

NOTES ON THE NOTES

- 1/ if we take only white things, and if 'white' has a single meaning, none the less what is white will be many and not one. For what is white will not be one either in the sense that it is continuous or in the sense that it must be defined in only one way. Whiteness will be different from what has whiteness. Nor does this mean that there is anything that can exist separately, over and above what is white. For whiteness and that which is white differ in definition, not in the sense that they are things which can exist apart from each other.

Aristotle, *Physics. Book I*, 350 BCE

symbolic images, often associated to a motto, that are represented to evoke a thought hidden in the human subconscious

it's about remembering the poets' verses, crushing them, reducing them to pieces in such a way that they produce pairings – more or less judiciously – with an image

the figure represents the body, the motto the soul, and the symbolic meaning born out of their fusion, the spirit

M. Zanchi, *Lorenzo Lotto e l'immaginario alchemico*, 1997

ALL THIS DRAWINGS ARE NOTATED IN THE BACK
WHAT THESE THINGS MEAN

Lorenzo Lotto, 1527

- 2/ Techniques commonly employed in the art include the association of emotionally striking memory images within visualized locations, the chaining or association of groups of images, the association of images with schematic graphics or *notae* ("signs, markings, figures" in Latin), and the association of text with images. Any or all of these techniques were often used in combination with the contemplation or study of architecture, books, sculpture and painting, which were seen by practitioners of the art of memory as externalizations of internal memory images and/or organization.

Wikipedia, *Art_of_memory*

5/ The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.

Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle*, 1967

6/ All art is immoral. For emotion for the sake of emotion is the aim of art, and emotion for the sake of action is the aim of life, [...] but we who are born at the close of this wonderful age are at once too cultured and too critical. To us the città divina is colourless

Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*, 1891

7/ another central idea behind the phrase “always-already” is that once a certain place in time is achieved, the being of places in time earlier than that place is transient, problematic, or unthinkable. For example, after a person finished reading *Hamlet* for the first time we may say he has “always already” read *Hamlet* [...] in our modern society, having always already read *Hamlet* is the nature of contemporary intellect. Similarly, the modern subject has always already learned a language, so it is inconceivable to consider the pre-linguistic subject.

Wikipedia, Always_Already

9/ Pioneering processes such as Smith and Urban’s Kinemacolor, Gaumont’s Chrono-chrome, Prizmacolor and the early two-color versions of Kodachrome and Technicolor would be understood as progressive attempts to bring to the screen the colors of real life. But if Bazin, writing in the 1950’s, witnessed the triumph of this indexical color, the silent era seems more notable for the other tradition of color, color which is not due to indexical photographic processes but was manufactured by various processes of more or less arbitrarily applied color, including hand painting, stencil coloring, and various varieties and combinations of tinting and toning.

Tom Gunning, *Colorful Metaphors: the attraction of color in early silent film*, 1994

11/ *White Terror* may refer to:

First White Terror (1794–1795), a movement against the French Revolution
Second White Terror (1815), a movement against the French Revolution
White Terror (Russia), mass violence carried out by opponents of the Soviet Government during the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Russian Civil War (1918–20)

White Terror (Hungary), a two-year period (1919–1921) of repressive violence by counter-revolutionary soldiers

White Terror (Spain), atrocities committed by the Nationalist movement during the Spanish Civil War and during Francisco Franco’s dictatorship

White Terror (mainland China), the period of political repression in China starting in 1927 by the Republic of China government

White Terror (Taiwan), the period of political repression in Taiwan starting in the 1940s by the Republic of China government

White Terror (Greece), persecution of the EAM-ELAS between the Treaty of Varkiza in February 1945 and the beginning of the Greek Civil War in March 1946

White terror, violence of the white troops during and after the Finnish Civil War in 1918

The White Terror (film), a 1917 silent German film

Wikipedia, White_terror (Disambiguation page)

17/ A white feather has been a traditional symbol of cowardice, used and recognised especially within the British Army and in countries of the British Empire since the 18th century, especially by patriotic groups, including some early feminists, in order to shame men who were not soldiers. It also carries opposite meanings, however: in some cases of pacifism, and in the United States, of extraordinary bravery and excellence in combat marksmanship.

As a symbol of cowardice, the white feather supposedly comes from cockfighting and the belief that a cockerel sporting a white feather in its tail is likely to be a poor fighter. Pure-breed gamecocks do not show white feathers, so its presence indicates that the cockerel is an inferior cross-breed.

Wikipedia, White_Feather

22/ Oh God, let's hope they don't destroy the Hollywood Sign!

a friend of mine, at the hairdresser's, the morning of 9/11

Metaphysics - the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own logos, that is, the mythos of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason. Which does not go uncontested (...)

White mythology - metaphysics that has erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it, the scene that nevertheless remains active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest.

Jacques Derrida, *White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy*,
in *Margins of Philosophy*, 1982

24/ Writing - for their writing is primarily representational.
The hieroglyph.

The means of production - brush and ink - determined the form. In the fierily cavorting hieroglyph *ma* (a horse) it is already impossible to recognize the features of the dear little horse sagging pathetically in its hindquarters, in the writing style of Ts'ang Chieh, so well known from ancient Chinese bronzes. But let it rest in the lord, this dear little horse, together with the other 207 remaining *hsian cheng* symbols [...] The point is that the copulation (perhaps we had better say the combination) of two hieroglyphs of the simplest series is to be regarded not as their sum but as their product, i.e., as value of *another dimension, another degree*; each, separately, corresponds to an *object*, a fact, but their combination corresponds to a *concept*. From separate hieroglyphs has been fused - the ideogram. By the combination of two "depictables" is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable. for example: the pictures of water and the picture of an eye represents "to weep", the picture of an ear + the picture of a door = "to listen"
But this is - montage! It is exactly what we do in the cinema.

Sergei Eisenstein, *The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram*, 1929

26/ Where did white skin come from? This is quite an interesting process, although a bit long to explain. To cut a long story short, dark-skinned people migrated to the fertile crescent, that is, to Iran and Iraq, where they invented agriculture and sheep farming. It was at the end of a terrible ice age, the climate became stable and humans shifted from a hunting economy (which involved wandering in groups of 40 or 50) to a settled way of life, and they began to grow corn. Now, corn is good but there's something wrong with it. It contains no vitamin D and without vitamin D survival is in jeopardy. Yet corn does contain two vitamin D-like molecules which are transformed into vitamin D when exposed to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. But if you have black skin, the ultraviolet radiation won't penetrate. Thus there was a genetic mutation: the substance which made the skin black was neutralized and the skin became white. So the ultraviolet rays enter your body, you eat bread, and take vitamin D.

Enrico Bellone, *Ignorabimus - is this Physics or Philosophy?*,
Occulto issue $\sqrt{-1}$

It has been observed that adult human females are consistently lighter in skin pigmentation than males in the same population. This form of sexual dimorphism is due to the requirement in human females for high amounts of calcium during pregnancy and lactation. Breastfeeding newborns, whose skeletons are growing, require high amounts of calcium intake from the mother's milk (about 4 times more than during prenatal development), part of which comes from reserves in the mother's skeleton. Adequate vitamin D resources are needed to absorb calcium from the diet, and it has been shown that deficiencies of vitamin D and calcium increase the likelihood of various birth defects such as spina bifida and rickets. Natural selection has led to females with lighter skin than males in all indigenous populations because women must get enough vitamin D and calcium to support the development of fetus and nursing infant and to maintain their own health

Wikipedia, [Human_skin_color#Sexual_dimorphism](#)

27/ I had not quite understood his *artistic* objection to "colored". He explained it thus: Figures in the first scientific works on flowers, birds, butterflies and so forth were hand-painted by diligent aquarellists. In defective or premature publications the figures on some plates remained blank. The juxtaposition of the phrases "a white" and "a colored man" always reminded my poet, so imperiously as to dispel their accepted sense, of those outlines one longed to fill with their lawful colors - the green and purple of an exotic plant, the solid blue of a plumage, the geranium bar of a scalloped wing. "And moreover [he said] we, whites, are not white at all, we are mauve at birth, then tea-rose, and later all kinds of repulsive colors."

Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire*, 1962

Sarah Jane wants to pass as white not because this colour is more beautiful than black, but because you live better when you are white. Lana Turner wants to be a stage actress not because she likes it, but because when you reach success, you have a better place in life.

R.W.Fassbinder, *Imitation of Life. On the cinema of Douglas Sirk*, 1971

29/ 'man' and 'white', as isolated terms, are not yet either true or false (...)

The affirmation 'every man is white' is the contradictory of the denial 'not every man is white', or again, the proposition 'no man is white' is the contradictory of the proposition 'some men are white' (...)

Thus, if it is true to say that a thing is white, it must necessarily be white; if the reverse proposition is true, it will of necessity not be white. Again, if it is white, the proposition stating that it is white was true; if it is not white, the proposition to the opposite effect was true. And if it is not white, the man who states that it is making a false statement; and if the man who states that it is white is making a false statement, it follows that it is not white (...)

For instance, a man is man and white. Therefore, if predicates may always be combined, he is a white man. Again, if the predicate 'white' belongs to him, then the combination of that predicate with the former composite predicate will be permissible. Thus it will be right to say that he is a white man so on indefinitely.

Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 350 BCE

36/ we establish likenesses as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but doing something (*imagines agentes*); if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we dress some of them with crowns or purple cloaks, for example, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily. The things we easily remember when they are real we likewise remember without difficulty when they are figments, if they have been carefully delineated. But this will be essential—again and again to run over rapidly in the mind all the original backgrounds in order to refresh the images.

Unknown, *Rethorica ad Herennium*, I century BC.
In: Frances Yates, *The art of memory*, 1966

39/ A Utopia, if seriously intended, obviously must embody the ideals of its creator. Let us consider, for a moment, what we can mean by "ideals." In the first place, they are desired by those who believe in them; but they are not desired quite in the same way as a man desires personal comforts, such as food and shelter. What makes the difference between "ideal" and an ordinary object of desire is that the former is impersonal; it is something having (at least ostensibly) no special reference to the ego of the man who feels the desire, and therefore capable, theoretically, of being desired by everybody. Thus we might define an "ideal" as something desired, not egocentric, and such that the person desiring it wishes that every one else also desired it. I may wish that everybody had enough to eat, that everybody felt kindly towards everybody, and so on, and if I wish anything of this kind I shall also wish others to wish it. In this way, I can build up what looks like an impersonal ethic, although in fact it rests upon the personal basis of my own desires--for the desire remains mine even when what is desired has no reference to myself. For example, one man may wish that everybody understood science, and another that everybody appreciated art; it is a personal difference between the two men that produces this difference in their desires.

The personal element becomes apparent as soon as controversy is involved. Suppose some man says: "You are wrong to wish everybody to be happy; you ought to desire the happiness of Germans and the unhappiness of everyone else." Here "ought" may be taken to mean that that is what the speaker wishes me to desire. I might retort that, not being German, it is psychologically impossible for me to desire the unhappiness of all non-Germans; but this answer seems inadequate.

Again, there may be a conflict of purely impersonal ideals. Nietzsche's hero differs from a Christian saint, yet both are impersonally admired, the one by Nietzscheans, the other by Christians. How are we to decide between the two except by means of our own desires? Yet, if there is nothing further, an ethical disagreement can only be decided by emotional appeals, or by force--in the ultimate resort, by war. On questions of fact, we can appeal to science and scientific methods of observation; but on ultimate questions of ethics there seems to be nothing analogous (...)

Is there any standard of "good" and "bad," except what the man using these words desires? (...) Is there objective truth or falsehood in such a statement as "pleasure is good," in the same sense as in such a statement as "snow is white"?

Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 1945

41/ Human eyes are somewhat distinctive in the animal kingdom in that the sclera is very plainly visible whenever the eye is open. This is not just due to the white color of the human sclera, which many other species share, but also to the fact that the human iris is relatively small and comprises a significantly smaller portion of the exposed eye surface compared to other animals. It is theorized that this adaptation evolved because of our social nature as the eye became a useful communication tool in addition to a sensory organ. It is believed that the conspicuous sclera of the human eye makes it easier for one individual to infer where another individual is looking, increasing the efficacy of this particular form of nonverbal communication. Animal researchers have also found that, in the course of their domestication, dogs have also developed the ability to pick up visual cues from the eyes of humans. Dogs do not seem to use this form of communication with one another and only look for visual information from the eyes of humans.

Wikipedia, Sclera#Function

43/ A primitive natural writing, of which certain forms of esoteric knowledge, and the cabala first and foremost, may perhaps have preserved the scattered memory and we're now attempting to retrieve its long-dormant powers. Esoterism [...] is a phenomenon of the written word

In the esoteric field the properties of words, syllables, and letters are discovered by another discourse which always remains secret, [...] though near the surface, the decipherable sign

Let us call the totality of the learning and skills that enable one to make the signs speak and to discover their meanings, hermeneutics;

44/ let us call the totality of the learning and skills that enable one to distinguish the location of the signs, to define what constitutes them as signs, and to know how and by what laws they are linked, semiology

To search for a meaning is to bring to light a resemblance. To search for the law governing signs is to discover the things that are alike. The grammar of being is an exegesis of these things [...] and that resemblance is visible only in the network of signs that crosses the world from one end to another

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 1966

45/ And yet again that night the blanket bothers me. It moves like a snake. It takes various forms. It will not stay flat and wide across the bed. And the night after that. I kick it to the floor by the couch. then I see it move. Ever so quickly I see this blanket move when my head seems turned away. I get up and turn on all the lights and get the newspaper and read, I read anything, the stock market, the latest styles in fashion, how to cook a squab, how to get rid of crab grass; letters to the editor, political columns, help wanted, the obituaries, etc. During this time the blanket does not move and I drink 3 or 4 bottles of beer, maybe more, and then it is daylight sometimes, and then it is easy to sleep.

Who would ever believe such a thing? Who would ever believe such a damn thing? A blanket coming to life and trying to murder one? Nothing is believed until it happens the FIRST time - like the atom bomb or the Russians sending a man into space or God coming down to earth and then being nailed to a cross by that which He created. Who is to believe all the things that are coming?

Charles Bukowski, *Tales of ordinary Madness*, 1980

48/ Philistinism is international. It is found in all nations and in all classes. An English duke can be as much of a philistine as an American Shriner or a French bureaucrat or a Soviet citizen. The mentality of a Lenin or a Stalin or a Hitler in regard to the arts and the sciences was utterly bourgeois. A laborer or a coal miner can be just as bourgeois as a banker or a housewife or a Hollywood star.

Vladimir Nabokov, *Philistines and Philistinism*,

50/ The silent wall of protestant churches is not only or merely a *wall*. It's painting, whitewashed, erased, *un-done*: it's absent painting. [...] To the dismay eventually manifested by someone facing a bare church, Zwingli replied with an emblematic statement: "The walls are beautiful when they're white" (...*die Wände sind hübsch weiss!*). The "beauty" of the anti-image is one of the paradoxes of the modern epoch, a paradox founded in the Reformation.

Victor Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image*, 1997

53/ Dans le monde *réellement renversé*, le vrai est un moment du faux.

Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle*, 1967

I imagine the supreme cinematic perversion would be the projection of an execution backward like those comic newsreels in which the diver jumps up from the water back onto his diving board.

André Bazin, *Death every afternoon*, 1951

53/ And was not The attack on the World Trade Center with regard to Hollywood catastrophe movies like snuff pornography versus ordinary sado-masochistic porno movies?

This is the element of truth in Karl-Heinz Stockhausen's provocative statement that the planes hitting the WTC towers was the ultimate work of art: we can perceive the collapse of the WTC towers as the climactic conclusion of twentieth-century art's 'passion for the Real'- the 'terrorists' themselves did not do it primarily to provoke real material damage, but for the *spectacular effect if it*.

That is the rationale of the often-mentioned association of the attacks with Hollywood disaster movies: the unthinkable which happened was the object of fantasy, so that, in a way, America got what it fantasized about, and that was the biggest surprise. The ultimate twist in this link between Hollywood and the 'war against terrorism' occurred when the Pentagon decided to solicit the help of Hollywood: at the beginning of October 2001, the press reported that a group of Hollywood scenarists and directors, specialists in catastrophe movies, had been established at the instigation of the Pentagon, with the aim of imagining possible scenarios for terrorist attacks and how to fight them. And this interaction seemed to be ongoing: at the beginning of November 2001, there was a series of meetings between White House advisers and senior Hollywood executives with the aim of co-ordinating the war effort and establishing how Hollywood could help in the 'war against terrorism' by getting the right ideological message across not only to Americans, but also to the Hollywood public around the globe - the ultimate empirical proof that Hollywood does in fact function as an 'ideological state apparatus'.

Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, 2002

63/ Space may be the final frontier but it's made in a Hollywood basement.

Red Hot Chilli Peppers, *Californication*, 1999

100/ And of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851)
Chapter 42: *The Whiteness of the Whale*