# 1.

## SPILT COLOUR/BLUR

*During the late 1960s and early 1970s Jean Louis Schefer's research was fully involved with structuralist and post-structuralist efforts aimed at redefining the nature of traditional intellectual disciplines by way of a change in methodologies and epistemologies. In the field of art and art- history this meant, generally speaking, dispensing with for instance the iconology and the reading of master-codes that had been refined by Panofsky and Gombrich, and installing instead the practical concept of the artwork as semiological system. Schefer's first book, Scénographie d'un tableau (1969), appears at this time and in this mode, roughly coincident with important articles such as "Note sur les systèmes représentatifs" (1970a) and "L'image--le sens 'investi'" (1970b). Like "Spilt Colour/Blur" each of these is not only concerned with critiquing traditional art historical methodology but also practices the new methods of reading.*

*"Spilt Colour/Blur" has been chosen to represent this period of Schefer's writing for several reasons. First of all, it's the only writing from the period for which Schefer himself still retains much affection: what he now thinks of as the pseudo-scientism of the semiological project has for a long time held little further interest for him, despite the fact that this is the genre of work for which he is often recognized. Notwithstanding Schefer's own hesitancy, it seemed important to use this essay to introduce his work, not simply because it is of this early period, nor because it represents a strand of his writing which became quite influential; but rather more because the essay can be considered as a kind of foundation stone for much of the rest of the work translated in this volume. Equally important, it contains and deploys a number of the insights that semiological work was able to generate and can thus can give the reader an opportunity to*

assess the value of such work which should perhaps not be so summarily dismissed as Schefer would seem to want.

The sense and import of the semiological approach for Schefer's work is primarily the task of _Scénographie_ to introduce. The basic gesture of that book is a semiological analysis of Pierre Bordone's painting, _A Game of Chess_, and its gambit is the structural description and designation of the picture's elements into a set of binary oppositions. So, for instance, the painting is structured by the black and white oppositions of a chess board; it organizes the similar patterns of a chess board and a marbled floor; it distributes its background between architectural and natural elements; it depicts two players and two games (one chess game, and a card game); and so on. Schefer's elaboration of these binaries is complex but is put to the use of producing a set of almost Barthesian codes for reading the picture.

Part of the point here is to counter the Panofskian use of code which, Schefer suggests, tends to delimit reading and interpretation to the operation of a single overarching code that will eventually "explain" the picture on the basis of internal organization and thus reduce the picture to an illustration of that master code. What Schefer is interested in is in a sense the opposite of what a Panofskian reading produces: that is, he wants to demonstrate how the elaborate interplay of binary elements actually produces a _blurring_ or a _leakage_ of meaning in the picture. That's to say, for him the logic of the signifier in this picture is one of deferral whereby the elements of the binaries always as it were miss each other by dint of being continually taken up into other organizational structures and codes. This deferral of signification is for Schefer the important lesson of semiological analysis in general and of Bordone's picture in particular.

This interest in the blurring of signification will be a constant throughout Schefer's writing, in ways that we will see. But this early semiological work also deploys a concept which will have profound effects in the course of Schefer's writing: that is, the  notion of the _lexie_. This is in effect the intertextual field in which the visual object _and_ its readings exist. The _lexie_, to

*paraphrase Roland Barthes, is a field of signifieds that points to a body of practices and techniques that together constitute a given system of knowledge or culture. Barthes calls this set of signifieds "a large unit of reading," which is to say that it constitutes the field of meaning into which the object can possibly be drawn by both connotation and denotation. Importantly, the notion of the lexie points to the possibility of an idiolectic field, a <u>parole</u>, which "without ceasing to belong to a given <u>langue</u>," implies a degree of interpretative freedom for the reader or spectator.* [1]

*Schefer's work will continually take advantage of this putative freedom. For instance, Schefer uses several other paintings to help interpret the Bordone, each acting as what he calls a "commutational moment" or switching point for the widening of the lexical field. In this way the Bordone painting comes to be located in a <u>langue</u> which consists of the readings that can feasibly be given of it. Part of what is made possible by this application of the concept of the <u>lexie</u> is the notion of what we might call a non-linear tradition; that is, the range of intertextual reference for interpretation need not remain within a strict historical context or chronology but may import what traditional scholarship would think of as "anachronistic" elements. Equally, the idea of the <u>lexie</u> points to the possibility (indeed, the inevitability) of some part of the spectator's experience being included in the reading and therefore in the picture's very field of definition. In sum, then, if traditional "objective" criticism of art depends upon the distance of the interpretation from the picture, Schefer attempts to make them one and the same--the work <u>becomes</u> its readings.*

*Like <u>Scénographie</u>, "Note..." (1970a) consists largely in a critique of the methodologies of art criticism and theory--iconology and orthodox structuralism come under particular scrutiny. But it also lays out a semiological approach to analysis, the initial move being the analysis of the visual object as <u>system</u>. Since "Spilt Colour/Blur" depends somewhat upon Schefer's particular understanding of the system of painting and of the elements within that system, a word or two about "Note" is in order here. As we have said, for Schefer a system*

*is crossed by numerous codes, none of which will exhaust or finally account for the picture's signification. Equally, the picture and the codes themselves are historically located, but not in the sense that one can establish from that proposition a neat duality of "text" and "context," as in traditional art history. Rather, the text and its context are irrevocably marked by acts of reading, such that the codes of picture and readings as it were meld to become the constitutive entity, the thing being looked at. It's in that sense that a picture is its readings.*

*Yet at the same time, there is an internal organization of determinations within the visual object which makes up its system. Notably, for Schefer the analysis of the total system of a picture depends upon a distinction between <u>figuration</u> and <u>representation</u>. The distinction is important since it is not only the condition of possibility for the leakage of meaning, but also allows the analysis in "Spilt Colour/Blur" of colour as a kind of excrescence--or even a kind of embarrassment--to the systematization of classical painting. Schefer schematically expresses the relationship between figurative and representational systems by the formula S1/Sx. The representational system or the system of the space in the picture is called Sx, whereas S1 refers to the figurative specification of those spaces or as it were the filling of space with objects. Sx aims at the production of a unity, a unified field, and Schefer tracks this down in Leonardo da Vinci's establishment of grounds for the science of perspective. On the other side, S1 is its own signifying economy, attached to objects and their meanings which the system Sx would necessarily tend to delimit. That is, in Schefer's theory Sx exerts a determination over the painting as a whole as it seeks unity and closure; but S1 exerts another determination of meaning by dint of its attachment to objects and figures and their signification. If the two systems are conceived as delimited lines exerting determination in relation to each other, the space of their properly overdetermined relationship constitutes the <u>lexie</u> for the picture's reading. Schefer's own schema from "Note.." perhaps best illustrates the relations of determination and thence overdetermination that exist between the systems:*

*Schefer proposes, then, that there is on the one hand a representational system whose function is to organize space (i.e. produce a unity of the visual field). But on the other hand there is also a figurative system that functions as it were <u>typologically</u> and is thus bound up with signification as such. These two systems overdetermine each other, and not to the benefit of simple or unified meaning; rather their interference leads to the blurring of signification that we have mentioned.*

*These notions of the system of painting are deployed in "Spilt Colour/Blur" as a basis for understanding the function of colour in classical painting. Always considered in classical painting as merely a supplement to these systems, colour cannot be absorbed into the frameworks which systematize painting and attempt to unify it. Schefer demonstrates that colour is in this sense a difficulty for classical painting. This is why it is assigned to the function of "symbol" where its signifying power is of the crudest and most supplemental kind. (At the same time, and as we shall see in the final essay in this volume, "What Are Red Things?", this level of signifying power can turn out to produce powerful mythological belief.)*

*Colour's subordination to the "scientific" rules of perspective which are crucial to classical painting is thus the primary concern of "Spilt Colour/Blur." The essay examines the role colour plays in intensifying, so to speak, the process whereby signification is lost in the image. Because of the way it is poised dialectically in the system of determinations between figuration and representation, colour is both attached to and resistant to the signifying function. It remains autonomous because it is not expressive (expressivity is the function of the figure itself). Schefer's own <u>lexie</u> in the demonstration of colour's subordination and resistance pulls in*

*a number of germane texts, such as Freud's work on dreams and Mallarmé's notes on theatre. Here the proposition is that figuration is the domain not just of expressivity, but of theatre and dance--a notion that too is developed in other of the essays in this volume.*

*"Spilt Colour/Blur" is perhaps the least prepossessing of Schefer's work. Certainly, the reader's indulgence will be called upon by the extraordinarily complex syntax and punctuation, not to mention the semiological jargon, deployed here. At the same time, the essay offers theoretical and interpretative justification for much of the work that is to follow.*

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In what's conventionally called classical painting, colour is the object of a characteristic sort of neglect (and we'll see later that the "convention" relies on particular denomination only because it also relies on a particular statute, a characteristic rule for what one might understand as a representational system). This neglect and lack of consideration are practised by both the painter and the art historian and have always been explicitly rationalised or implicitly forced into figurative equations by one or the other of them. Since this is the case, colour becomes something that still remains to be explained: first, in relation to representational systems; and second, because both formal and material determinations pre-exist it, and these arise from from the representational structure that systematizes them and that composes the (system) from them.

To put it another way, this lack of consideration for colour--manifest in the limited and discrete application set aside for it--finds its theoretical justification in the actual denomination of the painting we so precisely call "classical." The exact character of such painting is, moreover, at the very moment we define it, to see itself actually finding a definition to absorb it: it's not theoretically constituted and is practised only in the subordination of all the elements of such painting under a single defining class (first noting the area to which they belong formally. We know that figurative systems make their rules of constraint bear upon typological characterizations rather than upon any signifying determination. We also know, and must demonstrate once more, that the level of signifying determination originates from the representational structure that is overshadowed in all figurative systems). The immediate efficacity of this sort of painting lies, then, in its only ever approaching an object under the auspices of that object's own class, continually rejecting any notion of its species: repudiation of colour is,

appropriately, an act of aspection, since colour is an effect that cannot be integrated into an economy (of a system) based upon the principle of substitution.

In the history of western painting (the painting for which Europe has formulated all systems of representation into a definition of historical classes, beginning with events or produced objects--which is how painting has been conceived of since the Renaissance) colour is the object of symbolic codification; starting with Byzantine art, and then at the start of this century becoming the object of a theory for Chevreul; in between those two moments codification shifts from colour towards figure in such a way that, although the two terms remain in opposition, we see a decodification of figure (of perspective) in favour of colour, and the culminating point of this was, clearly, the 18th century.

This has meant that, under the constitution of a body of formal definitions, all that has been produced (in the practice of perceptual discernment) is the repression of colour by the characteristic outline of such practice: that's both the necessary effect and the subsidiary aim of the practice.

So we must recognize that this marks the Renaissance as the limit outside of which (and exactly "outside," if the Renaissance may be characterised as the time of a categorical obliteration of all practice)[2] painting can become a practice of modernity. For in fact, as we shall see in Leonardo, at that time colour could only be thought of as a predicate because: l) colour theory was subordinate to perspectival thought; 2) perspectival thought is bound up with causality (by the intermediary of optical rays, all images are of their own source); and finally 3) in this system perspective (optical causality), with its explicit empirical foundation, is in fact nothing less than the image of some final cause, or part of an equation (eye-sun-god) whose terms may be combined in pairs (where in fact the binary relations that hold will exhaust all the relations since any third term is excluded as being either product or condition: thus Leonardo's induction of material cause is both

limited and enabled by the deduction of a divine cause which can circumscribe the whole field). From this third condition, the foundation of the Copernican landscape, Leonardo forges the opening declaration of his work; an image is always just the third part of an analogical equation that lays bare the path of a cause (right up to the sketchwork) whose figure is at once its distinguishing mark and its most radical loss. Here it's understood that all causality is reversible, so that the eye rebounding and returning (that is, in accordance with a specular definition) reassembles all those lost causes for the sake of the subject, itself: this is done by the delegation of a cause (god) of which the eye is furthermore the image.

So there's an absolute necessity in the subordination of colour to figure (the form of a repression). We see once more that the infinity of a code for colour (susceptible of giving account of pictorial productivity without resorting to systematic reduction) becomes conceivable only when Leonardo's theory (in which colour is never a proper object but just one part of the system of definition) is integrally inverted. Colour's function in Leonardo is purely auxiliary, a distinguishing function that helps the representational structure in its implicitness; it's both the overdetermining and complementary structure of the figurative system (and never manages to free itself of it); it's the depression beyond which signification cannot happen--indeed, it's the structure within which an <u>operation</u> is produced as a formal and material system of foregrounding (of the picture, of course) and the production of a signifier takes place (as far as that can happen) and the articulation and production of such can take place inside a representational system (this happens analogically: as far as a denotated plan is not precisely known in advance of the structure that will determine it l) in a categorical way, or 2) in the terms that are never those of its species. There's never any specificity given to the signifier, or in a representational system the specificity of a given particular cannot

spring straight from its signifier--that's a fundamental rule of representational systems--because anything that could constitute the object of some sort of phonematic analysis precisely cannot be articulated l) in painting and 2) figuratively in a representational system, or cannot be its categorical product).

It's important, then, to see first that figurative painting is incapable of identifying its own production with the production of the signifier, since the signifier is entirely predetermined--indeed, overdetermined--by the implicitness of a system of reading which excludes the productivity of specificity from its product, and this exclusion is then the payee for the object of representation; and secondly, that painting in the Quattrocento and Cinquecento thus eliminates what might at first appear to be no more than a surplus of the signifier (matter, colour, gesture). All this, elaborated to try to establish a pure condition for representation, sets out all the possible transgressions of the principles of figuration, and in so doing determines infractions against representation which always employs another aspect of the signifier. In this context the signifying <u>function</u> is first of all a property of figure.

Nonetheless, colour--and this is the fundamental level of its resistance to definition, in that it is never the proper subject, it never accedes to the signifier and is thus continuously repressed so that it becomes a mere attribute--colour escapes definition and doubles back under the species of the subject itself, painting. It's important to see that this change too is marked in Leonardo: colour is what is attributed to things, but things are distinguished by means of colour: this double distinguishing function can be applied only to colour because it's primarily a function of a way of seeing whose terms are reversible: that is, in a formulation of the world which is specular. Due to this very disregard of colour's specificity, the history of painting has included this productive paradox: that colour has retained an absolute autonomy because once again, it's not included in

Renaissance definitions (because it never constitutes the object to be defined) except as a distinctive quality; colour's <u>effect</u> is not expressive except that it expresses what it is not (precisely because it is caught inside a system of essential definitions): colour, then, is a variable in the figurative equation.

Consequently, due to [colour's] subordination in this type of painting wherein we have seen the role played by the term "classical" (the founding return, the retroactive effect of a predicate, the effect of total delimitation in this sort of painting whose theoretical formulations assume—with Alberti and Leonardo—that its definition does not transgress the laws that the painting imposes upon itself: it has no frames, its only limit being its reverse side), consequently what's classical about it is that, treated under the heading of its class (Ripa: "an image is a definition," so that a well-made image is a well-made definition), it is the means by which the painted picture can inscribe itself in the taxonomic picture; and inversely: figure, Ripa says, is governed by the order of predicables, and so is susceptible of analysis in terms which are the terms of its categorical borrowings. Similarly, Leonardo da Vinci: "Perspective comes to our aid where judgment fails in things that diminish" (2: 372).[3] In this equation, too, where judgement has perception as its petitioner in the same way as the image petitions for definition (where we can show that judgment always ends up relating to figure because perception is itself, according to the equation, a definition), we can grasp that the principal prohibition in classical painting relates to something that's not an element of definition in representation, nor a constitutive term of representational structure; rather, it relates to the thing that is treated as a distinctive element: that is, to colour--not figure, because figure, where art theory and art history have focussed their problematic over the signifier, is still a definable term in the characteristic substitutional movement of the loss of the signifier in representational systems.

If colour for its part resists (that's to say, if it can't be formalized in the figurative equation except as a variable that cannot represent) and if the linguistic formalization of a representational system takes it merely for what it is in the figurative system (a distinctive level which has autonomy only when opposing, or superimposing upon, figure), that's precisely because it's repressed there: if it's present as such colour becomes the waste product in any transformatory operation based upon the figurative structure (in order to realize what representation clings to, since all representation works on the actual consistency of the elements it displaces). In other words, colour can resist this substitutive movement so long as it's seen as an attribute of figure: figure is charged with reducing colour to a principally distinguishing function (such a delimitation occurred in the Renaissance under the influence of Aristotle's Poetics: as subject is to drama [the subject of the drama], so drawing is to painting); so the predication of colour is thus the very form of its repression.

And when Leonardo da Vinci insists on the necessity of finding colours that are real or natural, it's out of a concern for the truth of perception or the fidelity of images (an image is only ever faithful to its cause, never to its own appearance: thus it can be referred back to a better construction): colour is then an auxiliary for perceptual judgment--"Darkness steeps everything with its hue, and the more an object is divided from darkness the more it shows its true and natural colour" (2: 379). This means that real or natural colour exists only as a property of the object, that the "hue" of darkness, in so far as it can "steep" things, is not a pertinent element in (perceptual) judgment; and so it's neither real nor natural because it inverts the order of subject and predicate which is the very formula of the naturalistic convention and remains, in the Aristotle reference, the very formula of the subject; what's unthinkable in all this is that objects could be seen as attributes or accidents of pure colour (which Leonardo only ever refers to as a fog): that

is, it's unthinkable that these things could be produced within the picture. Here again the same may be said of colour as has always been said elsewhere of nature (in that a picture never understands it except as a term of opposition in the rhetorical system upon which it is constructed and in which all articulations are merely references back to the system that's both the origin and the product of the pairs of oppositions that implicitly refer back to it): the problem of Renaissance definition is absorbed by the perspectival problem that corresponds to an imperative on the predicability of figure: cf. again "Perspective comes to our aid where judgment fails...." When, from being the subject of an utterance, a term becomes the predicate, then there's repression, or it's present only as a repressed term.

This goes beyond the problem of natural and conventional colour (and generally beyond Lessing's whole problematic about the motivation of pictorial "signs"); Leonardo's realist alibi: displacement (from the apparent to the natural) only ever operates, within the convention, from the moment when colour is turned into an attribute by it; or else, the problem of real and natural colour doesn't present itself and cannot be formulated except from within its distinctive function, that is, from inside a space governed by the imperative problem of definition (or in other words, within a single aspect of perspectival figuration). Colour is absolutely efficacious in this its distinctive role that characteristically eliminates it from the representational structure, and, conjointly, from the problem of the signifier as far as it can be formulated here; colour--by virtue of its repression (without which, once again, representation is impossible)--makes this clear: that the unthinkable (as described above) animating Renaissance definition (and that might be called its ideological space) is not its complement but its contrary: historically we can only add to the equation by suppressing it. This is also what we can read in Leonardo and what colour itself can reveal insofar as it's only ever the exponent of a system, its petitioner; and in this system its most efficacious function—the result of the

reduction we have examined—is an expressive one.

So there's another reason for the pre-eminence of figure in the question of the signifier: here space is entirely subsumed by the fiction of whatever is being represented, and every time there's a resistance from colour there is also a resistance, thus marked, to representation (in the sense that we've given that term: the total structure wherein figuration is rationalized; as the sum of the series in which the signifier of S1 is determined). One might, moreover, note that the samee applies to gesture, something that doesn't really appear in painting (in that a "picture" doesn't include it) except as its own productivity, never as representation; in classical space a picture exists only by virtue of the fact that there's no movement; or, more exactly, the movement figured in the painting is present only as an articulation that has strayed from its own system: there are, literally, "figures": "signa" = statues (cf. "Reading Poussin" by Philippe Sollers where the Poussin character is a statue, a "signum" within the rhetoric of the picture in which it is determined, and which it helps constitute).[4] So with Giotto, or Uccello's Deluge—the rule might be as follows: each figuration of movement is reabsorbed into what it's a priori constructed upon--a construction figure.

So we can say that, because of the fundamentally predicative and analogically distinct function in which it's held (by the fact that it's only ever one of the variables within a system),[5] colour--and this is, I think, its calculated effect-- retroactively illuminates what a representational structure might exist as. Insofar as—and inasmuch as—figurative painting allows itself to be enclosed by the definition of a system of figures, colour has the calculated effect of becoming its limit; or rather, in escaping it colour points out the type of reduction and/or substitution that characterizes representational systems: it points out by default (the very default by which figurative painting holds perceptual judgment) that only

commutative operations (which Hjelmslev reserves for paradigmatic relationships), or substitutional ones, are susceptible of working on representational structure where the problem of the signifier is posed only by means of an implicit logical (grammatical or linguistic) structure which might be the object of an inverse shift in its semantic and phonological levels (literally, then, each system (S1) is absorbed by the fiction of what it is representing).[6] So we need to recall the following definition:

> representation consists in the borrowing of signifiers. It is the economy of such a borrowing (and, by way of the signifiers, it is the entire body of the implicit system whose retroactive and implied effect is representation itself),  giving off figures that are proposed as (pre-tended to be) analogical signifiers.[7]

In this pre-tension of the analogical sign (Lessing), a blurring of the signifier occurs under a given representational meaning: we know, too, that in the 17th century, in court usage, representation meant a "funerary simulacrum"; a year afterwards—or at least in a ceremony not involving the dead man[8]-- so that he can attend his own funeral--an empty coffin is used for absolution and the funeral oration is delivered over it, while the signifier is really what the verse is actively concerned with. Thus, representing isn't a matter of recalling what has already been present in flesh and blood, as a person, but of producing a displaced figure (that installs its prototype/hypostasis elsewhere) from something that has never been present as such, so that preferably it can never be there, that is to say, anywhere, except in the place where it's said to be: "the imaginary." This re-presentational illusion obtains by a false repetition (the illusion is also a chain of substitutions: what is figured = what is represented = the signified). Such a theatrical conception of representation entirely assumes this funerary conception and its juridical correlative.

Pertinent here is the Napoleonic statute book, section 739, which talks of "the making of the law" (law's actual fiction, but a _fiction_ that makes the _law_) whose _effect_ (against which painting can in fact be measured--it's the nearest thing to painting's own efficacity) is to make the representative enter court in place of and in the same name and with the same rights as the representee; and we might emphasize, "in the same name," since the representative takes on the "title" of the deceased only in order to assume the latter's value (to _renew_ him in his value but at the same time to take it away from him in the form of his rank and his heritage). So the legal world, too, deploys this fiction of instituting the present in the name of the past (and that renewal, authorized and announced by death itself, is by no means an assumption on the part of the representee): the past, the one who has passed away—whose representative institutes the signifying function in announcing the fact of the decease (as a substitutive term), an announcement made precisely in the form of a pre-decease, that is, of an anteriority that is abolished by death and that pretends to be the very hypostasis of what it is displacing--it doesn't abolish the representee except by _in effect_ instituting him in his name, by means of his decease. The pre-_deceasor_ is the one who, before the representee or _any one else_ that the law tries to pass off as the signifier so as to leave his place free, has already gone, _decessus_. In the light of all this we can finally see and understand (as we wouldn't be able to outside of that light) this "making of the law" whose _effect_ (and this "effect" will be the cause of a further effect in the figuration of the representative) is to make the representative _enter_ court in place of the representee (which implies, en bloc in this displacement, the renewal of his rights and his rank); and to understand--in the need to install an heir, to pass someone off as heir, _to pass on_ a title from the dead to the living-- that _the representee is not the referent but the signifier_ (implicitly), that it's his own title, station, and rights that are being played with in representation—as the stake, in fact.

With regard to the function assigned to colour by Renaissance theory,[9] it's possible to distinguish three functions it has, or three instances of its usage.

A Game of Chess by Paris Bordone presents us with a radically reduced case: in this picture colour is a purely redundant code (and thus superfluous in both the economy of the system and of the parenthetical-system), without autonomy and, in short, a non-distinctive level of the signifier so that we can even construct its economy without altering the S1 system. Consequently this is a particularly characteristic case of usage in a figurative system (in a representational structure—it's also a fortunate case because it's entirely at the behest of our model: so it's a borderline case as well). Nonetheless, the application of a borderline case doesn't prohibit other possible cases since, in the very act of systematizing itself, the representational structure makes all cases borderline ones by jointly implicating into the figurative system both perspective and the Aristotelian definition. The interest of this particular picture is that the characterising function of colour, at the level of typological constraint where the functions of the picture's elements may be read, should have already been completely suppressed by the metonymic import of the chessboard, the synecdoche of black and white which rules the sequences and functions of the picture and which, for that reason, occupies the entire pictorial surface (also defining it as a purely tactile surface by balancing the picture around the chessboard). This, strangely enough, means that the black and the white are not colours in the Leonardian sense.

> Since white is not a colour but is capable of becoming the
> recipient of every colour,[10] when a white object is seen in the
> open air all its shadows are blue; and this comes about in
> accordance with the fourth proposition, which says that the
> surface of every opaque body partakes of the colour of

surrounding objects...

(If we think of it in itself as whiteness, white positions the opacity of a body as it were as an insight into its own essence; it's defined by its contours, and is both a white object and the shadow of a white object; if its only properties are accidental ones, then its definition will be always accidental).

> As therefore this white object is deprived of the light of the sun
> by the interposition of some object which comes between the
> sun and it, all that portion of it which is exposed to the sun and
> the atmosphere continues to partake of the colour of the sun
> and the atmosphere, and that part which is not exposed to the
> sun remains in shadow and partakes only of the colour of the
> atmosphere. And if this white object should neither reflect the
> green of the fields which stretch out to the horizon nor yet face
> the brightness of the horizon itself, it would undoubtedly
> appear of such simple colour as the atmosphere showed itself
> to be (2: 296-297).

In the theatre of definition black and white are the <u>villains</u>, because they steal; and they aren't natural colours because they're pure fictions of nature--in the same way as the fog which hinders judgment is a fiction of nature. And as for black: "the colour which <u>least</u> resembles black will be the one which at a great distance will <u>most</u> retain its natural colour" (2: 297); finally, and above all:

> An object which is represented in white and black will appear
> in more pronounced relief than any other: and therefore I
> would remind you, O painter, that you should <u>clothe</u> your
> figures in <u>as bright colours as you can</u> [that is: without

reaching white], for if you make them dark in colour [that is:

without naming black, which would make them disappear],

they will be only in slight relief and be very little visible at a

distance" (2: 258).

So these are not colours, by virtue of the fact that they are not attributes; in the picture we're looking at they are indices of functions, that is, with reference to the chessboard, the anticipated result of possible operations within the picture. And, from another point of view, they're not colours since their double grid of squares (functional and perspectival) demands the suppression of colour, but across that suppression (this time in a very Leonardian way) demands the suppression of what colour is the attribute of--that is, of things which will not enter into the picture as functions. That's why the collusion between what is not, by its very nature, either perspectival or functional (that is, the probable object of a transformation) consigns the periphery of the picture to the figuration of a landscape. So it's possible, starting with this picture and the preceding definitions, to sum up their product in the following schema:

1. colour (—)

2. ( + ) colour

3. (—) colour

1. What is proposed as the exponent of colour is the possibility of excluding figure from the S1 system--obviously, the destruction of the whole /system/ Sx--that presupposes (so that the operation makes sense/can have semiotic efficacity, or can turn to elucidating what the signifier is) the preliminary abandon or the non-verifiability of a perspectival system (which is unambiguously the case starting with Cézanne, Impressionism, Fauvism). The operation is then negative or tautological and produces what's supposed to be confirmed about the status of the object, namely, that a

suppression of the conditions of representation is staked on colour. (Which is then only a necessary condition because it's a sufficient condition only in the Renaissance system. Beyond this entrenched "conditional" opposition, it's possible to say that the 18th century can be characterized by its having disinvested in figure in favour of colour, or rather in a radical transformation of the general economy of the whole system insofar as the quantum invested in colour displaces and tends to continually annul the quantum in implicitness, the system of figures. The 18th century, with both Goya and Watteau, defines, one might say, ever more pertinent degrees of approximation to this formula.)

2 and 3. These two formulae denote a complementarity of figure and colour. They place themselves simultaneously in a textual space formalized during the Renaissance, which has only ever been treated as being characterized within itself by the possibility of making text and image—because of their complementarity—enter one equation together, and, wherever it's still neeeded (since it doesn't <u>have to</u> alter form), of integrating colour, thus articulating an entire system of subordination, as follows: "text (figure (colour)), or (text) (figure (colour))." (Colour is always tied to figure and so is never able to determine a text, contrary to what happens with the first formula). It remains understood (but also presupposed by the dominant logic of the representational model) that colour here is something from which we can construct an economy, since the figurative system is articulated only <u>towards</u> the terms of representational structure (and it's finally to these terms that commentary relegates it, as in Panofsky: in Panofsky, where everything is interpretation, it's a question of <u>reading substitutable terms</u> as being at once both system of the image, the apparatus and the "lure" of its representation--it's a <u>description</u> of substitution which is unaware of the system or the structure that it is (re)producing. And for the reason, Hjelmslev says, that the substitution that it would be necessary to formulate as a semiotic operation is always present, endlessly caught up as a term—that

is, as a result—of the operation. And this comes directly out of Panofsky's production of a miraged structure: any description by substitution is one of a representation in the language that formulates the supposed descriptum; it's in the describing element that this miraged structure is constituted, which is to say—and I'm weighing my words—it's an effect of refraction in the describing element where an illusion (repraesentamen) is produced of the descriptum thus produced <u>within</u> the describing element by the postulation of a structural identity.

Yet a parity of structure seems impossible to reach--and the same can also be said of the determination of a structure, except in the displacement of the most obviously structural terms, in that such terms are never given outside of the space where reading produces them. So structure is not the point of convergence and resistance for a series of readings that could produce it as <u>their own aporia</u>; indeed, it's more a question of something that's endlessly displaced, not the alternative between variable and invariable (or else, between consistent and inconsistent) as in Merleau-Ponty's arithmetic, but the <u>variability</u> (and the diagram of that variability) in any object produced within the general economy of the system. This is for the opposite reason, in which Panofsky's supposed structuralism meets others, that's to say, meets all those systems which are instituted— legally—upon the <u>utopia</u> of the object they produce (cf. Lévi-Strauss: "the history [of structuralism] <u>consists in</u> its method"--its only object is what its method can produce).[11]

We've yet to point out that this epoch of representation supposing the conditioning of colour is the one in which Panofsky's method is located and justified; there we see a classic case of the collusion between a field of study and the structure of the objects in its field: Panofsky's method (summed up in his four levels of interpretation)[12] is characterized by the possibility of commutating objects that are interior to the very field they define. This implies: l) no object can be properly susceptible of being a product

inside this same field since it defines the field; 2) what is overshadowed in the field of history is its subject; 3) it can then have no signifier other than figures; 4) all the figures of the general system are referred to symbolic universals; 5) Panofsky's interpretative levels are the "spilt" structure of his history--this is the only possible type of historical formalisation in his system, produced by default; so this very method is situated within a representational structure <u>which defines it</u> because it's taken for a figurative structure: "speculum rerum" = a magnet for the genitive which renews only the states of a closed text but never—in its linear historic conception—poses the problem of the signifier (except by analogizing meaning, sign, and language) as something which can only be formulated if we start from overdetermination; and the latter, we must point out again, is what determines the signifier. And the insistence of the signifier is thus marked insofar as it's never given in a representational system but marked by displacement (which is Freud's <u>Verschiebung</u>) and by such obliteration that it has to be constructed out of the signifieds in which it's represented.

<u>Verschiebung</u> provokes the following parenthetical remarks.

Displacement, Freud's lateral sliding; lateral displacement in the system of volte-face on the Mallarméan stage: displacement names the <u>Verschiebung</u>: permitting us to read, in order to construct a model of it, the structure of representation, Sl in S x-determination. There's a scenography in this: from where I see the stage in all its perspective, the empty side where theatre is written--the writing of a scene. We can join together the texts of Mallarmé and Freud.

Mallarmé: <u>Theatre Sketches</u>: <u>en tè skènè gegrammaton</u>--towards a scenography.[13]


"A spiritual acrobatics, demanding the pursuit of the least scriptural intention, exists--but invisibly--in pure <u>movement</u> and in silence <u>displaced</u> by the trapeze....

The theatre alters those arts that it takes up into a special or literary point of view....if one could not recognize in Ballet the name Dance, which is, if you like, hieroglyphic."[14]

Freud: The Interpretation of Dreams, in the chapter translated into French as "Prise en considération de la figurabilité"[15] (a rendering that doesn't precisely explain what representability, "Darstellbarkeit", by this movement, might actually be; it doesn't translate "Rucksicht"--retrospective, retrospection with retroactive effect, determining-- and considers figurability only under the aspect of an effect in which it measures its derivation (never primary, never a given): measures its own derivation). Freud, when taking account of displacement in effect: "The direction taken by the displacement usually results in a colourless and abstract expression in the dream-thought..."[16]

> [In German, farblose--without colour, never having had colour.
> So it is Sx that's discoloured, and S1 is coloured, but this is also
> in relation to the S1/Sx presupposition that colour only
> appears as a memory of the discoloured, never as colour: for
> the very reason that the West, with no cosmogonies of its own,
> is ignorant of the cosmic function of colour-- the West can
> perceive colour but (contrary to India, China, Africa, South
> America, etc.) cannot think in colour; and for another reason,
> that because of its closed economy the figurative system can
> never introduce elements that it's not capable of engendering
> by itself. Plato, Aristotle, Malebranche...all engender colour for
> perception, that's to say, in the general economy of a
> "reasonable" cost to the subject--which guarantees the
> subject/the world/ philosophy.]

Freud again: "...an abstract and colourless expression in the dream-thought being exchanged for a pictorial and concrete one." For, "A thing that is pictorial (das Bildliche) is, from the point of view of a dream, a thing that is capable of being represented: it can be introduced into a situation"[17] (or onto a scene, which is then, as a situation, already no different from a stage, scenic). "A dream-thought is unusable so long as it is expressed in an abstract form; but when once it has been transformed into pictorial language [in eine bildliche Sprache umgeformt: is transformed into the image that its language actually means], contrasts and identifications of the kind which the dream-work requires, and which it creates if they are not already present, can be established more easily than before between the new form of expression and the remainder of the material underlying the dream....it is fair to say that the productions of the dream-work, which, it must be remembered, are not made with the intention of being understood, present no greater difficulties to their translators than do the ancient hieroglyphic scripts to those who seek to read them."

Mallarmé and Freud relying on the theatrical stage, the dream stage (figuration, which for Freud has recourse to ancient hieroglyphs, borrows from the past the character which marks it), both relying on the Sybiline character of what cannot be written--Sybiline--unless it's because it's only, by these displacements, the writing of the theatre. "A lady of my acquaintance had the following dream: She was at the Opera. A Wagner opera was being performed...High up at the top was the conductor....He kept running round the railing...."

Theatre-writing, that's to say a scenography that includes in its text its own choreography, the sum of displacements that writing makes of it (the theatre). Vitruvius:

> The kinds of the arrangement [which in Greek are called ideae]
> are these: ichnography (plan); orthography (elevation);

scenography (perspective). Ichnography demands the

competent use of compass [circinus] and rule; by these, plans

are laid out upon the sites provided. Orthography, however, is

the vertical image [erecta imago] of the front, and a figure

slightly tinted to show the lines of the future work [rationibus

operis futuri].[18]

 So, in this picture [picta figura], nothing other than the execution of the elevated image

[erecta] in its projected proportions. "Scenography[19] also is the shading [adumbratio] of

the front and the retreating sides, and the correspondence of all lines to the vanishing

point, which is the centre of a circle [ad circini centrum]." The total design is the system of

these three "graphies" (ichno-ortho-sceno): the reduced model the erection of the future

work in its image, their common theatre in the play of the compass--circinus.

Traced out by the compass: "ad circinum"--from the Greek kirkinos, compass;

kirkos, the wheeling falcon; Kirke, Circe the enchantress. Circellé: adj., decorated with

small coloured circles; circellus, dim. of circus; circiné, adj., rounded on its own axis in the

manner of a cross; circinus, circle; circus, the theatrical stage; the compass--the circus.

Literally: writing of the stage; but "divested of all the scribe's apparatus"

(Mallarmé), on stage, by a lateral sliding (Verschiebung), on to Freud's "other scene"

(Traumdeutung), the hieroglyphic.  Mallarmé read into Freud (at least...), but it's also

found in Freud: and who would doubt it? Anyone who, not saying it, in doubt, would

make us doubt.

Verschiebung (this is the end of the parenthetical remarks): the effects of it can be

measured by the fact that the signifier is always the response to its own death, thus

marking its effect on the other scene.

So let's say this: in a figurative system or in a representational structure the

signifier is the displacement (understood as the index of a greater displacement) of what must be constructed in order for the system to find its specificity by recourse to what it had already expelled and which is the generality of the /system/ (and closes it).

So we can see that the rearticulation of figurative systems onto a representational structure (which determines them so that they can exist according to how they are read), having as its corollary (its obligatory exit) and also as its condition (the opening) the constitution of a signifier from the structural conditions of its displacement, supposes a history that's not, whatever else it might be called, a history of art (linear, discursive in its suppositions about the transformability of its elements), but rather a history whose matrices are susceptible of thinking the representational system in terms of signifying overdetermination—where the specificity of the matrices is tightly bound to the displacement of the signifier as we have characterized it (in other words, more exactly: a history from which we can construct the matrices of systems but which is not in itself representable).

To return now to the last two formulae which allow colour to be put into an equation—and which are specifically from the Renaissance: they now present us with an alternative.

What is set up as the exponent of the system of figures this time is colour, charged with a positive and a negative function: colour's deployment is fictionally situated between those two poles: they act here, marked as they are, as two modes of attribution or two values of readability. It must be noted that the attribution of a zero function, which is a distinct tendency in a system that subordinates colour, is a return to simple material suppression: this level, which is never effectively realized, remains pertinent for a moment and is necessary to the reading of a figurative system if--and insofar as--we map its articulation on to a representational structure; in other words, it must be noted

that the formula (colour O) corresponds to a moment in our semiotic operation without being, in this precise case, an index of reduction. Therein lies the semiotic justification of a type of painting theoretically constituted upon a system of utterance: that moment— when the figurative structure is recognized—is predetermined by the total representational structure inasmuch as it's situated inside the structure of a displacement (its system, its "economy") that colour, very ambiguously, resists.

So, our three formulae:

 1. colour (—);

2. (+) colour;

3. (—) colour.

In the first, colour is able to saturate the system; in the second (Giorgione or Pontormo), it can saturate any other system but that of figure and so it chops up sequences that cannot be substituted for those of figure; the third presents the (theoretical) case of a purely distinctive utilization of colour, as exhibited at certain points in Leonardo's manifesto.

The manifesto for a scientific utilization of colour that Leonardo offers poses several questions that need to be returned to. Empirical knowledge ("Leonardo Vinci, disciple of experience" [2: 365]) of colour's properties: since it's empirical, this knowledge can extend only to properties, colours, forms, distinguishability....which is to say that the final subject of the properties in Leonardian theory can never be the object since the object is still a type of property, which means a type of the predicable inside the perspectival system; this subject to which all the properties are related--being both what they are most concerned with and at the same time their author--is finally the general system which permits their representation, perspectival construction itself, and it's because of this that a "fiction" of nature can be retained. The fact is that perspectival construction in its generality is a priori an axiomatization of the world, and is complete only because it's

constructed on an axis, a specular pivot <u>between</u> cause and effect: "The image imprinted in a mirror partakes of the colour of the said mirror" (2: 298); the empirical knowledge of colour's properties allows linear perspective to be double, and allows the construction of a perspective of colours: in short, it's a scale of the volumatic <u>effects</u> proper to chromatic gradation, thus helping figuration in the third dimension according to both empirical knowledge and purely analogical reasoning; so the chromatic scale is a scale of effect and effect is always linked, to a greater or lesser extent of distinguishability, to its own excessive production in the body of figuration (the play of surface over volume): so it's susceptible of being related <u>on the principle</u> of its measurement--which is also the principle of its regulation--to all gradations of effect; <u>thus</u>, distance is a discolouration...

[and, parenthetically, we are witness only to the production of the "thus," as follows.

<u>In effect</u>, "Perspective is of such a nature that it makes what is flat appear in relief, and what is in relief appear flat" (2: 371).

<u>For</u>, "There are three divisions of perspective as employed in painting. Of these the first relates to the diminution in the volume of opaque bodies; the second treats of the diminution and disappearance of the outlines of these opaque bodies; the third is their diminution and loss of colour when at a great distance" (2: 374).

<u>Or indeed</u>, "Perspective as it concerns Painting is divided into three chief parts, of which the first treats of the diminution in the size of bodies at different distances. The second is that which treats of the diminution in the colour of

these bodies. The third is the gradual loss of distinctness of the

forms and outlines of these bodies at various distances"(2: 376).

Thus, "Make the perspective of the colours so that it is

not at variance with the size of any object, that is that the

colours lose part of their nature in proportion as the bodies at

different distances suffer loss of their natural quantity" (2:

380).]

...a discolouration related thus, by the principle of mensuration (our scale, perspectival

foreshortening) to all gradations of effect which suppose the same mensuration (which

makes empirical knowledge, experience's disciple, all about analogy); distance becomes

discolouration: "colours los[ing] part of their nature in proportion as the bodies at

different distances suffer loss of their natural quantity," quantities that reside in the very

proportioning of the analogy of natural properties—itself no more than a gradation, a

regulating of effect. Compared with all the properties of bodies (that is, compared to

bodies themselves) distance generally means loss of quality, the very loss of the object.

The far end of the scale, the moment of diminution and discolouration (when even the

passion for line can no longer see anything "at a great distance" except the very unreason

of its madness in the malignant blur that nature breathes--in the picture's background--as

the resistance of the subject being constructed there) is the point at which nature is

produced in all her fiction, the fog that threatens form and erases colours with the whole

weight of the painting itself yet to come: colour, with which Chinese painters before

starting to paint used to fill their mouths and then spit out, is entirely inside this very

fog—the fog into which Leonardo sees line, contour, volume, colour, objects, the world

itself disappear—with his own analogical passion last of all—the spittle that washes away

all the mouth's evil spirits, voice, utterance, breath, the storm of reason, and in this case it

all goes on to the paper.

For Vitruvius the effect of depth is determined only by a system of lines corresponding amongst themselves according to an optical principle, colour having no part in the matter except in that "what appears as ground seems to advance and recede," and so colour is something different, ornamental, ochre that is worth more than silver, the silver in dyeing in the first great clothing industry--"and therefore I would remind you, O painter, that you should clothe your figures in as bright colours as you can" (Leonardo)-- to make the obligatory colouring in clothes, their paleness (ochros); in the gesture of putting on, taking off clothes, dressing up in or taking off colour: <u>ochra</u>, yellow earth, red earth. ("What used to be the best [ochre], the Attic, is not available now, for the following reason. When the silver mines at Athens were worked, shafts were dug underground to find silver; but when a vein of ochre happened to be found, they worked it no less than silver"--Vitruvius.)[20]

For Leonardo colour is no longer a resource to be found in the earth; it's a property of things;[21] it's enjoined in the service of their vision/visibility and so is subordinate to the imperative of proportional distinction in figures; it's also the change in a thing's colour according to distance, which constantly renews the specular effect of perspective. So colour has an essential role in this distinctive function in which it's caught up: "at a certain distance" [where "certain" is then what can be measured by the effect of distance] what is dark becomes blue." A scientific knowledge of the "natural" properties of colour (which, once again, means to Leonardo a knowledge of colour itself) is thus entirely reabsorbed into the constitution of a code auxiliary to the code of figure where those properties are related to each other by the same analogy (of scale and degree) <u>from</u> science—which it allows—<u>to</u> representation. In this connection it becomes obvious that a manifesto for the scientific utilization of colour is not the right one for suppressing the

use of symbolic residues (since, historically, perspective is brought into a single symbolic space that's entirely codified in the ground and is thus perverted, as in for example the introduction of perspective into Cimabue's <u>Madonna della Santa Trinita </u>where the symbolic codification of colour—its attribution as a property of what is symbolized—plays upon the "<u>forced</u> articulation" of two spaces) since in both cases we are concerned with the same predicative function, reabsorbing almost totally its distinctive function precisely because it <u>also situates it inside of the figurative system</u>.

So this is how problem of colour has been presented historically (under the aspect we know, since the Cubist and Impressionist upset) from the Renaissance onwards.

With our three formulae, moreover, it's possible for /1/ to change to /2/ and /2/ to /3/, since /3/can become /2/; but it's not within the logic of the system for /1/ to become /3/. Besides, since in this transformation it's a matter of reducing the code's constituents, a transformation is possible if its inverse transformation is also possible. Unleess colour is valorised, it remains clear that /3/ alone can be the <u>equivalent</u> of /1/ in the general economy of the system if colour animates certain elements of the picture and constitutes an autonomous code within them: in such a case we get two different systems, two texts that cannot absorb each other.

So it's necessary to subordinate colour to figure, for if it "loses" the signifier (under certain conditions) it can become one by ceasing to be the object of a predication. So this is the definition of that normality (as the construction of a representational <u>machine</u> in which the signifier is only ever the factor that slides, the object of the greater displacement), a normality that for the most part is <u>retrospectively</u> posited: at the end of the Renaissance so that it can fall back upon the <u>whole</u> of the Renaissance and act as an apologia for the "perspectival science" to which all science is subordinated in both practice and theory; that is, in a specular spilling, the level of practice (painting) is the

level of theory because perspective (to which all science is subordinated) is a science that has as its object only what it permits itself: i.e. representation through perspectival figuration. It's a science that doesn't permit knowledge because it always <u>supposes</u> some already acquired knowledge and any science appropriated in advance thus necessarily becomes empirical:

> Those who are enamoured of practice without science are like a pilot who goes into a ship without rudder or compass and never has any certainty where he is going. Practice should always be based on a sound knowledge of theory, of which perspective is the guide and gateway, and without it nothing can be done well in any kind of painting (2: 283)--this being written by "Leonardo da Vinci, experience's disciple."

So perspective is its own object: it has no application; indeed, all its objects allow us to know, <u>by means of the fiction of what they represent</u>, the structural conditions for its principles: it's not a science of things because things are never more than a term for reading this science's conditions (its displacements, by virtue of which the principle can in fact be constituted): so we can see that its interest is not in speculation about space (and Leonardo's total equation should make this clear, once again). The definition of normality starting from the representational machine is paramount insofar as colour has the property (this is a postulate that cannot be axiomatized into the system) of not representing: that's to say, it doesn't lend itself to <u>the same deduction as defines the status of figure</u>:

"The reason why we enjoy seeing likenesses is that, as we look, we learn and infer what each is, for instance, 'that is so and so'"—Aristotle.[22]

Besides, we know that it's because of his transgression of this norm that Pontormo

earned himself a reputation for madness: such unreason, in the restrained economy of the structure of representation, is the introduction of its inverse, its outside, in the <u>species</u> of colour which is figured there in order not to represent. But Uccello and Pontormo, both stigmatized by Vasari for their characteristic excesses, are excluded from an ideological space that can only think its own norm:

> For, although these studies [of perspective] are meritorious and good in their way, yet he who is addicted to them beyond measure, wastes his time, exhausts his intellect, and weakens the force of his conceptions, insomuch that he frequently diminishes the fertility and readiness of his resources, which he renders ineffectual and sterile....one so disposed will become unsocial, melancholy, and poor, as did Paolo Uccello....[23]

The prison of this perspective is indefinitely substituted for production itself, from gesture, colour, body, to sex itself, colour, <u>sperm</u>:

> [His] wife who was wont to relate that Paolo would stand the whole night through, beside his writing-table; and when entreated by herself to take rest and sleep, he would reply, 'Oh, what a delightful thing is this perspective'.[24]

And Artaud says in "Uccello the Hair:"

> The ideal line of the hairs, inexpressibly fine and twice repeated....Apart from these lines that sprout from your head like a foliation of messages, nothing  remains of you but the silence and the secrecy of your fastened robe. Two or three signs in the air, where is the man who pretends to be more alive than these three signs and from whom, throughout the

hours that cover him, one would think of asking more than the

silence that precedes or follows them? They form the words of

a black syllable in the pastures of my brain. You, Uccello, are

learning to be only a line and the heightened level of a secret.[25]

We can add: perspective and colour, in themselves, in their madness. Like all

excess in the system ((S1) S x-determination), since the system is made only to reabsorb

them and since its coercive force relies on (derives from) the fragility  of a single

definition (and this is the pivot that supports the whole ideological construct), a

definition caught up in Aristotle's Poetics: "'the subject is to drama as the design is to

painting," a definition that we must also understand in all its retort(ion)s: the drama in

painting is the subject of the design; it is the design as well as the subject; it is the subject;

it is the drama; it is the design.

And to continue: perspective, retracing the path (the trajectory of the optical ray)

from image to cause (alla sua cosa--to its own object), being founded only on the existence

and demonstration of a prime cause: perspective is organized space in the absence of a

god to motivate it; cause of an absence of god which allows it to exist under the major

effect of that absence. And this perhaps irreverent text:

inscribe in any place the name of God and set opposite to it His

image, you will see which will be held in greater reverence!

Since painting embraces within itself all the forms of nature,

you have omitted nothing except the names, and these are not

universal like the forms. If you have the results of her

processes we have the processes of her results (2: 227).

According, that is, with this perspective that has to be totally formulated once more:

Perspectives are of three kinds. The first has to do with the

causes of the diminution or as it is called the diminishing

perspective of objects as they recede from the eye. The second

the manner in which colours are changed as they recede from

the eye. The third and last consists in defining in what way

objects ought to be less carefully finished as they are farther

away. And the names are these:

Linear perspective.

Perspective of colour.

Vanishing perspective (2: 241).

And so nature is the fictional space wherein representation can be achieved, where it is

improbabilised, in fog, in smoke, in the system's seminal loss, in an extravagant spending

that it cannot command:

The density of smoke from the horizon downwards is white

and from the horizon upwards it is dark; and, although this

smoke is in itself of the same colour, this equality shows itself

as different, on account of the difference of the space in which

it is found (2: 298).

Colour is the smoke in the loss of the system that locks it up, that for all bodies

snips off this appendage that's liable to disturb and produce some dangerous

supplement. As it plays on the line of the horizon, above it and below it, colour is the

difference in the field wherever it is. The field where it is is the field of definition, of

Aristotelian drama--the field of analogy. It's the West in that Renaissance. It's the very

same West where colour is seen only at its setting. On the horizon and over the land

where the sun is shaded by the ray that swings across the farthest fringe of the earth; in

itself, in essence, in the last instance, colour is: the difference in the field where it is found.

ᴺOTES

Only for this one essay are notes included in Schefer's original texts; these are marked [JLS]. All other notes and all references to English translations are supplied by the translator.

[1] See Roland Barthes, Elements of Semiology (trs. A.Lavers and C.Smith). New York: Noonday (1992 [1964]), 45-47

[2] A complex operation, built upon the rehabilitation of Aristotle in Averroism, a rewriting of Plato etc., and stricto sensu there are no practices but rather indexed techniques across several major systems. [JLS]

[3] This and following references in parentheses are to Leonardo da Vinci, The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, vol. 2 (tr. Edward MacCurdy). New York: Reynal & Hitchcock (1938).

[4] See Philippe Sollers, "La Lecture de Poussin." Tel Quel, 5 (printemps, 1961), 22-39.

[5] Sometimes one, sometimes variable: also formulated by the academy in terms of "value." [JLS]

[6] For an account of the relation S1/Sx see the translator's introduction to this chapter.

7 "Note..." (1970a), 50-51.

8 Death as a signifier is definitely an object of foreclosure. Delay, <u>Verschiebung</u>, <u>Verwerfung,</u> the reference of death to an unassignable time permitting the man to play dead, <u>simulacro adsistere,</u> to be the real counterpart of his symbol at the funeral. This dead time, interpolated into the real, and "devoted" to the recuperation of its signifier with which it has always exchanged places, is called representation. This is also a pressure within all symbolic economies. The fact that such a pressure has helped constitute all symbolic economy is precisely the point of my enquiry here. [JLS]

9 In more detail we would see that this function is secondary only because perspective demands a conception of perception as pure construction: "Perspective is a rational demonstration whereby experience confirms how all things transmit their images to the eye by pyramidal lines" (2: 369); "The air is full of an infinite number of images of the things which are distributed through it, and all of these are represented in all, all in one, and all in each" (2: 364). But this already engages Leonardo's paraphrase of Lucretius.

Leonardo--"An instance of how the images of all things are spread through the air may be seen in a number of mirrors placed in a circle, and they will then reflect each other for an infinite number of times, for as the image of one reaches another it rebounds back to its source, and then becoming less rebounds yet again to the object, and then returns, and so continues for an infinite number of times" (2: 364).

Lucretius-- "Next, that which is the right side of our frame appears in a mirror on the left, for this reason, that when the approaching image hits on the flat of the mirror, it is not turned round unaltered, but is thrust out straight backwards, just as if someone

should dash upon a pillar or beam some mask of plaster before it were dry, and if it should at once keep its shape undistorted in front and mould a copy of itself dashed backwards: it will happen that what was formerly the right eye now becomes the left, and that the left becomes right in exchange." De Rerum Natura. Cambridge: Heinemann (1975), 299-300. [JLS]

[10] As if white were the base and the "social contract" for all colours that lose their autonomy in order to achieve, by means of what they have lost, an intensification of their effect. The white/black opposition has colonized the West since Aristotle's definition of space by arithmetical difference.

Engels: "Light and darkness are certainly the most conspicuous and definite opposites in nature; they have always served as a rhetorical phrase, from the time of the fourth Gospel to the lumières of religion and philosophy in the eighteenth century....Clark Maxwell (Theory of Heat, p. 14): 'These rays (of radiant heat) have all the physical properties of rays of light and are capable of reflection, etc....some of the heat-rays are identical with the rays of light, while other kinds of heat-rays make no impression on our eyes.'

Hence there exist dark light-rays, and the famous opposition between light and darkness disappears from natural science in its absolute form. Incidentally, the deepest darkness and the brightest, most glaring, light have the same effect of dazzling our eyes, and so for us also they are identical." Dialectic of Nature. New York: International Publishers (1940), 210. [JLS]

[11] The proper object of this history is itself insofar as it's capable of representing, in its classification, a <u>given</u>: this Lévi-Strauss theoretically refuses to accept, but the ideology given off by the representational apparatus is capable—in these empirical schemas—of <u>producing</u> only the thing already given. [JLS]

[12] See Erwin Panofsky, <u>Studies in Iconology</u>. New York: Harper Row (1962), 3-31

[13] <u>Skèné</u> in its Vitruvian ambiguity, both scene and theatre; and in its etymology. <u>Skèné</u>, a hut made of planks, the covered wagon, the tent where actors played, before being "stage," as distinct from "theatre." The <u>skenorraphos</u> sewed together the pieces of canvas which cover the theatre, the circus' top. [JLS]

[14] Mallarmé, <u>Oeuvres Complètes</u>. Paris: Pléiade (1965), 311-12.

[15] The usual English translation of this phrase does not use the word figurability, but rather "representation." This translation does not square with Schefer's distinction, so I have kept the French translation upon which his following remarks are based.

[16] This and following quotations from Freud, <u>Interpretation of Dreams.</u> London: Allen &Unwin (1967), 339-342.

[17] This introduction (<u>einverschieben</u>) is already produced <u>within</u> the <u>Verschiebung</u> as an insertion, an interpolation, as its interior gloss. [JLS]

[18] On Architecture (Book 1, ch. 2).  London: Heinemann (1931), 25-27

[19] Item scenography: "finally," according to the delays of the hearing, of the reckonable account; so in the third place, item skenographia: scenography is--item, just the same as--"of the same nature" uttered in the two preceding delays: thus harmony. Item: by the same principle, assigned in nature by the play of the compass. [JLS]

[20] On Architecture (Book 7, ch. 7). London: Heinemann (1934),  113

[21] Except on the feathers of birds, within the nature of flight: "In the case of many birds...their most striking colours appear during movement, like the feathers of a peacock or the feathers on a duck's neck": colour is always tied to the most characteristic property of the object and so follows the gradient of the grossest analogy. [JLS]

[22] Aristotle, Poetics (Book 4). Cambridge: Heinemann (1973), 15

[23] Giorgio Vasari,  Lives of Seventy Painters Sculptors and Architects. New York: Scribner (1913), 177

[24] Vasari,  Lives, 191

[25] Antonin Artaud, Selected Writings (ed S.Sontag; tr Helen Weaver). New York: Farrar, Strauss and  Giroux (1976), 135-6