Illustration to poem in Low German, 1596, 'Nobody', all reproduced in Gerta Calmann. 'The Picture of Nobody', *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes*. Kitaj has also linked the dispossessed to frenzy in the alternative title to this work: *NOTES TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF NOBODY, A REVERIE*.

<sup>65</sup> Lull with ladders, Karlsruhe Miniatures, reproduced in Yates, 1954.

<sup>66</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE NICE OLD MAN AND THE PRETTY GIRL (WITH HUSKIES)*, 1964, 122 x 122 cm (48 x 48"), reproduced in Kestner-Gesellschaft, 1970.

<sup>67</sup> Edgar Wind. 'Studies in Allegorical Portraiture I', *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes*.

<sup>68</sup> *The Mantichora* or *Martikhora* from Edward Topsell's *Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes*, 1607, reproduced in T.H. White, 1954.

<sup>69</sup> The *Mantichora* or *Martikhora* appears in many forms, *vid.* T.H. White, 1954 and Wittkower, 1942 and 1977.

<sup>70</sup> *No Exit* is the translation of Sartre's *Huis Clos*. Sartre 1946: 47.

<sup>71</sup> Michelangelo, Detail from *The Last Judgement*, c.1536-41, Sistine Chapel, The Vatican, reproduced in Charles De Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, 1971.

<sup>72</sup> R.B. Kitaj, *THE PERILS OF REVISIONISM*, 1963, 152 x 152 cm (60 x 60"), Private collection, New York, reproduced in Livingstone, 1985.

The dispossessed figure in Kitaj's paintings is in each case part of Kitaj's other. The figures take part with Schiller's robber, Karl von Moor. As Thomas Carlyle puts it, speaking of Schiller's work, '... they remind us of defective civilisation, as well as *the fervid and harassed feelings of its author.*'<sup>73</sup> 'To Schiller,' Carlyle continues later, 'the analogy of their situation (between Schiller and von Moor) must have peculiarly recommended him. *Moor is animated into action by feelings similar to those under which his author was then suffering and longing to act.*' Kitaj's project echoes Carlyle's discussion of Schiller's play.<sup>74</sup>

When the runner in Kitaj's *AN EARLY EUROPE* runs against the critique of the idea that Beauty compounds mendacity by promising a release from identity, as he runs away, he is ineluctably returned. He is in this sense also Orpheus. For Orpheus, 'Eurydice is the furthest that art can reach'.<sup>75</sup> His work is to bring it back to the light of day and to give it form, shape, and reality in the day outside of the cave. But by turning toward Eurydice, Orpheus ruins the work, the Beauty. What became false through coarseness or enervation is brought back by means of Beauty.<sup>76</sup> It is the confrontational and Nietzschean return, this double in the gaze of Orpheus and in the figure of alienation, the viewer experiences as episodic recurrence in Kitaj's spread of work. It is where the head of Pariah, that may be Orpheus and Malcolm Lowry, just as quickly disrupts and recalls Kitaj's own self-portrait philosophising on aesthetics and civilisation. As Nietzsche put it, 'In some it is their deprivations that philosophise; in others their riches and strengths. The former NEED their philosophy ... For the latter it is merely a beautiful luxury'.<sup>77</sup>

Kitaj's poise complexes the overtly stated referentiality in his use of the reproduction from the Canovan idealised sculpture and the uncertain identity of the running figure of alienation. It indicates that Kitaj's role partakes in both positions: the political, radical dispossessed, and the figure of Orpheus: the consultant at the fragments of the cave of the oracle in times of social danger and the seeker for Beauty. Even if Kitaj was standing before Canova's, original marble he would be confronting something extinguished, something uncertain. When set against the 'world as text' (the reproduction of the photograph of the sculpture) Kitaj's simulations draw on a spread from seriousness and uncertainty to

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Life of Schiller*, 1825. The italics have been added.

<sup>74</sup> The following may serve as an example: 'The characters of the place, though traced in glowing colours, are outlines more than pictures: the few features we discover in them are drawn with elaborate minuteness; but the rest are wanting. Everything indicates the condition of a keen and powerful intellect, which had studied men in books only ... The inferior banditti are painted with great vigour, yet still in rugged and ill-shapen forms; their individuality is kept up by an extravagant exaggeration of their peculiarities ... When Moor is involved in the deepest intricacies of the old question, necessity and free will, and has convinced himself that he is but an engine in the hands of some dark and irresistible power, he cries out: Why has my Perillus made me a brazen bull to roast men in my glowing belly?' Carlyle 1825.

<sup>75</sup> Maurice Blanchot, 'The Gaze of Orpheus', 1982.

<sup>76</sup> vid. Schiller 1967, *Letter XX*.

<sup>77</sup> Nietzsche in the second preface to *The Gay Sconce*, quoted by Roger McKeon in 'Gaiety, A Difficult Science', *Nietzsche's Return*, 1978.

arbitrariness that produces a pattern of connectedness and discontinuity, which constitutes his aesthetic function. When set against the living conditions (the perceived and invented world), the viewer's patterns of connectedness, these simulations present disruptions which can provide the energy to change the tropes of those patterns towards the making of tomorrow's healthiness. A health, that is, 'in which sense and reason are both active' and which 'pre-eminently deserves to be called a free disposition'.<sup>78</sup>

In view of this as potential, the viewer is indeed being presented with a *Europe that is Early*: not the beginnings of a continental land mass, or group of nations, but the beginnings of an Enlightened civilisation that itself produces the 'wound' that alienation and the post-Enlightenment potential exemplify. Out of necessity Marcuse understates this in recognising that 'only a new mode of civilisation can heal it'.<sup>79</sup> It is too soon to know whether Kitaj's sought-after position as a senso-rational artist can contribute towards such a projection. It is part of his aesthetic project to include uncertainty. Whether he seeks Beauty, or simply the Grace to fully consider it, his terms are not melancholic. He proposes an allegorically formulated grand theme, without necessarily having decided to do so beforehand.

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<sup>78</sup> vid. Schiller 1967, *Letter XX*.

<sup>79</sup> Marcuse, 1966.

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