The Double Poetics of Popular Images

A Dialogue between Popular Culture and Postdramatic Theatre

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In exploring the relationship between popular culture and (postdramatic) theatre, the amount of formal traces of popular culture in contemporary performances is striking. Think of the dance performances by *Hush Hush Hush* in the Nineties, incorporating spectacular break dance battles, electric boogie, hip-hop dance styles like b-boying, popping and locking, and other elements of popular street culture. Think of the references to Barbie dolls in Jan Fabre's *As Long As the World Needs a Warrior's Soul* (2000) (Stalpaert 2005) and of Wayn Traub's imitation of Michael Jackson's moonwalk in *Beasts* (1999). For his *Orgy of Tolerance* (2010), Fabre chose the revue, the popular leisure time activity in the first quarter of the twentieth century, as a format. In *SOAP* (2006), the young Ghent collective Ontroerend Goed copied the formal structuring device of popular television series and had popular Flemish TV-stars act 'soapwise' in a series of episode-performances on stage. Each episode began with a recognizable tune, a live 'what-happened-before'-summary and ended with a typical 'cliff-hanger'.

Popular culture in contemporary theatre, however, does not only concern the question of how popular formats – such as the music hall, revue, fairs, television soaps and street dance – are transformed and incorporated in theatre. The topic also entails the ideas, perspectives and attitudes that are connected with the phenomenon 'popular culture'; that is the discourse connected with what is *supposed* to be 'mainstream' or mere 'entertainment' in a given culture. From the nineteenth century onward, popular culture is often labelled 'trivial', 'superficial', belonging to a 'lower' culture. Because of its close connection with mass media, popular culture is said to be commercial and 'flat', to be produced for mass consumption, hence levelling the quality to the benefit of quantity. Similar to mass media, popular culture is said to dumb down and to undermine critical thinking, to immerse people in trivia; in a "strange compensatory decorative exhilaration" (Jameson 197).

In this contribution, I will trace the discourse lamenting the supposed stupefying and isolating effect of popular culture back to Walter Benjamin's influential article

On Some Motifs in Baudelaire in order to explore two central notions in the popular culture debate; first the notion of the image devoid of substance; and second the spectator's individual notion of pleasure and the consequent demise of social responsibility. Instead of looking at formal analogies between popular culture and contemporary theatre, I will look at the way art *plays* with representational practices that have been attributed to popular culture; such as the abundance of so-called flat images, illusionism, immersion, the spectacular and sensationalism. I will argue that by inciting 'popular' ways of seeing in the black box constellation of a theatre context, contemporary postdramatic performances such as Jan Fabre's *Glowing Icons* (1997) playfully explore and even dismantle 'popular' scopic regimes[1] and regimes of imageness.[2]

Fabre's "gallery of celebrities and fairy-tale characters we know from film and television" features Snow White, Dracula, Jackie O., Napoleon and Einstein, among others (De Brabandere 31f). The way these popular images are 'quoted' in a postdramatic performance will be compared with Andy Warhol's celebrity portraits of the 1960s, depicting iconic clichés of Elvis Presley, Liz Taylor, Jackie O., Muhammad Ali and Marilyn Monroe. In his well-known mass-production method, Warhol appropriated images that were intended for mass distribution in American popular culture. The fact that also Andy Warhol appears in Fabre's *Glowing Icons* in the form of an almost perfect lookalike, provides an interesting point of reflection on the critical potential of pop art with regard to popular scopic regimes, regimes of 'imageness' and the logic of consumption.

Modern leisure-time man and the addiction to *Erlebnis*

For Walter Benjamin, one of the most significant developments of modernity is the replacement of experience (*Erfahrung*) with *Erlebnis*; the sensate registering of the world in the moment of experience. Man's capacity to assimilate, recollect and communicate experience to others (through storytelling) is replaced by the sense of life as a series of shock experiences; disconnected impressions with no common associations. The glut of *Erlebnis* is meaningless in the sense that it is no longer registered as *Erfahrung*; it lacks a shared discourse of experience. Baudelaire already observed how mere sensual and sensational pleasures kill interest and receptiveness (Benjamn 155); it isolates information from experience and paralyzes the imagination of its consumers. Bergson, too, advises to stay clear of the mere sensual and sensational experience, for it "manifests itself in the standardized, denatured life of the civilized masses", in the "inhospitable, blinding age of big-scale industrialism" (Benjamin 156-157).

The modern leisure-time man filled his Sundays with visiting the revue, strolling along the arcades, gambling and getting bored. While apparently divided into separate activities of work and leisure time, factory work and gambling, however, are both to be considered drudgery devoid of substance.

> The jolt in the movement of a machine is like the so-called *coup* in a game of chance. […]; each operation at the machine is just as screened off from the preceding operation as a *coup* in a game of chance is from the one that preceded it, the drudgery of the laborer is, in its own way, a counterpart to the drudgery of the gambler. The work of both is equally devoid of substance. […] They live their lives like automatons. (Benjamin 177-178)

Variety theatre and fair attractions such as 'looping the loop' also were a substantial element in the leisure time of modern men. These 'free-time' activities function *apparently* autonomous from capitalism. In fact, however, consumption and spectacle are partners in crime, in preventing that one thinks things through, in dumbing down spectators and participants, leaving them capable only of reflex action, becoming automatons, "no matter how agitated they might be" (Benjamin 178). Popular theatre forms such as the revue are in that perspective part of the dream-filled sleep of capitalism. It has that specific structure that reflects the aesthetics of *Erlebnis*; a multi-act popular theatrical form of entertainment providing disconnected impressions with no common associations, seeking sensation without reflection, loosely connecting music, dance and sketches, and bluntly displaying the 'other' body.

It is the never-ending hunger for the individual *Erlebnis* that in postmodern times would lead to further dehumanization. While Benjamin wrote his comments as a witness of the relatively new phenomenon of leisure time and mass culture at the end of the nineteenth century, the Flemish philosopher Lieven de Cauter observes how contemporary society promotes the dictate of the kick. In *Archaeology of the Kick* he observes that our culture of the kick cultivates the enjoyment of the superficial thrill of the momentary excitement. Man is eager for sensations and accumulates one moment of experience after the other. During survival trips and adventure tracks, sports like rafting and bungee jumping, man continually acquires what de Cauter calls *Erlebnis-Kapital* (7-8). Under pressure of rapid technological developments, man seeks what he calls continuous intensification; the nervous collecting of ever stronger and ever more varying stimuli. "Getting your kicks" is no longer the slogan of beatniks like Jack Kerouac

and William Burroughs, de Cauter explains, it is a common life style that penetrates every filament of society. One gets a kick out of life if one cultivates the art of consuming the bearable lightness of the shock, not realizing that the hunger for *Erlebnis* is – just like capitalist hunger – insatiable.

Several poets and critics lamented the *individual* notion of pleasure in these entertainment forms, and the consequent demise of social responsibility. The dictate of *Erlebnis* would lead to the moral isolation of people from one another. Like Poe's "man of the crowd" who lacks the reflective skills of the *Flâneur*, the gentleman of leisure is immersed in an atmosphere of isolation and comfortable entertainment.[3] In his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* Engels already observed "the brutal indifference" of the Londoners roaming the streets and rushing past one another "as if they had nothing in common or were in no way associated with one another":

> [...] these Londoners have had to sacrifice what is best in human nature in order to create all the wonders of civilization [...] a hundred creative faculties that lay dormant in them remained inactive and were suppressed [...] There is something distasteful about the very bustle of the streets, something that is abhorrent to human nature itself. (Benjamin 166-167)

Paul Valéry similarly observed how "the inhabitant of the great urban centres reverts to a state of savagery – that is, of isolation. The feeling of being dependent on others [...] is gradually blunted in the smooth functioning of the social mechanism. Any improvement of this mechanism eliminates certain modes of behavior and emotions". "Comfort isolates", agrees Benjamin, "it brings those enjoying it closer to mechanization" (174), in this way further illustrating his comparison of the leisure man and the factory worker with an automaton. Or, as Gilles Deleuze put it; "*automatic movement* gives rise to a *spiritual automaton*" (*The Time Image* 151).

Postmodern depthlessness and the waning of affect
The rise of aesthetic populism in late capitalist and postmodern times made Fredric Jameson observe the emergence of "a whole new culture of the image". Its constitute features were the notion of "a new depthlessness" (193) and the consequent "waning of affect" (196). In order to illustrate this whole new culture

Fig. 1. Publicity photograph for *Niagara* of Marilyn
Monroe, 1953

of the image, and the changed attitude on the part of the spectator, the circulation of images of tragic heroines such as Marilyn Monroe is particularly interesting. For the features mentioned by Jameson are not only characteristic of popular culture, but also of the pop art movement of the 1960s. In his well-known mass-production method, Andy Warhol brought one particular publicity photo of Marilyn Monroe for the film *Niagara* to the 'high-art' canvas. In the photo, Monroe is portrayed in the typical Hollywood portrait lighting that was nearly universal for depicting female stars at the time. The so-called Butterfly or Paramount lighting had a feathery effect and bestowed godlike qualities on facial features.[4] It aided in establishing the sexy 'Monroe look' that reflected the character of the femme fatale and her overtly sexual performance in the film.[5] The iconic values communicated by the still photo have little to do with Marilyn Monroe as a person, but all the more with stardom, female beauty and physical awareness. In favour of glamorous close-up devices for mass distribution, Norma Jeane Baker's corporeality has been put in a frame, on a pedestal, to become the icon Marilyn Monroe.

Francis Bacon already noted how "the photo tends to crush sensation into a single level and is powerless to put into sensation the difference of constitutive levels" (Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon* 64). Some photographic images even come to stand in for an entire life or historical event. The portrait of a tragic hero becomes an icon. Being in constant circulation, photographs hence encourage a short-circuited thinking. The photographic image has become an iconic cliché. Gilles Deleuze's use of the concept of the *cliché* is of particular interest here. Deleuze plays on the double meaning of *cliché* in French, which indicates both the reproductive mechanism at the basis of photography and at the basis of stereotyped thinking. A *cliché* denotes an image or an idea that has lost the force of its originality through overuse. Central to Deleuze's thinking on photography is that the use of clichés entails "a particularly dangerous sort of short-circuited thinking and representation, since its chemically based realism gives it an air of authenticity, of innocent directness that anchors and supports all its stereotyping" (Polan 245).

In his pop art style, Warhol appropriated images, icons and clichés of popular culture in order to foreground this logic of (mass) consumption. In his silkscreen Marilyn printings, collectively titled *Marilyn Diptych*, he reproduced the glamorous and glossy image of the actress's face fifty times, as in a sheet of postage stamps. Half of the reproductions are in bright pop art colours; shocking

Fig. 2. Andy Warhol, *Marylin Diptych,* 1962

pink, canary yellow and deep blue. The others are rendered in black and white, gradually blackening or fading, eventually rendering blurred shades.

In repeating the images extensively, Warhol points at the original context of the photo as a mechanically reproduced cultural product. He brings to the fore the 'smooth' mechanism of reproduction that has the human being Norma Jeane Baker become part and parcel of an industry. Behind the "photograph as relic, possessing a spiritual aura" lie reproduction technologies with economic interests; culminating in the capitalist logic of consumption (West 145).

By infusing the mass-production method with the unrealistic pop art colours, Warhol in fact brings to the fore how the Hollywood film industry erased every trace of the uniqueness of Norma Jeane Baker as a person. The black and white pictures with blurred shades are in that perspective reminiscent of how the cliché or photo negative turns the corporeality of the actress into an 'overexposed' cliché and commodity. But, in applying the same mass-production techniques as popular culture did, could Warhol escape the logic of capitalist consumption? Is it possible to recover corporeality and emotions from flatness through appropriation and critical repetition? The critical potential of 'quoting' or appropriating popular images in 'high art' has been the topic of many debates. Baudrillard wondered in his analysis of mass media culture: "Is it (pop art) not simply an effect of fashion, and thus a pure object of consumption itself?" (16). "Quite simply", he adds, "Pop artists fail to see that if a picture is to avoid being a sacred super-sign (a unique subject, a signature, a noble and magical object of commerce), then content or the intentions of the author are not enough; it is the structures of cultural production that decides this" (21).

Postmodern depthlessness in pop art
Jameson argued that "flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality, in the most literal sense" also befalls pop art productions (186). While Warhol's images hematise death – for example in his traffic accidents or the electric chair series – "the glacéd, x-ray elegance" of these images has nothing to do with "the death anxiety on the level of content" (Jameson 196). Pop art has lost its symbolic depth. Human figures, such as Warhol's Marilyn Monroe, have in that sense little to do with expressing (universal) pain. Whereas the alienated and isolated figure in Munch's painting *The Scream* is projecting out and externalizing cathartically the uttermost feeling of fear and pain as gesture or cry, as outward dramatization of inward feeling, the *Marilyn Diptych* depicts a tragic heroine that communicates nothing of her innermost feelings. Warhol completed the *Marilyn Diptych* during

the weeks after Marilyn Monroe's death in 1962, but despite the fact that the final years of Monroe's life were marked by illness and personal problems, the portraits do not reveal any sign of suffering. "Depth is replaced by surface", says Jameson (198). Pop art is a 'cool' art; "it demands neither aesthetic ecstasy nor affective or symbolic participation ('deep involvement')" (Baudrillard 22).

The flatness or depthlessness of the image has in that sense less to do with the level of content, than with what Jameson calls "a more fundamental mutation both in the object world itself […] and in the disposition of the subject" (196). Human relations have become media-fuelled. Our 'real' emotions of empathy, fear and love have been replaced by melodrama images, photos, picture postcards and film icons. "A strange compensatory decorative exhilaration" (Jameson 197) covers the loss of corporeal affects, but flattens the human faculty of the senses even further. The isolated individual has become impersonal in postmodern times. "There is no individual subject, and no distinctive feelings, only intensities of an impersonal type" (Buchanan 94). Pathologies of the ego have lost their relevance in a postmodern world, as the subject is scattered. "The alienation of the subject is displaced by the fragmentation of the subject" (Jameson 199). There is no longer a Subject to produce the feeling.

It is true, Warhol himself became part and parcel of the logic of capitalist consumption. He turned stars into art, but in the course of his career, this process turned himself – the artist – into a star. His stardom gave him access to exclusive celebrity circles and parties and this turned him into an icon of American popular culture as well. Not coincidentally, the term diptych refers to hinged paintings of religious icons that form an altarpiece. Is Warhol's *Marilyn Diptych* in the end nothing but a mere homage to the superficial iconic cliché of the sex symbol-actress who died far too soon?

'Depthless' popular images in theatrical seriality
Jan Fabre seems to intervene in this debate by including Warhol in his gallery of *Glowing Icons*. But despite the meta-reflective level, depthlessness also seems to afflict this performance. In displaying one icon after the other on stage, *Glowing Icons* also replaces corporeality by images. Human figures become iconic signs and hence "pure exteriority" (Baudrillard 15). The performance is devoted to bodies that possess an external aura only by the grace of their immortality as collective heroes or icons.

Fig. 3. Jan Fabre, *Glowing Icons,* 1997. Picture by
Wonge Bergmann

> Here we witness the disappearance of the erotic body. It is nothing but a narcissistic reflection, an illusion. The body is above all an image. An image that is made independent by the media and whose referent is unclear. […] The body disappears through overexposure. (De Brabandere 32-33)

The pessimism that guides Jameson in his diagnostic process, is striking. It is balanced by a profound sense of optimism, however. In his observation on dephtlessness and the waning of affect, Jameson stresses the fact that the cultural products of the postmodern era are not utterly devoid of feelings, emotions and anxieties. Rather, "such feelings – which it may be better and more accurate to call 'intensities' – are now free-floating and impersonal" (Jameson 200). Such feelings have been scattered, as the subject itself has been. The problems he addresses here, might be translated into a new challenge to postmodernity. This challenge is precisely "how – in the absence of an ego – to think the relation between all these new intensities thrown up by postmodern experience" (Buchanan 93). I will now develop the idea of how postdramatic theatre like *Glowing Icons* might meet this challenge.

In *Glowing Icons*, the spectator easily recognizes the celebrities the way mass-media has depicted them endlessly on posters and picture postcards. These images might be called flat, easily consumable images in the sense that they merely depict the glitter and glamour that voids the deep realities of fear and tragedy, of corporeality and life. But, this is but one function in the possible constellations of image-functions. Following Rancière in *The Future of the Image*, there is no such thing as a flat, superficial image. Art is a game of 'operations', consisting of shifting constellations of different functions of the image. Art history is in that case not a history of different sorts of images; it consists of shifts of different relations of functions of images.

> The images […] are not primarily manifestations of the properties of a certain technical medium, but operations: relations between a whole and parts; between a visibility and a power of signification and affect associated with it; between expectations and what happens to meet them. (Rancière, *The Future of the Image* 3)

By putting the icons in a seriality, Jan Fabre outwits the 'easy' consumption of the iconic clichés. In Rancière's words, he connects disruptively. When Einstein shakes hands with Napoleon on stage, or when Dracula is crawling beneath

Warhol's feet, his eyes covered with blood, Fabre links and has the icons 'Einstein', 'Napoleon', 'Dracula' and 'Warhol' collide with one another to install "*le non-lien de ses phrases*" and hence "*le shock des hétérogènes*" (the shock in heterogeneity) on the part of the spectator. In this case, a series of disconnected impressions with no common associations does not entail mere *Erlebnis* or comfortable entertainment. Whereas the smooth mechanism of the series of disconnected impressions in comfortable entertainment kills interest and receptiveness (Baudelaire), paralyzes the imagination of its consumers (Benjamin) or suppresses creative faculties (Engels), the seriality in *Glowing Icons* entails montage in a Benjaminian sense. Its disruptive connecting demonstrates a potential for a dialectics of seeing. Montage demonstrates its power "to interrupt the context in which it was inserted, and as a result to serve as an antidote to illusion" (Buck-Morss 67). Instead of emphasizing the connection between heterogeneous elements, the dialectics in montage or seriality "accentuates the heterogeneity of elements in order to provoke a shock that reveals a reality riven by contradictions" (Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* 58).

In the seriality of *Glowing Icons*, the iconic cliché is not formally altered; its function and relation with other images change, and hence its inherent readability. The perfect lookalike resembles the iconic cliché Warhol. One of the main challenges in Fabre's proclaimed 'battle' against clichés is – in accordance with the thinking of Deleuze in *The Time Image* – to have the spectator rediscover everything that one does not see in the image. In order to escape easy consumption, the iconic cliché should then "enter into internal relations that force the entire image to be 'read' no less then viewed, readable as much as visible", and must take on "the functions of thought" (22-23). The pure optic image of the iconic cliché 'Warhol' opens itself to the readable image (*l'image lisible*), the thinking image (*l'image pensante*) and shock thought. Instead of accumulating the bearable lightness of the shock in a chain of kicks (de Cauter), there is a shock in thought, "without thought being able to assimilate that shock within a coherent set of rational coordinates" (Bogue 176).

Deleuze's aesthetics of intensities is not concerned with mere spectacle in the sense of sensationalism or *plaisir-décharge,* mere thrills or pleasure of the senses. The intensity of the shock is not a letter of safe-conduct for the corporeal; it is also and at the same time an invitation for creative thinking, beyond common sense, cognitive recognition and representational idea(l)s. There is a movement "from the image to the thought, from the percept to the concept" (*The Time Image* 157). The concept engendered by the collision of montage is that the

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images in their seriality have "a shock effect on thought, and force […] thought to think itself as well as to think the whole" (Deleuze, *The Time Image* 158). Consensus in interpretation – the envisaged effect of the function of popular cultural images – is disrupted and becomes dissensus again.

In fact, the dialectics of seeing is also at work in Warhol's *Marilyn Diptych*. The main difference between pop art and popular culture is that the ethos of popular culture is based precisely on "unambiguous realism, on linear narration […] and the decorative […]. It is only on a rudimentary level that Pop can be mistaken for 'figurative' art, colourful imagery, a naive chronicle of consumer society, etc. Their candour is immense, as is their ambiguity." "Pop is a 'cool' art", but, Baudrillard significantly adds, "one preserving something of childhood curiosity or the naive enchantment of discovery". This sounds trivial, but it is not; it points out that pop art "above all […] (is) triggering those intellectual reflexes of decoding, deciphering, etc …" (22).

The so-called smile of collusion that Baudrillard observed in the scopic regime of pop art, is also part of the game in *Glowing Icons*. In watching the performance, we are stimulated to think the relation between all the new intensities thrown up by the postdramatic and postmodern experience. We do not necessarily know what the chain of moving icons means, why some iconic characters behave as they do on stage (symbolic depth), but we do see how the double poetics of the image works.

The smile of collusion belongs to the spectator as accomplice. It resembles the schizophrenic smile of the bewildered viewer, which is not to be confused with the smile of the bewildered madman, having no reason whatsoever. It is the smile of the creative thinker, seeing beyond the singular perspective of 'common sense'. For the smile of collusion not only demands to rediscover everything, but also demands the impossible perspective to see everything at once. In his quest for possibilities for art to conceive of new modes of relationships between the intensities, Jameson himself pointed at "the advent of a kind of schizophrenia (in Lacan's sense)" (Buchanan 97-98). This might be interpreted as a condition of the spectator in his attempt to rediscover the depth of the image beyond the symbolic mould. To think the relation between all the new intensities thrown up by postdramatic and postmodern experience is to rediscover the perpetual modulation of meaning in the image.

The schizophrenic points at the "breakdown in the signifying chain, that is, the interlocking syntagmatic series of signifiers which constitutes an utterance or a meaning" (Jameson 209). When that relationship breaks down, when the links of the signifying chain snap, then we have schizophrenia in the form of "a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers" (Jameson 210). The schizophrenic or bewildered spectator is invited to "do the impossible, namely, to see all the screens at once, in their radical and random difference" (Jameson 31). The abundance of images in Fabre's *Glowing Icons*, resulting in a saturation of the signaletic material (Deleuze, *Francis Bacon* 91) or plethora or plenitude (Lehmann 89), gears a similar schizophrenic gaze on the part of the spectator. However, this is not a mere overloading as such that leaves the spectator perplexed with astonishment or dumbed-down – a characteristic attributed to popular culture. The body and mind of the spectator are overwhelmed, but at the same time put at a distant, in a place where the courage of critical and creative thinking is required. This dialectics of seeing and gazing is reminiscent of "the madness of vision" ("*la folie du voir*") that Christine Buci-Glucksmann attributes to the baroque and that Deleuze in his notion of 'the fold' called "a sort of schizophrenic 'stuffing'". The abundance of iconic images in Fabre's *Glowing Icons* is hence not a process of blurring, but a process of doubling, of schizophrenia, seeing both functions of the image at the same time. The spectator is being overwhelmed *and* incited at the same time.

Ethics of evenly hovering attention
To return to the discourse lamenting the supposed stupefying and isolating effect of popular culture; will the abundance of images and the accompanying waning of affect lead us to moral isolation? To a flattened faculty of the senses? To dehumanization? Not necessarily so. Abundant image-constellations enhance a double poetics, at the same time immersing us and putting us at a distance. This might call for a mental exercise in flexibility, becoming schizophrenic in the sense that we open up towards several possible meanings, relations and identities. To accept the split gaze, the schizophrenic experience in watching popular culture in a theatre performance constellation is to endure "a state of indecision" (Rancière, *The Future of the Image* 38). It is an exercise in undecidedness, in the skill of what Hans-Thies Lehmann referred to as the "evenly hovering attention" ("*gleich-schwebende Aufmerksamkeit*"). Lehmann borrowed the term from Freud to describe the changed attitude on the part of the spectator in postdramatic theatre, where "everything depends on not understanding immediately".

> Rather one's perception has to remain open for connections, correspondences and clues at completely unexpected moments, perhaps casting what was said earlier in a completely new light. (Lehmann 87)

This mode of perceiving requires an openness in encountering the 'other'. Deleuze's argument for becoming schizophrenic no longer works with common sense to recognize otherness on the basis of easily recognizable external features such as stardom, beauty, physical appearances, or – at another level – on the basis of race, gender or age, but to meet or encounter according to an *accord discordant* or discordant harmony, according to an agreement to differ and disagree, to postpone interpretation and hence judgment (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* 183). The way the abundance of popular images challenges the boundaries of common sense might then be interpreted as an exercise in mental flexibility in encountering otherness, even if it occurs only in the (popular) cult of the intensive time of momentariness. To rephrase Rancière, wouldn't that be a nice future for the (popular) image in theatre?

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¹ Martin Jay's term 'scopic regime' is borrowed from the French film theorist Christian Metz who introduced the term in his 1975 study *The Imaginary Signifier* to distinguish between the cinematic and the theatrical scopic regime. Peter de Bolla wrote that "a scopic regime provides the envelope within which practices of looking play out their variations; it gives shape and form to aesthetic productions, orders the relation between the artwork and the viewer, and gives definition to the subject who looks. Such regimes are not always hegemonic, nor are they always antagonistic to different ways of ordering visuality – and indeed more than one regime may operate at a given time" (De Bolla 16).

² In *The Future of the Image* Jacques Rancière points at a regime of 'imageness' as "a regime of relations between elements and between functions (of an image)" (4), as "a particular regime of articulation between the visible and the sayable" (11).

³ Benjamin explicitly pointed out that the man of the crowd is no *flâneur*. The man of the crowd is "the pedestrian who would let himself be jostled by the crowd", while the *flâneur* would demand elbow room and would be "unwilling to forgo the life of a gentleman of leisure. Let the many attend to their daily affairs; the man of leisure can indulge in the preambulations of the *flâneur* only if as such he is already out of place. He is as much out of place in an atmosphere of complete leisure as in the feverish turmoil of the city" (172 – 173).

⁴ For a similar analysis of the circulation and mass distribution of photographs as icons, possessing spiritual aura in popular culture, see also my analysis of Fabian Barba's *A Mary Wigman Dance Evening* in the light of the fashionable sales technique of inserting collectible cards of famous dancers and film stars in cigarette packs in the 1930s. See Stalpaert 2011.

⁵ Not coincidentally, it was in *Niagara* "that the (Monroe) look was established" (Whitey Snyder in Churchwell 62).