SYNAPSE LAPSE

Arthur Kroker

Hyperreality

> But today the scene and the mirror no longer exist; instead, there is a screen and network. In place of the reflexive transcendence of mirror and scene, there is a nonreflexive surface, an immanent surface where operations unfold — the smooth operational surface of communication.
> ... the schizo is bereft of every scene, open to everything in spite of himself, living in the greatest confusion... He is only a pure screen, a switching center for all the networks of influence.
>
> Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstacy of Communication"[1]

Because of his brilliant productions in electric art. Tony Brown is already an important contemporary artist of the postmodern kind, and is, in fact, the direct successor in sculpture to the hyper-technological vision of Marshall McLuhan. This is to say, then, that Brown is an artist of technology and postmodern culture *par excellence*. In his sculptural simulations, ranging from *Two Machines for Feeling* and *Spinning House* to *Breaking Screen*, we are processed through the hallucinogenic, implosive, and hyperreal logic of technology in the postmodern condition. Indeed, Brown's artistic vision runs just at that edge where quantum physics enters popular culture, and where the overriding mood is that of "uncertainty" as *we* become screens for electronic imaging-systems (from television and the information society of micro computers

to the blast of the advertising machine) which are seductive only because they engage in a series of sign crimes. What makes Tony Brown's simulations of postmodern technology and society so fascinating is that they reveal, in grisly yet seductive detail, the extent to which life in the processed world of technological society runs at the edge between ecstacy *and* decay, between processed world as violence and seduction, between hyper-technology as "space invaders" and body invaders.

In *The Medium is the Massage*, McLuhan insisted that we cannot understand technological experience from the outside. We can only understand how the electronic, and then digital, world works us over if we recreate the experience, in depth and mythically, of the processed world of technology.

> All media work us over completely. They are so persuasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the massage. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments.[2]

It was McLuhan's special insight that twentieth-century experience is dominated by actual "exteriorizations" of the human sensory capacities and of the human mind itself in the form of the disembodied world of the electronic media. What's the real meaning of the medium as massage? It's just this: we now live *in reverse image* as the central nervous system has gone outside in the form of the environment of the technological media of communication (the "artificial intelligence" of computers as approximating the externalization of consciousness; television as a sightscape; Sony Walkman's as a soundscape where our heads become broadcasting booths); and the media environment comes inside in the form of the seduction of desire which is the language of the advertising scene today. For McLuhan, technology *is* the real world!

Now, Tony Brown may be the direct successor to McLuhan's privileged vision of the technological media of communication, but there is one key difference between Brown and McLuhan. McLuhan might have warned us that the big change precipitated by electronic technology was actually to flip human consciousness and sensory experience inside out as we live within the processed world of the mediascape, but Brown has gone much further than McLuhan in actually *decoding* the inner language of postmodern technology and culture. In a series of pioneering simulations of the mediascape, Brown shows exactly how the various technological media of communication function to exteriorize the human mind and the human sensory capacities, to actually take possession of the central nervous system and of consciousness itself like

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body invaders of the media kind. Moreover, he has provided important clues to what the social and cultural impact of life in the fast track of the technoscape, '80s style is likely to hold for the future.

Tony Brown is, in fact, that rarity of an artist: a visual prophet of the age of quantum technology whose art can be at the height of its times because, rather than seeking to evade the blast of the technoscape, it does just the opposite. Brown's electric sculpture is a brilliant case study in art as "probe", seeking out the most intensive participation possible in the most dynamic, yet hidden, aspects of postmodern technology. His electric or, perhaps better, *digital* sculpture thus has a twofold importance which gives it a more urgent claim to general cultural significance in understanding the postmodern condition. It is a profoundly original and deeply seductive vision of what is happening to *us* as we are worked over by the silent language of the technoscape; and, in addition, it provides a critical method — the artist as probe — for understanding technology. This is just to say, then, that Brown's artistic productions have a more pressing and, in fact, global, significance as one of this country's most accurate (and chilling) decodings of the silent language of technology in the quantum era. Indeed, Brown's simulational art has done just that which the French theorist, Jean-Francois Lyotard, writing in *Driftworks* said would be most difficult for critical art today: deciphering not only the explicit contents of the mediascape, but actually foregrounding the ideological effects of the mediascape which are hidden in the very *form* of the technological media of communication. Brown forces the processed world of postmodern technology to reveal its hidden ideological agenda; and in doing so he compels us to think anew about the fate of technology and culture in the contemporary century.

In Brown's electric art, technology inscribes itself on the body in the seductive language of imaging-systems; everything is driven from within by the relentless dynamo of centrifugal forces; and every element of popular culture (from the TV Guide of *Two Machines for Feeling* to the advanced consumer culture of *Spinning House*) is already on its way to a grisly terminal point in reversal, cancellation, and exterminism. Brown actually compels the simulacrum to reveal its secret: a processed world modelled on the "screen and the network" is also the terrain of dead power, dead sex, and dead culture. What's Brown's processed world? It's technology as the inscription of power in the form of advertising on the text of the body, and as the disappearance of the body itself into the disembodied and perfectly bleak (just because so aesthetically seductive) scene of the mediascape: an electronic scene which reduces itself quickly to the "smooth operational surface of communication": which functions psychologically under the sign of schizoid personalities who as "pure

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screens" are also "open switching centers for all the networks of influence" and whose key cultural tendencies are parasitism and excess.

Brown's artistic vision — the world of communications as one big synapse lapse — runs parallel to the theoretical vision of postmodern technology proferred by the French avante-garde theorist Jean Baudrillard, in *Simulations*:

> The very definition of the real has become: *that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction...* The real is not only what can be reproduced, *but that which is always already reproduced*. The hyperreal... which is entirely in simulation.[3]

"A Performance without Performers"

It's not just that Brown's sculptures actually tease out the ideological inscriptions hidden in the form of things by foregrounding the background effects of the mediascape (although that too). No, the cumulative impact of Brown's sculptural productions is to create, at a deep psychological level, the actual *emotional experience* of technological media. And they do so by *simulating* the media environment which is, anyway, how we experience the real world of technology today. Brown's sculptural *simulacra* draw together something of the actual physical blast of the cyclotronic mechanisms of particle physics (the centrifuge in *Two Machines for Feeling* and *Spinning House* as a teasing out of the violence of quantum technology); the power of information society as it inscribes the surfaces of just about everything (from the frame construction of *Spinning House* to the disembodied robots of *Two Machines for Feeling*); science as the language of power today (the micro-computer which coordinates the robotic movements and imaging-sequences of *Two Machines for Feeling* to the infrared, x-rayed world of *Breaking Screen*); and the despairing mood of the inhabitants of the spinning world of post-industrial society ("Get up"; "Make Breakfast"; "Go to Work"; "Come Home"; "Watch TV"; "Go to Bed"). And what's more, Brown's sculptures are linked together by a deep thematic unity, which moves from the external effects of the mediascape (*Two Machines for Feeling*) to progressively more intensive and interior — indeed, almost *metaphysical* visions — of technology as body invaders: the publicity culture of *Spinning House* and the suicidal nihilism of *Breaking Screen*.

Indeed, it's because Brown is really a metaphysician of quantum technology that he is able to sum up in his artistic vision many of the key tendencies in a whole generation of theorists who have thought deeply about technology and culture: Baudrillard's hyperreal, implosive, and violent world of technological simulacra is the background text for *Two Machines for Feeling*; Michel Foucault's brilliant essay "A Preface to

Transgression''[4] is suggestive of the lightning-flash of *Breaking Screen*; and *Spinning House?* that's perfectly suggestive of Roland Barthes' dead world of *Camera Lucida*[5] where we are saturated by electronic imaging-systems of staged communications, inert photographs, dead signs — a whole world of advertising culture as toxic poisoning of the semiological kind.

However, this is not to say of Brown's sculptural productions that they are fatalistic. Quite the opposite! Brown says of his own works that they move at the edge of ecstacy and decay, and they do so because just like the technological media which they simulate, they take their materials directly from popular culture. His is a sculpture of "a performance without performers".

> Today, there is a real uncertainty of experience. The mediascape constructs and deconstructs. Where there is narrative continuity, things are, in fact, most violent.[6]

Brown says further of the *method* of his work that it's just like performance art:

> It does at the level of technological simulation what performance artists did in self-immolation. It's intended to show how the exteriorization of the senses occur in the media... how technological media become violent, hallucinogenic, and implosive... *how technology today actually pivots into psychosis!*[7]

Brown's recurrence to the site of popular culture as the focus of his sculptural simulacra is strategic. It is intended to show both how the ideology of the technological imperative has inscribed itself, most deeply and pervasively, in the most prosaic items of contemporary consumer culture (the house as an ideological site of consumption *par excellence* in *Spinning House* or the simulacra of the image-system in *Two Machines for Feeling*); and to disclose a possible avenue of escape. Brown seems to suggest that it is only by thinking in terms of absolute negativity, in thinking the worst that can be thought or imagined (the nihilistic implosion of experience in *Breaking Screen*; the wasteland culture of *Spinning House*; the degendered sex of the ballerina figure and the mechanical robot in *Two Machines for Feeling*) that the rage for political action can commence. This is not an abstract art at all: rather it is profoundly concrete. And it is concrete just because Brown's sculptural simulacra begin and end with the necessity of thinking humanism anew within the limits and possibilities of technology as the real world. Indeed, Brown can understand the hyperrealism of the new order of technological simulacra (television, computers, chip technology) so well, just because he is a realist on the question of understanding technology.

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It is Brown's special insight that it is only by deciphering, in exact detail, the new language of quantum technologies as they inscribe their power on the surfaces of just about everything (from the body as text for advertisements to consumption as publicity culture to the hyper) that we can discover a method for enhancing the possibilities of technological media of communication while limiting the unlimited dangers of technology without any sustaining or guiding ethical vision. Just like McLuhan before him, Brown is, in the most constitutive and profound sense, deeply religious in his approach to understanding media. He seeks to realize the possible "epiphanies", or possibilities for the aestheticization of reason in technological experience; and to do so without illusions and with a full understanding of paradox, irony, and ambiguity as the deepest language of technology in the quantum condition.

It is just this tension between technology as violence *and* redemption — this insistence of revealing exactly how technology as language takes possession of our bodies, our culture, our sex, our vision, and on disclosing how technology is (paradoxically) most seductive just when it is most violent — which is the deep thematic unity running through three of Brown's major works: *Two Machines for Feeling, Breaking Screen*, and *Spinning House*. A careful study of those works reveals an artistic imagination which has translated the most important insights of French poststructuralist thought (from Derrida's "traces" to Baudrillard's insights into technological simulacra as the death of the social) into successively deeper and more psychologically profound understandings of the semiotics of quantum technology; and which has, moreover, presented the challenge anew *to us* of rethinking ethics in the quantum condition.

Missing Matter: *Two Machines for Feeling* and the Death of the Social

There was a story recently in the British magazine, *Nature*, which said, and this without any sense of irony, that after the Big Bang which began the universe, 90% of the *physical* matter of the universe went missing, just disappeared, and no one — astro-physicists most of all — know where it's gone. Now, I would argue, and this with respect to the critical importance of *Two Machines for Feeling*, that after the equally Big Bang of communication technologies which began the new universe of postmodern (signifying) culture, 90% of the *social* matter of the universe went missing, just disappeared, and no one — with the possible exception of artists like Tony Brown — know where it's gone.

It's not at all surprising that the art critic for the Montréal Gazette should have said recently that "to experience *Two Machines for Feeling* is to know immediately that you are in the presence of a masterpiece".[8] After all, *Two Machines for Feeling* is a privileged sculptural simulacra. It

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is *quantum art* fully equal to the task of taking measure of the dynamic and implosive language of quantum technology!

This sculptural production shows us on the outside what we have become on the inside in the era of postmodern technology. It's like a 1980's version of the almost surrealistic mirror-reversals, time-warps, and space shifts of *Alice in Wonderland*, except this time rather than slip from the Real into the fantasy world of a deck of cards come alive, in *Two Machines for Feeling* we actually enter into the (dark) semiological interior of information society. In a culture which is pulverized by the mediascape to the extent that we can speak realistically now about neon brains, electric egos, and digitalized eyes as the bigger circuitry of a society held together by the "smooth surface" of the screen and the network, entering into the simulacra of *Two Machines for Feeling* is something akin to being positioned in the real (hallucinogenic) world of postmodern technology. It's like space travel in the society of the super-chip; just where, however, we become passive observers of what is happening to us every day in the complex sign-system of information society. *Two Machines for Feeling* is, in fact, a perfect simulacra of a culture modelled on the "screen and the network"; and driven from within by the reduction of experience to the transparent surface of the image-system (communication), with us this time as dangling schizos: "a pure screen, a switching center for all the networks of influence".[9]

As an analysis of the complex, inner *discourse* of postmodern technology, *Two Machines for Feeling* is very insightful. This artistic production is, to begin with, about the "virtual body", the body which doesn't exist except as the site of convergence of the axes traced by three great discourses: the *digital coding of a culture which is coordinated today by the power of computermatics* (the micro-computer in *Two Machines for Feeling* controls the action of the robots and the sequencing of the image-system); *the implosive and hallucinogenic logic of image-systems* (this is a perfect image of television with the "pixle images" as the Real and us as the "missing matter" of the production); and the *immanent violence of the cyclotronic ballerina* (Brown says that "narrative continuity in information society can be assured only by a violent speeding-up of the dynamo"). As a semiology of technology to the hyper in the postmodern condition, *Two Machines for Feeling* is just perfect: it's all *gender side* (the robot has no sex; and the ballerina has no existence except as a tiny porcelain doll; the production is about the existence today of only a degendered, virtual sex); it's all *technologically dependent* (just like in performance art, turn off the energy system and the apparatus is just inert rubble); everything *plays at the edge of the ecstacy of communication and the detritus of excremental culture* (Brown says, in fact, that he is interested in just that moment when

"fascination turns into psychosis");[10] and it forces to the surface the *ideological inscriptions* hidden in the formal structures of technology (the visual continuity of the dancing ballerina is maintained only by the flattening of the image — *and us with it* — at warp speeds; and we are ideologically positioned as inert observers of the spectacle).

The overall mood of *Two Machines for Feeling* is one of ambiguity, paradox, and even parody as that which is most aesthetically seductive (the image of the dance of the ballerina, the shadow play of the mechanical robot) is also shown to be a real site of immolation (Brown actually foregrounds the inner circuitry of the computerscape which controls the deconstruction and reconstruction of the image-system). Indeed, this production suggests that industrial technology (the mechanical robot) and post-industrial technology (the simulacra of the ballerina's dance) are *not* different order of phenomena; but, in fact, are two deeply convergent tendencies in a common (technological) process of seduction and immolation. And why not? Everything in *Two Machines for Feeling* suggests that technological society *as domination* functions now by a relentless invasion on the part of the technological dynamo of the *interior* (the manipulation of desire in a promotional culture where power works as seduction) and of the *exterior* (the mechanical robot as a simulacra of Chaplin's *Modern Times*). Indeed, *Two Machines for Feeling* is emblematic of the closing of the circle of technological domination in three key ways. *Optically*, the production works under the psychological sign of illusion: an illusionary system, however, which is intended to be seductive just because it is visually disorienting like the hallucinogenic world of TV where narrative continuity is provided by the positioning of our faces as screens for the play of TV images. *Digitally*, just like an avant-garde expression of the world of computer-generated imagery (which is the deepest language of quantum technology), all of the movements of the production are controlled cybernetically (the micro-computer with its adoption and use of pioneering programming techniques on Brown's part). Like the quantum condition which it simulates, *Two Machines for Feeling* is the emblematic sign of a system which is high in information, but low in energy. And finally, *cyclotronically*, the violence of the technological dynamo as the underlying logic of postmodern culture dynamo is simulated by the relentless force and speed-up of the centrifuge which is at the (disappearing) centre of the production. Ironically, what is most interesting is that it is only when the centrifuge achieves a speed which is life-threatening (and thus has to be boxed in to protect the audience) that it produces an illusion of narrative continuity by gradually flattening the image of the ballerina. The idea of the cyclotron with its violent, implosive language of speed-up is, of course, specific to particle physics, the real language of quantum

technology today. In particle physics, the cyclotron is the decisive experimental mechanism for blasting apart physical matter in order to make it reveal its most elementary (quanta) building-blocks. The implication is clear. If particle physics (as the language of contemporary power) begins by *imploding* the elementary constituents of physical experience to their very limits in the micro world of leptons and baryons, then an artistic strategy which would seek to foreground science as today's language of power should do exactly the opposite. It should foreground the background of the cyclotron (the centrifuge as "techno-logical dynamo") in order to both tease out the inner violence in technological experience and to show that information society actually functions by *deconstructing* cultural experience (blasting apart society into its elementary particles: "the screen and the network" with us as "computer blips" on the bigger neural circuitry of the new communica-tion order); and by *reconstructing* the cultural residue (that's *us* after the big blast of the mediascape) into hallucinogenic wholes (information society as *ersatz community*). And, of course, the double reversal of the language of particle physics and, with it, the logic of quantum technology itself, is exactly the artistic strategy and the sure and certain source of the brilliance of *Two Machines for Feeling*. This sculptural simulacra can be recognized, at once, as a "masterpiece" because it has not only deciphered the inner grammar of quantum physics as the contemporary language of power, but it has also revealed, in a way that is fully parodic and ambiguous, how science has taken possession of popular culture and of us with it. Indeed, if the aesthetic appeal of *Two Machines for Feeling* has to do with its *charm* (the dance of the ballerina), *beauty* (the visual rhythm of the optical illusion), strangeness (the edge of violence and seduction), and *symmetry* (the robot and ballerina in contiguous motion), then it's worthwhile to bear in mind that these are also the exact aesthetic categories of quantum physics today. In a way which is fully parallel to the race in contemporary quantum physics towards the construction of the world's biggest "atom smasher", Tony Brown has created in *Two Machines for Feeling* the art world's first "culture smasher". And just as much as the violent, centrifugal action of the cyclotron in atom smashing is intended to whip elementary particles around until they reach escape velocity, that's exactly what *Two Machines for Feeling* does. It combines optics, cybernetics, robotics, and industrial centrifuging into an exact simulacra of how *power* functions today. And what are the elementary *social* particles which are whipped into an endless free-fall from this violent and hallucinogenic act of culture smashing? Well, that's the *social* itself as the dark "missing matter" of the new universe of communication technolo-

gies. In the end, *Two Machines for Feeling* is about the death of the social and the triumph of a (signifying) culture.

"Body without Organs": *Spinning House*

It's the very same with *Spinning House* which focusses on ideology and power in the age of disembodied desire. More so than *Two Machines for Feeling* which explores the perceptual implosion at the (disappearing) centre of the mediascape, *Spinning House* plays just at the edge between a deep existential reflection on the nihilism of consumer culture and a semiological analysis of the inscription of power in the sign-form of commodification to such a degree of abstraction that culture itself becomes an image.

In *Spinning House*, ideology is inscribed on the transparent frame construction of the house, on its occupants, and on their social routines in the form of the laconic messages pulsating from the house itself. Just like in David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* in which TV comes alive as a desiring-machine and takes possession of its viewers, *Spinning House* shows that ideology now has sunk into the everyday, background surface of popular culture; and, moreover, that ideology is most pervasive just when most transparent. Here is a perfect study of how ideology functions today in the language of popular culture (the house as a key consumption site). The family is lacerated by language and broken into by the violence of imaging-systems (it's a *spinning* house); the occupants' minds are a volume in disintegration and a study in ruins ("Go to bed", "Wake Up", "Go to Work", "Eat", "Watch TV"); the cultural routines of the house are policed by the interiorization of entertainment ideology (television) and by the normalizing power of the work order ("Go to Work"); the psychological sensibility of the members of the spinning house is what Nietzsche described as a culture of "last men" (passive nihilists who just want their entertainment and blink, "and who are incapable of thinking deeply just because they have never learned to despise themselves");[11] and the house itself undergoes a great, violent implosion until it becomes a scene of consumer culture as residue. *Spinning House* is a bleak study of cultural disintegration: the house, as the site of consumption culture *par excellence*, is traced by the ideology of consumption, achieves a narrative (optical) continuity only when the level of violence (the centrifugal forces) achieves escape velocity; is reduced to a carceral for the domestication of social power; and is the anguished scene for a free-fall into suicidal nihilism. This is just to say, though, that *Spinning House*, just like the whole network of suburban culture which it simulates, *does not exist*. As a consumption site to the hyper, *Spinning House* is just an empty scene into which is injected all the seductions and social residue of excremental culture. It's a pure

discursive site: the scene for the convergence of a whole network of discourses of power, from the language of consumption ideology and television culture to the routinization of power in work experience. And, of course, just like *Two Machines for Feeling*, the blast of the *Spinning House* positions us perfectly: we're flattened, delocalized, and inert observers of the triumph of ideology under the dark sign of the high-intensity market setting.

Indeed, *Spinning House* with its grisly, yet aesthetically appealing, recitation of technological violence, its ideological inscription of the signs of desire on the text of the home and on the flesh of its inhabitants, and its bleak meditation on the immanent nihilism of consumer culture is a perfect expression of what the contemporary French psychoanalysts, Deleuze and Guattari, have described in *Anti-Oedipus* as the society of the "body without organs".[12] In the "schizoanalysis" of *Anti-Oedipus*, power is experienced today as a matter of relational effects, as the inscription on the surface of things (the home, the family, the flesh) of a sign-language of desire and absence which is always delocalized, dehistoricized, and dematerialized. In *Anti-Oedipus*, just like in *Spinning House*, it's no longer power and oppression, but power and seduction; and, in fact, power no longer speaks in the language of presence, but of absence. *Spinning House?* It's just what Nietzsche said in those fateful words which begin *The Will to Power*: "Nihilism is knocking at the door. Whence comes this most uncanniest of guests?"[13]

"Darkness to Infinity": *Breaking Screen*

The profound reflection on technology and nihilism which runs like a dark arc across *Two Machines for Feeling* and *Spinning House* reaches its most intense expression in *Breaking Screen*. Here, in a way remarkably akin to what Marshall McLuhan predicted would be our fate in the twentieth-century (to live in a culture in which we are "x-rayed by television images"), the rotating bed in *Breaking Screen* actually begins to pulsate and to visibly disintegrate into an x-ray image as it traces a great path of implosion. As Brown says: "*Breaking Screen* does what television always promises, but never does. The mechanical bed actually pivots into psychosis".[14]

The psychosis invoked by *Breaking Screen* is everywhere. The sound environment of the production is that of crickets and screaming cars, just like so much background radiation. The images inscribed on the screen speak searingly of the ruins within: " 'So you lie there dreaming of another's life'; 'Alone in your room with nothing to do but wait for something to happen that never does'; 'Lost Dreams' ". The frame of the house is burned. And the overriding psychological sense is that in the society of the *Breaking Screen*, it's catastrophe itself which is desired and

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this in just the same way that Baudrillard has suggested in *Oublier Foucault*.

> This time we are in a full universe, a space radiating with power, but also cracked, like a shattered windshield still holding together.
>
> Do you think that power, economy, sex — all the REAL'S big numbers — would have stood up one single instant without a fascination to support them which originates precisely in the inversed mirror where they are reflected and continually reversed, and where their imaginary catastrophe generates a tangible and immanent gratification?[15]

And what about the lightning-flash which is the moment of violence and immolation towards which everything in *Breaking Screen* is directed. In his classic essay, "A Preface to Transgression", Michel Foucault anticipated the secret of the lightning-flash as a transgressionary act which lights up the blackness of the sky for one single instant only to reveal the immensity of the darkness within:

> Transgression, then, is not related to the limit as black to white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces. Rather, their relationship takes the form of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust. Perhaps it is like a flash of lightning in the night which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies, which lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation, its harrowing and poised singularity; the flash loses itself in this space it marks with its sovereignty and becomes silent now that it has given a name to obscurity.[16]

Tony Brown's *Breaking Screen*, with its lightning-flash which illuminates the sky only to reveal the "darkness within" is an almost eerie sculptural expression of Foucault's profound philosophical understanding of the meaning of transgression in nihilistic culture. Just like Foucault's "transgression", the lightning-flash of *Breaking Screen* is not a division between opposites nor is it a gesture of the cut or even a permanent refusal. It is, in fact, that most difficult and delicate of artistic manoeuvres: a reminder in the language of absence itself not just of the immensity of the ruins within, but also of the fate of transgression itself as nothing more now than a throw of the dice in the spider's web of the technological dynamo. The lesson of *Breaking Screen* is explicit: the catastrophe has already happened, and we are its survivors and not so

transgressionary victims. It's Nietzsche's time now: terror speaks in the language of the aesthetics of seduction.

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Notes

1. H. Foster, *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Port Townsend, Washington; Bay Press, 1983, pp. 126-127.

2. Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage*, New York: Bantam, 1967, p. 26.

3. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, New York: Semiotext(e), 1983, p. 146.

4. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in Donald F. Bouchard (editor), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977, pp. 139-164.

5. Tony Brown, interview with author, March, 1986.

6. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

7. Tony Brown, interview with author, March, 1986.

8. *Montreal Gazette*, June, 1986.

9. H. Foster, *The Anti-Aesthetic*, p. 133.

10. Tony Brown, interview with author, May, 1986.

11. For a searing account of Nietzsche's reflections on nihilism, see George Grant's *Time as History*, Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1969, p. 33.

12. For a provocative reflection on Deleuze and Guattari's recuperation of Antonin Artaud's vision of the "body without organs", see the special issue of Semiotext(e) organized around a discussion of *Anti-Oedipus*, Volume II, No. 3, 1977.

13. F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, New York: Vintage Books, 1968, p. 7.

14. Tony Brown, interview with author, March, 1986.

15. Jean Baudrillard's text, *Oublier Foucault*, remains the best contemporary critique or representational conceptions of power and of the desire for catastrophe which is essential to the logic of the order of simulacra.

16. M. Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 35.