

Robert Drew and JFK:
Insights into the Media Problem of 1960

by
Kenneth Noble

Thesis Advisor: Professor Drayton Nabers

Second Reader: Professor Kevin Quashie

Thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
in the English Honors Program in the Department of English
at Brown University**

April 9th, 2020

I hereby declare that I am the sole author this thesis.

I authorize Brown University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I further authroize Brown University to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other instituions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurtz Polk", written over a horizontal line.

Signature

Brown University requires the signatures of all persons using or photocopying this thesis. Please sign below, and give address and date.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

CRISIS IN TELEVISION STRUCTURES—1960

1 FEAR OF GOING OUTSIDE: THE ICONIC MAN AND INARTICULATION IN THE 1960S

2 CRISIS AND THE CREATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL POINT OF VIEW

CRISIS STRUCTURE IN FILM FOR TELEVISION—ROBERT DREW

3 THE EPISTEMIC CODES OF DIRECT CINEMA

4 IN ROBERT DREW'S TERMS: UNPUBLIC, CRISIS, AND HENRY LUCE

5 BY WAY OF CONCLUSION: *FACES OF NOVEMBER*, THE AUDIENCE AND THE GENRE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

The spiritual nature of politics may have been a contributing element through the 1940s and 50s but it was not a principal concern affecting the aesthetic organization of social factors. In the 1960s though, there was a different origin story of politics: *governance was engineered from myth, politics is one mode by which people communicate with entities that are not entirely human, and myth is the science of communication with entities that we cannot otherwise be accounted for*. In previous decades, one could not draw a line to this fictive origin so easily, but in 1960 the consensus philosophical orientation of thinkers working in politics and society concerned itself with the state's management of non-empirical elements and popular movements organized their aesthetic strategies around the spiritual possibilities of politics. 1960 then is the starting point for a set of peculiar revolutions that had a deep investment in media.

The filmmaker and journalist Robert Drew (1924-2014) stands as a useful lens in approaching the two tracks of the problem facing the start of the 1960s, the spiritual-political and the aesthetic-social. Drew is the inventor of Direct Cinema, also known as American Cinéma Vérité. He theorized the genre and accompanying method in a Harvard master's thesis after working as a photojournalist for *Life*. His company, Drew Associates, would assemble prominent figures who would continue versions of Direct Cinema in their own way, including Albert Maysles (1926-2015) of the Maysles Brothers known for *Salesman* (1969) and *Grey Gardens* (1975), D.A. Pennebaker (1925-2015) for his work on Bob Dylan in *Dont Look Back* (1967), and Richard Leacock (1921-2011),

who was celebrated for his work in France and Germany. Most of Drew's films would not find a home in the United States, but were celebrated in France as a part of the French New Wave and the French Cinéma Vérité genre oftentimes associated with Jean Rouch (1917-2004). While Robert Drew's legacy is most often catalogued in the history of documentaries, which deals with aesthetic concerns carried out from the ethnographic film genre at the beginning of the 20th Century up to the present, Drew's aesthetic project is better understood as a critique of the inadequacies of news starting in the late 1950s and on through the 60s and an exploration in the possibilities of films made for television to transform news.

Drew's perception of the inadequacy of news is representative of a widespread problem with meaning-making in regards to mediums that deal in non-empirical elements. In Drew's time, these institutions would include religion, Arts, and politics. Drew's proposed solutions help to concretize the nature of these problems in the 1960s and in order to understand how Drew goes about addressing these concerns in news, he must be mapped onto discourses about these concerns in Arts and politics with which his work is conversant.

To set the parameters of this map: there is a change in the episteme of Man that occurs at the beginning of the 1960s from the Administrative Man to the Iconic Man. With a change in the hegemonic system of evaluating forms of knowledge production, there are two common responses that are important for analyzing Robert Drew—these are epitomized by Michael Fried and Susan Sontag. A characteristic of the change in the episteme of Man is the synesthetic incorporation of the sociogenic conditions that surround the art object into the frame of the art object. The mechanics and consequences

of this change in the subject matter of art objects is explained using *The Addams Family* (1964) television show as an example in section 1, arguing that the principal difference between Charles Addams' cartoon done during the episteme of the Administrative Man and *The Addams Family* television show done during the episteme of the Iconic Man can be described by how the series takes the television audience's family as its subject.

Michael Fried and Susan Sontag both understand this change in the configuration of the audience and the work of art as a problem to art objects' ability to produce the non-empirical effect characteristic to Art, but they take opposing opinions as to the solution. Fried advocates for a rejection of art's incorporation of the social. Sontag advocates for the adoption of art's incorporation of the social and art-as-artifice. This counterpoint in approach allows us to map the problem Drew is concerned with in politics and in the news. Below is a diagram of interlocutors in the problem of meaning-making the 1960s covered in the analysis of this thesis organized along the dichotomy between Fried and Sontag:

Interlocutors Organized in Dichotomy

Michael Fried

Herbert Marcuse
John F. Kennedy
Robert Drew

Susan Sontag

Commission on National Goals
Dwight D. Eisenhower
Henry Luce

Fried and Sontag cover the first track of Drew's news concerns: the synesthetic compounding of the social and aesthetic. Marcuse and Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals describe Drew's second track: the synesthetic compounding of the spiritual and political. Marcuse and the Commission mirror Fried and Sontag except instead of the incorporation of sociogeny into aesthetic logic, Marcuse and the

Commission are concerned with the incorporation of alternative ways of being into the reproductive mechanisms of the State. The result is a spiritual problem whereby the prospect of meaningful politics, for representatives and constituents, seems dubious and the mediums of popular sovereignty within the democratic process are suspect of being incapable of producing the non-empirical effects characteristic to governance.

Drew takes on the spiritual problem of politics and its consequences, which are elaborated on in the first quarter of section 2, because Drew understood news as a necessary creative medium for the further development of the democratic process, which requires an account of popular political decision. Naturally then, Direct Cinema's stated goal, "to capture the moment of decision," requires a way to portray the national consciousness in the psychological, social, and historical operations structure of decision and be able to portray the alienation between that national consciousness and the nation. In order to resolve these obstacles, Drew's aesthetic project must be to fashion a medium that can bring coherence to these two tracks, the spiritual-political and social-aesthetic.

The Kennedy Films, including *Primary* (1960), *Adventures on the New Frontier* (1961), *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment* (1963), and *Faces of November* (1964), are the works where Drew manifests the ability for news to cohere the spiritual-political and the social-aesthetic. The films' ability to fulfill Drew's aesthetic project is in large part a consequence of John F. Kennedy's own aesthetic strategy. As will be demonstrated in section 4, Kennedy was a fortuitous subject and model for the aesthetic components Drew would incorporate into his films, for Kennedy, in campaign and in office, had to address the spiritual problems of politics and did so by constructing an aesthetic configuration about himself that figured him

as a crisis manager in such a way that, through his decision, he was able to defeat the commodification of his person, position, and process.

Many of the indelible characteristics of Drew's mode of documentation come from this chiasmatic collaboration between Robert Drew and John F. Kennedy, which had Drew apply a political solution to an aesthetic problem in a similar way to how Kennedy applied an aesthetic solution to a political problem. A couple of these characteristics include a belief and disillusionment with liberalism and an investment in revealing frameworks of American political myth alongside the social and economic conditions they surround. This is particularly significant in the comparative interpretation of his films and, having already mapped his conceptual geneology and interlocutors, it allows the analysis to gesture toward the myriad traditions he quietly shaped with his theories in documentation and news.

In approaching Robert Drew's oeuvre with a careful eye to the philosophical and aesthetic moods of his work and his time, I hope I have not written my own theory of the period but captured the moments of decision with which Drew revealed his insight into the political and aesthetic worlds of the 1960s. My analysis has the aim to describe Drew's aesthetic project as it inhabited these worlds and how Kennedy's political project intersected Drew's ambitions to generative effects. My hope is that in holding Drew and Kennedy's insights into the early 1960s, the reader may venture to consider the place of their theories about news and documentation within the spirit and politics of the later 60s and up until the present.

1

Fear of Going Outside: The Iconic Man and Inarticulation in the 1960s

Abstract:

There is a change in the episteme of Man at the end of the 1950s from the Administrative Man to the Iconic Man. Under the episteme of the Iconic Man the limen of aesthetic formulations moves to include the sociogenic conditions of the art-object and audience. This results in a change in how modes of philosophical inquiry are privileged, certain fields of philosophical inquiry are synesthetically linked, and actions in Art and politics are meaningful to the extent they are able to present alternative ways of being within the language of Style. Style here is defined as the ability for persons and non-human art-objects to project character that defeats their social-aesthetic commodification. Michael Fried and Susan Sontag represent two types of responses to this change in the episteme of Man and will be set up as guides to understanding concepts central to the analysis of Robert Drew: *theatricality*, presence-absence game, alternative ways of being, and grace.

In the change from the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the 1960s, there is a concern that nothing can be expressed coherently. This seems to track throughout the 1960s. The dilemma poses pernicious problems to concepts such as intuition, causation, and the alienability of observations and spurs greatest affordances from institutions that most extensively incorporate non-empirical elements in the fabrication of their meaning, e.g. religion, Art, and politics. In the case of Art, the formlessness of thought originates alongside a focus on the materiality of aesthetic and social paradigms and as the locus of entertainment moves from the composition of the art object to the network of social relations and obligations that make up the

sensibility of the art object, there is a call for new forms of aesthetic experience and a doubt in the possibility for expression.

One can read this through *The Addams Family* (1964) and its difference with Charles Addams' cartoons. It is easily located in the television show because the series is explicitly interested in the television medium. This is clear for the opening sequences set the standard for how television portraiture dominates the construction of the first episodes. The credit sequences play with motion and stillness. The Addams' snapping typifies this play as it suggests the illusion of a snapping still image. The established tradition gestured toward is one of still photography where one might expect a clear gestalt and a visual formulation that privileges symmetry and difference. The movement of the camera propounds how the Addams Family's moving portrait does not operate in the tradition of still photography: the audience's attention is not organized toward perceiving difference between characters within the frame or characters outside the frame and the image is not organized into a clear gestalt because it moves telescopically. The credits are an evident microcosm of how *The Addams Family* engages television portraiture. The mosaic montage of music, choreography, and close-ups is organized in reference and dissimilarity to photography in order to transubstantiate the cartoons' otherworld nature into the shared environ of the suburban household.

The characters within *The Addams Family* are importantly not on the fringes of society and do not represent an alternative way of being unlike Charles Addams' original cartoons. In Addams' original cartoons, Morticia and Gomez are excitations of the Other that crawl out of the perspective and deep focus of the cartoon frame. In

general, Charles Addams' humor revolves around this play with perspective, wherein some upstage action recontextualizes a relation portrayed downstage or something implied in shadow, a hazy deep-focus, invades the tonal sanctity of the clear forward action in its postcard-flatness.

His humor relies on the many layers of flatness within the cartoon medium: the affective flatness of the newspapers' negative space caused by the heterogeneity of content and form within the times' mosaic; the flatness of the text whose suspension away from other text and balance with the cartoon frame creates a multistability wherein it is both text and visual difference; the flatness of the imaginary cartoon plane, which proposes itself as anti-theatrical in how the representation comfortably matches the size of the depicted territory, e.g. the small spaces presented feel neither confined nor intimate and, therefore, the mise en scene does not purport to be sentimental or distorted; and the flatness of character created by caricature and thereby the presiding method of character construction through assembling deterministic physical features. The fabrication of the Addams Family cartoon is a way to resolve necessary conflict between perspective and flatness within the cartoon medium in order to create a caricature of a family beyond the possibility of the newspaper audience. It is still flat caricature yet alien to the ontology of the cartoon as they are more than opposite the straight man.

The Addams Family television show is about the audience's family.

The change in subject matter from a caricature of formal distortion to the audience's family is corollary to a change in the social disturbance of the cartoon to that of the television program. A considerable extent to which television and

newspaper cartoons engage in politics is by how they shape audience. In the history of the news and news magazine how news is actively changing its audience is evident. Henry Luce, the co-creator of *Life-Time*, and Condé Nast, the media titan that controlled magazines such as *The New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair*, envisioned news as central to the democratic process in a nearly Deweyian pragmatist mode. Through the amalgamation of personality, Luce, or through the aggregation of attention, Nast, the news designs the political citizen through a transmutation of supposed spontaneous events of Truth into values, and, therefore, politics.

Within the Luce and Nast tradition of news, Addams' cartoons' rupture into the production of politics through the cultivation of figure and attention. The breach into politics is a consequence of how the cartoons are an explicit exposition of a socialized citizen who is not incorporated into news demography. The distortion of the cartoon frame only clarifies this position that there could be a family engaged in American social life but not participate in the event of making politics. From this sense, Charles Addams' racist cartoons, which deal with minstrel characters, converge with his Addams Family cartoons in that the articulation of the socialized and unincorporated family reflects anxieties about both the progressive project of social organization around the form of the corporation and the ways the corporation encodes an economic segregation and imperialism along racial lines.

The first episodes of *The Addams Family* are interested in mapping these historical alienations that the cartoon is conversant with while marking its concerns as separate. The first thirty seconds situates the series' project in relation to the cartoons'. The first episode opens on a mailman and when he spreads out the letters

for the Addams in his hand, Thing, the Addams Family's disembodied hand, grabs them and recoils into the box. Delayed, the mailman turns up his head in shock and eyes the camera. He runs into the truant officer, who asks for help identifying the residence, and then declares his intent to have the Addams children attend school. The mailman's trajectory introduces the cartoon's logic to the show as a comparative. His initial comfort inspired from the routine nature of his delivery emphasizes the uniformity of the Addams' mailbox, their street, and the benign anonymity of their residential place between urban life and suburbia. When Thing pulls the letters as the mailman looks away, we have the same visual humor and a point of distortion that marks Charles Addams' style, in this case the close-up on the mailman. At this point, a frenetic display of indistinct facial gestures replaces the play of perspective from the cartoon and as he glances at the camera, we are reminded of the cartoon's focus on the demographic citizen at the same time that we are asked to feel through the mailman's gesture, become synonymous with him and become synonymous with that demographic citizen.

By the truant officer declaring his intent to incorporate the children into the school system, he breaks the arrangement the mailman establishes where the Addams are an example of the mappable social Other, originally the opposite of the Economic Man, carried over into the epistemic order of the Administrative Man, where the family is inexplicably apart and involved—inexplicable because the epistemic foundation of the Administrative Man, public administration, cannot give an account of, cannot socialize, the family's difference. Unlike the mailman, the truant officer must render the Addams alienable social roles in institutional

exchange, not just be satisfied with understanding them as mappable disalienable commodities as they are represented in the flatness of the cartoon. This requires a literal and metaphorical entrance into the domestic and when he expects to find a privatized epistemic order that he would resocialize, where the Addams might have unique ways of knowing determined by their physiology and the extrasomatic accoutrement of their home, he instead finds a private aesthetic. The family is not physically different, their ways of communicating with each other through the noose gongs, exotic pets, and miniature organ, have natural counterparts in the normative genre of American families, but they keep a critical distance from their home, activities, and values as they treat these as aesthetic representations separate from themselves. The truant officer has mistaken the Iconic Man for the Economic Man's Other.

The first two episodes of *The Addams Family* track this argument in their A plots (main dramatic arcs). The central problem of the first episode is that "there's such a thing as learning and accomplishment" and that they have nothing to do with talent. Toward the end of the episode, this problem manifests when the children return from school in tears because their class had read a book where a knight killed a dragon, which is indefensible cruelty to the dragon. The Addams then convince the school to send the truant officer back to their home to discuss the problem and sit him down to innumerate their points. In forcing the truant officer back into their home to discuss a point about the school's curriculum, locking him into their decorated chair that taxidermy bears physically encircle and sonically fill, they rearticulate pedagogy into a language of sociogenically innate aesthetics. With that,

a kind of socialization that purposes learning and ambition as transferable, especially through an institution, is rendered a matter of aesthetic preference originating from a sense of personality indivisible to the person. The Addams describe this aspect of personality as “talent” and by the end of the episode, it is clear that talent is of the same substance as pedagogy and ambition.

The second episode is troubled by Gomez’s thought: “what if I had tied the first knot.” They are the last words of his story to Pugsley on how he was able to overcome the seduction of a boy’s love of the outdoors. Pugsley’s interest in boy scouts suggests people’s state of becoming depends on their behaviors. They hire a psychologist who wants to let out Pugsley’s “inner antagonisms” to cure him of his outdoorsman perversion. Pugsley begins to act like his other family members and the psychologist leaves thinking Pugsley has released his inner antagonisms, only to be surprised as he is covered in waves of discarded camping equipment and sports goods as he leaves the door. The Addams’ investment in protecting natural talent as a preservation of family honor changes into understanding inner antagonisms as within the parameters of the family—that acting out inner antagonisms is family behavior. In this sense, personality and charisma become essential characteristics of the family as the base unit of social organization. The essential being is made of their family behavior and behavioral materialism is left as detritus that is metonymically linked to the institutional nature of psychology in the same way that mental health may become a metonymical possession of the psychologist.

The discourse on talent, beauty, and social organization is sustained throughout these and later episodes as a consequence of the necessity of the

program, in its capacity as television portraiture, to represent a family that is not a product of its bio-psychological construction, its social role, or sentimentality. The program tracks Style as it defeats social organization, thereby establishing the epistemic foundation of the Iconic Man in the use of Style to explain social difference. The epistemic vision of the Iconic Man's work is the manipulation and composition of social phenomena to create immaculate untouchable aesthetic paradigms of sensuality.

The transition can be read through the pictures on the next page. The image above is from a Charles Addams' cartoon that inspired the second episode of the series, which the second image below is taken from. Both images' aesthetic logic deal in the resolution of a perspectival impossibility. The cartoon has two perspective horizons that, through different operations in its gestalt and mise en scene, generate the subject and form of the cartoon. The television still asks us to believe that Morticia in the doorway is looking at Pugsley's reflection and not the camera and that Pugsley cannot see Morticia or the camera. The action within the mirror demonstrates the primacy of Pugsley and Moritica's Style in their capacity as Iconic figures, thus making the frame of the mirror a miniature scene within scene of television's new limen enveloping the sociogeny of the audience rather than the gap between audience and the television unit.



(above: Charles Addams cartoon)



(above: *The Addams Family* season 1 episode 2)

Returning to the first image, the cartoon, one can notice how the gestalt of the Pugsley's performance to the mirror makes Pugsley's reflection seem apart from the mirror at the same time that the mise en scene presents Pugsley and the mirror as one bio-object. The construction of that bio-object and the long presence of his shadow turns his salute into the site/sight of his physiological presence and his hidden nature in two ways: his hand obscures his face within the bio-object and in his reflection, which turns them into criterion for the unconcealment¹ of his transcendental nature, in this case, his administrative self; the salute's site/sight is triangulated by the sight of the family, his reflection, and the cartoon frame.

The gestalt of the parents gives two different senses: the gray values give a sense of a continuous space with Pugsley but the horizon perspective lines, lack of proximity, and the refusal for objects or subjects that would stress continuation across the rooms gives the impression that the top left of the picture is a separate space or foreign plane. The mise en scene proposes Morticia, Gomez, and the door as a bio-object, the thick line that emphasizes the difference in flooring becomes the site of power that constructs their bodies and gaze devoid of voice or dialogue. Their gestalt and mise en scene create the context for the humor of the cartoon because of how it prepares the delay from Morticia in the top left to the bottom text, setting the pace and perspective shift necessary for the execution of the punch line. In this way,

¹ In using the word, "unconcealment," I reference Martin Heidegger's essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1950). I am implying that the way the hand hides Pugsley's face sets up a dialectical relationship between his hidden psyche and his outfit that transubstantiates his ontogeny and the work of his being into an administrative self; this would be a version of the dialectic from Heidegger's essay between the *earth* and the *world* that results in the unconcealment of the work of art.

the humor of the cartoon is the manifestation and release of the change between the Economic and Administrative Man, especially as it relates to the Other. The terms of the discussion are gestalt and mise en scene—how the cartoon form distorts and expands itself in myriad ways marks the transition into and problems of the Administrative Man.

The second image, the television still, is opposite but similar to the cartoon. As before, Pugsley is covered, but, at the same time, is not. The focus plane privileges the composition within the mirror, stretching as far forward as the African statue to the left. The eye moves from the top left to bottom right, which, along with the relative brevity and compositional equality between the mirror and Pugsley's reflection, makes the body essentially connected to the reflection yet, at the same time, considering the composition's similarity to an over-the-shoulder perspective shot, makes the body and reflection aesthetically independent and at a representational distance. The arrangement of Pugsley's covered self and his reflected self is continuous but estranged: what is depicted is not him facing himself, him feeling himself, the separation between his body and his representation, or the separation between his materiality and consciousness.

As before, there are two anchoring sites/sights: Morticia and Pugsley's body. Through the compositional similarities to an over-the-shoulder as mentioned above and the eye contact between Morticia and the camera, both anchors become communal sites where the primacy of Pugsley's fashion and Morticia's affect, as aspects of the iconic, may be substitutable with the audience. The composition of Style within the mirror as a way of metaphorically engaging the audience in the

language of Iconic Man becomes constitutive of how television understands itself as a tactile medium² and the estrangement between Pugsley's body and his reflection marks an anxiety about the transition between the Administrative Man and Iconic Man, which in turn, defines the primary plot of that episode as described above.

This social disturbance of television as a result of the transition into the Iconic Man creates ripples across aesthetic thinkers, leading to a problem of inarticulation. Marshall McLuhan's analysis of "hot" and "cool" media is a manifestation and effect of this transition. Because television required high participation from the audience in such a way that the television image is realized as it is projected onto the viewer's body and passes through the perception of the viewer, McLuhan theorized that television caused "depth structures" in other media:

"The cool TV medium promotes depth structures in art and entertainment alike, and creates audience involvement in depth as well. Since nearly all our technologies and entertainment since Gutenberg have been not cool, but hot; and not deep, but fragmentary; not producer-oriented, but consumer-oriented, there is scarcely a single area of established relationships, from home and church to school and market, that has not been profoundly disturbed in its pattern and texture" (*Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* by Marshall McLuhan, 417).

The promotion of "depth structures" can be extended to philosophy. Expanding McLuhan to a philosophical gesture comes with an understanding that television's capacity for synesthetic tactility is cause and effect of the adoption of depth structures across human behavior including the ways by which we make and codify genres of Humanity.³ Positing a "depth structure" in how the 1960s understood

² See McLuhan's book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), especially the chapter regarding television, "Television: the Timid Giant," for more on the tactility of television.

³ It is important to note here that I do not use "Iconic" in the way McLuhan does, as when he describes the "iconic," he is describing how corporate organization creates unified selves within a system of roles. He is describing the Administrative Man and sometimes how the Administrative Man is able to operate in the transition between definitions of Humanity, such as the non-specialization of

definitions of the Human would lead to a similar kind of synesthesia, some of which we have discussed above. Below is a chart tracking some of these pairings when privileging the transcendental power of personality:

Homo Iconicus' Synesthesia

Talent	Ambition
Aesthetics	Ethics
Epistemology	Ontology
Values	Politics
Love/Language	Reason/ Language

Under the episteme of the Iconic Man, there is a perceived necessity to engage with these fields of inquiry through depth structures. The value of new insights is tested on the sensuality of the materiality they offer, yet that sensuality must be of a transcendental or divine nature and their materiality is made up of the collation of the sociogeny of audience. This renders many discourses inarticulate, not incoherent but not reaching the point of the matter.

There are numerous respondents to the phenomenon of mass inarticulation and, among them, Susan Sontag represents one prominent approach. In her “Notes on ‘Camp’” (1964), she maps an optimistic view of the commodification of character and the incorporation of social relations into aesthetic logic. This trajectory of her argument is best highlighted when she describes style as artifice and maintains that “taste governs every free—as opposed to rote—human response” (“Notes on Camp”

domestic spaces, which does not make sense when considering Style, but could make sense if considering the process as a way for the corporate domestic to develop a method for finding the immaculate aesthetic aura of domestic spaces: “All this adds up to the compressional implosion—the return to nonspecialized forms of clothes and spaces, the seeking of multi-uses for rooms and things and objects, in a single word—the iconic” (McLuhan, 435).

by Susan Sontag, 4)(1). She, in effect, advocates for the adoption of the episteme of the Iconic Man, arguing that a privileging of Style may lead to new political possibilities. In her navigation, style and character are the dandyist evacuation of self from the aesthetic toward the theatrical. There remains a problem. The text is troubled by the thought that there is no possibility of genuine aesthetic experience or genuine politics. Understanding Camp as a projection of a New York homosexual sensibility designed to further social integration, she must reconcile how, by her account, Camp generates a system of values without foregrounding an urban gay citizen or role. How theatricality seems generative and troublesome is a consequence of how it is, on one hand, a landmark of the death of a certain kind of human, such that gay folks that take up the sensibility are unable to have social selves that purport to be more than artifice and, on the other hand, seems to account for the beneficial pairing of value and politics and ontology and epistemology, such that gay folks as artifice may be incorporated into a general discourse on politics and being:

“To perceive Camp in objects and persons is to understand Being-as-Playing-a-Role. It is the farthest extension, in sensibility, of the metaphor of life as theater” (4).

Michael Fried represents another prominent approach to the change in the episteme of Man that is nearly opposite what Sontag advocates. Fried names the place of theatricality in the project of Modern Art directly in “Art and Objecthood” (1967): “The imperative that modernist painting defeat or suspend its objecthood is at bottom the imperative that it *defeat or suspend theater*” (*Art and Objecthood* by Michael Fried, 160). In the case of the Iconic Man, *theatricality* includes the

metaphorized corpus, e.g. Pugsley's body in the second image above, and the sociogeny that the television with which composes in order to track Style. Fried's account of Minimalism resembles Sontag's account of Camp in that her writing on style as artifice matches his account of Minimalist sculpture as trying to mimic the sociogeny and materiality of the human form and promoting their understanding through distanced interest. Fried understands *theatricality* as a sensibility that Modernist Art defines itself against across time, but his remarks on Minimalism reveal a concern that the encroachment of *theatricality* is more prominent in the 1960s. In clarifying the trajectory of the Minimalist sensibility, he is defining the language of the episteme of the Iconic Man. Therefore, when he opposes what Sontag finds to be an adequate response to the treacherous path of understanding the terms by which one is rendered human, he is fashioning out the terms by which Camp, and other modes of theatricality, fail to meet the particular criteria of art in the age of the Iconic Man, fail to generate non-empirical sensuality characteristic of Art.

According to Fried, "Conviction" and "Presentness" are chief among the attributes that genuine artwork inspires, as "Presentness is grace" (168). These two and permutations of them are what is required of Art in the age of the Iconic Man for those who are not satisfied with Sontag's adoption of art-as-artifice. It constitutes a new account of the non-empirical effect of Art. In this account, Art engages the mystery of Style—something fabricated from interest and social phenomena into something that is able to manifest conviction and presentness. Behind this is a mechanism running on a presence-absence game of materiality. For example, the

effect of the presentness of the viewer and piece is grounded in the absence of materiality of both yet this effect is managed through the presence of the viewer and piece's materiality, which leaves both of them absent of character—to some extent we could articulate this vice versa though and ad infinitum, so what is evident is the game itself, not any particular arrangement. The presence-absence game will become a theme for the rest of the analysis.

Another consequence of how Fried's language intersects with the Iconic Man, is how the mystery of Style under the regime of the Iconic Man as described by Fried fears engaging with an outside actor and this organizes which and in what way aesthetic projects are privileged. It is especially powerful to evoke alternative ways of being in the non-empirical effect of the art-object, but this portrayal of the stranger must only be an effect and not require a new set of material affordances. The Addams are at once made up of and live outside the behaviors and obligations that mediate their living in the world and they bring outsiders in only for their conquest. The truant officer and psychologist are only briefly strangers and soon becomes a part of the mechanisms by which the Addams may defeat *theatricality*. The episteme of Style fears a stranger that would give a permanence to the materiality, or lack of there of, of the composition. Such is paramount to living in fear of a stranger able to articulate. The criteria for the defeat of *theatricality* and the dual interest and anxiety over the alternative ways of being will become considerations for Robert Drew in how he constructs Direct Cinema and the basis by which Kennedy may begin to solve Drew's aesthetic problems.

Crisis and the Creation of the Presidential Point of View

Abstract:

Television allowed for President Eisenhower to reconsider the role of the executive office and his relationship to foreign policy. This change manifests in the Commission on National Goals releasing their 15-point report. In that report, the Commission uncovered what can generally be termed “television problems.” In how television organized its audience and contents, it revealed⁴ a spiritual problem in American political myth, which spurred responses from Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy as well as anxieties around political meaning-making. Kennedy’s spiritual solution was to transform the presidential decision-making process, thereby changing the relationship between desire and fact in such a way that, paired with a re-orientation to his commodification, allow him to produce acts of grace that defeat theatricality and reveal glimpses of a Marcusean political alternative to industrial society. He does this through substituting the operational problem between desire and fact with the idea of the crisis, *κρίσις*.

The Television Problem

According to the 1960 decennial census, the number of families that possessed a television set went from 11 percent to 88 percent in 10 years.⁵ There was unanimity of activity amongst all Americans in the evenings. Consider then how the mosaic quality of television gives all elements within its composition an equality of value, as opposed to a visual medium that may work in symmetry instead of equality. Therefore, within 10 years, there was a supposed uniformity of action and form: Americans were watching

⁴ To an extent I do believe television also caused this problem in American political myth, but to assert that would require an extensive preamble theorizing causation in cultural change dealing with non-empirical entities and ethnographic data about the normative political ontologies in the United States as well as how discursive, economic, and military power flowed through those ontologies. Such an investigation is beyond the scope of this thesis and would retract from our foci, Robert Drew and John F. Kennedy.

⁵ Theodore White. *The Making of the President, 1960*, p. 279.

television and the elements within on the television screen held the same value. The country had a technological consensus of mass communication such that its participants were interchangeable as well as its messages.

In 1960, the interchangeability of participants and messages implied the interchangeability of participant-messages, thereby changing the mediums of political consciousness and non-localized popular action. The progression from interchangeable participants and messages to participant-messages is the result of how, within the paradigm of the Iconic Man and in McLuhan's idea of *depth structures*, the audience is the subject of television or it is bounded within the limen of television composition. The messages transform the viewer, acting upon them as a part of the fabrication of Style, resulting in the creation of the bio-object, participant-message, and an interchangeability between the participant, message, and participant-message. This is not a special or esoteric alchemy as the transformation and concatenation of elements is a part of any system of symbols and endemic to all mediums.⁶ It is a matter of degree only emphasized by how television makes the bifurcation and creation of political consciousness its central concern evidenced by the Presidential debates between Kennedy and Nixon that had the candidates, as Theodore White describes,

“snapping their two-and-a-half-minute answers back and forth, both candidates could only react for the cameras and the people, they could not think. And, since two and a half minutes permit only a snatch of naked thought and a spatter of raw facts, both candidates, whenever caught out on a limb with a thought too heavy for two-minute exploration, a thought seemingly too bold or fresh to be accepted by the conditioned American mind, hastily scuttled back toward center as soon as they had enunciated the thought” (*The Making of the President, 1960* by Theodore White, 292).

⁶ The works of Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Ludwig Wittgenstein depend upon these in their theories of the sign. These relations are especially prominent in the trichotomies of Peircian semiotics and, I would conjecture, in American aesthetics in general because of its proximity to Pragmatism.

The move to television changed the vocabulary of the presidential race from a discussion of differences in roles and experience to a maneuvering of the candidates' "real" and "fake" natures. For within the narrative of the debates as they were conducted, it was understood that Nixon's consciousness was with his opponent in the room and Kennedy was clearing the mind of the American people and, alongside that, Nixon's fake real persona melted with his lazy shave and Kennedy's real fake persona became the foundation of his enchantment.

Kennedy would go on to win the election by such a small margin that it rendered his majority arbitrary: the political apparatus did not manifest the popular will; it only happened to coincide with the popular consciousness television had successfully indexed. The movement of sovereignty from Eisenhower to Kennedy appeared to be an event that occurred in spite of the political mechanism, instead an effect of Kennedy reaching out with the non-empirical force of personality that only television had made measurable and perceptible in the bodies of the television audience. Kennedy's ability to reach out of his commodification was a criterion for his collaboration with the television medium, as Gore Vidal opens his essay, *The Holy Family* (1967),

"he appeared to be beautifully onto himself; he was also onto us; there is even evidence that he was onto the family, too. As a result, there were few intellectuals in 1960 who were not beguiled by the spectacle of a President who seemed always to be standing at a certain remove from himself, watching with amusement his own performance" ("The Holy Family" by Gore Vidal in *Smiling Through the Apocalypse; Esquire's History of the Sixties* edited by Harold T.P. Hayes, 112)

so the power of Kennedy becomes entwined with his ability of disalienation, to package his alienation and ford the gap between himself and his self-estrangement, a division of his own design that television made more meaningful.

The television problem of politics exceeds Kennedy and was articulated at the time as a spiritual and operational problem of the American political myths undergirding industrial society—problems that had started to be elaborated under the episteme of the Administrative Man and inherited under the episteme of the Iconic Man. Herbert Marcuse is one of the most precise articulators of anxieties over political meaning-making and the relationship between commodification and non-empirical elements in the modern political consciousness.

In his book, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964), Marcuse tracks how advanced industrial society reproduces itself through the incorporation and dissolution of alternative ways of being. By how his hypothesis is constructed, he describes a theoretical landscape that will be found a few years later in Michael Fried's "Art and Objecthood" (1967). While Michael Fried delivers his definition of the purpose of Modernist Art as a definition for all time, it is clearly motivated by his appraisal of the time within which he is living. Not only is it a critique of contemporary art-makers, but the value of Art as he describes it is directly correlated to the peculiar alienation people have to their social realities and political futures. His most damning criticism of Minimalists is that the experience of encountering their work is far too similar to the experience of traffic or passing by strangers on a sidewalk, showing an understanding of the nature of the problems Marcuse writes on. It is also clear that Marcuse has a kinship to Fried's work as *One Dimensional Man* exhibits an extended consideration on the possibility of formal constructions to generate non-empirical effects. The incorporation of alternatives ways of being, their epistemologies, ontologies, and axioms and the residual consequences of that incorporation, i.e. that

intuition is behaviorally relegated to the experience of time passing through the body because industrial society alienates all other forms of communication in such a way that renders them inoperable,⁷ mirrors Fried's observation on Minimalism: that the total incorporation of modes of communication within a form of equal alienation between those modes, what he refers to as *theatricality*, leaves only the experiential currency of time passing through the body as a way of encountering those pieces thus making them unable to deal in the non-empirical intuition that is the grace of Art.

Fried can point to a solution to this problem in the existing tradition of Modernism, which Fried claims does, occasionally, offer the grace of Art, but Marcuse is in a very different position as there is no alternative tradition he knows he can point to. Instead, he hypothesizes the existence of a possible horizon point where the destructive reproduction of industrial institutions encounters a precipice where industrial society's further expansion necessitates its transcendence:

“Advanced industrial society is approaching the stage where continued progress would demand the radical subversion of the prevailing direction and organization of progress” (*One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* by Herbert Marcuse, 16).

Marcuse is not the only one that imagines the possibility of this horizon in the trajectory of industrial society. In fact, the existence and immanent importance of this horizon separating what I may call the “commodified technical” from the meaningful is central to the episteme of the Iconic Man and, through television, which is almost a living-diagram of this political possibility. Marcuse is far from the only one thinking about this: the

⁷ Marcuse gives many examples throughout the text. To include some as examples: Marcuse is both bothered by the division between the social and the natural as well as their co-presence found within each other; he is both bothered by the alienation of man in an industrialized world as well as the dubious claim man has to alienation when the object world is made extrasomatic and the social world parasomatic; and he is both bothered by how advanced industrial society transforms man's choices to be less than and greater than their assumed parameters.

Marcusian horizon and the television problems it engages in eventually come to Eisenhower's attention in the year he is preparing to leave office.

The Spirit Problem

Eisenhower had made few appearances with the rise of television and did not venture into live television broadcast until the end of his presidency, one of his first and last broadcasts was his presentation of *The Report of the President's Commission on National Goals* (1960) in which his committee found it was the opportune time to shed light upon the purpose of the American consciousness. Their recommendations were largely benign but operated against a backdrop of new Cold War rhetoric and an imminent transformation of national identity and encounter with a perilous unknown.

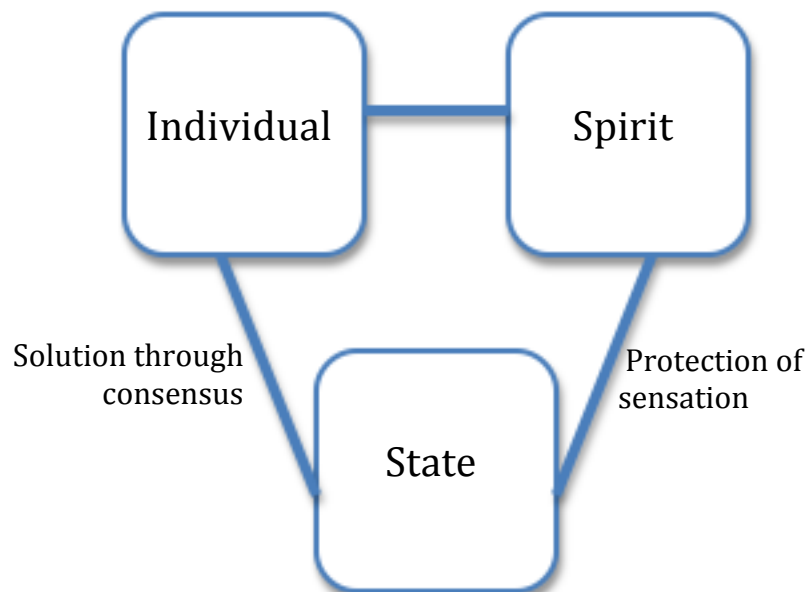
The Report in a mode part millenarian and part imaginative recognizes a spiritual problem in the construction of the State and proposes a return to a variation of the Economic Man. Center stage in their propositions is the creation of a "Democratic Economy" and a return to the dignity of the individual. In their recommendation, a "Democratic Economy" would replace a consensus market understanding of price, i.e. one where price is indexed to desire, with one where price would explicitly be determined through institutional negotiation. The hope is that by quieting economic mechanisms of popular will, e.g. the market or corporate socialization, there would also be a general individualization of political consciousness. If the individual were to take personal responsibility for the development of political consciousness, the hope is that the individual would no longer be treated as a commodified resource and instead be one that produced the spiritual resources necessary for its mythical foundations.

The Report's investment in a theodician individualist response is found in refrains such as:

"Today the individual not only has liberty to do his own thinking; if life is to be meaningful it is he who must search out the values he will cherish." (*Goals for Americans: Programs for Action in the Sixties, Comprising the Report of the President's Commission on National Goals and Chapters Submitted for the Consideration of the Commission*, 41)

"Only moral authority can offset fear and suspicion" (39).

The scope of their recommendations is revealed in how The Report treats the dignity of the individual as synonymous with the preservation of the spiritual health of the nation. With this they imply a trichotomy between the Individual, Spirit, and State and argue that it is the individual's goal to discover the national purpose and the State's goal to preserve the agency and wholeness of the national spirit, which springs from and ensures the dignity of the individual.



By The Report's recommendations, as shown in the diagram above, the Commission has a comfortable time offering policy solutions for how the Individual-State ought to manifest Spirit and how the Spirit-State ought to imagine the Individual. The remaining problem is an inability for the State to grasp sovereignty, attain legitimacy, or make itself clear to the Individual. This is the result of an inability for the Individual to engage Spirit and create the compound Individual-Spirit that undergirds the State. Thus, The Commission's understanding is another consequence of the television problem influencing Marcuse: the rendering of the State as only the collation of reproductive procedures. The Commission laments the dissolution of value in the episteme of the Economic Man and the Reason and decision structure of the Administrative Man. And, in the eyes of the Commission and in the fears of Eisenhower's last year of foreign policy, there is the ever-present threat of the false consciousness, which they associate with the Soviet Union, that exacerbates the Individual's dissociation from Spirit as a result of the commodification of sensation.

The Spiritual Solution and the Operational Problem

Kennedy engages the television problems of the nation during the race, as discussed above, and he inherits the spiritual offshoots of the problem when taking office. His approach to these problems is to reorient toward a new dichotomy he drives a wedge into: desire and fact. The maneuver is unique in that there is often no hard barrier between desire and fact and in so choosing to work with the concepts, Kennedy, presented with the opportunity, must make explicit their difference and then reconcile them.

At other times, there is no difference in currency between desire, what we want to be the case, and fact, what is the case. This is with the understanding of fact as the true truth-bearer and desire as something either synonymous with what is the case or a problem made up of and/or solvable by what is the case. For example, in broadest strokes, Freud is one of the prominent investigators of this relation as he studies in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1913) how the dream-work is able to put the dreamer to sleep (for we dream to put ourselves to bed) through distorting desire with matter of the day, which is what is the case. Fundamental to our ability to hide away from our intuitions and our ability to recover and contemplate them is the coexistence, mutual creation, and undifferentiation between desire and fact. Dreams are but one of many examples of how desire and fact are conceptualized to constitute each other such that they are no longer analytically separable.

Part of how Kennedy is able to put them in dichotomy is from an opportunity to do so in 1960. The nuclear strategy and resulting stalemate of the Cold War presented new problems in operations theory that saw a split between desire and fact: each was looking for the other yet they had become windowless monads unto each other. Those searches, for fact from what is desired and for desire from what is the case, become impossible and resulted in transforming the object of investigation into a kind of “thing” with indiscernible and multitudinous aspects.

The dissolution and reassembly of desire and fact under an operational problem of the Cold War is demonstrated in Theodore Sorensen’s writing on the presidential choice, *Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch or the Arrows* (1963) when discussing the grounds on which a President is able to make a decision:

“He is free to choose only: 1) within the limits of permissibility; 2) within the limits of available resources; 3) within the limits of available time; 4) within the limits of previous commitments; and 5) within the limits of available information” (*Decision-Making in the White House: the Olive Branch or the Arrows* by Theodore C. Sorensen, 23).

Looking at the list of five limitations, one can observe how the first two limitations are typical and would, by convention, encompass the three that follow: limits of time and information would be a part of the limitations of one’s resources and commitments are part and parcel of permissibility. The presence of the third, fourth, and fifth limitations are the effect of a general disaggregation of those secondary elements from the presidential decision-making process. They are secondary elements because they can be subsumed under the first two limitations and they have no direct correlation with the quality of the decision’s results or resources.

The insufficiency of the first two limitations, which Sorensen makes a point of, is troubling because one can see the first two limitations as indexical to desire and fact or as distinct entities comprised of an inseparable mixture of desire and fact. Their insufficiency in describing the terrain for adequate decision-making and their disaggregation into a greater number of elements gestures toward a lack of collaboration and an end to their coextensivity. Their sudden difference in currency is actualized in paradoxes of Cold War strategy. A prominent example would be the continual construction of nuclear weapons: the definition of desire, i.e. what is the case or a problem made up of and/or solvable by what is the case, does not change because the ratio between the size of the United States’ nuclear arsenal and the arsenals of its enemies is stupendously large. Their desire is what is the case. Yet, the continual proliferation of nuclear weapons seems to be a solution without an end. What ought to be encompassed by desire seems to then be lacking something beyond what is the case or our

appropriation of fact must be insufficient, suffering from a blindness of our desires. The difference between desire and fact leads Sorenson and other Kennedy advisors to assert the 1960 presidential decision process as a unique genre of choice even unknown to previous presidents where the common operational bounds for what makes up a decision are newly contested and indiscernable.

Kennedy's own appraisal of the dichotomy between desire and fact concurs with Sorenson's analysis and demonstrates that he ascribed coextensivity to desire and fact, understood the multitudinous forms their union may manifest in, and undertook a goal to eventually repair their co-construction in the presidential decision process. One of the moments he reveals these positions is when considering a Franklin Roosevelt quote on Lincoln in the introduction he writes to the same Sorensen book:

"Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt once remarked, 'was a sad man because he couldn't get it all at once. And nobody can.' Every President must endure a gap between what he would like and what is possible" (Kennedy, Sorensen, xii).

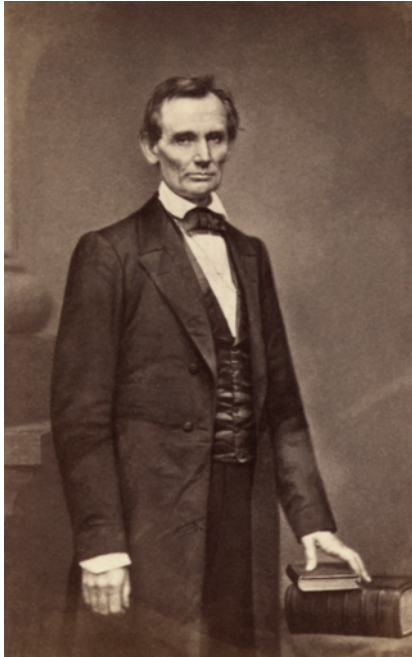
The FDR quote turns on the words, "all at once" and he is likely making reference to Lincoln's concept of "the storm" from a well-known Lincoln quote⁸ directed to Newton Bateman. Although Lincoln's words were from his campaign, his adherence to the idea of "the storm" and his understanding of Providence's plans for him continued to shape his idea of Justice in wartime: that one may achieve all, but it is the timescale and the cost that is the measure of one's spiritual strivings. So, the gap Roosevelt describes as Lincoln

⁸ The Lincoln quote as recorded by Newton Bateman: "I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think He has—I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right because I know liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and so Christ and reason say the same; and they will find it so. Douglas don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down, but God cares, and humanity cares, and I care; and with God's help I shall not fail. I may not see the end; but it will come, and I shall be vindicated; and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright."

suffering from is one of temperance, reverence, and endurance. In Lincoln's predicament, there is no difference in currency between desire and fact—the conflict is whether one can follow through on what is expected of them. Kennedy wishes to generalize Lincoln's understanding to the enterprise of bridging desire and fact and in doing so, reveals his understanding of the gap's character. In this case, if taken as a universal, the relation between desire and fact posits their consideration as equivalent to considerations of responsibility, even though there is no formal correspondence between the dynamic of desire and fact and the sensibility of responsibility. More of desire and fact's multitudinous aspects become explicit, in this case: time, temperance, reverence, and endurance.

Lincoln's solution will not work for Kennedy. Though, Kennedy's solution will resemble Lincoln's "storm," except instead of Divine Providence acting through bodies, the body of time, the state, and Lincoln's, communicated with through the virtues induced in spiritual strivings, Kennedy must create grace-acts himself: behaviors that interact with the non-empirical in such a way that they elicit intuitions into the alternatives Marcuse claims to be beyond the horizon of industrial society's incorporation and in so doing, defeat *theatricality* and supersede the spiritual problem the Eisenhower administration identified.

One can read the mechanics of how Kennedy wedges, i.e. separates and reconciles, desire and fact through his portraiture. To do so, let us first compare portraits of Lincoln and Eisenhower to underline the unique nature of Kennedy's spiritual solution. Below are two portraits of Lincoln. The one on the left is by Matthew Brady



taken after delivering the Cooper Institute Speech, a pivotal address during his campaign for the Presidency. The photo to the right is a part of a set taken by Alexander Gardner during Lincoln's visit to the frontlines of Antietam. Both Brady and Gardner are known for their documentation of the Civil War, a conflict that they saw an opportunity in to increase the popularity of photo. Their coverage is another aspect of the war that makes it distinct in the democratic history of the United States and their depictions were not insignificant in the crafting of the popular movements that called for an end to the war, revitalized the moral imperative of the war, and swayed opinions in favor and against Reconstruction.

The exposures Brady and Gardner worked on were not infrequently changed into other mediums for monetization, sometimes for engravings, paintings, newspaper etchings, or negatives sold for the purchasers' sole reproduction or record. With that in mind, the photos operate under a principle of translation wherein the elements of the

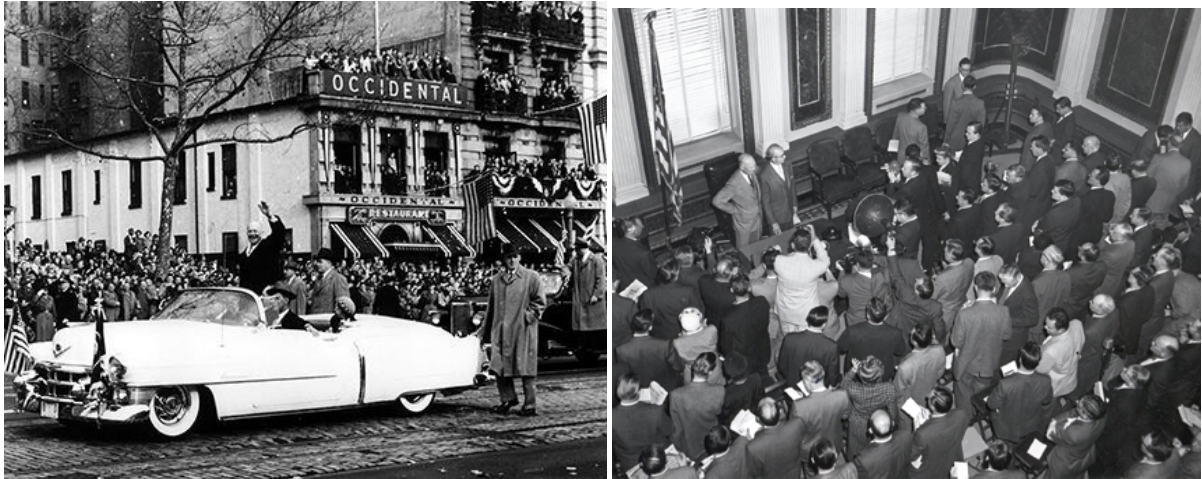
work go through a process whereby they are made into something unmistakably dissimilar in order for the original and the translation to be deemed as speaking for one another. This underlying principle of translation is informed by a principle of divine love, i.e. that God's love for man is the apparatus through which Man might learn to love himself, especially in these exposures. The collaboration results in a composite aesthetic theory of photo: the photo may be thought to represent itself through some other form being able to represent the photo—its authority is based in the dissolution of its claim to being a true depiction. Using theological translation as their baseline aesthetic principles, both exposures restate Lincoln's understanding of desire and fact: if there is a gap between the two, then it will occur through a transformation of Divine Justice coinciding with the diminution of the current corporeal being and the parasomantic extensions of that corporeality, e.g. the body of the State, popular society, or body of law, as well as the taking on of responsibility thus resolving desire and fact through the resolution of the sacred and mundane.

The first photo engages this fabrication of Lincoln's political meaning-making through its management of surfaces. The photo's statuesque quality, partly necessary due to the stillness required for the long aperture time and further emphasized in the pose's reference to protestant and Free Mason portraiture, imbues an agency to the surface of his body. There is a weight to his construction and when paired with his immobility, it is as if the energy implicit in the matter of his body and clothing hold effervescent to the surface. This is in stark contrast to the lack of agency in the surface of the film, which is only one temporary stage in the process of monetizing visual translation. The forced impossibility of the photo is in the figure's stillness, for the stillness of the figure is an attribution of

agency to the surface of film. The camera can then recognize the agency of its own surface through the figure's recognition and the figure may recognize the agency of their surface through the camera's recognition described above. Each of these movements manifest in the central focus on Lincoln's hands, which seem to best embody the frenetic elements of the photo and its elements of stillness at the same time, making the hands a model of the divine transformation Lincoln proposes.

The second photo's accepted impossibility rests on how the exposure relates to its own staging. The interpretive focus on staging is due to the photo attempting to show what it presumes to be the natural, in this instance the natural state of the soldier, by way of the sociality of the camera. If taken at another time and with different subjects, the photo could be considered ethnographic. The resulting depiction is of an insular ritual broken open for the camera and in being broken open, the ritual is partially a creation of the camera, but not entirely different from what it was before. This has two effects. The natural, i.e. the military logic of violence, is socialized into Northern popular space while at the same time the social is renegotiated in a trial of Man's nature. What these gesture toward is exactly Lincoln's orientation: fate and what this is to become requires a new sociality with an open hand to the transformation of the natural.

In examining portraiture of Dwight D. Eisenhower, one can see the beginnings of the television problems of spirit before they became apparent as well as the drive for industrial societies to incorporate and dissolve alternative ways of being. Below are two portraits of Eisenhower. On the left is a photo taken during his inauguration and to the



right is a photo by Abbie Rowe, the official White House photographer at the time, taken after Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech to the United Nations. A prominent feature of Eisenhower's portraiture is an interest in how people fill space and the ambivalent presence of that space. To some extent, these space-occupant depictions prefigure the participant-message transformation that comes with television in 1960.

There is a degree of humor within the photos in how the spaces seem to argue for how the space-occupant relationship does not index to popular will. Taking the inaugural photo to the left, there is some necessary context to the humor: the inaugural drive happens within a military parade. It is well known that Eisenhower expressed how parades were unnecessary because of the finality of the United States' military supremacy. To do a military parade, with all the might therein, while at the same time make it a civil event, while critiquing the meekness implicit in having a show of strength is a small demonstration of the incorporation of alternatives into the reproductive matrix of industrial society that Marcuse writes about. The legitimacy of either gesture, the military parade or the civil march, is delegitimized and could not be remedied by a return

to either. Such a predicament drawn out of trying to further dominate the Soviet Union is made light of by the building's sign, "Occidental"—a bit of cosmic humor. The mise en scene and gestalt only emphasize this joke through the mise en scene foregrounding the relationship between the car and the buildings and the gestalt putting into question whether Eisenhower is piloting the car as well as generating two different images based on which side of the building one is looking at. If one looks at the left side of the building focusing on the repeating windows and then returns to the car, it appears as if the car is propelled by some mysterious force of the buildings. If one follows the right side of the building and returns to examine the car, it seems reasonable to consider whether the man by the end of the car has some secret force. Either way, the car does not drive itself, but neither is Eisenhower, and the car is left looking with equal gaze for any origin of movement.

The second photo by Rowe exhibits a similar cosmic humor. The perspective, overhead and slanted, gives the initial expectation that the camera has broken into a barred off place of power and living politics. One realizes that the camera has broken into the back room only to find those political figures hanging around aimlessly. The subjects seem to almost be in open rebellion to the mise en scene and the room's architecture. There is no focal point, from Eisenhower, amongst the reporters, or between Eisenhower and the reporters. Their accumulation seems to be all that can be garnered and in this it feels elicited. Such an orientation matches up very well to the "Atoms for Peace" speech, which allowed the United States to go ahead on non-military nuclear applications and continue nuclear proliferation while incorporating and dissolving alternative forms of

warfare, anti-nuclear dissent, and the military self-determination of European states, containment states, and any change of relations with the Soviet Union.

With the photographic ways in which Lincoln's solution and Eisenhower's problem are depicted, one can read Kennedy's wedging of desire and fact through his portraiture. By way of example, below are two Kennedy portraits. The one on the left is by Jacque Lowe who was the official campaign photographer and, later, the Kennedy family's personal photographer;⁹ it captures Kennedy boarding his personal airplane, the *Caroline*, while on campaign. The photo on the right is by Paul Schutzer, a *Life* photojournalist best known for his foreign coverage; it depicts Kennedy's 1961 Inaugural



⁹ Jacque Lowe won the honor of being the family's personal photographer partially because JFK and Joseph Kennedy were dissatisfied with Abbie Rowe's White House photography. Abbie Rowe, Eisenhower's principal photographer, started photo when working for the Depart of the Interior and was picked by Eisenhower's team because he was more interested in the flatness of landscape and place than persons. JFK as this analysis will elaborate, did not adopt Eisenhower's invisibility and the few photos where the Kennedy aesthetic as described in this chapter is not present are Rowe's portraits of Kennedy's term in office.

Ball. These photographs together have a chiasmatic quality in their formal, political, and historical lives.

Lowe's photo matches well with one of White's anecdotes from *The Making of the President 1960*,

"For a full year of journeys he had bounded up the steps of this same airplane in a grace act that had become familiar to all his trailing entourage—a last handshake to dignitaries, an abrupt turning away and quickstep run up the stairs, a last easy fling of the hand in farewell to the crowd cheering his departure, and then into the cozy homelike Mother Ship and security" (White, 4).

As a part of the grace act we are asked to imagine the performance of ascending the stairs, in the photograph and in person, as something of a ritual procedure not unlike the trajectory of Lincoln's body across the country or the presidential speeches given from the *Ferdinand Magellan* Railcar. By ritual procedure, I mean a familiar action undergone by and/or for non-empirical entities or a non-empirical effect. The scheduled set of behaviors is empirical, yet an adequate understanding of the sum of these behaviors requires an affordance for non-empirical elements. In this case, these non-empirical elements revolve around the American myth of political spirit. His foregrounded Style is able to perform a grace act like this by separating desire and fact. The attendant's gaze to Kennedy and Kennedy's gaze to the viewer constructs a *mise en scene* that invites us to imagine Kennedy's body as pasted into the photograph, absent/present by his necessity on our gaze and that of the attendant. The *mise en scene* works opposite the gestalt of the photograph that attempts to place Kennedy within the airplane's maw and thereby the particular place and procedure the photo insists to depict. The result is Kennedy's bodily solitude becomes the true truth-barer of the photograph, evoking nothing—he could be

anyone yet represent no one. The fact of his solitude within our gaze and on the airplane ladder lays bare the dual difference between the perspectives of the mise en scene and gestalt and between his solitude and the glow thrown out behind him.

There is an accompanying White quote for Schutzer's photograph,

"In other countries, and particularly new countries, this beast quality of the crowd is the most unsettling factor in their politics; in mature countries, experienced and fearful of their own histories, like France and Germany, crowds and demonstrations are strictly limited in size, in place, in convocation. In America, crowds are permitted regularly to gather every four years to yell and shove and scream, and it is tradition, more than anything else, that disciplines them. For four years Americans are tamped down, their politics running like invisible streams underground; then comes the quadrennial, and like the dry arroyos of the West in spring, the channels of politics come to torrent visibly in the streets" (330).

The photo does not depict an unruly crowd, yet the photograph is built like a painting whose many elements put it within a tradition of Americana concepts. Chief among those traditional concepts in the picture is the relationship between its principal subject and what can only be described as a crowd manifesting "the channels of politics come to torrent visibly." The grace act in this photo is between the aspects of the photo reminiscent of painting and its elements that are representative of Schutzer's conformity to *Life's* magazine aesthetic logic. We must be able to imagine Kennedy as neither a creation of the booth nor an actor for the audience, his wife, or for us, the photo's observer. There must be a visual logic to the mosaic of the elements. Such would constitute a bridging of desire and fact. The grace act is accomplished here by instilling a power of symmetry within the mosaic wherein the mise en scene of the photo becomes a mosaic mise en place and Kennedy alone unto himself matches and balances the language of the gestalt and mise en place. This maneuver renders the crowd synesthetically linked and visually controlled by the Kennedy image as director-translator.

At the chiasmus of these photographs is the presence-absence of crisis, κρίσις. I use the Greek root to gesture toward crisis' double meaning in its colloquial sense and its etymological sense of "decision." Kennedy's presidency, and life, around his image and hagiography, is held as a peculiar artifact because it is formally self-contained by his death, as Gore Vidal writes, "there is a ritual beginning of the book which is the end: the death at Dallas" (Vidal, 113). Within that frame there are many others, Jacqueline Kennedy's Camelot myth and Joseph Kennedy and Henry Luce's shaping of his candidacy to name a few, and outside that frame or overlapping are other frames such as the rise of television, a change in the episteme of Man, and the Cold War. Across all these frames JFK's central crisis was the absence of a crisis and, at the same time, the disturbing ebullience of ever-present crises. I would conjecture that any event in his time in relation to the presidency can be read in this way and is already primarily read this way. The assassination poses a crisis. Its social disturbance births hundreds of theories. Yet, there is no crisis, there was no great decision, and the unknown, unsatisfactory, and unsettling that poses itself, for a time, as the nation's greatest problem offers no opportunity for its solution.

Kennedy is the greatest articulator of this quality of his life in his language on the New Frontier:

"We stand today on the edge of a New Frontier—the frontier of the 1960's—a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils—a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats. [...] But I tell you the New Frontier is here, whether we seek it or not. Beyond that frontier are the uncharted [...] unsolved [...] unconquered [...] unanswered [...] For the harsh facts of the matter are that we stand on this frontier at a turning-point in history. We must prove all over again" (JFK acceptance speech for the Democratic Nomination, Los Angeles, California, July 15, 1960).

With this speech there is the convergence of the discourse on aesthetics, theatricality, and inarticulation with politics. Grace acts, those glimpses into political alternatives, newly

necessary for the fabrication of aesthetic meaning, become necessary for the political meaning of the president. The New Frontier and its pushing of the political limen designs the presidential point of view referred to throughout writings on JFK's presidency. Such a point of view becomes divine as presidential decision is always understood as intervention into administrative operations. Kennedy's presence-absence game makes the President an otiose god, only more alone than asleep. The observer to the presidential point of view is still under the same philosophical synesthesia of the Iconic Man, possibly even exacerbated, and there is a new understanding of Kennedy's self-designed theodician responsibility. As a part of that responsibility, Kennedy must replace the continual process of difference between desire and fact with the continual process of $\kappa\rho\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$ and, through his commodification, push himself beyond the horizon of industrial society toward its alternatives.

3

The Epistemic Codes of Direct Cinema

Abstract: *Storm Signal* (1966) is a piece after the Kennedy Films in Drew Associates' oeuvre but works as a good interpretative example for an elaboration on the general methods in Direct Cinema as well as the shared epistemic codes that undergird those methods. The three epistemic criteria made evident in the film and by analysis are goal, subject, and vision. These will establish a baseline understanding of the genre and its aesthetic concerns for how we approach the collaboration between Robert Drew and John F. Kennedy in section 4, where some of these aesthetic ambitions are reshaped, changed, and resolved.

An analysis of *Storm Signal: The Storm of a Deadly Triangle* (1966) by Robert Drew and James Lipscomb may help to hold the Kennedy films in context. The one-hour piece for television covers a two to four month window in the lives of a husband and wife in the Bronx whose heroin addictions fragment and challenge their family and White middleclass aesthetic. The concept for the film, to do a piece on heroin addiction, came out of a challenge from the Xerox Corporation, who Robert Drew had reached out to for possible investors. *Storm Signal* is then set apart in interesting ways, as it is not a collaboration from *Life-Time*, it treats its primary subjects as out of history, almost explicitly adjacent to fiction, and engages those subjects with problems around prosperity and the unreality of news.

The univocal definition of Direct Cinema has two parts, one has to do with the technology of the camera, and the other has to do with the methodology employed. While almost all Drew Associates films follow the first rule of using smaller cameras made available by then recent advances in technology, few strictly follow the second definitional point that there be no intervention on the part of the

filmmaker for fear that the desired effect “of being there” would be spoiled with the makers’ tampering. In almost every Drew Associates film, there are interviews, narration, and/or intercutting used to craft their comprehensive plots. The underlying cause for why the cornerstones of the filmic discipline are in the business of stretching their customs may be how this methodological outlook amounts to a multilayered epistemological stance.

Drew’s epistemic goal is to create a film that may be a true substitute for experience. As a photojournalist he realized societal metaphors were not as well understood as they were commonly treated as being. This manifests in how Drew’s work is deeply interested in the *mise en scene* of a particular instance, how the coexistence of multiple disparate accounts may challenge the superficiality of one’s understanding. This is to say that Drew is not interested in experience in the same way a poet may understand their project as crafting experiences. His work is to deal with the accoutrement of an experience that does not cohere with our expectations in such a way that those surprises can enliven the general rule/ the depersonalized action.

The Drewsian subject, in relation to these experiences of detached actions, is a deceptively central figure. They are not active in the events the film portrays like the filmmaker may be in a French work of *Cinema Verite*, but they are vital to foreground the viewer’s relationship to the actions on-screen. In light of Dwight MacDonald’s *Masscult and Midcult*, one can claim the director/investigating subject figure of Direct Cinema is a product of the genre’s allegiance to a combination of the masscult and midcult. The knowledge Drew wishes the films to produce must come

pre-processed for the viewer through the directorial subject, who acts an uncertain mediator between the events on-screen and the route by which the viewer may traverse those paths. Axiomatically, the pre-processing of masscult and midcult require a belief in the creator as a univocal genius and the work of art to be a product of their charisma. Drew Associates films are auteur and the narrative they portray are a kind of ringmaster event. This is not to say they fail in challenging the unreality of news or fail at creating the feeling of “being there.” Rather, the investigating subject must be one part subterranean, as in the work of film narrative features, and one part present, so that one may have the charismatic directorial hand without the director.

The third epistemic criterion Drew places on his work is a vision for the genre in regards to how it interacts with other media and certain a priori investments into the work of his successors. Direct Cinema is conceptualized outside the filmic canon. As discussed before, the form was always an accessory to the news and, by that era in journalism, an accessory to the news may resemble not only the composite but the essay, photo essay, and novel. Part of Robert Drew’s later discomfort with New Wave critics and filmmakers is the surprise of being welcomed to the gates of cinema and unwelcome in the house of journalism. The television documentary as he imagined it would be a more all-encompassing work of history than photography, but work under the same ethos of trying to capture the moment of decision. Covering Kennedy is partially so pivotal because it brings these specificities of his vision to light: the iconography of Kennedy embodies both the American suspicion and enchantment with television during the Cold War and in

that suspicion and enchantment there is a concern over the malleability of charisma, news sources, and the centrality of the organizing moment.

Storm Signal is emblematic of these three epistemic dictums: goal, subject, and vision. The piece is concerned with a psychological problem, or, at least, turns to a psychological diagnosis of the problem, as the goal, in the terms described above, is to reproduce the experience of being there in the apartment with Jim and Helen “Smith” and to resolve the dissonance between the picture of their White affluence and their heroin addiction. The setting of the conflict in *Storm Signal* could be organized in multiple ways—the battles that phase in and out of the film, unable to be documented directly, are on racial lines, questions of individual autonomy brought with the Cold War, and difficulties with intimacy and professionalism. The problem with these being settings is how they do not fulfill Drew’s (and Luce’s) prerequisite that the news be about individual persons with great power or put in extraordinary circumstance. As the film continues and focuses on Helen going to the hospital and becoming sober, the narration becomes explicit about how the film understands the story as happening in “the struggle” in her mind. The turn to psychology delivers on the biographical requirement of the personal nature of news and leaves Helen superbly impersonal, her actions now the effect of subconscious forces, which are either universal undercurrents of a general human psyche or particular behaviors, long-repressed or self-obfuscating, that anyone might have. Her mind is a warehouse for a kind of mass-mind. This is how she is a “storm signal” in the way the film purports in the opening sequence—the encroachment of

addiction into her mind is a warning for the general invasion of the White American psyche in those larger settings of race, autonomy, and intimacy.

After the opening sequence, James Lipscomb addresses the camera directly in a foreword for the film. The clear narrator and address is at odds with the methodologies of Direct Cinema and is done to make clear the relationship between Helen's psychology, the filmmaker, and the audience. Framing the film are the lines from the narration: "experience is one way to learn [...] the risk of heroin is not an ordinary risk [...] what she is learning could have a meaning" and, at the end, "we don't know what she learned [...] we hope others have learned [...] we can't be the same" as we were before. The film admits that it is unable to pinpoint "what [Helen] is learning" and, therefore, what is meaningful also goes through a dispersal/disintegration. The dispersal of meaning, in the case of the opening lines, from extraordinary risk to Helen's mind to a dubious combination of the audience and filmmakers' responses, is mirrored in how she is passed through different powerful men and institutions and then how she makes and loses associations, either in friendships or when comparing her son to her a "brother she never had." All to say, the truth claims that undergird the film share Helen's institutional life and therapy. In the same way that the Kennedy films organize JFK's identity by following the back of his head and create an infinity stage for Kennedy wherein the events of the film begin and end each other in circular time and the figure of Kennedy continually escapes and is recaptured. It is James Lipscomb who begins a continual circular reconquista of Helen's mind by being able to capture the moment of Helen's

illness, cinematographically portrayed in the repeated use of a tracking zoom-in then still.

In the sequences in the last fourth of the film, where the psychiatrist's interview is intercut with Helen bedridden speaking on her own condition followed by the narrator begins to make connections within their own coverage, the Drewsian subject becomes a participant in the diagnosis. By the final lines of the film, that "we hope others have learned" as "we can't be the same," it is not a proxy revelation by way of the hooded ringmaster.

Just as the drug TV specials that would come after, the film wants to portray the fall of its principle characters. In the case of Helen, the film removes the affects of leisure from the scene and the early concerns about intimacy, which are rooted in social networks, are not resolved but changed; the race dynamics in the piece that center around the Smiths living in the Bronx and listening to jazz instead of watching television are transformed into an re-racination of the patients in the hospital, who are unable to access Whiteness or Blackness in the professionalized forms present to them in the form of the doctor and the nurse. The film lives circularly in a different sense than the Kennedy films. It is the reveal and persistent unknowability of Helen's actions when her points of leisure have been systematically removed from her character and her peace left undelivered.

In the Kennedy films, there is a clear point where the desired peace in leisure is reinscribed to the *gestus* instead of material prerequisites. In the case of *Storm Signal*, Lipscomb is able to turn the psychiatrist's suggestive readings of Helen's behavior into epic gestures. Lipscomb builds upon the psychiatrist's statement that

“she’s saying a lot more” than she lets on, offering correlations in the story that more so demonstrate Helen is working under a hidden rational decision-making structure, presenting her actions after this, getting through therapy and leaving the hospital, as watching the lion roar, i.e. showing her speak without the understanding of her communication, thereby seeing the action of her speech and the distance from her speaking to our understanding. This lysis allows for her to become a tragic figure that both complicates and stands at a distance from the audience in a similar mode as the Drewsian subject, upholding the desired effect of “being there.”

As a contribution to the vision of Direct Cinema, *Storm Signal* is far more set up to be a novel than a film and could be seen as a moving news composite. The work fits nicely into the Lucian craft of *Life-Time* as it manages tone and gives the impression of exhaustive study and particular experience while offering something neighboring: an alternative statistics. As the film announces in the beginning, the story of Jim and Helen is there to stand in for another form of quantitative representation, but the film is not interested in what a sociologist might call qualitative work either. Through building *gestus* and impersonality, the film investigates the life of a statistical point, not the person who cast that point or may be imagined to hold that point as their representative sample—the life of the point after it has been added to the set.

4

In Robert Drew's Terms: Unpublic, Crisis, and Henry Luce

Abstract:

Primary engages different lineages than the other Kennedy films, particularly in how it is invested in the magic of the ballot and manages place. Almost all elements of Drew's later work can be found here, yet the central problem of the film is painted in another hue distinct in the Kennedy trilogy: the development of national character into a popular movement rather than the defeat of theatricality through grace-acts.

Primary (1960)

Primary is one of Robert Drew's earlier feature films and the first in the Kennedy trilogy. The documentary follows JFK and Hubert Humphrey during their campaigns in the 1960 Wisconsin primaries. In cinematic and narrative terms, the piece's central focus is on investigating how, as the narrator describes, "voices begin to turn into votes." At the heart of the desire to portray the transubstantiation of ballots into the Democratic spirit is an anxiety over how to represent the political, the forms of media that take up this goal and the kinds of requirements the medium of politics makes on participants and audiences.

Taken together, Robert A. Dahl and H.B. Mayo may be some of the most precise articulators of the 1960s concern with our mediums and theory of democracy in their books, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* and *An Introduction to Democratic Theory*, respectively. In that work, Mayo enumerates nine values generated from, necessary to, and implicit in democracy:

- “(1) [...] the peaceful voluntary adjustment of disputes[...]
- (2) [...] ensuring peaceful change in a changing society [...]
- (3) [...] the orderly succession of rulers [...]
- (4) [...] the minimum of coercion [...]
- (5) [...] diversity [...]
- (6) [...] the attainment of justice [...]
- (7) [...] it is the political system which best promotes science [...]
- (8) [...] freedoms found in a democracy [...]
- (9) [...] any alternative is inevitably a system in which some kind of minority makes the policy decisions—always of course a properly qualified minority, since no one advocates that the minority should rule merely because they are a minority” (*An Introduction to Democratic Theory* by H.B. Mayo, 218-241).

When Dahl interrogates hypotheses of Madisonian and Populist Democracies, he demonstrates how these nine values of democracy index to formal shortcomings in American democratic theory. Some of these points of interrogation include the arbitrariness of inaction in points of deadlock, the arbitrariness of majority when in near parity, the insufficiency of election as a sign of political will, the inability to compare intensities or timescale, the lack of goals and values beyond political equality and popular sovereignty, the necessity for social indoctrination, along with the eight conditions Dahl posits as necessary to describing a system democratic in chapter 3 Polyarchal Democracy:

- “1. Every member [...] performs the acts we assume to constitute an expression of preferences among the scheduled alternatives.
 - 2. In tabulating these expressions, the weight assigned to the choice of each individual is identical.
 - 3. The alternative with the greatest number of votes is declared the winning choice. [...]
 - 4. Any member who perceives a set of alternatives, at least one of which he regards as preferable to any of the alternatives presently scheduled, can insert his preferred alternative(s) among those scheduled [...]
 - 5. All individuals possess identical information about the alternatives. [...]
 - 6. Alternatives with the greatest number of votes displace any alternatives with fewer votes.
 - 7. The orders of elected officials are executed [...]
 - [8. There must be special interelection provisions]”
- (*A Preface to Democratic Theory* by Robert Dahl, 67-71).

Writers outside political theory host the dynamic Dahl and Mayo enumerate between formal democratic virtues and limitations. One of these authors is Norman Mailer in *Superman Comes to the Supermarket* (1960). He marks American democracy as necessarily conjoining supposed virtues with ineptitudes, asserting in all of American life that “America is a nation of experts without roots” (*Superman Comes to the Supermarket* by Norman Mailer, 4).

All of these scholars then illustrate the contradictory mechanism behind American democracy’s transubstantiative force: that the expression of the voice of the people removes the electorate from the fictive locale of the *polis*.¹⁰ What we may call the “public will” is such and the decision-making process is such that there is no formal empirical way for the public will to be expressed. At what point(s) in the decision must the electorate show their leaning? What may qualify as the expression of their will? How may it be interpreted? How long does it stand before expiration? To the extent the people govern themselves, they do so remotely, outside the walls of governance, policy agenda, policy construction, and implementation. Furthermore, as Dahl articulates in Chapter 1: Madisonian Democracy, the will of the people puts no formal Constitutional checks on tyranny as a tyranny of the minority may remain undetected so long as its actions happen to concur with the electorate’s majority vote and there is no way to differentiate a tyranny of the majority from the will of the people unless a minority were given special powers to overturn the will of people, rendering the system undemocratic. In spatial terms, to

¹⁰ This is in reference to Mayo’s words “The only way to meet it is to say we do not in fact live in the polis” (Mayo, 94).

the electorate, what exists in the *polis* remains unknown so long as its tyrants, non-descript voices, and discarded lines of reasoning do not peak out beyond the walls.

It is plain to see the American Constitutional democratic system is not designed to maximize popular equality and popular sovereignty, but takes up as its goal the creation of national character. The fabrication is necessary in order to uphold democratic values that cannot be formally protected, is the moral telos of American ideals, and is the contractual matter that holds the regions of the Union together.

As is the surface text of *Primary*, turning voices into votes is about managing the place-contracts of the electorate, first between regions and then between the people, the *polis*, and the national character. The conceit of the film is whether Kennedy, an Easterner with West Coast production value, may better turn votes in the Mid-West than Humphrey, a Mid-Western political animal. As Mailer describes, “America is an unhappy contract between the East [...] and [...] the Middle and the West” and the obstacle was who could better mediate this contract (Mailer, 7). 1960, the years before it and after it, re-presented how place was not coincidental to the voter. The roots of checks and balances in Madisonian Democracy, the fear of losing property rights by majority vote, assumes a kind of inalienability of votes from the place where they were cast. Now consider the fear of factions, a formally inoperational concept as Dahl argues, is truly a fear of peoples beyond the democratic contract, e.g. Black people, Indigenous people, Southern oligarchs, British loyalists. The ballot is a compound object of the vote-place-person, which is able to put their three components into relation, an example of which would be from

W.E.B. DuBois *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935)—how Black suffrage was a way for the North to silence Southern obstruction to the corporate development of US industries, a win for Jacksonian Democracy, or the loss of the South in 1964 and the rise of Nixon’s silent majority. The democratic contract, manifested in the national character situated between the ballot and the *polis*, is then the rules and the goals of the places of the republic as their people change or as the relationships between places change. Presented vertically:

Hypothesis 1: The will of the people does not exist in the *polis* because the will of the people cannot be operationalized into political decision-making.

Definition 1: If something cannot be operationalized somewhere, then it cannot be made manifest within the logics of that place.

Definition 2: Places are distinct if they utilize different political-economic logic.

Hypothesis 2: The American Constitutional system designs the ballot to develop the national character.

Hypothesis 2.1: The national character corresponds to behaviors in the place where the will of the people is thought to exist and the place of the *polis*.

Hypothesis 2.11: The matter of those behaviors has to do with the democratic contract that upholds the Union.

Definition 3: The democratic contract is a part of the social contract, which deals with the ontological relationship between the citizen, their vote, and the land.

Hypothesis 2.12: the Union is made up of a few places held together and these places roughly index to the regions: West, East, Mid-West, and South.

Hypothesis 2.2: The national character cannot be adequately formally described by the logic of the will of the people or the logic of the *polis*.

Hypothesis 3: The ballot manages the relationship between places.

Hypothesis 3.1: The ballot is a compound object of vote-place-person

Hypothesis 3.11: The ballot is not the will of the people.

Hypothesis 3.12: The ballot may change the proxemics of places through redefining the relationship between persons and votes, e.g. Black suffrage.

Hypothesis 3.13: The ballot may change the taxonomy of persons through redefining the relationship between places and votes, e.g. the transformation of non-White European immigrant communities into White Americans.

Hypothesis 3.14: The ballot may change the meaning of votes through redefining the relationship between places and persons, e.g. Richard Nixon’s silent majority.

Hypothesis 3.2: The ballot’s becoming happens in multiple places: the will of the people, the national character, and the *polis*, e.g. a political campaign.

Above described is what I believe to be the media problem of the ballot that Drew, Mailer, democratic theorists, and many others were examining in 1960. While many of its attributes are common sense, its arrangement and language could be particular to the time: media problems of television, the Iconic Man, Kennedy, operational theory in the Cold War, partisan parity, or any number of other factors unknown to me or otherwise not enumerated.

Primary enters the discussion when the narrator announces the purpose of the film: to follow the “candidate’s view” and the voters of the Wisconsin primary. And, we see the result is a mosaic not unlike the vertical elaboration above, for the ballot and film share a non-visual network wherein every element is compound node-relation-causation. The cinematic goal is not so different from *Storm Signal*’s in that the attempt is to offer the life of the ballot through its options (candidates) and castings (voters).

That mosaic effect lays on what will become a hallmark of Drew’s films: the film being separated into cycles, each acting as a microcosm of the whole. So, while the energy of the film draws to a particular climax, when it is reached, it is not overcome and the film continues past it. These parallelisms are emphasized in handshaking montages comparing Humphrey and Kennedy meeting voters, a caucus by greetings; montages comparing the candidates’ choice of media: radio, television, and telephone; in side-by-side comparisons of how they gather themselves at the beginning of speeches; montages of Kennedy and Humphrey waiting for votes to come in with their family, and montages of voters’ legs under the voting booth

overlaid with testimonials about how they voted. After the film presents Kennedy as the winner of the primary, it follows the candidates to the news station where it is re-litigated through microphones, cameras, and graphs. Through these techniques, the camera never stops capturing the ballot's becoming and as the candidates leave the state to continue the race, there is a sense that the Wisconsin primary putters along without them.

Drew's idea of the *unpublic* seems to originate here. Even when the life of the ballot is concretized in its casting, it is dialectically managed—while it is always true that *history is written by the victors* and so the Wisconsin primary becomes the story of Kennedy fashioning a new political reality that better enables the economic and spiritual necessities of the Union, *the losers never really lose*: Humphrey transforms what the ballot collects. This characteristic of the primary as a whole is incorporated into the phenomenology of Drew's work: you are seeing something that is neither history nor politics, even though it is highly stylized and definitive like we imagine politics to be and dialectic like we are to pressed to understand history. When pointed at the primary, the *unpublic* is the cinematic mechanism that mirrors the Constitutional system for managing the national character proposed in Hypothesis 2: within the epistemic code discussed in the previous section, it must quantify myth and make it tactile.

The place of the *unpublic* is not consistent throughout Drew's films as they change subjects and it is not consistent through Kennedy's political career. At the time of *Primary*, Kennedy is not in the lonely place of the presidential point of view. He exists in the *unpublic* space of the national character, neither in the public nor

the *polis* postulated in Hypothesis 1. The alternative reason that reigns in the *unpublic* becomes the central problem of the film from the beginning when the narrator asks a constituent about Hubert Humphrey: “Here he is, what do you think of him?” and the constituent instead addressed Humphrey, “if you ever get in, I’ll come to see you by God.” In this movement Humphrey being “here” is in relation to his possible reconstitution through the race. The constituent has Humphrey with him now, possibly even had coffee with him a moment ago, but by the constituent’s hail, Humphrey is both not truly “here,” only being made real when elected, therefore unable to be seen before, and is entirely in the public, so if he were elected, the place Humphrey and the constituent share would be elected as well. The constituent’s action is a misplaced signifier by how he is prompted for a thought on a person and gives a prompt to that person instead, which happens to answer the original prompt better than any other collection of words. The exchange foregrounds the film’s place as overlapping the place of the national character, where the stylized interrogative, the intimate hail, and detached political conviviality are of the same currency, yet uncomfortably gathered and recontested—the uncertainty in power and rhetoric clear in Humphrey’s demeanor.

These contestations and misplaced signifiers characteristic of the place of the national character continue throughout the film in humorous ways. Chief among these moments are those when Drew focuses on children. Humphrey declares, “I talk to the people that vote” and the film cuts to him going out to give business cards to children he finds on the street. Kennedy declares that he is in Wisconsin because it is among a select few states who vote in primaries and he wants to speak to those

people who shall first vote for the whole of the nation. Then Drew cuts to Kennedy being swarmed by dozens of children asking for autographs—part-statesman part-television star, JFK nearly doing an optimistic reenactment of the children’s parents casting their ballots: “John F. Kennedy.” The music of the film comes from Kennedy and Humphrey campaign songs that we see being rehearsed, primarily by minors, with choral masters and conductors harshly overseeing. This has the effect of a kind of total theatre that transforms supposedly sharp contests over material gain, e.g. sought-after demographics and endorsements, as immaterial as the desires of childhood—the child-fact of the place of the Wisconsin primary, what is the blurry eyed and far-off case of the place made up of abstracted people and actions, becomes the prize. The business model of the campaign rests upon their appeal to spirit.

The national character and its humor are sculpted in two moments in the film: the first is Kennedy and Humphrey’s attitude toward the television camera and the second involves the Western cinematic motif that frames the film. Well before the Nixon-Kennedy television debates, Humphrey and Kennedy subsume some of the same dynamics along media. Humphrey’s set is full of grips, gaffers, cameramen, and co-hosts all of whom Humphrey directs, giving notes about what each guest must say when brought on-air, setting the composition of the shot, and informing the producer and director the logistical timescales they ought to administer. Kennedy’s television set is almost empty. Drew makes it seem as though there were only a single cameraman whom Kennedy patiently listens to. Then he speaks and he becomes, like the ballot, a teacher of liberty and his personality manifests the

national character. From the place of clear precise tailoring and commodification, Kennedy offers an alternative, similar to the grace acts discussed in section 2, wherein we might escape the *polis* and Humphrey's inward-local turn and create a shared destiny.

The power of Kennedy's personality lurching forward past the form of his confinement plays to the dynamic of the dialectic and decisive and the material-immaterial reasoning that inhabits the place of the Wisconsin primary. The parallel Drew circles back to is the difference between the mosaic of Humphrey's efforts in multiple mediums against the mosaic of Kennedy's television image, whose presence is not tactile in the way it will be in the presidential debates, but nevertheless projects the ballot through the bodies of those that watch it. The effect is a difference in our central theme, the turning of voices into votes: Humphrey turns them one by one over the phone, in the television set, in talking privately to the radio host, when handing out business cards, and sharing his food cravings and compliments to every chef at the beginning of every talk. He turns voices as he gathers himself and his own voice. Kennedy rather rests somewhere else; the form you find is currently assembled by someone else, and instead of turning the voice, he gathers the place of the primary, of the national character, within the viewers with the spatio-psychic harpoons of the television-ballot.

The second turning point in the film's treatment of national character surrounds Western motifs throughout, a lot of them having to do with tight shots, economy, and transitions, but most evidently in the opening credit's typography and wood background as well as the ending when Humphrey's car drives off into the

horizon kicking dust—how it plays with scale, color gradients, and the formal dimensions of the horizon assigns it a very definite cinematic lineage to Western portrayals of the new human of transportation, the psychic element of place, the roguery of industry, the economic possibilities of scale, the quantification of time, and the duality of democratic and natural rights. The inclusion of the Western, as the great cinematic communicator of material-immaterial place, is apropos and changes Kennedy's inhabitation of the national character: turning offering an alternative into a popular movement. In this way, the film's interest in a Western motif upon entrance and exit prefigures Kennedy's "New Frontier" before he spoke the words, underlines the importance of place-as-territory, which may distort and amplify scales of labor and capital, and portrays the national character under Kennedy as a veracious liberalism—his candidacy is presented as a social movement to conquer the world in order to better express ourselves.

The film never supposes that Kennedy convinced anyone in Wisconsin. The dramatic assumption of the film is that he cannot win by democratic strategy—he is not supposed to win and there is nothing in policy that should persuade the will of the people to support him. His winning is a peculiar revolution of an East coast cowboy who wishes to overthrow liberalism in order to reinstate it. Not unlike the ambitions of Joan Crawford or the Dancing Kid from *Johnny Guitar* (1954), Kennedy's personality-as-myth offers a chance for the national character to capture the imagination of Jacksonian democracy and corporatism and see them as possible global exports. It is a general strike of imperial cowboys against the Soviet Union and the *polis*.

Of course, by the time of his election, this revolution has very much changed and his development of the presidential point of view leads to the opposite end, the death of liberalism and wading through unknown waters. This story is also very much the story of Drew's *unpublic* as the promise and disappointment of liberalism continues through his work and may be one of Drew's largest contributions to the documentary mood.

“[The Democratic boss] comes to the convention resigned to nominating a man he does not understand, or let us say that, so far as he understand the candidate who is to be nominated, he is not happy about the secrets of his appeal, not so far as he divines these secrets; they seem to have too little to do with politics and all too much to do with the private madresses of the nation”—Norman Mailer from *Superman Comes to the Supermarket*

Adventures in Reporting: Adventures on the New Frontier (1961)

Abstract: While the previous subsection investigated Robert Drew's term, *Unpublic*, this subsection is concerned with elaborating on another one of Drew's concepts, *Crisis Structure*. The term is particularly important to understanding how the Kennedy-Drew collaboration was a significant determining factor in Drew films' structure, goals, and subjects and how Drew's work differed from but was in communication with Henry Luce's conception of news in *Life-Time*. In examining these collaborations and differences, one may be able to see the trajectory of Drew's plans for news was a sharp change motivated by the medium, film for television, and the two track problem of the spiritual-political and social-aesthetic.

Adventures in Reporting: Adventures on the New Frontier is a surprising film in the Drew repertoire on Kennedy. It is not considered a part of the Kennedy trilogy made up of *Primary* (1960), *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment* (1963), and *Faces of November* (1964) as it marks a different milestone in the development of Drew's ideas for documentary films for television as he innovates toward Direct Cinema's incorporation of the newsreel. As discussed in section 3, Drew is trying to find a

political solution to an aesthetic problem: he imagines the American citizen is apt to understand the news in a different way because audiences have a desire unspoken and unbeknownst to them for elements of history previously unable to be documented. In Drew's estimate, the political capabilities of the Direct Cinema's film camera would supplant all other forms of media as necessary to democratic governance, because of the social consequences of television and the new technological capabilities of the cameras' size and mobility.

Primary would be an important point where Drew further cemented his ideas of the *Unpublic*, what Direct Cinema would treat as its special subject, but the logic of the narrative structure of Drew's films was very much in development. Nearly all of Drew's films would exhibit in some form what Drew coined as *Crisis Structure* and each of his films may be understood as experiments into how *Crisis Structure* could best portray his desired political power and aesthetic effect. Amongst those experiments, *Adventures in the New Frontier* is where *Crisis Structure* develops its final form and is the film that best exhibits the goals and influences behind *Crisis Structure*.

A shaping factor in *Adventures on the New Frontier's Crisis Structure* is the choice to play with the newsreel. In doing so, the film takes up the aesthetic projects of *The March of Time*. *The March of Time* was the *Life-Time* newsreel that ran through the 1930s and up until 1945. It claimed it was "a new kind of pictorial journalism"¹¹ upon the premise that it would bring "dramatic coherence" to the news by getting behind it and showing what led up to the events that transpired in

¹¹ See *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* by Alan Brinkley, 185.

the past month.¹² The *Life-Time* newsreel was an invention of Henry Luce that opposed the previous expectations for what a newsreel could be because its form matched Luce's conception of the "news-fact." For Luce, journalism was a necessary arm of progressive technology that fashioned industrial society—it told the story of business, i.e. the story of the individual fashioning mechanisms by which the public interest might act upon the world. "News-facts" are then the social structures and economics that individuals are undergirded by and work to refashion through the dedication of their life-narratives to the democratic process in the form of business. Luce had found particular success communicating these "news-facts" through photography for the visual language of photo was able to describe the dialectic ontology between the individual, their business, and the public interest and, when put in the mosaic of a news magazine, be a Lucian model of democratic society that the reader could feel a part of in a short amount of time.

Drew's experiment, *Adventures on the New Frontier*, matches Luce's experiment, *The March of Time*, in key aspects. Luce hoped that the "dramatic coherence" of his newsreel would spark the same effects as follows Robert Drew's self-enumerated method: "sense a situation," "find characters," "be there," and produce the "feeling of what it was like to be there." Their dramas capture the moment of decision, yet for Drew that moment exists within a language of spiritual politics developing on film in actions where his subjects' may supersede the logics of their commodification and for Luce that moment is made from pairing the individual with technology visually communicated through hyperbolic intercutting news

¹² Brinkley, 182.

footage and dramatic reenactments. Their approaches involve many of the same elements: aesthetic-technological commodification and the subject's agency within the apparatus of their aesthetic confinement. They differ in how they understand politics and the decision. Luce sees decision as a consequence of power and biographical data that results in a technological demography, i.e. the decision is made up three parts: the societal conference of injunction, the catalogue of an individual's social relations and cycles of socialization, and a new highly stylized social composition of persons. The work of politics is the extension and reproduction of social and economic circumstance to engulf those new technological demographies. This is progress and this is the "news-fact." Drew does not have a definite theory of decision and politics, but it is clear the "news-fact" he is invested in portraying lies at the intersection of therapy and history. This is the mood with which Drew comes to work with Kennedy.

The president offers an aesthetic problem and an education. By moving with the president, Drew may take for aesthetic ends what Kennedy employs for political ones. *Adventures on the New Frontier* in narration declares its mission: "to move with the President, seeing and hearing for yourself in a new kind of report. Not a filmed version of summary and opinion you can find in print. But rather, a personal adventure with the President as he confronts the great problems of the US and the World." There are two tensions between Drew and Luce within the above declaration of purpose that shapes the form of the film.

The first is between what the narrator says and the context given on screen. The lines are a voiceover at the climax of the film's opening scene wherein Kennedy

breaks through a wall of photographers after performing the ceremonial inauguration for the undersecretary of the Navy. We see a three-dimensionality of Kennedy that we plot out in the distance of the camera's trajectory behind his gait as he disperses the historical photographers and photojournalists. The voiceover offers a view that could be commensurate with Luce's perspective focusing on social space, yet the visual context reveals to move with the president would mean to move in aesthetic space that has political and spiritual bounds. For this to be accomplished throughout, the film must engage in cycles, as described in the previous subsection. In these cycles in between commercial breaks, establishing shots of the White House, back in time to archival footage of the race, scenes within Kennedy's office, and forward in time reporting in foreign countries are used interchangeably to follow Kennedy's long force of personality that goes beyond the sociality of his surroundings, contemporary time, or the film. The presence-absence game of these cycles fits Kennedy's technique of crisis, *κρίσις*, as described in section 2.

The second tension is abreast the word "move." To "move with the president" cannot be the illusion Luce offers: a presence of shadowing pivotal moments in history. The camera of Direct Cinema cannot put social and economic forces into visual logic in the way still photography or *The March of Time* can. Instead, *Adventures on the New Frontier* must track a different moment of decision and in claiming that they "move with the president" in the life ways the president traverses the world, the camera's documentation is inscribed as political and Kennedy is presumed to exist already as a cinematic subject. If we are to believe as well that Direct Cinema deals in the

Unpublic as described in the previous subsection and the non-empirical elements of therapy and history, then the president must speak in those terms.

As Drew had worked under Luce at *Life* and wanted to model his movement in news after Luce's own deviation from the news standard Condé Nast had set, these tensions in interpretation between Luce and Drew would define Drew's understand of media. So, it is the ways in which Drew incorporates and diverges from Luce's standard that provide the scaffolding for Drew's concept of *Crisis Structure*. Under the concept and its two foci, the compounding of distinctly aesthetic, social, and spiritual phenomena, e.g. juxtaposition of domestic and political scenes in *Crisis* (1963), and establishing a mimetic relationship between the camera and preexisting cinematic figures, e.g. through his films Drew feels comfortable having the camera hang in the formal interview style when the subject has themselves just interviewed others or reported something in a formal capacity, documentation takes up a new philosophical meaning. Documentation becomes a reconciliation between how the camera's subjects appear to be aesthetic outcomes of social relations and the films' investment in the spiritual attributes of their aesthetic being, e.g. *Grey Gardens* (1975) and other descendants of Direct Cinema could be said to work on a version of this configuration. The project of documentation assumes the form of a program more than a method for generating story in documentaries.

The therapeutic program is directed at remedying the unreality of news and in the fictive intersection of news and film, what Luce might call the "ideal factory" of the film, generate a spiritual sensibility at moments when the subject is

incorporated into abstract formal procedure. In interview, Robert Drew characterized this aesthetic ambition as answering the problem of how “word logic made the work never leave the television.”¹³ In Drew’s formulation, “word logic” had governed photojournalism as well and history is inherently “mismatched” with the medium of the word and the photograph.¹⁴ The 58 minute newsreel film to television, *Adventures on the New Frontier*, experiments most in this direction as it self-consciously foregrounds the structure by which it presents the news and how it manages a wide range of characters and the preexisting cinematic lives of those characters.

Aside from the film’s opening, the management of character central to the philosophical therapy Drew does in his crafting of his “ideal factory” of documentation is established when focusing on problem of West Virginia’s economic struggle. The camera follows a household and its children in West Virginia in economic struggle and in its final sequences when the camera hovers over Kennedy in the near solitude of late night work. In these moments, there is a concretization of a presumably shared aesthetic language. Henry Luce described this investigation of analogy early on as a founding aspect of journalism:

“I am learning lots of things, that one takes for granted that everybody knows, but which, I guess, very few do know [...] I never saw a cell before. I never spoke to a prisoner. I never saw a brave tear-stained mother come to bail out her son, held on sure charge of forgery. These things reveal the Christ who said, “I came not to the righteous”” (*The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* by Alan Brinkley, 53).

¹³ See *Robert Drew In His Own Words*. Criterion Collection.

¹⁴ See *Robert Drew In His Own Words*. Criterion Collection.

One presumably knows what poverty looks like. Greater too does one know how children play and how that play may obfuscate or emphasize their maladies. One knows what it is like to figure how to be oneself within the social obligations one has undertaken, now late at night and everyone asleep. *Adventures on the New Frontier* utilizes the ubiquity of these figurations in order to treat them as *gestus*. The children and Kennedy are not imbued with psychological force. Instead, their actions are understood as a performance of their characters. By way of their cinematic commodification, they reveal an otherwise hidden spirit of the character.

If we take the example of the Kennedy scene where this operates, there is one reading where one may say that the camera is merely suggestive. In this reading, the force of the sequence is how the editing can put any sort of emotion and mood onto the neutral expression of Kennedy reading. In this case, it is using his spartan contemplation in order to push the audience toward a narrative that JFK, in this moment, is the embodiment of his declaration, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” as the words of his inaugural address play over the scene.

The sequence is better understood as an epic telling rather than a rhetorical suggestion. When Kennedy pulls his special secretary over to read a paper, we do not know the nature of what they are reading and there is no editorial suggestion as to its seriousness or reception. How Kennedy “moves” is what is presented—the intimacy of him calling over his friend and colleague, the warm solitude of their returning to jointly reading documents at the desk of the oval office. The recording of the inaugural address begins to play only as he moves his lips to audiate the

words of the page. The audio overlay has a magical offer to imagine that whenever Kennedy opens his mouth, the words of his speech come out. This is necessarily true in one sense—that he, like anyone, opens his mouth and makes speech, but the operating myth here is that when he opens his mouth, he may be presidential, i.e. have the effect as if he were making a speech of presidential quality. Laid bare is a dual revelation: the structure and nature of the political myth and the ever presence-absence of Kennedy's eminence through the presence-absence of a situation that requires his decision. The program of *Crisis Structure* in these revelations is then a revitalization of Style as described in section 1 and an education in the mythic foundations of politics, and thereby the cinematic nature of all subjects, made tactile by their expressions of character.

Adventures on the New Frontier follows the argument through a consideration of leisure. The American value of prosperity that follows into the 1960s becomes a problem for news and the perceived flatness of history. For the rest of the analysis we will examine Drew's concepts through the lens of leisure as it becomes the surface text of the film and informs our understanding of how news could ford the gap between the spiritual-political and the social-aesthetic.

As implied by the name of the broadcast, the “news-facts” Drew wanted to document were on the New Frontier—they were the future abundances and the preparations for their eventual arrival. The *gestus* and myths Drew works with existed in a state of leisure for a few reasons: the inalienability of the *gestus* to the powerful person, who did so in a constant search for leisure; a seeming synesthetic overabundance described in section 1; and the racialized nature of the therapy in

Crisis Structure—the New Frontier imagined a sprawling suburbia and an escape from that suburbia that did not require the integration of urban spaces, but a greater unifying of the White ruling class.

The first reason for this problem of leisure becomes the surface text of the film in a few scenes: when JFK goes to autograph a portrait for a family friend, he stops himself and jokes he automatically reverted to writing the inscription in a presidential tone; when he accepts officers and colleagues in the oval office, we see him gesture and presumably retell the same stories about the naval portrait on the wall and the wood of the president's desk; in the film's flashback montages to Kennedy running for president we see two motifs of the power of Kennedy's character as it passes through the television screen, yet when in office, the screen in the adjacent room lures him out of his briefing yet cannot hold his attention or make a stable image, and when he shuts it off in frustration he turns back toward his office space whose walls are occupied by half a dozen different framed headshots of himself. These scenes propose that in the delight of their leisure one will know the personal selves of powerful men as they move through the peace they have found. Such a context is reminiscent of Luce's writing on WWII:

“the great story of America in the war years, Luce believed, was not the battlefield but the story of individuals—‘of human chances and mischances, of man's mores, prejudices, foibles, failings, of his extraordinary behavior which completes the picture of man as a living creature’” (Brinkley, 285).

With that in mind, *Adventures on the New Frontier* is very much a wartime film in search of peace. In Kennedy's searching for a peace he is unable to have wholeheartedly, even though he is at the same instance a wartime president at

peace, the *Crisis Structure* of the film returns Kennedy back to the domestic space of the White house.

The problem of leisure's cohabitation in the White House is pivotal as the oval office and White House throughout the film become both a place of origin in the film and an immaterial television effect. A recurring establishing shot of the White House exterior generates the cyclical nature of the film discussed above. Telescopic narration retelling news in the past, present, and future across the world runs over these recurring frames, and so while the establishing shot evokes an immaterial central place, the narration induces a specter-like non-geographic wandering, engendering a focus on how the stunted feeling of how the film wants to transport the audience but does so only in partial montages. That focus on the frame as it is broken is a play on the tactility of place while not allowing one to inhabit that space. The White House plays that same presence-absence game that Kennedy plays. It flips between demonstrating a materiality of space to an immateriality of space. It is a photograph then an image for television. The game leads to an anxiety the walls might fall down to reveal a set—that the central location, the oval office, might be more so a construction for the camera than a historical record or mass epoch.

No matter the work Jackie Kennedy did in transforming the White House into a royal house by uncovering its artifacts, the *Crisis Structure* and the presence-absence of leisure subsumed the house: the spartan trimmings are cognizant of their own decorative status and the art pieces are dubious of their pictorial character. The House becomes fuzzy, somehow out of history and in unreality. Kennedy's *gestus* looks like something drawn out of idleness yet necessary to the brokering of

personal and national peace. Equally, the film looks like a creation of leisure news—it does not defeat the its unreality and cannot administer the therapy in order to cultivate a spiritual sensibility unless the viewer carries the television message beyond the television screen, through their bodies in repose. With that eventuality in Drew's idea of documentation, one sees the extent to which Kennedy's aesthetic management was his hardening obstacle and teacher. One may also map from this moment trajectories in the history of documentation as a spiritual political act that requires a sensual reception.

By Way of Conclusion: *Faces of November*, the Audience, and the Genre

When Kennedy is murdered in Dallas, he was a casualty of the presidential operational structure through which his eminence had sprung . In continuing his aesthetic practice in the lineage of Abraham Lincoln's crisis management, Kennedy's death is explained the same way as Lincoln's¹⁵: they are victims of their orientation to the crises they managed. Though it is tempting then to claim that Kennedy was a significant casualty of the Cold War, the contest between the United States and the Soviet Union did not create a crisis that could be attributed to the cause of his death and the bounds of that conflict were not of his creation. As evidenced by theories about his death and Jackie Kennedy's collaboration with Theodore White in creating the Camelot myth, the aesthetic logic of Kennedy's presence-absence game followed into his death as the non-empirical elements of his character seemed to subsume the foundations of American political myth at the same time that he and his New Frontier vanished from that same mythic place:

"But she does not want them to forget John F. Kennedy or read of him only in dusty or bitter histories:
For one brief shining moment there was Camelot."

Kennedy's death does not end the television problems in politics or the spiritual problems that work as their counterparts, but the aesthetic solutions he

¹⁵ This perspective was developed in consultation with Professor Nabers who offered frameworks for understanding the interpretation of Lincoln's death.

proposed during his presidency become a part of the fabric of the language of American mythic discourse well into the 1960s. For Drew, Kennedy's death similarly does not mark the end of the aesthetic project of documentation, but scales back the stage onto which his news-facts may be fielded. Part of this change in scale is a result of Drew's personal relationship with Kennedy that they had fashioned when Kennedy was running in the Wisconsin primary. Kennedy was interested in supporting Drew's idea of a new relationship between media and history. He gave Drew Associates access. In another sense though, while JFK was alive, the work to remedy the unreality of news seemed like it could be done on one front localized to the movement of John Kennedy and once Kennedy's movement in American political myth could not be localized to a body, the fronts on which the unreality of news must be fought seemed to become diffuse. The democratic process as it pertains to spiritual politics was done on a smaller scale and so too were Drew's ambitions meted out in limited portions.

In films after 1964, like *Storm Signal* (1966), discussed in section 3, the American mythos evinced through *Crisis Structure* feels more local. The terms by which the subjects of Direct Cinema are preexistent cinematic characters derive from the more specialized modes of commodification that work to organize their worlds. In the example of *Storm Signal*, these forms that wish to commodify the subjects are heroin, Black music and culture, and the psychiatric care. The *Unpublic* portrayed in these films revolves around the national consciousness as it pertains to this limited set of concerns and only to the extent that the figures are able to perform actions that defeat *theatricality*. With *Storm Signal*, the *Crisis Structure* has

to venture into the subject's psyche in order to find moments where her character surpasses her commodification.

The result is that films after *Faces of November* (1964) induce a spiritual sensibility to news-facts in vignettes. From what Drew articulated at the beginning of his ambitions in crafting the genre of Direct Cinema, the localized nature of these films would bar them from being able to portray the wholeness of reality. There may be many instances where the camera can capture the moment of decision, but not all decisions reveal the entirety of the framework by which one's subjects came to the camera already understood as cinematic figures. Without Kennedy, the logics of *Crisis Structure* that have the camera move with the subject, cannot organize the presentation of social arrangements in equivalent size and precision as Henry Luce's use of photography. At the same time, Drew finds Luce's visual formulations in photo inadequate to portray news in the 1960s.

Faces of November, Drew's 12 minute documentary on John Kennedy's funeral, the last in the Kennedy trilogy, is a climax in Drew's goal to ascertain how others apprehend the wholeness of reality. Kennedy was an opportune subject. Though, what the film discovers is that Kennedy's hearse provides the true perfect subject. The hearse embodies the high point of Drew's theoretical investments, the *Unpublic* and *Crisis Structure*, because funerary items during a funeral are already expected to produce an eminence able to defeat *theatricality*, even more so in the case of a president where the burial of the president coincides with governmental decision. The *gestus* of Kennedy's body does not need work in order to be revealed. The film in tracking the movement of the body enumerates the materiality and

sociality of the spiritual-political that had been the trilogy's focus. In accomplishing this, the film compounds the two tracks run through our analysis between the spiritual-political and the social-aesthetic.

The film accomplishes this through elements now very familiar to our analysis: there is a presence-absence game of our principal subject, the coffin; the film is framed in multiple layers in such a way that the events and moment of decision are broken up and caught in repeating cycles—most evidently this manifests in the gunshot salute and cemetery trees that open and close the film; and there is a *gestus*, the coffin's trajectory inscribed onto the faces of the audience. The aspect that sets the film apart and the impossibility that the film asks the audience to understand is how the principal subject may be articulated in the faces of the crowd. Kennedy and the hearse are made eminent and empty by the material affordances they require of the space, their assembly, dress, and the accoutrement of the state; by the sociality of the faces and bodies, their projection of professionalism, family, demography, race, and exertions in labor and consoling; and their spirituality, how they fill space and orient themselves in sensual yet unquantifiable ways. The most evident motif that marks the film as repeating in cyclic time is an editing effect, but as the camera in those opening and ending sequences is panned upward, following the rising movement of the mourners and soldiers, one must ascribe the cyclic framing to the eternal assembly of the faces of the mourners, family, and organs of State. All those elements described above, i.e. the presence-absence, cyclic repetition, and *gestus*, can be traced to the management of faces.

It is surprising to see faces do so much work. Their use is not novel and Drew's films after *Faces of November* will showcase certain people's faces as one might expect, but those faces were not the modes of spiritual-political engagement and the matter for subjects' social-aesthetic coherence. The special power of faces at Kennedy's death, and throughout the 1960s outside Drew's aesthetic project, has many lineages: the unification of mass media around television and therefore its tight shots, now a stylistic survival from low pixel density television; the immanent interpretability of Kennedy's face and its importance in his aesthetic strategy; faces as a combination of the concerns brought in section 4: Kennedy's popular movement for a reinstantiation of liberalism along with the leisure that invites someone to search for peace in wartime; and the Iconic Man's interest in the body as an onto-epistemological fact by which one comes to know the world, the unification of sensibility and moral value, and the face as boon and obstacle to the cultivation of Style to name a few.

Beyond those lineages, I would guess faces have a special quality in *Faces of November* in 1964 and throughout the 60s because the face becomes a dramatization of how *the mythic is the nightmares of our own reason*. The face becomes the staging ground for the conflict between sensation, our capacity to communicate across social logics, the noumenal logic we imagine to exist coextensive with the brain, and our ability to communicate the non-empirical—I would conjecture the face at that time was considered capable of instantaneously communicating the non-empirical qualities of one's humanity, the grace-act of humanity. In Drew's most complete articulation of Direct Cinema, of which *Faces of*

November is an example, the genre deals in nightmares. Drew's theory of documentation mandates that the piece make more clear to the audience the nature of the haunting that is already beset upon them. Representing that nightmare through the mosaic accumulation of faces presses the urgency with which these democratic problems of spirit meet social structures. The Direct Cinema documentary sensibility is that the haunting may explain the wholeness of reality.

Robert Dahl in *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956) ends his work with a rumination on the questions his analysis raises and the newly outlined work left to be done. I appreciate this mood and in homage, I would like to inventory what I have brought and the questions I invite others to take up. I have shown how Robert Drew's aesthetic project of documentation and new cinematic news relates to political concerns that begin in the 1960s, described those problems, mapped Drew's traversal against other thinkers, and investigated how Kennedy as a subject solved many of Drew's concerns and brought new ones to foray. I invite others to pinpoint Drew's influence in political and news documentation throughout the 1960s, to give an account of the cause for the change in episteme starting in the 1960s, and to apply this analysis to identifying the epistemes and reality problems of our current time. Robert Drew and Kennedy then is a rest stop on our path to understanding the ways in which audiences and genres have formed our democratic reality. There is more to be said about the usefulness of this pair whose relation was not by blood or shared movement, but an implicit sensibility for spirit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “Adventures on the New Frontier.” *ABC Close-Up!*. American Broadcasting Company, Time, Drew Associates, 28 March 1961, Television.
- Brady, Matthew. “Abraham Lincon, candidate for U.S. president, three-quarter length portrait from Carte-de-visite, before delivering his Cooper Union address in New York City.” Wikipedia Commons, Library of Congress, February 1860, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lincoln_O-17_by_Brady,_1860.png.
- Brinkley, Alan. *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.
- Dahl, Robert A. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Drew, Robert. *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment*. ABC News, Drew Associates, 21 October 1963.
- Drew, Robert. *Faces of November*. ABC News, Drew Associates, 1964.
- Drew, Robert. *Primary*. Drew Associates, Time, 1960.
- Fried, Michael. *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*. University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Goodman, Jon. *The Kennedy Mystique: Creating Camelot*. National Geographic, 2006.
- Gardner, Alexander. “Antietam, Md. President Lincoln with Gen. George B. McClellan and group of officers.” Wikipedia Commons, Library of Congress, 1975, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lincoln_and_generals_at_Antietam.jpg
- Hayes, Harold T. P. *Smiling through the Apocalypse; Esquire’s History of the Sixties*. McCall Pub. Co., 1969.
- “January 20, 1953- Dwight D. Eisenhower and Mamie Eisenhower wave to crowds during the Inaugural Parade.” Photographs | Eisenhower Presidential Library, <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/media/2924>.
- Robert Drew in His Own Words*. Criterion Collection, 2016.
- Rowe, Abbie. “March 31, 1954- Dwight D. Eisenhower and Lewis L. Strauss face questioners at a press conference.” Photographs | Eisenhower Presidential Library, <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/photographs>.
- Macdonald, Dwight. *Masscult and Midcult : Essays against the American Grain*. New York Review Books, 2011.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man; Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Beacon Press, 1966.
- Mayo, Henry Bertram. *An Introduction to Democratic Theory*. Oxford University Press, 1960.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media : The Extensions of Man*. Gingko Press, 2003.

“Morticia and the Psychiatrist.” *The Addams Family*. Amazon, American Broadcasting Company, 18 September 1964, Television, https://www.amazon.com/Addams-Family-Goes-School/dp/B07JGBMS65/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=addams+family&qid=1586420387&sr=8-3.

Sontag, Susan. *Notes on "Camp"*. Penguin Books, 2018.

Sorensen, Theodore C. *Decision-Making in the White House : The Olive Branch or the Arrows*. Columbia University Press, 1963.

“The Addams Family Goes to School.” *The Addams Family*. Amazon, American Broadcasting Company, September 18, 1964, Television, https://www.amazon.com/Addams-Family-Goes-School/dp/B07JGBMS65/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=addams+family&qid=1586420387&sr=8-3.

United States President’s Commission on National Goals. *Goals for Americans; Programs for Action in the Sixties, Comprising the Report of the President’s Commission on National Goals and Chapters Submitted for the Consideration of the Commission*. Prentice-Hall, 1960.

White, Theodore H. (Theodore Harold). *The Making of the President, 1960*. Atheneum Publishers, 1969.

