

Deferred Instantaneity: Clement Greenberg's Time Problem

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to examine American art critic Clement Greenberg's conception of time as articulated in his writings in order to bring new light to his idea of instantaneity. As a leading art critic in twentieth-century America, Greenberg propagated his modernist view of modern art through his formalist approach to interpretation, which led to the privileging of the Abstract Expressionists and subsequent artists including Jackson Pollock, David Smith, Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland and Jules Olitski. By and large, it is his modernist view of history as development that has drawn attention to the issue of temporality in Greenberg's arguments. It is why his prescriptive and therefore reductive approach to the history of modern art has been critically discussed by artists, art critics and art historians since the 1960s, when various art practices emerged at odds with his modernist critical enterprise.¹ Surprisingly, in spite of the implication of historical development in his discussions, Greenberg's conception of temporality in perceiving works of art has not received the careful consideration that it deserves. If anything, Greenberg has been regarded as an exponent of instantaneity, an idea apparently incompatible with temporality.² Certainly he points to

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instantaneity in his writings, but it is also the case that several of his texts unequivocally imply duration. I explore how the notion of temporality functions in Greenberg's art writings from the mid-1940s through the mid-1970s, and how it played a crucial role in fashioning his concept of optical illusion. To do so, his major article "Collage" and other key texts will be reinterpreted as explications of the temporal dimension of the viewer's experience. I will then turn to Jacques Lacan's exegesis of logical time as a tool for elucidating the structure of Greenberg's idea of instantaneity in order to contend that it cannot be regarded simply as a mere instant of time.

Of intense interest for artists and critics in the 1960s was the topic of temporality. In particular, such artists and critics shared what Pamela M. Lee aptly describes as "chronophobia," an obsession with, as well as a fear of, time.³ Because of his reputation as a formalist, Greenberg has been discussed only in terms of his interest in spatial images. Contrary to this presumption, the task of this essay is to bear witness to the issue of time in Greenberg's art criticism long before it haunted the artists and critics of the 1960s.

I UNCOVERING GREENBERG'S TEMPORALITY

Greenberg's theoretical framework underwent significant transformation in the 1950s. In the previous decade, he had addressed the physical properties of works of art in praising Jackson Pollock and other Abstract Expressionists whom he had regarded as absorbed in the problem of medium. But the 1950s saw the emergence of what Yve-Alain Bois calls "Greenberg's amendments," through which Greenberg's idea of medium shifted from a consideration of the properties of a work to that of the ethereal optics situated between works and viewers.⁴ It is in this context that the problem of time manifested itself in Greenberg's discourse.

First published in 1958 as "The Pasted-Paper Revolution," "Collage" is an article he re-titled when it was incorporated into his later book *Art and Culture*, published in 1961.⁵ "Collage" has been widely read as an exemplar of his formalist approach to works of art. Whereas other of his influential texts, such as "'American-Type' Painting" (1955) and "Modernist Painting" (1960), foregrounded his historical perspective from which he considered the then-present situation of contemporary art, "Collage" is informed by his narrowly drawn concern surrounding the

development of Cubist paintings. In this text, Greenberg attempts to explain how the experiments of Analytic Cubism produced the invention of collage.

Starting with his analysis of the development of Cubist paintings, he introduces the dichotomy of “literal flatness” and “depicted flatness,” by which he distinguished between the flatness of the surface of support and the flatness of the ground behind the depicted objects. The development of the paintings is discussed as the dialectical interaction between literal flatness and depicted flatness. In the early stage of Analytic Cubism, Greenberg writes, Braque and Picasso tried to make a slight illusion between the two kinds of flatnesses in order to keep the paintings from being overwhelmed by the literal flatness. At times they emphasized depicted flatness by painting recognizable objects such as “a tack with a cast shadow” in Braque’s *Violin and Pitcher* (1910) and at other times literal flatness was made conspicuous by depicting flat images like letters and the grain patterns of wooden surfaces as in *The Match Holder* (1910) by the same artist.⁶ Greenberg argues that one painting has a variety of flatnesses—not only those of depicted and literal flatnesses but also different layers of depicted flatnesses. In this respect, each motif emphasized its own flatness. Greenberg writes:

Thus every part and plane of the picture keeps changing place in relative depth with every other part and plane; and it is as if the only stable relation left among the different parts of the picture is the ambivalent and ambiguous one that each has with the surface.⁷

Claiming our attention is his discussion, which at first addresses the historical development of Cubist paintings, transformed en route into the explication of the viewer’s experience. Greenberg thus describes how flat planes, created by devices such as letters and the grain patterns of wood, oscillate between each other. The relationship between literal flatness and depicted flatness is viewed as “ambivalent and ambiguous.” Greenberg argues this effect, saying: “All this [planes created by various devices] expands the oscillation between surface and depth so as to encompass fictive space in front of the surface as well as behind it.”⁸ The relationship between the depicted planes and the plane of the surface becomes ambiguous because the oscillations are created not only between the surface and the depicted plane in front of it, but also between the surface and the depicted plane behind it. He then describes the transformation of these oscillations as follows:

Flatness may now monopolize everything, but it is a flatness [that has] become so ambiguous and expanded as to turn into illusion itself—at least an optical if not, properly speaking, a pictorial illusion.⁹

Oscillating planes themselves accordingly become an illusion, which he terms as “optical illusion.” As in the above citation, optical illusion is conceived not so much as illusion in a picture, which he calls pictorial illusion, but rather as an illusion into which the picture is perceived as being transformed subsequent to the process of oscillation. It is during the process of beholding that optical illusion is activated.

Within Greenberg’s entire corpus of writing, arguments concerning the idea of oscillation in pictorial space are not limited to “Collage.” In 1951, Greenberg expresses the oscillating process in Cézanne’s paintings as “a never-ending vibration from front to back and back to front,”¹⁰ an observation which he later revises as “a vibration, infinite in its terms”¹¹ for a reprint in *Art and Culture*. Both expressions demonstrate the infinitely prolonged process of oscillation, and do so all the more emphatically because they do not mention whether or not the oscillations eventually converge.

Greenberg also finds the process of oscillation present in Abstract Expressionist paintings. This is not surprising when we consider how Greenberg drew a parallel between Abstract Expressionist illusion to that found in Cubist works.¹² Using a metaphor of respiration, Greenberg writes: “the surface [of Abstract Expressionist paintings] manages somehow to *breathe* [Greenberg’s italics].”¹³ More specifically, paintings by Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still are described as “a new kind of flatness, one that breathes and pulsates.”¹⁴ The operation of the pulse is what Rosalind Krauss later refers to when she describes the activities against formalist distinction between spatial and temporal domains.¹⁵ Making their appearance in some of Greenberg’s major texts, the terms remind us of how important it is to deconstruct Greenberg’s image as an investigator of spatial problem.

In any case, Greenberg also bestows his concern on the temporal dimension of perceiving three-dimensional works.¹⁶ For example, he describes the process of oscillation in David Smith’s *Black White Forward* (1961):¹⁷

As in a Synthetic Cubist painting, the flat “picture” plane is jolted into what seem two planes of different depth, only to have its “integrity” reasserted.¹⁸

Greenberg discusses how the jolted picture plane at first appears to be two different planes, but which eventually merge with itself. Comparing the adjustment which produces the “jolted” effect to the oscillation found in Cubist paintings, Greenberg locates the temporal experience in his view of Smith’s sculpture. Although he reasserts the integrity of the two planes, he nevertheless looks at the process by which the two planes jolt along back and forth.

Although Smith’s *Black White Forward*, an assembly of flat steel planes, is so frontal as to operate according to a logic similar to that of painting, Greenberg finds that kind of experience in non-frontal sculpture as well. Anthony Caro’s sculpture is discussed thus:

Planar and linear shapes of steel (there are no solidly enclosed volumes in Caro’s vocabulary) gather together in what the surprised eye takes at first for mere agglomerations. Seldom is there an enclosing silhouette or internal pattern with readily apparent axes and centers of interest; these, when they emerge, do so tangentially and ex-centrally. That the ground plan will at times echo as well as interlock with the superstructure or elevation (as in the superb *Sculpture Two* of 1962) only renders the unity of a piece that much harder to grasp at first. Yet just those factors that make for confusion at first make most for unity in the end.¹⁹

Once again, the work seems to initially appear as “mere agglomerations” whose “enclosing silhouette or internal pattern” can hardly be recognized. Even if there are “readily apparent axes and centers of interest,” they emerge “tangentially and ex-centrally.” Here Greenberg emphasizes that grasping the unity of Caro’s sculpture is not done in a moment but carries with it a kind of delay, analogous to that which he finds in Smith’s sculpture.

Greenberg’s interest in temporality has been eclipsed by the shadow of his stature as a formalist art critic whose assigned role it is to explore spatial problems of a given work. We see that he found duration to be present in a range of paintings and sculpture including Cubist collage, Cézanne, Abstract Expressionism, David Smith and Anthony Caro. As in the sculptures by Smith and Caro, a unity of the work might be reasserted in the end, but it should also be noted that such a unity is not posited *a priori* but created as a result of the process during which we perceive the work of art. Greenberg’s attention to this process, however, has been consigned into oblivion in discussions of his critical discourse.²⁰

II THE COMPATIBILITY OF INSTANTANEITY WITH TEMPORALITY

As we have discussed, Greenberg mentions temporal experience in looking at art in many places for many subjects. It is also the case, however, that he often mentions the idea of instantaneity in perceiving works of art. For example, his 1959 article “The Case for Abstract Art” discusses the notion of “at-onceness,” as we will discuss later.²¹ In a symposium in 1987 he stated that, “A masterpiece as well as a dog can be grasped in the split second. An instantaneous look, and you can see how good Titian is when he’s good.”²² Hence the question arises: if he discusses the idea of instantaneity, how does Greenberg reconcile it with his conception of temporality? In the following pages, I will argue that his instantaneity can be considered not as a mere instant of time but rather as an idea that encompasses a specific kind of temporality.

Let us go back to the mid-1940s. “On Looking at Pictures” (1945) is one of the earliest texts in which Greenberg discusses his version of instantaneity.²³ It is a book review of Lionello Venturi’s *Painting and Painters: How to Look at a Picture* (1945).²⁴ Greenberg criticizes Venturi’s argument about the process of viewing a picture. According to Venturi, we only have a vague impression of a picture at the first glance but after an analysis of all its components we may understand the meaning of them and the picture as a whole. Greenberg considers Venturi’s argument to be “highly misleading if not completely wrong.”²⁵ He writes:

The process of looking at a picture is infinitely more complex in scheme than that [Venturi’s statement]; it cannot be analyzed into discrete, sequential moments but only, if at all, into logical moments (though logic as such has very little to do with the experience of art). Doesn’t one find so many times that the “full meaning” of a picture—i.e., its aesthetic fact—is, at any given visit to it, most fully revealed at the first fresh glance? And that this “meaning” fades progressively as continued examination destroys the unity of impression?²⁶

Greenberg criticizes an evolutionary implication in Venturi’s model of understanding. We must note that it does not follow that Greenberg insists that one can understand the full meaning of a picture in a moment of time, because he argues that what one initially assumes as the full meaning of a picture “fades progressively” as one’s examination of the work continues. His addition of quotation marks to the phrase “full

meaning” also implies that Greenberg thinks that one cannot comprehend the full meaning of a picture in a moment. Put otherwise, he was doubtful not only about the gradual apprehension of a picture but also about the instantaneous understanding of its full meaning.

Still, Greenberg remains attracted to some aspect of instantaneity in spite of his doubts. Evidence of his concern can be seen in the following:

With many paintings and pieces of sculpture it is *as if* you had to catch them by surprise in order to grasp them as wholes—their maximum being packed into the instantaneous shock of sight. Whereas if you plant yourself too firmly before looking at a picture and then gaze at it too long you are likely to end by having it merely gaze blankly back at you [*italics mine*].²⁷

His use of “as if” reveals that Greenberg believes that one does not have to comprehend works of art in a moment of time in reality but that one feels an imperative to do so because a maximum amount of meaning is packed into and within an instantaneous shock of sight. It means that even if one does not understand all the meanings of works of art in a moment of time, they are actually imprinted onto one’s eyes, to be retroactively reactivated. What is at stake in Greenberg’s conception of looking at works of art is this combination of their instantaneous impression on the viewer’s eyes and her/his gradual understanding of its meaning.

If this is the case, then how does the slowness of understanding differ from that of Venturi’s model of understanding which also requires a certain amount of time to come to fruition? Useful at this juncture is a discussion of Greenberg’s reference to logical moments, which he contrasts with “discrete, sequential moments” that Venturi presupposes in his formulation of looking at a picture.

As for logical moments, Greenberg only writes: “The process of looking at a picture is infinitely more complex in scheme than that [Venturi’s statement]; it cannot be analyzed into discrete, sequential moments but only, if at all, into logical moments (though logic as such has very little to do with the experience of art).”²⁸ Rosalind Krauss regards Greenberg’s idea of logical moments as atemporal and therefore ideal configurations of the viewer’s look.²⁹ According to her, Greenberg’s idea of logical moments parallels that which constitutes the diagrams Erle Loran uses in *Cézanne’s Compositions* (1943),³⁰ the book Greenberg would praise three months later after he first mentions logical moments.³¹ As Krauss properly argues, Loran’s diagrams are so schematic as to be called

logical, while Greenberg's conception of logical moments leaves room for reexamination, because he writes that Loran's diagrams "are a matter of intuition and experience rather than of conscious thought."³² That means Greenberg does not consider Loran's diagram to be the product of speculation but rather that of experience. If Greenberg's idea is parallel to Loran's as Krauss argues, Greenberg seems to have regarded logical moments as pertaining to actual experience in some way. I write "in some way" because he nonetheless writes that "logic itself has little to do with the experience of art." In other words, Greenberg's logical moments originate in the actual experience of art, yet they are concurrently qualified by logic which has little to do with that experience. This apparent double bind of the term "logical moments" is unraveled when we consider it as the two-phase process of looking at a picture. Logical moments are experiential because they arise from the actual experience of art, which, in Greenberg's case, is provided in a moment, and at the same time not experiential in that they are not created on the spot but rather reconstructed after the event. For Greenberg, logical moments are those into which one unfolds by logic something that one perceives as happening in actual experience.

To clarify Greenberg's use of logical moments, I now direct attention to another discussion about logical moments of a judgment articulated by French psychoanalyst and philosopher Jacques Lacan in his essay "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty," published in 1945 in the 1940/1944 volume of *Cahiers d'art*.³³ Although the subject of this article, which focuses on aspects of temporality in logic, seems to have little relevance to Greenberg's discussion of the process of looking, Lacanian analysis can be usefully employed as an invaluable means of explicating Greenberg's model. For present in Lacan's writings is a specific kind of temporality as it exists in a particular judgment, which in turn, operates in the latter.

Lacan's argument on time is made in relation to his own interpretation of a logical problem involving three prisoners.³⁴ The problem is explained as follows: three prisoners have an opportunity for one of them to be released. The warden places one disc from a set of three white discs and two black discs on each prisoner's back. Each prisoner can only see the discs on the other two's backs and not their own. The first prisoner to walk to the door and tell the warden which color disc he has on his back will be released. When the warden uses three white discs to put them on the backs of the prisoners, what happens? The result is that after

having contemplated for a given length of time, all three prisoners walk to the door at the same instant. Lacan argues that each of the prisoners reaches a solution by thinking as follows: "I saw the other two have white discs. I thought that if I have a black disc, one of the two would be able to infer the following: 'If I have a black disc, the other would find he has a white and leave immediately but since he does not, I have not a black but a white.' Since the other two do not leave, I find I have a white."

To describe the process that each prisoner goes through, Lacan introduces a time element, which he divides into three moments: the instant of the glance, the time for comprehending, and the moment of concluding. The instant of the glance takes place when the prisoner notices what is given in the situation where each prisoner sees two white discs. The time for comprehending occurs when that prisoner makes a line of reasoning. The moment of concluding is when that same prisoner realizes that he can conclude if he interprets the other's standing still as a hesitation.³⁵

What makes the last phase significant is that the prisoner must quickly end his process of reasoning in order to head for the door, for if the others go before him, he cannot use the hesitation of the others as an element in his line of reasoning. Thus, in the moment of concluding, the prisoner's act does not make an additional reasoning but ends the line of reasoning by the construction of the judgment. The judgment is made according to what Lacan calls "anticipated certainty," in which the prisoner leaps ahead to a conclusion whose rationale can only be verified after the judgment is made.³⁶

Although scholars have focused on the function of the moment of concluding, especially the way in which this last moment makes the time for comprehending retroactively meaningful,³⁷ the instant of the glance also deserves special consideration in its relationship to the second moment. Lacan writes:

The time for comprehending can be reduced to the instant of the glance, but this instant can include all the time needed for comprehending.³⁸

Here Lacan regards the first instant of the glance as comprising the time for comprehending. We can see how his notion of the instant of the glance shares the same structure as Greenberg's idea of instantaneity which is not completed by itself. In both cases, it is the subsequent time for understanding that gives significance to, or rather activates, the first moment of glance. Taking into account recent studies on Lacan's idea

of three logical moments which are discussed in relation to Sigmund Freud's notion of afterwardsness (*Nachträglichkeit*),³⁹ we can interpret the deferred understanding of the first glance as an effect of afterwardsness, which consequently allows the first glance to be reactivated later during the time for comprehending.

It is important here to note how Greenberg himself argues this effect of afterwardsness in relation to his version of instantaneity. In one of his aesthetic writings in the mid-1970s, he discusses how crucially aesthetic experience depends on "the interplay of expectation and satisfaction (or dys-satisfaction)."⁴⁰ According to him, aesthetic expectation is not what one holds before s/he sees works of art but is created solely within their actual experience and influenced by nothing outside it.⁴¹ Greenberg argues that although it is much easier to point to the interplay in the temporal, than visual, arts, it nevertheless happens in the latter. This includes pictorial art "whose full effect can be gotten—and has to be gotten—from a split-second glance,"⁴² which recalls the Venturi book review written some thirty years earlier. Greenberg thus argues:

Here [in pictorial art] the interplay is compressed into microscopic time—and who knows but that it may violate the dimension of time, or rather our consciousness of the dimension of time. In visual art, as it seems to me, satisfaction (and maybe dys-satisfaction too) can generate expectation *retroactively*, or, if not that, coincide with it in the same apparent instant [italics mine].⁴³

He considers the interplay of expectation and satisfaction, which should require duration by definition, to be compressed into a moment of time in such a way as to undermine our consciousness of the temporal dimension. Losing a normal sense of time, one can reinterpret her/his early expectation in terms of her/his later satisfaction. It is in this sense that the latter can make the former retroactively meaningful. Retroactive temporality is an idea which has operated throughout Greenberg's years of discussion on aesthetic experience.⁴⁴

III FRIED'S TWIST AND AFTER

Aside from the complexity of Greenberg's notion of time, how can we postulate the reasons why it has been unnoticed? Here the important role Michael Fried played in disseminating the idea of instantaneity demands our attention. As a leading disciple of Greenberg,⁴⁵ Fried wrote his sem-

inal article "Art and Objecthood" (1967) where he praises modernist paintings and sculpture for convincing the viewer of the value of their works instantaneously, in contrast to minimal artworks, which are criticized for requiring the viewer to feel the duration.⁴⁶ It is with reference to his article that many scholars have discussed "presentness," the instantaneity which Fried claims is perceived in modernist paintings and sculpture.⁴⁷

Fried does not specify the source of his argument on instantaneity in the article, but it is clearly from the writings of Greenberg. For Fried later refers to Greenberg's notion of "at-onceness" in discussing the temporal mode of instantaneousness of Édouard Manet's painting. Citing Greenberg's article "The Case for Abstract Art" (1959), Fried writes in a footnote:

For Greenberg, the quality of "at-onceness" is a mark of all successful paintings: [The following is Fried's quote of Greenberg's "The Case for Abstract Art."] "[I]deally the whole of a picture should be taken in at a glance; its unity should be immediately evident, and the supreme quality of a picture, the highest measure of its power to move and control the visual imagination, should reside in its unity. And this is something to be grasped only in an indivisible instant of time" (p. 80).⁴⁸

Greenberg's argument in Fried's quotation holds that the whole picture and its value should be apprehended in a moment of time. Since Fried regards Manet as the first modernist artist,⁴⁹ it is likely that Fried has the notion of "at-onceness" in his mind when he discusses modernist paintings and sculpture in America.

It is of vital importance to understand that little attention has been drawn to what Greenberg writes after Fried's quotation, because the latter has decontextualized much of Greenberg's argument. Even a cursory examination of the rest of the passage reveals the partial nature of Fried's quotation:

The "at-onceness" which a picture or a piece of sculpture enforces on you is not, however, single or isolated. It can be repeated in a succession of instants, in each one remaining an "at-onceness," an instant all by itself. For the cultivated eye, the picture repeats its instantaneous unity like a mouth repeating a single word.⁵⁰

Greenberg here contends that the notion of "at-onceness" does not refer to just a single or isolated experience of a work of art. Through the continued repetition of "at-onceness," the viewer experiences the work of

art. In other words, the apprehension of the unity of the work and its value is instantaneous, but this instantaneity is iterated over and over, so that the total experience of art develops in the course of time.

It must be added, however, that Fried himself in looking back in 1998 to the situation when he wrote "Art and Objecthood," maintains that his presentness is not a mere instant of time either. He provides the evidence for this contention as an epigraph from Perry Miller's book on American theologian Jonathan Edwards,⁵¹ stating that "we every moment see the same proof of a God as we should have seen if we had seen Him create the world at first."⁵² That is how Fried writes: "My point, I would say today, was that at every moment the *claim* on the viewer of the modernist painting or sculpture is renewed totally, as if nothing less than that is the condition of its expressiveness [Fried's italics]."⁵³ Fried insists that he also has suffered from, rather than promoted, the simplification of the idea of instantaneity, which was perhaps motivated by its exaggerated contrast with minimalist temporality. It is not so much Fried's argument itself as the repercussions it had on the contemporary art field that has obscured Greenberg's subtle implication of instantaneity.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of what we have considered above, I again emphasize the significance of the theme of time in the aesthetic of Clement Greenberg's art criticism by a discussion of two types of his arguments on this subject: temporality and instantaneity. The close look at his article "Collage" shows us Greenberg's belief in the beholder's eventual comprehension of the unity of a work of art over the course of time. Oscillations in a pictorial space not only create optical illusion but also involve a distinctly temporal process of beholding. This kind of temporality in the experience of art is also found in the works of Cézanne, the Abstract Expressionists, Smith and Caro. At first sight, Greenberg's temporality appears to be at odds with his idea of instantaneity, but they are reasonably compatible because Greenberg's instantaneity is not a single moment of time but instead encompasses the time for understanding. The twofold nature of Greenberg's time is reinterpreted as an effect of afterwardsness, via Jacques Lacan's argument that the first moment of the glance could be retroactively reactivated during the time for understanding. In the last section, I discussed how Michael Fried gave a twist to Greenberg's contention of time. Its two-phase structure converged

into the mere concept of instantaneity largely through the repercussion of "Art and Objecthood" rather than due to his article itself.

Greenberg's critical writings remained influential in the art world of the 1960s. Although more artists came to oppose his formalist interpretations, Greenberg's interest in temporality intersected with the artists' obsession with time. This article is an effort on my part to explore the extent to which Greenberg's ideas and issues were involved with the art practices of the 1960s. Some of Greenberg's ideas became obsolete, while others survived by their subsequent appropriation by later artists and critics in a manner that might be characterized as furtive. If the theoretical values of Greenberg's discourse remain worthy of re-evaluation, it would best be done obliquely; that is, in such a way that would best elucidate their deconstruction by the generations of artists and critics to come.

NOTES

¹ Max Kozloff, "A Letter to the Editor," *Art International* 7, no. 6 (25 June 1963): 88–92; Barbara M. Reise, "Greenberg and the Group: A Retrospective View," *Studio International* 175, no. 900 (May 1968): 254–57; no. 901 (June 1968): 314–16; Donald Judd, "Complaints: Part 1 [1969]," *Complete Writings: 1959–1975* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York: New York University, 1975), 197–99; Leo Steinberg, "Other Criteria," *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 55–91; Donald B. Kuspit, *Clement Greenberg: Art Critic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979); T.J. Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art [1982]," in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, ed. Francis Francina, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 71–86; Michael Fried, "How Modernism Works: A Response to T.J. Clark [1982]," in *Pollock and After*, 87–101; Timothy J. Clark, "Arguments about Modernism: A Reply to Michael Fried [1983]," in *Pollock and After*, 102–9; Robert Storr, "No Joy in Mudville: Greenberg's Modernism Then and Now," in *Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low*, ed. Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 160–90; Rosalind E. Krauss, chap. 6 of *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 243–329; *Les Cahiers du musée national d'art moderne*, no. 45/46 (automne/hiver 1993) [Clement Greenberg issue]; and Thierry de Duve, *Clement Greenberg between the Lines* (Paris: Dis Voir, 1996).

² de Duve, "Performance Here and Now: Minimal Art, a Plea for a New Genre of Theatre," *Open Letter*, 5th Series, no. 5–6 (summer-fall 1983): 249; and Yve-Alain Bois, "Introduction: The Use Value of 'Formless,'" in Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 24–25. By "instantaneity," I mean a very short period of time, whereas "temporality" has two meanings embedded: the nature of time (as opposed to spatiality) and duration (as opposed to instantaneity).

³ Pamela M. Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).

⁴ Bois, "Les amendements de Greenberg," *Les Cahiers du musée national d'art moderne*, no. 45/46 (automne/hiver 1993): 52–60.

⁵ Clement Greenberg, "The Pasted-Paper Revolution [1958]," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, *Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957–1969*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 61–66; and Greenberg, "Collage," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 70–83.

⁶ These paintings are reproduced in Henry R. Hope, *Georges Braque* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1949), 42, 48.

⁷ Greenberg, "Collage," 76.

⁸ *Ibid.* 77.

⁹ *Ibid.* 77.

¹⁰ Greenberg, "Cézanne and the Unity of Modern Art [1951]," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 3, *Affirmations and Refusals, 1950–1956*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 86.

¹¹ Greenberg, "Cézanne," in *Art and Culture*, 52.

¹² Michael Fried, "Three American Painters: Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Frank Stella [1965]," in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 263n18; and William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition, Part 3," *Artforum* 5, no. 8 (April 1967): 18–19.

¹³ Greenberg, "Contribution to a symposium," in *Art and Culture*, 125.

¹⁴ Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting," in *Art and Culture*, 226.

¹⁵ Krauss, "Pulse," in Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, 161–65.

¹⁶ Optical illusion is not restricted to painting. Greenberg refers to the presence of optical illusion in sculpture in "Roundness Isn't All: Review of *The Art of Sculpture* by Herbert Read [1956]," in *Affirmations and Refusals*, 270–73.

¹⁷ Although Greenberg refers to this work as *Untitled* (1965), I use *Black White Forward* (1961) according to Rosalind E. Krauss's identification in her book *The Sculpture of David Smith: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977). See catalogue entry 507.

¹⁸ Greenberg, "David Smith: Comments on His Latest Works [1966]," in *Modernism with a Vengeance*, 226.

¹⁹ Greenberg, "Contemporary Sculpture: Anthony Caro [1965]," in *Modernism with a Vengeance*, 206.

²⁰ In addition to Greenberg's articles discussed in the text, the idea of temporality can be found in his early writings. For example, in "Avant-Garde and Kitsch [1939]," Greenberg opposes "the processes of art," assigned to what Picasso paints, to "its effects," corresponding to Ilya Repin's concern. His discussion on "the processes of art" includes the germination of temporality, although it does not thematize the oscillation of planes. See Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," in *Art and Culture*, 15.

²¹ Greenberg, "The Case for Abstract Art [1959]," in *Modernism with a Vengeance*, 75–84.

²² Greenberg, "A Public Debate with Clement Greenberg [1987]," in Thierry de Duve, *Clement Greenberg between the Lines* (Paris: Dis Voir, 1996), 123.

²³ Greenberg, "On Looking at Pictures: Review of *Painting and Painters: How to Look at a Picture: From Giotto to Chagall* by Lionello Venturi [1945]," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 34–35.

²⁴ Lionello Venturi, *Painting and Painters: How to Look at a Picture* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945).

²⁵ Greenberg, "On Looking at Pictures," 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 34.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 34.

²⁸ Ibid. 34.

²⁹ Krauss, *Optical Unconscious*, 98–107.

³⁰ Erle Loran, *Cézanne's Composition: Analysis of his Form, with Diagrams and Photographs of his Motifs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943).

³¹ Greenberg, "Review of *Cézanne's Composition* by Earle [sic] Loran [1945]," in *Arrogant Purpose*, 46–49.

³² Ibid. 47.

³³ Jacques Lacan, "Le temps logique et l'assertion de certitude anticipée: Un nouveau sophisme," *Cahiers d'art* 16–19 (1940/1944 [1945]): 32–42. It was reprinted in *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 197–213 and translated into English as "Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty," trans. Bruce Fink and Marc Silver, *Newsletter of the Freudian Field* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 4–22. Lacan's argument on logical time is deployed to unravel Greenberg's intricate conception of logical moments. Although it is widely known that Abstract Expressionist artists and their fellow art critics enthusiastically read *Cahiers d'art*, and Greenberg himself mentions the French magazine one month after his Venturi review, I choose not to discuss the direct influence that the article might have exerted on Greenberg. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain any actual influences of Lacan on Greenberg because there are no manuscripts or notes relating to this article in the publicly available Greenberg files, including "Clement Greenberg Papers, 1937–1984," Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and "Clement Greenberg Papers, 1928–1994," Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Los Angeles. For the historical context of Lacan's article, see Erik Porge, *Se compter trois: Le temps logique de Lacan* (Toulouse: Érès, 1989), 21–24.

³⁴ This logical problem is a variation of the Muddy Children Puzzle. For the latter, see Ronald Fagin, Joseph Y. Halpern, Yoram Moses, and Moshe Y. Vardi, *Reasoning about Knowledge* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

³⁵ Ed Pluth and Dominiek Hoens, "What if the Other Is Stupid?: Badiou and Lacan on 'Logical Time,'" 183. This is a response to Alain Badiou's discussion of Lacan's article in his *Théorie du sujet* (Paris: Seuil, 1982).

³⁶ Ibid. 184.

³⁷ David Blomme and Dominiek Hoens, "Anticipation and Subjectivity: A Commentary on an Early Text by Lacan," *Computing Anticipatory Systems: CASYS'99—Third International Conference*, ed. D. M. Dubois (Woodbury, N.Y.: American Institute of Physics, 2000), 119–20; and Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 75–76.

³⁸ Lacan, "Logical Time," 12.

³⁹ Bruce Fink, "Logical Time and the Precipitation of Subjectivity," in *Reading Seminars I and II: Lacan's Return to Freud*, ed. Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, and Maire Jaanus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 357; and John Forrester, *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan and Derrida* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 202–3. See Jean Laplanche, "Notes on Afterwardsness," in *Essays on Otherness* (London: Routledge, 1999), 260–65, for the problem of "deferred action" as a translation of *Nachträglichkeit* used in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.

⁴⁰ Greenberg, "The Factor of Surprise [1975]," *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 31.

⁴¹ Ibid. 31.

⁴² Ibid. 31.

⁴³ Ibid. 31.

⁴⁴ Fried also argues how the idea of *Nachträglichkeit* operates in his work not only on

paintings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also on the art of the 1950s and 1960s. See Jill Beaulieu, Mary Roberts and Toni Ross, "Interview with Michael Fried," in *Refracting Vision: Essays on the Writings of Michael Fried* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2000), 380–84.

⁴⁵ Although Fried had begun to distance himself from Greenberg's modernist framework by 1966, it is also the case that Fried's argument relies heavily on Greenberg's. See Michael Fried's comment in *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, no. 1 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 56.

⁴⁶ Fried, "Art and Objecthood [1967]," in *Art and Objecthood*, 166–67.

⁴⁷ Irving Sandler, *American Art of the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, Icon Editions, 1988), 254; Frances Coplitt, *Minimal Art: The Critical Perspective* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1990), 91–99. Coplitt discusses Greenberg's opticality in terms of spatiality in her article "Systems of Opinion: Abstract Painting since 1959," in *Abstract Art in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. Coplitt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 164–65.

⁴⁸ Fried, *Manet's Modernism or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 568n71.

⁴⁹ Fried, "Three American Painters," 214.

⁵⁰ Greenberg, "The Case for Abstract Art," 81.

⁵¹ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1949).

⁵² Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 148.

⁵³ Fried, "An Introduction to My Art Criticism," in *Art and Objecthood*, 47.