Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity
Author(s): Mark Antliff
Source: *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 84, No. 1 (Mar., 2002), pp. 148-169
Published by: College Art Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3177257
Accessed: 14/09/2009 10:31

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=caa.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We work with the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

College Art Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Art Bulletin.*

http://www.jstor.org

Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity

Mark Antliff

The terms *fascism* and *modern art* used to seem comfortingly opposed to each other, but the last two decades of scholarship in history, art history, and literature have radically revised that postwar complacency. An understanding of the profound interrelation of these two terms is now a precondition for an appraisal of modernism in any historicized sense. This has led historians to examine the relation of both avant-garde art and fascism to broad socioeconomic, cultural, and philosophical trends pervading European society in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. For example, in her introductory essay for the 1991 exhibition catalogue *"Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany,* Stephanie Barron rightly identified the 1937 *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition organized by the Nazis as "the most virulent attack ever mounted against modern art."[1] At first glance such a statement seemed to confirm the common assumption that fascism and modernism were mutually exclusive and that the Nazis' concerted efforts, after 1933, to vilify modern art evinced an unbridgeable chasm between fascists and the European avant-garde. Barron, however, tells a more complicated story, noting that attempts to condemn pictorial abstraction as evidence of the "degenerate" condition of its creators were countered within the Nazi movement by those who valued the art of such modernists as Ernst Barlach and Emil Nolde as "regenerative."[2] This latter camp praised German Expressionism as attuned to the spiritual values of the German folk, claiming that this abstract art embodied a Nordic artistic heritage with roots in the Gothic era. Indeed, Nolde himself, who became a charter member of the North Schleswig branch of the German National Socialist Party in 1920, saw no contradiction between Nazism and modern art.[3] No less a figure than Joseph Goebbels—future minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in the Third Reich—actively sided with German Expressionism's defenders, and, as Barron notes, Nolde's art met official rejection in Nazi circles only after Hitler's September 1934 condemnation of modern art at a party rally in Nuremberg.[4] Thus, before 1934 some factions within the Nazi movement seemed in tune with the cultural politics of Italian fascism under Benito Mussolini, finding in German Expressionism an artistic counterpart to the Italian fascists' promotion of all strands of modernism, from the Le Corbusier–inspired architecture of the Italian Rationalists to Futurism and the art of the novecento.[5]

Such complications are further compounded when we consider the incorporation of modernist formal aesthetics into the design of household goods under the Third Reich. As John Heskett concluded in his study of modern design in Nazi Germany, the Nazis' closure of the Bauhaus in 1933 has obscured the relation of Nazi industrial design to that developed under the Weimar Republic and the degree to which the Nazi regime actively embraced modernity.[6] Espousing "blood and soil" tribalism even as it constructed autobahns, engineered the Volkswagen, and developed advanced methods of factory organization, the Nazi regime—like its Italian counterpart and fascist movements in France—looked to both a mythic past and a technological future in a manner that seems highly contradictory. The pivotal role of modern art in that matrix will be the focus of this essay as I examine new approaches to modernism through the lens of fascism's cultural politics.

Central to this problematic is the function of both fascism and modernism in the development of modernity, that is, the socioeconomic transformation of Europe and the world following the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the birth of democracy in the wake of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution of 1789, and the subsequent globalization of capitalism.[7] Scholars now recognize the role of both fascism and modernist aesthetics in the emergence of anti-Enlightenment movements opposed to the democratic tradition that was the heritage of Enlightenment thought. Indeed, the rise of fascism in Europe responded to a widespread search for spiritual values and "organic" institutions capable of counteracting what was considered the corrosive effects of rationalism (and capitalism) on the body politic. As Pierre Birnbaum notes, democracy's opponents repudiated the Enlightenment principle of a rationalism inherent in human nature and the legitimizing principle of "one man, one vote."[8] In its stead they posited ethnic, regional, and religious forms of national identity, antithetical to political democracy's universalist and rationalist precepts. The Enlightenment's adversaries also came to associate capitalism with the homogenizing effects of rationalism, since the only value recognized by capital was that of quantifiable monetary exchange. In this regard, Marxists Robert Sayre and Michael Löwry have configured fascism as one manifestation of what they call "Romantic anti-capitalism," an umbrella term for an "opposition to capitalism in the name of pre-capitalist values" on the part of intellectuals associated with a broad political spectrum, including Marxism, anarchism, and socialism.[9] They associate this worldview with hostility toward a capitalist present that reduced human relations to a matter of exchange value with no regard for the social divisiveness and alienation resulting from monetary competition.[10] For Sayre and Löwry this worldview precipitated a "nostalgia" for a "pre-capitalist past, or at least for one in which capitalism was less developed." Capitalism had reportedly stifled our imaginative capacity by immersing human subjectivity and emotions in a system based on "extreme mechanization" and "quantitative calculation and standardization," thus instigating a "yearning for unity" both with "the universe of nature" and "the human community."[11] The marshaling of "human values" identified with that past served either to resist a capitalist present or as a springboard for "a dreamed-of future beyond capitalism" inscribed "in the nos-

talgic vision of the pre-capitalist era." This appeal to past values in the name of a noncapitalist future society is a key characteristic of fascism, though Sayre and Löwry fail to recognize this when they claim that fascism—as exemplified by German Nazism—was predominantly hostile to the "modern world" and fully restorationist in orientation.[12]

Indeed, fascists, though opposed to Enlightenment ideals and capitalist precepts, were eager to absorb those aspects of modernity (and modernist aesthetics) that could be reconfigured within their antirational concept of national identity. Thus, historian Jeffrey Herf has documented the Nazis' thorough acceptance of modern design and industrialism, which has led him to coin the term "reactionary modernism" to describe those thinkers and ideologues under the Weimer Republic and the Third Reich "who rejected liberal democracy and the legacy of the Enlightenment, yet simultaneously embraced the modern technology of the second industrial revolution."[13] As Paul Jaskot points out, the use of technocratic systems of organization and accountancy reached a horrific extreme with the SS's mobilization of forced labor in the mass production of dressed stone for Albert Speer's monumental building campaigns; in like fashion, Barbara Lane has analyzed the Nazis' adaptation of Bauhaus design techniques to industrial construction in response to Hitler's call, in 1933, for an architecture of "crystal clear functionalism."[14]

Emilio Gentile has reached similar conclusions with regard to Italian fascism, noting that Mussolini and his allies among the Futurists cast themselves as "antagonists of that perverse modernity that stemmed from Enlightenment values of liberal reason." Claiming that the principle of democracy valued individual freedom to the detriment of "spiritual" values with the capacity to unify Italy's body politic, the fascists gave "absolute primacy" to notions of "national collectivity as organised by the totalitarian state."[15] Zeev Sternhell, in an important anthology devoted to this issue,[16] outlines what was at stake for the Enlightenment's adversaries:

> The Enlightenment was the age of criticism. . . . The principal ideas of the modern age—progress, revolution, liberty, democracy—ensued from criticism. It was the rational criticism of certitudes and traditional values—and in the first place religion—which produced the theory of the rights of man, the primacy of the individual with regard to society. . . . It was the rational criticism of the existing order which allowed society to be conceived as an aggregate of individuals and the state as an instrument in the hands of the individual.[17]

To contravene this new social and political order, the Enlightenment's critics turned to alternative philosophical strands, from which they constructed new social systems attuned to the Industrial Revolution yet opposed to the democratic tradition. Antirationalist philosophers and activists such as Maurice Barrès, Friedrich Nietzsche, Georges Sorel, and Henri Bergson, antidemocratic sociologists like Gustave Le Bon and Vilfredo Pareto, and racial theorists like Arthur de Gobineau inspired the anti-Semitic blood and soil politics of the Nazis, the creation of fascist myths under Mussolini, the socioeconomics of corporatism, and the theatrical mass politics of fascist regimes and movements throughout Europe. Moreover, concepts associated with modernist aesthetics—including regeneration, spiritualism, primitivism, and avant-gardism—were integrated into the anti-Enlightenment pantheon of fascist values, with the result that many artists found common ground with these new movements. Over the course of the 1990s historians of fascism began probing this cultural matrix, and journals such as *Modernism/Modernity* (founded in 1994) and *Journal of Contemporary History* (begun 1966) have played a seminal role in providing art historians, literary critics, and historians with a forum in which to examine the specifically *modernist* dimension of fascism's cultural politics. In short, we now recognize that many of the paradigms that spawned the development of modernist aesthetics were also integral to the emergence of fascism, and that the internalization of these paradigms as operative assumptions was a stimulus for alliances between modernists and anti-Enlightenment ideologues throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Common denominators uniting modernist aesthetics and fascism include concepts of cultural, political, and biological regeneration; the use of avant-garde techniques, such as montage; notions of "secular religion"; primitivism; and anticapitalist theories of space and time. I will treat these five themes separately, considering the implications of each paradigm for the study of modern art and architecture while recognizing their synergetic confluence within the matrix of fascism's cultural politics. The principal framework in which I will situate fascist modernism will be the definition of generic fascism outlined by Roger Griffin in his book *The Nature of Fascism* (1991).[18] In that volume Griffin developed a heuristic model for the study of fascism's internal workings; scholars have found this approach compelling because it lends coherence to the vast and disparate writings on fascism and has proven to be constructive in subsequent evaluations of fascist aesthetics. As I will explain, the above categories gain conceptual consistency when analyzed from the perspective of Griffin's definition of fascism as "a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism."[19] I will begin by considering Griffin's definition of myth before exploring the ramification of "palingenesis" (meaning rebirth) for the first of our categories: that of regeneration.

Myth

By claiming that fascism possessed a "mythic core" Griffin highlights the irrationalism behind fascist ideology and the function of myths as motivating factors among fascism's adherents. He turns to the theory of myth propounded by French political theorist Georges Sorel (1847–1922) to define the fascists' specialized use of this concept—an appropriate association, given Mussolini's self-professed debt to the author of *Reflections on Violence* (1908).[20] Sorel concluded that the revolutionary transformations instigated by religious sects and political movements arise from the emotive impact of their core myths, defined as those visionary principles that inspire immediate action.[21] For Sorel, myths were decidedly instrumental; rather than providing people with a social blueprint for a future to be created incrementally through political reform and rational planning, myths presented the public with a visionary ideal whose stark contrast with present

reality would agitate the masses. In his *Reflections on Violence,* Sorel underscored the emotive and antirational nature of myth by defining it as "a body of images capable of evoking all the sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of the War undertaken by socialism against modern society."[22] Having condemned parliamentary socialists for employing rational argumentation to promote social change, Sorel lauded the mythic power of the French anarchosyndicalist vision of a general strike for its ability to instill revolutionary fervor among the working class. If each worker believed their strike action would spark similar acts throughout France and that the proliferation of such strikes would result in the downfall of capitalism, then the evocation of such an apocalyptic general strike would inspire workers to engage in heroic forms of violent resistance to the capitalist status quo. Sorel viewed the general strike as only the latest manifestation of the power of mythic images to transform individual consciousness and, ultimately, whole societies. Other examples included the Christian belief in Christ's imminent return; the various utopic images that had inspired the citizen-soldiers of France to defend the Revolution of 1789; and Giuseppi Mazzini's visionary call for a united Italy, which had motivated the common people to take up arms during the Risorgimento (1861–70). In each case, mythmakers drew a strong contrast between a decadent present, rife with political and ethical corruption, and their vision of a regenerated future society, premised, in no small part, on the spiritual transformation of each individual within the body politic.

Heroism in the realm of labor unrest had a constructive complement in the creativity of the industrial worker, whose interaction with modern machinery galvanized a worker's potential for invention. To Sorel's mind the ethical violence of the worker merged with the creativity of the industrial producer; accordingly, Mussolini (and his French fascist counterpart, Georges Valois) described the fascist movement as a Sorelian alliance of combatants and producers.[23] At its most extreme, a society built around such myths would no longer support institutions structured on Enlightenment precepts; parliamentary democracy would cede to the creation of a new form of politics, such as fascism. As belief systems that served as catalysts for activism, myths not only nurtured social cohesion among disparate constituencies, they also made social and industrial dynamism, and the potential for violent upheaval, core aspects of any ideology employing such mythic images to achieve its objectives.[24]

The importance ascribed by Griffin to the revolutionary import of Sorel's theory of myth is confirmed by historian Zeev Sternhell's thesis that fascist ideology had its genealogy in the "antimaterialist" revolt against parliamentary politics forged by Sorel and his followers before World War I.[25] In a series of books devoted to the development of fascism in France and Italy, Sternhell has documented the alliance formed between antiparliamentary nationalists, anarchists, and Sorelian syndicalists, noting that the doctrine of national socialism was first developed when Sorel and his followers forged links with members of the monarchist Action Française (including the future fascist Valois) before 1914. Similar alliances were developed in Italy when Sorel's followers—including the formally Socialist Mussolini—joined the ultranationalist Enrico Corradini (who founded the Associazione Nazionalista Italiana in 1910), anarchist-oriented Futurists Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, and F. T. Marinetti, and Florentine critics Giovanni Papini and Ardengo Soffici in advocating an Italian version of national socialism. Claiming that Italy was a "proletarian nation" locked in conflict with richer "plutocratic" countries, they exalted war—whether in the guise of imperialist conquest in Libya (1911), irredentist warfare with Austria, or military intervention in World War I—as a catalyst for Italy's spiritual unification.[26] Once Marinetti formed the Futurist Party in 1918–19 he entered into an alliance with the Association of the Arditi (World War I assault units) and Mussolini's Battle Fasces (Fasci di Combattimento) to embark on a campaign for national revolution outside the parliamentary framework. Although the Futurists' anarchist leanings made for stormy relations with Mussolini following the creation of the National Fascist Party (Partito Nazionale Fascista) in 1921, the fascists' public admiration for Sorel's mythic politics continued to draw dissident leftists to their ranks throughout the 1920s.[27]

Regeneration

According to Griffin, the mythic core of fascism was that of national palingenesis. "Etymologically," states Griffin, "the term 'palingenesis,' deriving from palin (again, anew) and genesis (creation, birth), refers to the sense of a new start or of a regeneration after a phase of crisis or decline which can be associated just as much with mystical (for example the Second Coming) as secular realities (for example the New Germany)."[28] Notable here is the Janus-faced nature of fascism's regenerative nationalism: to reinvigorate the body politic, fascists looked beyond a decadent present to past eras, but they did not advocate a nostalgic return to, say, the era of Imperial Rome. Instead, they sought to incorporate qualities associated with past eras into the creation of a radically new society, fully integrated with twentieth-century industrialism and technology. In Sorelian fashion, selective moments from a nation's historical past were utilized for their mythic appeal as a catalyst for the radical transformation of present society. Griffin has underscored this point in a critique of the exhibition catalogue *The Romantic Spirit in German Art, 1790–1990,* which characterized Nazi art and art policy as profoundly antimodern while claiming that works such as Oskar Martin-Amorbach's *The Sower,* 1937 (Fig. 1), were indicative, in both style and content, of the reactionary and restorationist outlook of a regime harking back to an agrarian, medieval past.[29] Griffin notes that the role of the past in Nazi ideology was rather to supply values that would facilitate the nation's rebirth, pointing out that "the Nazis no more wanted to return Germany to the period of the Völkswanderungen (tribal migrations) or the Holy Roman Empire than the [Italian] fascists wanted to return literally to the age of the Romans or the Renaissance."[30] Instead, fascists selectively plundered their historical past for moments reflective of the values they wished to inculcate for their radical transformation of national consciousness and public institutions. Thus, Martin-Amorbach's pictorial ode to Germany's preindustrial rural peasantry, executed in a style reminiscent of northern Renaissance "primitives," referred metaphorically to the organic, corporative, and racial order the Nazis would impose on all aspects of the German economy, including the agrar-

1 Oskar Martin-Amorbach, *The Sower,* 1937. Peissenberg, Ernst Reinhold/ Artothek

ian, the governmental, and the industrial. The decidedly modern function of this mythic *Sower* is affirmed by its original placement in the Beyreuth House of German Education, where it was meant to encourage teachers to "sow" National Socialist values among the German youth.[31] Nazi imagery used the countryside as "the focus for the palingenetic myth of renewal and sustenance, not for a retreat from the twentieth century." Similarly, the Nazi celebration of Athenian society and Greek sculpture as an aesthetic ideal was wed to the modern pseudoscience of eugenics; the sculpture of Classical Greece functioned as a mythic prototype for the fascist "new man" who was destined to inhabit an industrialized Third Reich, devoid of "degenerate" races.[32]

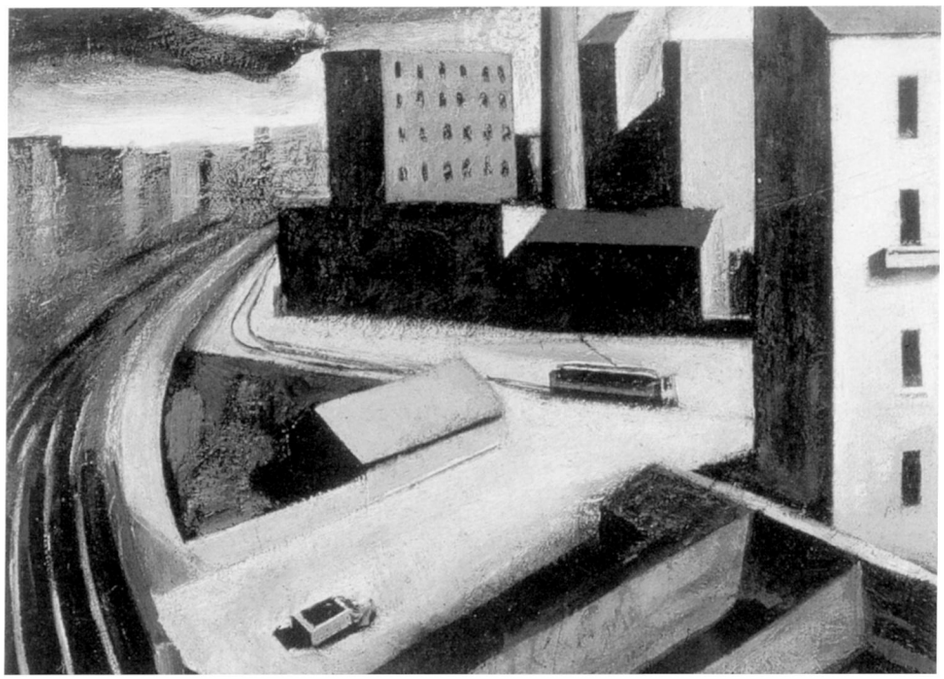
Art historians have lent further credence to Griffin's model in the recent exhibition catalogue *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators* (1995).[33] Iain Boyd Whyte's essay "National Socialism and Modernism" vividly documents the continued usage of modernist-inspired building techniques in the Nazi construction of power plants, airfields, youth facilities, and sports centers. Moreover, architects involved in such projects had modernist pedigrees; to cite two examples, Hans Dustmann, a former head of Walter Gropius's design office, be-

came *Reicharchitekt* of the Hitler Youth, while Gropius associate Herbert Rimpl headed a team that designed an ultramodern Heinkel aircraft factory north of Berlin.[34] Whyte also notes the combination of "the ultra-modern with the ultra-historicist" in Albert Speer's Hitler-approved plans for the rebuilding of Berlin, which envisioned a north-south axis composed of classicizing monumental structures anchored at its extremities by railway stations, an adjacent airport, and an outer autobahn ring road circumnavigating the city to facilitate traffic. Whyte rightly compares this emphasis on modern transport to modernist blueprints for urban design, such as Le Corbusier's "Contemporary City for Three Million People" (1922).[35] Speer's granite buildings, when compared with the exposed concrete, steel, and glass structures of Rimpl, appear poles apart in "purely constructional terms"; yet "in terms of emotional response," monumental architecture and "the power of industry and technology are linked by the aesthetics of the sublime." "Both," Whyte remarks, "offer images that overwhelm our perceptual and imaginative powers," thus serving as mythic symbols for the political and industrial might of the Third Reich.[36] The Nazis were not alone in mythologizing modern technology as a metaphor for national regeneration. Georges Valois, the leader of the French Faisceau movement (1925–28), and Philippe Lamour, founder of the Revolutionary Fascist Party (1928), both wished to incorporate Le Corbusier's architectural plans into their vision of a fascist corporative order of "industrial producers," modeled after Sorel's mythic constructs.[37]

This simultaneous relation with both past and future also pertained to Italian fascism. Historian Emilio Gentile has concluded that in Italian fascist discourse and in Mussolini's personal identification with Emperor Augustus, the "cult of Romanness was reconciled, without notable contradiction, with other elements of fascism, such as its activism, its cult of youth and sport, the heroic ideal of adventure, and above all the will to experience the new continuity in action projected towards the future, without reactionary nostalgia for an ideal past perfection to be restored."[38] One finds a striking example of this attitude in Mussolini's interwar renovations of Rome, which stripped venerable edifices such as the Colosseum and the Pantheon of all later architectural excrescences and removed surrounding buildings, so that these ancient structures could exist as monumental exemplars of the new fascist Italy.[39] Mussolini drove home the regenerative theme in a 1925 speech, claiming that comparisons between fascist Italy and "the first Augustan Empire" would only occur if the "great Oak" of Roman building were liberated "from everything which still smothers it." "Everything which has grown up in the centuries of decadence must be swept away," Mussolini concluded.[40] This palingenetic link between fascist Italy and Imperial Rome had its most dramatic manifestation in the stark juxtaposition of the antique and the modern created in 1938 when the fascists enclosed the newly restored Ara Pacis in a Bauhaus-inspired structure designed by Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo.[41]

The ramifications of such thinking for the study of modern art are cogently examined in Emily Braun's recent book on the onetime Futurist and fascist ideologue Mario Sironi (1885–1961).[42] Braun's monograph is something of a milestone in the study of fascist art and politics, not only because Sironi played a seminal role in the development of fascist aesthetics but also due to the theoretical sophistication Braun brings to her analysis of fascism's cultural politics. She frames Sironi's production in terms of Emilio Gentile's and Roger Griffin's concept of fascism, noting that the palingenetic nature of the myth allowed fascists to disavow "the modernity of enlightenment reason for another modernity of activism, instinct and irrationalism."[43] Since fascist politics were premised on mythmaking, artists had an important role to play in the development of myths capable of sustaining a revolutionary spirit once the fascists gained power. The myth Sironi fabricated for the masses focused on the primacy of the Italian people. As Braun states, "it was the projection of a future destiny grounded in a remote past that defined the temporal dynamic and political modernism of fascism: the power of its myth lay precisely in an imaginary national essence of origins to be recovered and created anew."[44] Since Sironi associated naturalist verisimilitude and didactic imagery with an appeal to reason and conscious reflection, he rejected such stylistic features, relying instead on pictorial fragmentation and disjunction, expressive brushstroke, and figural deformation to operate subliminally to inspire an emotional rather than a purely cognitive reaction to his art.[45] Such imagery was intended to evoke a spiritual transformation in viewers, leading them to draw comparisons between their own actions and the epic events portrayed in Sironi's canvases and murals. The work of art thus functioned as the catalyst for the internalization of fascism's regenerative values, and thanks to Braun's comprehensive study we can now fully appreciate Sironi's seminal role as Italian fascism's foremost mythmaker.

In her analysis of Sironi's aesthetic, Braun first turns her attention to his urban landscapes of 1920–21 to consider how his conflation of fascist ideals with the pictorial language of Giorgio de Chirico's "metaphysical" paintings lent mythic import to his unsettling images (Fig. 2).[46] Using pictorial techniques developed by de Chirico, Sironi shrouded the urban scene in silence and immobility, thus denuding it of the vibrancy and energy so evident in Futurist images of the city. The stagelike appearance and monumentality of the humble buildings and dormant factories purposely echoed the compositional clarity of quattrocento painting in order to lend epic significance to the urban environment. The only objects animating these stilled images are the trams and trucks, which crisscross streets devoid of any other activity, whether industrial or pedestrian. Most important, the trucks lent historical specificity to Sironi's subject matter for, as Braun demonstrates, they are the Fiat 18 BL trucks employed by fascist squads, and the urban landcapes they patrol are the proletarian suburbs of Milan, where Sironi had taken up residence following World War I. Like the Futurists, Sironi lauded the revolutionary potential of those proletarians who had rejected both communism and parliamentary socialism in favor of the punitive politics of the fascist squads, and his urban landscapes celebrated their activity during a period of social insurrection. Over the course of 1920, labor unrest in Milan had culminated in a series of strikes and factory occupations; the fascist squads had initially supported the strikes as harbingers of a Sorelian revolution, but they turned against the workers when the labor unions adopted Soviet-



2 Mario Sironi, *Urban Landscape,* oil on canvas, 1920–21. Private collection

style tactics. Sironi considered those factions of the working class who endorsed the revolutionary, antibourgeois import of Mussolini's movement and attacked Bolshevism to be engaged in a heroic conflict. In this light the empty streets, uncanny perspectives, and stilled factories evoke the moment of general strike, while the fascist trucks are a portent of the impending violence needed to usher in a national revolution. As Braun states, "Sironi's urban landscapes betray that contradictory mix of proletarian sympathies and strident nationalism held uneasily together by their revolt against the values of parliamentary democracy."[47] Here, stylistic features of quattrocento painting are combined with a contemporary event—the fascist insurrection in Milan—to render epic the significance of this early moment in the history of fascism.

Literary historian Jeffrey Schnapp has underscored the mythic importance of the Fiat truck in a study of one of the first mass spectacles staged in Italy under Mussolini.[48] Titled the *18 BL,* this theatrical extravaganza took place on the bank of the Arno River in Florence in 1934. Twenty thousand spectators witnessed a series of "acts" involving two thousand amateur actors, an air squadron, ground troops, fifty 18 BL trucks, gun batteries, and ten radio stations. Composed of three parts, the theatrical presentation opened with an evocation of the cataclysm of World War I, then turned to the heroic struggle of the "fascist revolution" before culminating in the fascists' productivist rebuilding of the nation. As Hal Foster notes in his introduction to Schnapp's book, the performance's tripartite format enacted a narrative of "trial and triumph, death and resurrection." The truck's role as principal protagonist in both the revolutionary violence and its productivist aftermath confirmed its mythic significance in this overtly palingenetic narrative.[49] Sironi's pioneering images of over a decade earlier thus set the stage for a mass reenactment of the heroic struggles associated with the Milanese insurrection. Art, in short, was an agent for social transformation, a form of mythic activism marshaled by fascists to retool consciousness and society. Through its recourse to myth, fascism could address both past and future in its ideology. Implicit in the myth is the judgment of a decadent present in need of regenerative cultural renewal.

Avant-Gardism

The concept of palingenesis is particularly germane to the study of the fascist debt to avant-garde aesthetics, as Matthew Affron and I have shown in our review of critical reassessments of Marxist Walter Benjamin's analysis of fascism's cultural politics in his influential essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936).[50] In this text Benjamin claims the fascists championed the retrograde aesthetics of "art for art's sake" and contrasts that aestheticist model with the emancipatory role signaled by new aesthetic forms such as cinema and montage. In Benjamin's theory, the montage aesthetic forms alone were adapted to the collective consciousness of the emerging proletariat; as a result montage and cinema were divorced from the auratic properties of older art forms, whose organic completeness, Benjamin argued, was designed for passive contemplation. By cloaking politics in auratic rituals and aestheticized rhetoric, fascism sought to impose passivity on the working class and simultaneously uphold the bourgeois order threatened by the class-based politics of this newly created urban proletariat.[51] Aesthetic notions of an unchanging, organic unity, whose self-referential value transcends the historical circumstances from which it emerged, were transferred to the political realm to justify fascism. Thus, in Benjamin's view, fascism seeks to overcome the sociopolitical dissension caused by capitalism by imposing an aestheticized ideology on the fragmented and pluralistic flux of contemporary society.

Part and parcel of this transferral is a denial of historical change and the replacement of the ever-changing, dynamic condition of human history with a closed, unified, and static model of organic completion, wherein existing socioeco-

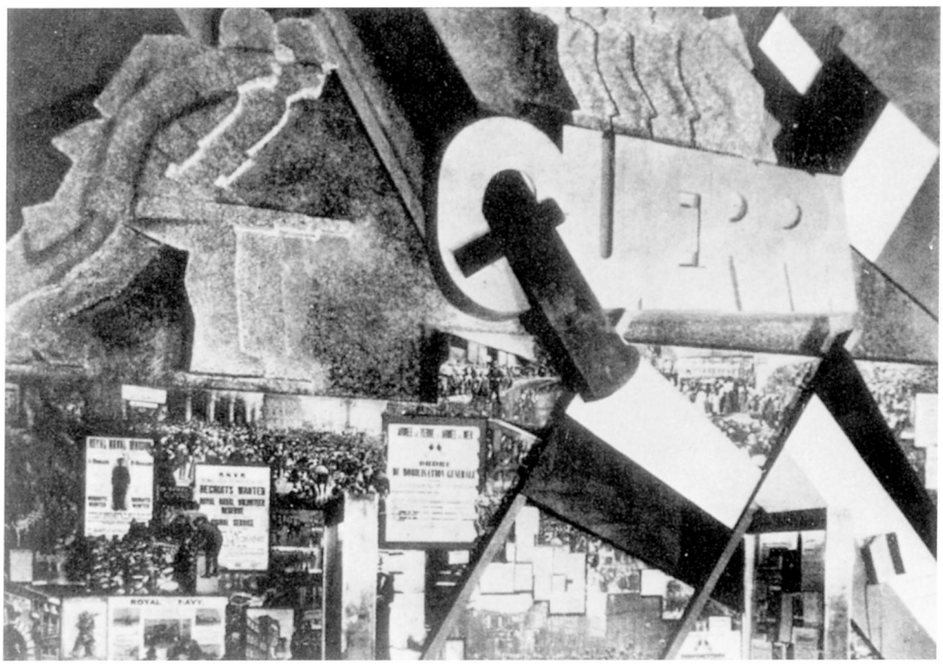
nomic hierarchies would become ossified and forever fixed. To quote Russell Berman, Benjamin regards "the closed order of the organic work of art" as "a deception that imposes an enervated passivity on the bourgeois recipient"; in contrast, Benjamin valorizes "fragmentary, open genres: the German Trauerspiel of the baroque as well as the avant-gardist valorisation of montage," whose negation of aesthetic closure precludes any passive response on the part of what is invariably a collective audience.[52] "In place of the auratic art work, with its isolated and pacified recipient lost in contemplation," asserts Berman, "Benjamin proposes a postauratic model that would convene a collective recipient (the 'masses') endowed with an active and critical character."[53] As the carrier of new cultural forms and new modes of aesthetic reception, the proletariat is the class best adapted to the new collectivist economy; the bourgeoisie and its fascist apologists, on the other hand, marshal the auratic aesthetic of an earlier era to defend the outmoded politics of private ownership. To Benjamin's mind, this model is confirmed by Italian fascism's relation to Futurism; having quoted extensively from a Futurist text extolling the beauty of the war in Ethiopia, Benjamin correlates the aestheticism of *l'art pour l'art* with Marinetti's Futurist defense of fascist violence.[54] Thus, the battle between fascism and communism has an aesthetic correlate in the closed order of organic form and the fragmentary dynamism of collage, and only the latter is attuned to the socioeconomics of the twentieth century. Benjamin valorizes those art movements—Dada and Surrealism—that consciously attack bourgeois notions of artistic autonomy, while aligning Futurism with the aestheticized discourse of fascism.

Benjamin's analysis inspired contemporary scholars to explore the implications of his model for an analysis of literary texts written by fascism's apologists.[55] It also provoked scholars to counter that the aestheticization of politics can serve a variety of political positions[56] and to question Benjamin's restriction of fascist aestheticization to nostalgic models of organic unity and completion. In this regard fascism's relation to Futurism has undergone extensive revision, for a number of historians have argued that Futurist aesthetics utilized the very fragmentary, dynamic, and collage-based aesthetic that Benjamin would associate with antifascism and proletarian emancipation.[57] Literary historian Andrew Hewitt claims that Benjamin's relation of fascism's politics to "falsified principles of harmony, organic totality, and unity," serving to mask a society typified by class conflict and social fragmentation, cannot explain the fascist acceptance of Futurism, because that movement trumpeted the very conflict fascism supposedly sought to cover up.[58] Turning Benjamin's construct on its head, Hewitt argues that Futurist proponents of fascism thought contemporary society to be in a condition of ossification, organic closure, and stasis, and thus in need of rejuvenation through violence. By calling for "the ontologization of struggle as both an aesthetic and a political principle,"[59] the Futurist wished to reinvigorate a culture subsumed in the very organicist metaphors Benjamin would identify with the fascist project. Instead of following Benjamin in stressing the occultation and aesthetic resolution of class struggle under fascism, Hewitt refers us to fascism's "generation of depotentialized areas of struggle within the aesthetic," that is, the transference of the dynamism of class conflict to a realm of avant-gardism.[60] I have found that to be the case in my own analysis of the cultural politics of the French Sorelian Philippe Lamour, who praised montage techniques in film and photography as an aesthetic medium attuned to the dynamism of the fascist industrial producer.[61]

Hewitt's critique of those who, like Benjamin, would relate fascist aesthetics and Futurism to "the classical aesthetic of harmonization" and "the false reconciliation of social conflict"[62] finds an echo in Emily Braun's assessment of the use of photomontage, typography, and what the fascists termed "photomosaic" in the didactic installations for the 1932 *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista (Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution)* in Rome (Fig. 3).[63] Designed by such artists as Sironi, Esodo Pratelli, Giuseppi Terragni, and Arnaldo Carpanetti, the cacophonous montage elements had a clear precedent in the Soviet installations of El Lissitzky and those of the German Dadaists, yet as part of an exhibition recapitulating the fascists' historical rise to power, montage served ends antithetical to those eulogized by Benjamin. Braun concludes that the medium of montage "simultaneously overstimulated and distracted the senses" so that both images and didactic texts could operate at the level of "subliminal suggestion."[64] Braun argues that montage in fascist hands, rather than serving the emancipatory ends envisioned by Benjamin, served to stifle the critical capacities of the spectator, and that the use of such techniques in the *Mostra* ultimately "did not alter the one-way direction of communication." By incorporating montage into the politics of the spectacle, this exhibition underscored "the potentially totalitarian powers of the media."[65] As we shall see, it also subsumed auratic and avant-garde aesthetic forms within the parameters of a mythological narrative that charted fascism's redemptive impact on Italian society.

Secular Religion

Recourse to regenerative myths had its roots in the attempt, in both Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, to create a form of mass politics based on ritual and public pageantry meant to foster a spiritual unity supposedly unattainable under parliamentary systems of governance. Emilio Gentile, following George Mosse, has described this new politics as a form of "secular religion," wherein fascist regimes "adapted religious rituals to political ends, elaborating their own system of beliefs, myths, rites, and symbols" with the aim "not only to govern human beings but to regenerate them in order to create a new humanity."[66] Gentile, in his publications on fascist Italy, and George Mosse, in his pioneering work on Nazi Germany, have both traced the origins of fascist symbology to the perceived crisis of national values following the French Revolution and Italian Risorgimento.[67] As Mosse notes, what we call "the fascist style was in reality the climax of a 'new politics' based on the emerging eighteenth-century idea of popular sovereignty."[68] Key to this transition was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of the "general will," which held that citizenship is born out of moments of mass assemblage wherein individuals act in consort. During the French Revolution the general will "became a secular religion, the people worshiping themselves, and the new politics sought to guide and formalize this worship" through public forms of self-veneration. Not surprisingly, allegiance to the Revolution



3 Esodo Pratelli with Luigi Freddi, Room A, "From the beginning of World War I (July–August 1914) to the founding of Il Popolo d'Italia and the creation of the Fasci d'Azione Rivoluzionaria (December 1914)," *Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution* (from Dino Alfieri and Luigi Freddi, eds., *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista, guida storia* [Rome: Partito Nazionale fascista, 1933])

became a matter of faith; the "cult of reason" was imposed to replace Catholic worship, and, as Mosse contends, "this cult of reason abandoned rationalism; it tended to substitute the Goddess of Reason for the Virgin Mary and infuse its cults with hymns, prayers, and response modeled on Christian liturgy."[69] In effect, the Revolution had two offspring: democratic institutions premised on Enlightenment precepts and the irrationalism of mass politics. "The new politics," Mosse concludes, "was, from the beginning, part of the anti-parliamentary movement in Europe, advocating a secular religion as the political cement of the nation."[70]

This alternative response to the Revolution proved inspirational to German nationalists throughout the period before the Nazis' rise to power in 1933. Mosse has documented the development of mass rituals and the creation of national monuments designed to foster German unity by commemorating the "wars of liberation" against Napoléon (1813–14) and other significant events expressive of German military might.[71] Through comparative analyses Mosse reveals the profound debt owed by architects like Albert Speer, and Hitler himself, to past architects who had envisioned the construction of national shrines as sacred spaces and sites of "public worship"—whether in the form of monuments to Frederick the Great or memorials to military victory, such as the Tannenberg Memorial (completed in 1927). The latter shrine—dedicated to General Paul von Hindenburg's defeat of Russia in World War I—had a special appeal for the Nazis, since it could accommodate one hundred thousand people in public festivals. Mosse rightly compares the function of the Tannenberg Memorial to the use of space at the Nazis' Nuremberg Party rallies, where the architecture also served as a theatrical framework for the participants.[72] Party rallies in turn took on all the trappings of religious ceremonies. "The Introitus, the hymn sung or spoken at the beginning of the church service, became the words of the Führer; the 'Credo' a confession of faith pledging loyalty to Nazi ideology; while the sacrifice of the Mass was transformed into a memorial for the martyrs of the movement."[73]

Secular religion was also a motivating concept during the Italian Risorgimento, and it served as the basis for subsequent critiques of Italy's unification after 1861. Gentile, in his groundbreaking study *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy,* charted the seminal role of Giuseppi Mazzini in propagating the myth of national regeneration through the creation of a spiritual unity, a discourse that would be appropriated by subsequent nationalists, including avant-gardists and the major players in the fascist movement.[74] Although Italy lacked the national monuments that served as nodal points for secular religion in Germany, nationalists like Mazzini were quick to point to Italy's Catholic heritage as the basis on which to build a secular religion. As Gentile notes, "Mazzini envisioned an Italy regenerated and united through a political revolution based on faith in freedom and on the religion of the fatherland"; the fascists in turn appropriated his notion of secular religion while jettisoning Mazzini's republican ideals.[75] Mazzini thought Italy's unity could be fostered only through "a collective palingenetic experience," by undergoing a process of "struggle, sacrifice, and martyrdom" comparable to a religious transformation.[76] After 1861, Mazzini argued that while Italy was unified politically, the national revolution remained incomplete because no form of secular religion had developed as a result of the Risorgimento. In the period leading up to World War I nationalists repeatedly claimed allegiance to Mazzini while decrying the decadence of the Italian political system and calling for the spiritual rejuvenation of the body politic.

Fascists thought World War I had such mythic significance, for in their view citizens who had fought in the trenches had undergone a moral transformation as a result of their heroic defense of the nation. Mussolini and his followers then drew a dramatic contrast between these valiant soldiers and the corrupt politicians who had retained power throughout the

4 Giuseppe Terragni, Casa del Fascio, Como, May 5, 1936 (from *Quadrante,* nos. 35–36 [Oct. 1936])

conflict.[77] In Italy and France fascists like Mussolini and Georges Valois followed Sorel in condemning the Enlightenment precepts underpinning the parliamentary system as antithetical to the spiritual and "collective" values they wished to instill.[78] Fascists throughout Europe therefore claimed to embody the heroic militancy of the wartime combatant, attracted war veterans to their ranks, and nurtured this revolution of the spirit in the postwar period by bestowing mythic status on both fallen soldiers who had made the "supreme sacrifice" and those fascists who had been "martyrs" during the fascist struggle to gain power.

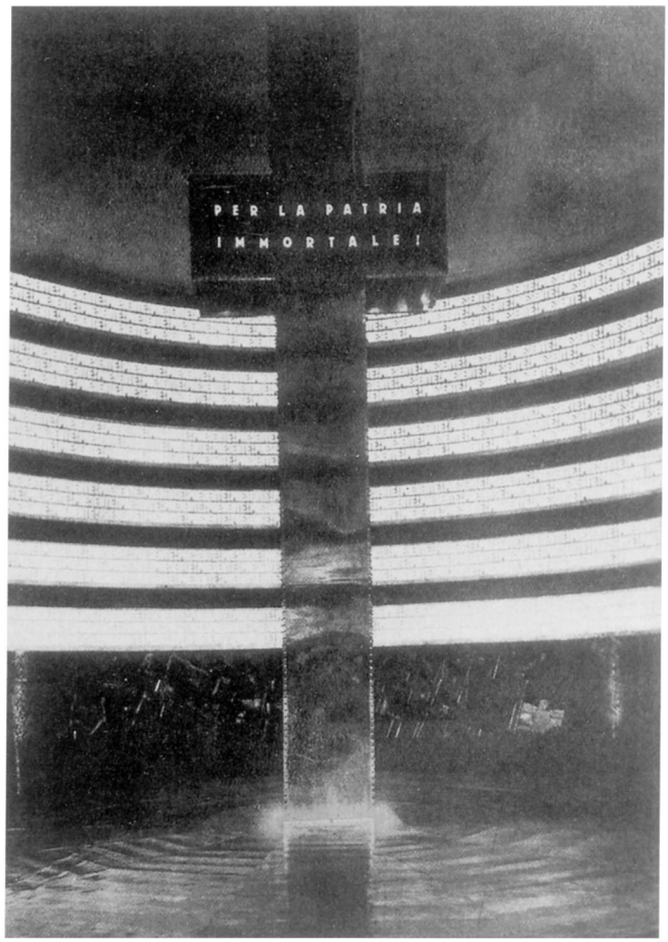
Scholars concur with Gentile when he concludes that the "new politics" advocated by fascists was indebted to wartime propaganda, because the cult of the fallen soldier was an essential ingredient in fascism's own secular religion.[79] In 1919, Mussolini drew together nationalists, Futurists, and war veterans to form the Fasci di Combattimento; in 1921, the fascists' main organ, *Il Fascio,* underscored the palingenetic dimension of the war experience by proclaiming, "The Holy Communion of war has molded us all with the same mettle of generous sacrifice."[80] After the fascists rose to power in 1922, the punitive battles of fascist squads against urban workers and socialists during the so-called Red Biennium (1919–20) and related struggles in the countryside took on a mythic dimension as another manifestation of the zealous heroism forged during the war effort. During their incursions into Socialist-dominated areas, fascist squads engaged in acts of symbolic iconoclasm, destroying red flags and other socialist and communist symbols and imposing public respect for the national flag and acquiescence to fascist insignia.[81] In 1926 the future deputy secretary of the National Fascist Party (PNF), Salvatore Gatto, even compared "the heroes of the fascist revolution" to "Christian Martyrs," whose wholly spiritual motivations were divorced from "earthly" concerns.[82] Such findings affirm Griffin's contention that adherence to fascism was widely regarded as a form of spiritual redemption. The fascist rank and file conceived of themselves not as servile followers of a totalitarian leader but as converts to a cause who had undergone a spiritual and palingenetic transformation.

Formalized admission to the Fascist Party—the *leva fascista* instituted in 1927—bore all the trappings of a Catholic religious rite; as Gentile documents, the initiation ceremony imitated an act of confirmation, wherein members of fascist youth organizations became "consecrated fascists" by officially joining the party. This confirmation ritual was carried out in public squares throughout Italy, with Mussolini himself presiding over the ceremony in Rome.[83] Even the local public headquarters of the Fascist Party, the Casa del Fascio, were referred to as "churches of our faith" or "altars of the Fatherland's religion," and during the 1930s the party specified that each *casa* should have a "lictorial tower" equipped with bells that would ring during every party ceremony.[84] The "call to worship" signaled by the fascist clarion was in direct imitation of the function of churches in local communities. Moreover, these buildings were also places of veneration for the cult of fascist martyrs, once again underscoring the primacy given to heroic violence as a galvanizing myth in the fascist lexicon. In analyses of the liturgical elements of Giuseppi Terragni's Casa del Fascio at Como (1933–36), built in the Rationalist style, both Gentile and architectural historian Richard Etlin have noted Terragni's "quasi-mystical" usage of glass: glass not only allowed Terragni to integrate the building with the surrounding environment, it also served as a metaphoric reference to Mussolini's declaration that fascism be "a house of glass" open to all (Fig. 4).[85] Terragni's *casa di vetro,* states Gentile, gave the public "an immediate sense of the full integration of the Party into the lives of the people and of the direct communication between the masses and their leaders."[86] Etlin in turn has noted the primacy Terragni accorded to the *casa*'s Sacrario (sacrarium), dedicated to the "Fallen for the Revolution":

> To Terragni, the Sacrario was designed to convey "the spiritual elements that constitute the basis of the entire Fascist Mysticism." The ceiling of the entrance foyer was covered with black marble to "prepare the visitor for a religious attention to the Sacrario," which was formed as an "open cella" created by three monolithic walls of red granite. Terragni explained that the slabs of red granite

defining the space of the Sacrario . . . would suggest "primitive religious or royal constructions of ancient Mycenae or Egypt."[87]

The mythic function of fascist martyrdom also formed the centerpiece of the *Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution,* which opened in Rome on October 28, 1932 (the tenth anniversary of the fascist rise to power). Numerous scholars have analyzed the dual function of the exhibition as a presentation of the history of fascism and as a votive shrine for national worship.[88] Designed by modernist architects and painters, including Giuseppi Terragni and former Futurist Mario Sironi, the exhibit was housed in a series of fifteen rooms in the converted Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome. Emily Braun, in her study of Sironi, notes that the exhibition amounted to a rite of passage wherein the public was immersed, through "ritual reenactment and engulfing spectacle," in the history of Mussolini's movement before confronting installations "devoted to the cult and apotheosis of a triumphant Fascism."[89] The rectangular shape of the early rooms (recounting fascism's birth out of the cataclysm of World War I) was masked behind an unpredictable progression of asymmetrical spaces that made use of collage elements, irregular proportions, and strong diagonals to evoke a sense of dynamism as well as sensations of dislocation, rupture, and shock (Fig. 3). Braun has astutely labeled this stylistic feature a mode of "modernist defamiliarization" indebted to the collage techniques of the Soviet artist El Lissitzky.[90] Having passed through the exhibition's historical section visitors were then confronted with a central series of rooms dedicated to the fascists' "glorious" activities between 1919 and 1922 (designed by Sironi) and to Mussolini's role as Il Duce before entering a cylindrical crypt: the "Sacrarium to the Martyrs" of the "Fascist Revolution," created by Rationalist architects Adalberto Libera and Antonio Valente (Fig. 5). Bathed in a red light and dominated by a huge cross, centrally placed, to commemorate the fallen, the space echoed with the recorded voices of disembodied fascists uttering the word "Presente!" a declarative phrase emblazoned on the surrounding walls. The metallic cross bore the inscription "For the Fatherland," and the surrounding walls were lined with the pennants of the action squads that had engaged in the heroic struggle. Such symbolism had a real-life counterpart in early funerals for members of the fascist squads; during their burial rites fascists would reaffirm their comrades' immortality by responding "Presente!" when the names of the dead were read aloud. The usage of the Latin term *sacrarium* to describe this sanctified space served to connect fascism's martyrs with what Romke Visser calls the fascist doctrine of "the cult of the Romanità,"[91] thereby conflating ritual symbols from Roman antiquity and Christendom.[92] As literary historian Jeffrey Schnapp concludes, the transition from the spatial dynamism of the earlier rooms to the auratic stasis of the Sacrarium effectively "transformed the narrative of fascism's triumph [into] an allegory in which the emotions of awe and terror associated with the revolutionary violence of fascism-as-movement are transmuted into feelings of order and solemn elation associated with fascism-as-regime."[93] Once again the visual syntax of modern art and that of past eras were combined within the ideological framework of mythic activism.



5 Adalberto Libera and Antonio Valente, Room U, "Sacrarium to the Martyrs," *Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution* (from Alfieri and Freddi, *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista*)

Primitivism

The fascists' new politics had its roots not only in state-sanctioned cults and religious institutions but also in the cultural politics of avant-garde primitivism. Historian Walter Adamson was among the first to probe this issue in his examination of notions of a secular religion propagated by such major Italian modernists as the writers Giuseppi Prezzolini and Giovanni Papini and the artist-critic Ardengo Soffici.[94] Writing in the journals *Leonardo* (1903–7), *La Voce* (1908–16), and the Futurist-oriented *Lacerba* (1913–15), they combined antirepublican politics and admiration for Georges Sorel with calls for spiritual renewal in a manner that appealed to Mussolini, who contributed to *La Voce* and later praised the journal's effort to create "spiritual unity" among Italians. "Like new-politics movements," writes Adamson, "cultural avant-gardes in the European pre-war period grew out of a perceived need for a spiritual renewal in modern culture that would involve the masses in society's political rituals." In the case of the La Voce group their quest for national regeneration led "in volkish directions as well as more cosmopolitan or 'high cultural' ones."[95] Ardengo Soffici exemplified such thinking, and, as Adamson demonstrates, Soffici's prewar cultural politics anticipated views he held following his conversion to fascism in the early 1920s.

Soffici's synthesis of nationalism, modernism, and "volkish" regionalism before 1914 led him to celebrate the idea of *toscanità,* or "Tuscanness," as a sign of his own spiritual regeneration.[96] According to Soffici, the religiosity of Tuscan peasants, combined with a deep love of the land, constituted a "folk essence" antithetical to the perceived materialism and corrupt values held by Italy's leading parliamentarians such as Giovanni Giolitti. Rooted in the land and attuned to nature's seasonal cycles, modern-day peasants symbolized all that was enduring in Italian culture. In the realm of visual representation, Soffici signaled this continuity between past and present in terms of pictorial form and content. He rejected single–vanishing point perspective as overly scientific, claiming that the perspectival and proportional distortions in his Tuscan landscapes and genre scenes expressed an emotive response to the humble subjects and an avant-gardist endorsement of philosopher Henri Bergson's concept of intuition.[97] Melding his politicized regionalism with modernist aesthetics, Soffici compared his decision to leave Paris for Tuscany in 1907 to Paul Cézanne's regionalist retreat from Paris to his native Aix-en-Provence; appropriately, Soffici utilized Cézanne's pictorial techniques in his depictions of the local peasantry, and Fiesole's Monte Ceceri became Soffici's Mont Ste-Victoire.[98] Soffici's avant-garde style also had an Italian genealogy: he drew comparisons between Cézanne's spatial distortions and those of the trecento "primitive" Giotto, as both artists, wrote Soffici, rejected "scientific" perspective for plastic forms based on "spiritual" and emotive values. Indebted to both Giotto and Cézanne, Soffici situated his regionalist aesthetic in terms of palingenesis; circumnavigating the "decadence" of state-sanctioned academic art, Soffici simultaneously adopted Italian primitivism and French modernism in the name of those antimaterialist and spiritual values he associated with national regeneration. Following his conversion to fascism, Soffici applied this paradigm to the movement's cultural politics. In a November 1922 article titled "Religiosity and Art" published in Mussolini's *Il Popolo d'Italia,* Soffici praised fascist rites and ceremonies for their ability to nurture spiritual unity among the masses, and in the fascist journal *Gerarchia* he proclaimed fascism to be "neither reactionary nor revolutionary, since it unifies the experience of the past and the promise of the future."[99]

This politicized regionalism reached full fruition in the interwar period when Soffici joined forces with such artists as Carlo Carrà and Giorgio Morandi in supporting a fascist cultural movement known as Strapaese (supercountry), whose artistic and political trajectory has been analyzed by Adamson and Braun. Centered in the regions of Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, the movement's proponents self-consciously allied themselves with the "revolutionary" phase of fascism (1919–22), when the fascist squads brought their punitive campaign to rural Italy, thus facilitating Mussolini's rise to power in 1922.[100] On the other hand, Strapaese's adherents rejected the fascist myth of Romanità, intended to further Mussolini's centralization of power in Rome, and the concomitant undermining of regional identity, both cultural and political. Likewise, they condemned the Futurist cult of the machine, Rationalist architecture, and the internationalist aesthetics of the novecento, considering these Stracittà (supercity) movements seeking to impose foreign culture, decadent cosmopolitanism, and bourgeois values on the indigenous, "authentic" culture of rural Italy. Artists affiliated with the Strapaese identified the essence of fascism with the unsophisticated, rustic life of the peasantry; moreover, like Soffici, they looked to Cézanne's regionalist aesthetic as a model for their own interwar "return to the soil." Like other palingenetic movements, Strapaese did not condemn modernism and modernity outright but, as Braun argues, wished to reconcile aspects of modern technology and avant-gardism with adherence to tradition.[101] In this manner Strapaese's allies hoped to maintain regional difference as a bulwark against the homogenizing effects of state-sanctioned centralization and mass culture on the tenacious independence of the rural populace.

This form of fascist populism was propagated in two major journals—*Il Selvaggio* (1924–43), or *The Wild One,* founded by the critic, caricaturist, and ex-squad member Mino Maccari, and the Bolognese journal *L'Italiano* (1926–42), *The Italian,* created by writer Leo Longanesi. Braun, in her exemplary study of Morandi's role in the movement, notes that the artist's still-life images of lowly handmade objects, painted in earthen colors or painstakingly inscribed in intaglio, were celebrated in these journals as indicative of Strapaese's fascist primitivism.[102] The humbleness of the depicted pitchers, bowls, and lamps underscored the primacy of their use value, as opposed to the ostentatious frivolity of bourgeois display, with its emphasis on exchange value. Additionally, *Il Selvaggio*'s critics associated Morandi's rose and ocher palette with the muted coloration and dusty light found in Italian hillside villages and lauded his frequent recourse to etching as a venerable technique steeped in the Italian tradition. Soffici in turn fulfilled similar ideals by utilizing fresco technique in his depictions of contemporary peasants engaged in time-honored agrarian tasks and religious rituals to highlight the continuity and cyclical nature of a rural life attuned to nature's seasons and the Catholic dogma (Fig. 6).[103] For Maccari and his colleagues such imagery and artistic methods demonstrated Morandi's and Soffici's status as fascist "primitives," whose art synthesized the enduring values of a rural folk culture with the modernism of Cézanne and the artistic heritage of the trecento. In this manner, writes Braun, "Italy would be renewed from the bottom up, so to speak, from the vital roots of the earthy peasantry, or *Italia barbara.*"[104]

The Italian fascists' primitivist synthesis of traditionalist and modernist artistic forms had a French complement in the cultural politics of Georges Valois, who sought to unite cultural arbiters from both left and right in his Faisceau movement.[105] While self-styled syndicalists in Valois's Faisceau fold exalted the architecture of Le Corbusier as an expression of Sorel's productivist ethics, the movement also numbered neo-Catholic monarchists Maurice Denis and Jean-Loup Forain (son of artist Jean-Louis Forain) among its membership. Forain, writing as art critic in the Faisceau's periodical *Nouveau Siècle* (1925–28), condemned abstract art as a foreign incursion akin to Bolshevism, while promoting the interwar rural landscapes of former Fauvist Maurice Vlaminck as an expression of "sauvage rudesse" (savage crudeness).[106] Forain claimed that Vlaminck's rural landscapes, devoid of abstraction or machine-age imagery, cap-

tured his desire to "return to the soil," to rediscover his own cultural roots as well as the simplicity of the French peasantry. Art historian Romy Golan has recently charted the prevalence of such thinking and comparable cultural politics in post–World War I France, noting that conservative critics frequently associated the landscape painting of the former Fauves with the cultural politics of ultranationalists like the monarchist Charles Maurras, who regarded rustic regionalism and the exaltation of France's "Greco-Latin" roots as "synonymous with anti-republicanism, anti-parliamentarism, and anti-urbanism."[107] Unlike Italian fascists, the Faisceau's members were never able to reconcile such primitivizing rusticity in the realm of painting with their defense of modernist architecture in the name of Sorelian productivism. Although both factions in the Faisceau identified their aesthetics with spiritual regeneration, Valois's heady claim to be "neither right nor left" eventually foundered when his version of corporatist "national socialism" proved to be too socialist for the right-wing faction of his movement.[108]

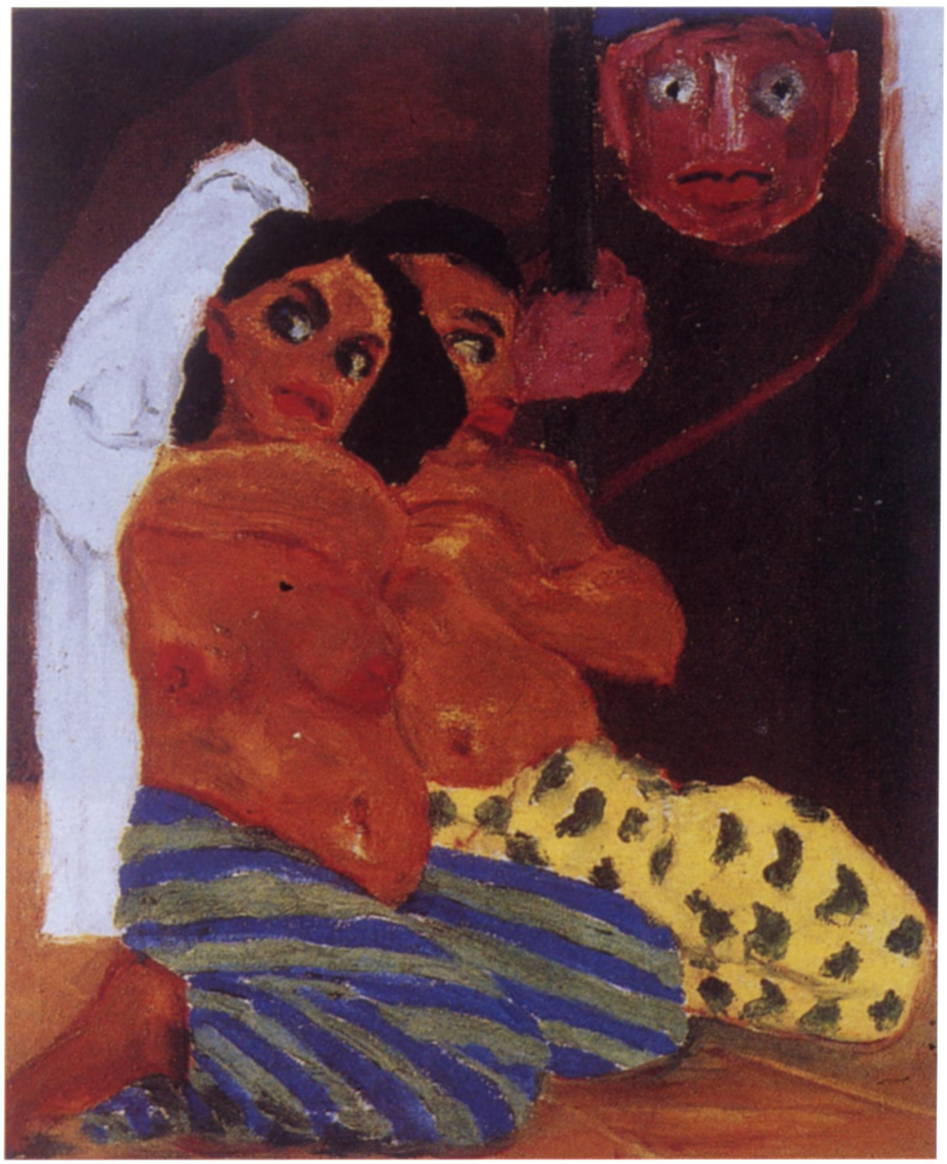
While fascist avant-gardists in France and Italy treated the European peasantry and their rural setting as mythic ciphers for primitivist aesthetics, their counterparts in Germany wrestled with a more problematic relation to primitivism, primarily due to the debate over what constituted a regenerative form of art. For Hitler and his followers, the term *primitive* held positive and negative valences depending on its racial import. Nazis argued that the essence of the German folk resided in an Aryan genealogy with roots in Classical art and culture and that of the Gothic and Renaissance eras. Historians have noted Hitler's and Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg's literal association of Greek sculpture with their own eugenic program to create a fascist "new man," untainted by the degenerative effects of racial "mixing."[109] As a result they circumscribed their notion of regenerative primitivism within the geopolitical boundaries of Europe and subsumed German society in the "organicist" politics of corporatism and racial collectivism.

Proponents of this geopolitical and racial paradigm could not countenance forms of primitivism that appropriated the art of non-European cultures as sources for European regeneration.[110] Russell Berman has touched on this very issue in his analysis of the complex relation of Emil Nolde's primitivist Expressionism to the primitivism of Nazis such as Rosenberg.[111] Noting Nolde's association of the Nazi contempt for Enlightenment precepts with his own rejection of what he regarded as "bourgeois" culture and the "enervating" aesthetics of academic painting and French Impressionism, Berman explicates the conflict that arose in Nazi circles over Nolde's turn to African and Oceanic sculpture as a regenerative source for his Expressionist art (Fig. 7). Unlike his Italian counterparts, Nolde looked to the art of non-Europeans as repositories for an authentic mysticism and vitalism that had been lost in industrial Europe. To resuscitate this aspect of experience he looked for correspondences between the stylistic features of African and Oceanic art and his own elemental expressionism, aligning both with the mystical and antirationalist revolt against liberalism he associated with National Socialism. As Berman notes, "primitivism here ceases to be inimical to European identity and instead turns out to be congruent with the German nationalist rejection of the Impressionist canon, and the Nietzschean call for a new barbarism."[112] Ultimately, however, as the Nazis' concept of primitivism was grounded in the regenerative potential of eugenics, Nolde's correlation of his own primitivist self-fashioning with non-European art was anathema to ideologues like Rosenberg. This paradigm accounts for Rosenberg's mixed assessment of Nolde's painting in the July 7, 1933, issue of *Völkische Beobachter.* While acknowledging that Nolde's Expressionist depictions of the German north were "strong and weighty," he quickly dismissed his figural work as "negroid, impious, raw, and lacking in genuine inner power."[113] Although Nolde himself would identify both genres as indicative of his primitivism, the inclusion of stylistic features derived from Oceanic art in his portraiture met with Rosenberg's condemnation as evidence of artistic miscegenation. In Nolde's estimation, cultures foreign to Europe provided the Enlightenment's adversaries with an aesthetic language conducive to their own regenerative aims; for Rosenberg and Hitler, the stark contrast between the art of ancient Greece and that of "negroid" cultures constituted an absolute division between regenerative primitivism and a degenerative, atavistic "other" to be eradicated.

6 Ardengo Soffici, *Procession,* fresco on wood panel, 1933. Florence, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Palazzo Pitti

Fascist Space and Time

Fascist aesthetics has broader implications for our understanding of modernism when cast in terms of the dichotomy between regenerative and capitalist approaches to space and time.[114] The geographer David Harvey, for instance, has related modernist and fascist spatial-temporal configurations to



7 Emil Nolde, *Nudes and Eunuch,* oil on canvas, 1912. Bloomington, Indiana University Art Museum: Jane and Roger Wolcott Memorial

resistance to the pervasive rationalization of time under capitalism and the subsequent breakdown of older cultural patterns as the capitalist system of time became universalized.[115] According to Harvey, the eighteenth-century clocks and bells that came to regulate the labor of workers and merchants separated the populace from the natural rhythms of agrarian life as well as those of the Christian calendar.[116] By the twentieth century this "chronological net" had expanded to encompass the whole globe, and the spatial and temporal bases for the creation of a worldwide capitalist order were set. Space and time were now socially constructed as quantifiable commodities to be bought and sold. As social structures they were wholly absorbed into the homogenizing powers of money and commodity exchange.[117] Both our subjective, felt experience of time and our historical identification with a particular locale were rendered irrelevant under the cultural logic of capitalism.

Since space and time had a quantifiable and normative value, each parcel of land was like any other, and each measured hour was interchangeable with the next. The realm of industrial production became subject to similar quantification with the fin-de-siècle system of factory organization known as Taylorism, widely disseminated in Europe and the United States. Named after the American efficiency expert Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915), Taylorism maximized the ratio of output to input by devising wage scales based on piecework. Proponents of scientific management not only fragmented the production process into a separate series of repetitive tasks, they also analyzed worker movements by means of chronophotography, thereby measuring the speed of human labor against the stopwatch in order to eliminate all extraneous movements in the name of labor efficiency. As Marxist Georg Lukács cogently observed, this fragmentation of production destroyed "the organic manufacture of whole objects" and, at the same time, the "subjects of labour" were likewise "rationally fragmented." In effect, modern industrialism simultaneously declared "war on the organic manufacturer of whole products" and robbed workers of their own "qualitative" craft skills by reducing their labor to simple repetitive tasks and preventing them from

producing a wholly finished object.[118] Laborers themselves became interchangeable and their labor time quantified and measured according to the homogenizing dictates of capitalist production. The infiltration of capitalist rationalization to every corner of the globe created an awareness of the uniformity and internationalism implicit in capitalist processes of standardization. Thus, in the early 1920s, modernists like Le Corbusier saw industrialization and Taylorist techniques as a means of liberating human society from the parochialism of local culture.[119]

As Harvey notes, the shared conception of standardized time and space promoted by capitalism also precipitated a countermovement on the part of those modernists who wished to maintain a sense of local difference.[120] "By enhancing links between place and social identity," states Harvey, "this facet of modernism was bound, to some degree, to entail the aestheticization of local, regional or national politics."[121] Since the standardization of time and space "implied a loss of identity with place" or "any sense of historical continuity," architects like Louis Sullivan in Chicago "searched for new and local vernacular structures that could satisfy the new functional needs but also celebrate the distinctive qualities of the place they occupied."[122] The Taylorist quantification of time in the service of mass production was countered by organic modes of manufacture, exemplified by the proliferation of arts and crafts movements throughout Europe and America.[123] By the 1930s even Le Corbusier had abandoned the internationalism of his Taylorist vision in favor of the corporatist and regionalist theories found in the syndicalist journals *Plans* (1931–32) and *Préludes* (1933–35).[124] As a result Le Corbusier developed "site-specific" modes of architecture, as exemplified in his use of rusticated Provençal stone for the construction of the Villa de Mandrot (1929–32) on the Mediterranean coast.[125]

This geographic model gained rhetorical power with the emergence of fascism, where it played an important role in the development of aesthetic doctrines based on regional and ethnic difference, and in the subsuming of technocratic forms of industrial organization under the umbrella of organicist social and temporal orders. Soffici's and *Il Selvaggio*'s primitivizing notion of *toscanità,* Mussolini's cult of *romanità,* and the Nazis' Eurocentric racial aesthetics all constitute examples of resistance to the leveling effects of capitalism. The fascists' concomitant assimilation of technocratic industrialism under the rubric of corporatism or productivist ethics in turn underscored the "qualitative" and "spiritual" aspect of this new spatial-temporal order. In the latter process an underlying tension arose as proponents of fascism sought to contain technocratic methods and industrial class relations within the framework of corporative, regional, and racial forms of social organization. In France, Italy, and Germany, fascists developed corporative theories in an attempt to establish "organic" and thus "natural" relations between workers and their industrial overseers.

In Germany the Bureau of the Beauty of Labor proclaimed corporatism a means of emulating the supposed class harmony and organic unity of medieval society, even while it promoted mass-production methods in the workplace. In Nazi propaganda, the rationalization of the labor process was thereby "organicized" as an aesthetic metaphor for the unified discipline and productivist ethics of workers within the corporative structure.[126] In France, Georges Valois hoped to alleviate class conflict by emulating Mussolini's corporatism. Valois therefore organized industry according to trade and regional identity, claiming that this corporate structure united workers and employers in their common cause as ethical producers. Thus, industrial methods—including Taylorism—were to be delimited within the organic stucture of the corporative system to protect French society against the homogenizing forces of industrial capitalism.[127] As Diane Ghirardo and Etlin have demonstrated, Italy's Rationalists achieved a similar conflation of technocracy and organic regionalism by merging Le Corbusier's theories with their own allegiance to Italian fascism's nationalist, regionalist, and corporatist agenda.[128] Etlin convincingly relates the facade of Terragni's Casa del Fascio (Fig. 4) to the open loggia of rural farmhouses in Italy (Fig. 8), noting that Rationalist critics cited such agrarian loggias as historical confirmation of Le Corbusier's theories concerning the selective evolution of an architectural type in *Vers une architecture* (1923).[129] Concurrently, Ghirardo observes the Rationalists' assimilation of Le Corbusier's authoritarian pronouncements in *Vers une architecture* to the fascist imposition of a corporative hierarchy *(gerarchia)* on Italian society, while Etlin has charted the Rationalists' relation of Le Corbusier's classical aesthetic to the fascist doctrine of *mediterraneità.*[130] By arguing that Le Corbusier was a modernist wedded to Mediterranean culture, the Rationalists effectively countered claims that they favored internationalism over an indigenous Italian tradition, reflective of a Latin and Imperial past. In this manner these architects could take their place alongside fascist advocates of

8 Farmhouse with loggia near Gandino, Val Seriana (from Giuseppi Pagano and Guarniero Daniel, *Architettura rurale italiana,* Quaderni della Triennale [Milan: Ultrico Hoepli, 1936])

rural regionalism and *romanità* in supporting an ideology that laid claim to the cultural legacy of Imperial Rome as a springboard to colonial conquest in Africa.

This "historical" and "spatial" resistance to capitalism was augmented by the fascist advocacy of qualitative as opposed to quantitative notions of time. Fascists condemned the "clock time" of capitalism, claiming that it emptied temporality of meaning and thereby denied that human actions could have a spiritual or epic significance that transcended mundane materialism. For instance, fascists embraced Sorel because his theory of myth was premised on Henri Bergson's critique of rationalized clock time and promotion of "intuitive" consciousness as a means of discerning the "creative" aspects of human temporality. For Sorel, "mythic images" provoked such an intuitive consciousness, infusing human action with the life-affirming energy of an epic struggle between the forces of decadence (capitalist rationalism and plutocracy) and those of regeneration (syndicalist revolution).[131] After World War I, those fascists claiming allegiance to Sorel countered the universality implied by capitalism's normative sense of time with temporal models that identified the "ethical state" as the mythic end point of teleological history.[132] This conversion of teleological history into spatial form, states Harvey, was synonymous with the "place-bound sense of geo-politics and destiny" adopted by fascism.[133] Thus, while ideologues like Sorel or fascists like Hitler, Mussolini, and Valois did not believe in "logical, discursive thought," they "did believe in energy, in force, in unthinking passions" evoked in the name of the mythic "purification and revival of a class, a nation, or a 'race' that had a task to perform" or "a destiny to fulfill."[134]

The Nazis' foregrounding of the "chronotrope" of racial nationalism as a counterweight to capitalist homogenization led them to invest temporal experience with a spiritual and regenerative significance premised on anti-Semitism. As Robert Sayre and Michael Löwry suggest, fascists regarded the human experience of temporality as one among "an aggregate of *qualitative* values—ethical, social, and cultural—in opposition to the mercantile rationality of exchange value."[135] For fascists, stock market speculation epitomized this mercantile reduction of time to a commercial asset, for the stock market implicated both the principle of interest and that of credit as economic possibilities. These perceptions were key to the development of anticapitalist anti-Semitism among European thinkers on both the right and left who identified Jewish financiers as the nonproductive exploiters of bourgeois and working-class producers.[136] As a result, international bankers like the Rothschilds were condemned as modern-day usurers who amassed wealth by speculating on the labor of others and who bore no allegiance to any class or country. This viewpoint extended to the realm of art; proponents of anticapitalist anti-Semitism in France and Germany frequently contrasted the creative capacities of the artist, the folk, the Sorelian producer, or of the fascist leadership itself with the artistic "impotence" of Jewish entrepreneurs who saw art as a commodifiable object for fiscal speculation rather than an agent of spiritual edification.[137] The qualitative experience of time that went into the production of a work of art or the finely crafted product of a workshop reportedly had no meaning for the Jew, who saw everything in terms of exchange value. This capitalist "disenchantment" of time reduced all products of the creative process to a quantifiable commodity, subject to monetary speculation; fascism, by contrast, sought to infuse time with qualitative value as an expression of its ability to transform human consciousness and society.

Such notions have led Roger Griffin to speak of the fascist "social engineering" of time itself.[138] Noting that concepts of sacred, cyclical, or revolutionary time persisted into the modern era despite capitalist rationalization, Griffin joins a number of recent scholars in relating the cultural rebellion against the Enlightenment project to such alternative temporal frames, the most significant of which was the fascist quest to regenerate time through the mythic politics of palingenesis. Citing Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1940), Griffin concludes that revolutionary events fall under the rubric of an "alternative" time, since "a revolution is a moment when a mythically charged 'now' creates a qualitative change in the continuum of history, which is to be distinguished from undifferentiated 'clock time.'"[139] Drawing on a wide range of sources, both primary and secondary, Griffin documents Mussolini's attempt to manipulate time in order to assert the revolutionary import of fascism and instill fascism's epic sense of time among the masses. The most dramatic instance of such social engineering was the "superimposition over the Gregorian calendar" of a fascist time frame, in which 1922 became "Year I" of the fascist era, signaling a regenerative break from the plutocratic decadence of the immediate past. The new calendar was then punctuated with certain days of national celebration, each with "a two fold mythic significance":

> Thus March 23, Youth Day, commemorated the founding of the Fasci; April 21, Labour Day, the founding of Rome; May 24, Empire Day, the entry of Italy into the First World War; September 20, Italian Unity, the incorporation of Rome into the Kingdom of Italy; October 28, the fascist Revolution, the March on Rome. . . . In this way ordinary Italians were encouraged to experience the unfolding of time as a phenomenon with a transcendental core on a par with the metaphysical reality which underlay Christianity.[140]

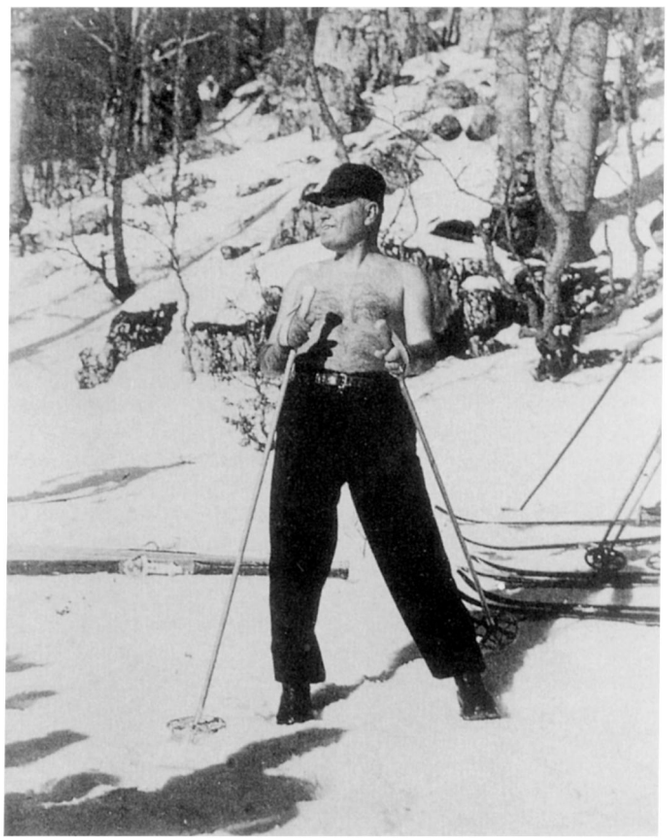
As Griffin points out, fascism's attempt to usurp the role of Christianity as the principal custodian of qualitative time is fully confirmed by Emilio Gentile's analysis of the proliferation of secular religious rituals under fascism, all organized around epic moments in the history of the movement and the cult of fascism's martyrs. For fascists the heroic actions of the World War I combatants and the fascist squads on behalf of the nation assured their "immortal" transcendence of mundane human time; moreover, their votive enshrinement, states Griffin, was meant to lift ordinary Italians "out of the anomic experience of time [by] reconnecting them with the epic life of the nation."[141] "Immortality" through martyrdom was not the only way of marking qualitative time; numerous scholars have likewise noted that the fascist and Nazi cult of youth—exemplified in art by a predilection for sculpted nude athletes and images of female fecundity—signaled the perpetual energy and regenerative capacities of both regimes.[142] Mussolini himself took on the mythic aura of per-

petual youth; journalists were forbidden to publicize his birthdays; his status as grandfather was suppressed, as was any evidence of illness; his hair was shaved when it showed signs of graying; and he was frequently photographed in such virile roles as mountaineer, lion tamer, and skier (Fig. 9).[143]

As Mabel Berezin demonstrates, this attempt to "colonize time" invaded every aspect of ordinary life in Italy. Citing Berezin's analysis of fascist events staged for the citizens of Verona over a twenty-year period, Griffin concludes that the ideal citizen would have attended 727 such events, an average of 36 per year, or one every ten days.[144] Italians were asked to participate in the fulfillment of the Risorgimento, to realize the imminent destiny of fascist Italy as an empire comparable to Augustan Rome, whose creative fecundity rivaled that of the Italian Renaissance. This "cult of remembering," states Griffin, was practiced in a revolutionary spirit, for the past was commemorated "in order to regenerate the present and transform the future: a parodox expressed in the slogan of the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* 'Nostalgia for the Future.'"[145] Similar thinking pervaded Nazi cultural politics, where the redemptive theme of palingenesis was promoted through a variety of media, including mass rallies, commemorative events, radio addresses, cinema, and literature.

In his book *Un art de l'éternité: L'image et le temps du national-socialisme,* art historian Eric Michaud has also addressed the import of qualitative time for Nazism through an analysis of how the Nazis' secular religious ideology relates to their Sorelian use of mythic images in order to "accelerate" time.[146] In a section of his book titled "Image and Anticipation" Michaud explicates the Nazis' secular religious association of their rise to power with the "salvation" of the German people, and the Nazis' subsequent transformation of German society through progress toward final deliverance, signified by the "eternal" establishment of the Third Reich.[147] Modeled after the Christological narrative of the First and Second Coming of Christ—Christ Redeemer and Christ Pantocrator—Nazi ideology incorporated a period of "transition" into its anticipated historical narrative to account for an era when Nazi values would be inculcated among the masses as a prelude to the consolidation of the *Reich.* The Nazis held that progress toward the eternal *Reich* could be "accelerated" if the masses could be more quickly converted to the cause; this has led Michaud to consider the applicability of Sorel's notion of mythic images to an analysis of the agitational function of Nazi propaganda, both oratorical and visual. Having outlined Sorel's claim that mythic imagery was wholly divorced from intellectual reflection and served to agitate the masses by a direct appeal to their creative intuition, Michaud analyzes the function of Nazi visual and oratorical imagery in asserting the German people's mythic status as "the unique race incarnating 'creative genius.'"[148]

The Nazis propagated a "myth-image" intended to awaken the people's desire for salvation, a condition to be realized through the material and ethical transformation of Germany. This led to the proliferation of imagery devoted to "the sanctification of creative work" as "the instrument and guarantee of the future salvation." Through an analysis of the writings of such Nazi ideologues and writers as Hitler, Robert Ley, Goebbels, Gottfried Benn, and Ernst Jünger, Michaud documents the pervasive association of all forms of labor—



9 Mussolini as skier at Terminillo, near Rome, n.d. (from Renzo De Felice and Luigi Goglia, *Mussolini: Il Mito* [Rome: Laterza, 1983])

cultural and industrial—with the Nazis' instigation of a "vast process of autoredemption for the race," which absorbed the individual in a collective effort *(Arbeitsgemeinschaft)* to establish the eternal *Reich.*[149] This sanctification bestowed on "ennobled labor" a degree of creativity and high moral purpose usually reserved for the fine arts; moreover, it resulted in a profusion of images devoted to collective labor, such as Ria Picco-Rückert's *Unified Force* (1944), or the monumentalizing of the building process itself, as in Carl Winckler's undated Piranesian lithograph of an ocean-going vessel under construction. This secular religious association of labor with redemption is best exemplified by Ferdinand Staeger's portrait of German Work Front laborers, titled *We Are the Work Soldiers,* marching in unison against a dramatic backdrop of cumulus clouds (Fig. 10).[150] The Work Front recruits form an unbroken (and seemingly unending) column; armed with shovels rather than rifles, they ascend heavenward as a pictorial metaphor for their "sacred" effort to create "the eternal Germany." These "work soldiers" are completely absorbed in an epic and spiritual struggle for redemption, and their actions will transcend their own life span to play a role in the salvation of the German race. As Michaud cogently argues, by converting the worker into a heroic type and monumentalizing the scale of their sculptures, Nazi artists Fritz Koelle and Josef Thorak effaced the individuality of the laborer in order to glorify the epic significance of "Work" itself (Fig. 11). Just as the "unknown soldier" gave his life to assure the survival of

10 Ferdinand Staeger, *We Are the Work Soldiers,* oil on canvas, 1938. Location unknown (from Hinz, *Art in the Third Reich,* 126)

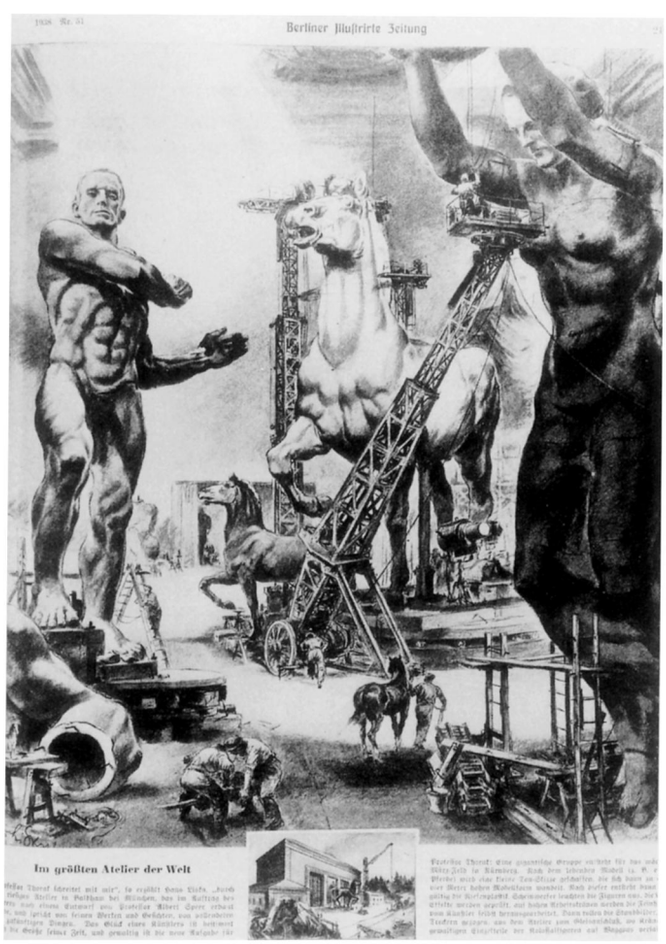
Germany, so, too, the "unknown worker" would be the custodian of the Third Reich, and his "holy labor" the means of achieving salvation.[151]

While images of labor inspired the German people to participate in this spiritual journey, Hitler's monumental building projects asserted Nazi Germany's status as a millennial regime not unlike ancient Rome. As Alex Scobie has demonstrated, Hitler and his principal architects pointedly modeled their architectural plans after Roman precedents. Ludwig Ruff's proposed Kongresshalle in Nuremberg (1934–35) was to resemble the Roman Colosseum; Speer's and Hitler's Volkshalle in Berlin (1937–40) imitated Hadrian's Pantheon; and Cäsar Pinnau's Public Bath planned for the capital (1940–41) was based on ancient Roman thermae.[152] Hitler and Speer pushed these conceptions further in the infamous "theory of ruin value," which, in Speer's words, "called for the use of special materials and engineering techniques" so that monumental buildings "even in a state of decay, after hundreds or (such was our reckoning) thousands of years would more or less resemble Roman models."[153] The role of the German people as a sanctified race and the custodians of culture was most dramatically asserted in architect Wilhelm Kreis's wartime plan to construct a series of necropolises circumscribing the limits of the new Nazi Europe, from the Atlantic coast to the Urals.[154] These monuments to the dead, claimed Kreis, to symbolize "the meaning of a great historical turning point," would serve as "an eternal reminder . . . of the unification of Europe as carried out by the German people." The buildings, moreover, would be "surrounded by tombs of the generation of German warriors who defended the existence of the Western World, as they have done for the last two thousand years."[155] Michaud argues that such edifices enabled each German not only to anticipate the "eternal" *Reich* but also to envision the eventual demise of the German people themselves as part of Hitler's millennial narrative. "The paradox of the National Socialist movement," Michaud concludes,

> is that it is supposed to lead the authentic German back to his primal dream by imposing itself as that prophesy already realized. It is supposed to define a space in which the end is the beginning, in which the community, at last purified of the *other's* dream [namely the Jewish dream of being the chosen people], remains eternally present to itself.[156]

A New Look at Fascism and Modernism

The consideration of fascism and modernism from the perspective of modernity underscores the permeability of the two former categories and the need for art historians and historians to treat fascism not as an isolated political phenomenon or as an aesthetic aberration in the modernist march



11 Hans Liska, *The Largest Studio in the World,* drawing of Josef Thorak's studio (from *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung,* no. 51 [1938]: 2103)

toward abstraction, but as a form of cultural politics in dialectical (or dialogic) relation to other anti-Enlightenment movements, both left and right. By adopting this approach we need no longer think of fascism as a fixed, stable entity but instead may conceive of it as a movement full of internal contradictions, with an unstable "base" composed of individuals and constituencies who endorsed fascism for a variety of reasons, and whose allegiance to the cause may have been transitory. The ramifications of such an approach for art history are clearly demonstrated, for example, by Matthew Affron in his analysis of French critic Waldemar George's move from a wartime endorsement of anarchism to the forging of a Franco-Italian aesthetic in the name of fascist "neo-humanism" after 1930; or by Nancy Goldberg in her study of the critic Henri Guilbeaux, who underwent a similar shift from syndicalism to an allegiance to fascism's corporatist cultural politics following World War I.[157] In both instances the antirationalist politics of the left acted as catalyst for these critics' endorsement of fascism. Such anti-Enlightenment politics could also lead to disillusionment with the fascist cause, if not with modernism. Philippe Lamour, who promoted Le Corbusier's architecture as exemplary of the fascist ethics of productivism, continued to do so after he abandoned fascism for regional syndicalism in the 1930s.[158] Georges Valois, who championed modern art throughout his political career, began as an ally of Maurras's Action Française, left that movement to found the Faisceau in 1925, but then renounced fascism in the 1930s for a notion of "libertarian communism." Valois's intransigent allegiance to communism ultimately resulted in his incarceration and death in a Nazi concentration camp in 1945.[159] Clearly, fascism could serve as a way station on the road to other forms of anticapitalism; we need to be sensitive to such choices if we are to do justice to the complex nexus of fascism and modernism. In like fashion, rather than considering fascism as a monolithic term, we should speak of competing fascisms as evidenced in the cultural debates between Italian proponents of Strapaese and Stracittà, or the Nazi defenders of German Expressionism and their eugenicist-oriented adversaries.

Perhaps the most complex challenge facing historians, including art historians, is the need to take seriously the fascist usage of the mythic politics of palingenesis to win over the public through a process of spiritual conversion and psychological transformation. Too often fascism's cultural politics are cast in terms of a cynical manipulation of the docile masses, with no allowance made for the *appeal* fascism had for the individual, or the internal point of view of the fascist rank and file. Concepts of secular religion were more than ideological tools for thought control; for the fascist believer they were agents for the spiritual uplifting and psychic conversion of individuals, who could then experience fascism's redemptive value as a counter to the socioeconomic upheavals of interwar Europe. Similarly, the Nazis' evocation of the "sublime," beyond its description in terms of sensations of awe, terror, or mythic symbols for political and industrial might, merits understanding with reference to its etymological roots in edifying notions of "self-transcendence."[160] Iain Boyd Whyte has touched on this very issue by linking the monumentality of Nazi architecture to the Kantian notion of the "dynamic sublime" to account for the impact of such buildings on the human psyche. To citizens of the Third Reich, identification with Albert Speer's monumental structures carried with it the ascription of the power and might these buildings evoked to themselves. Infused with "sublime inspiration" under the impact of Nazi art and architecture, citizens could further enhance the power of the *Reich* through their own Promethean actions.[161] In Italy fascists deployed the iconography of secular religion to achieve similar results, most notably in the 1932 "Sacrarium to the Martyrs" (Fig. 5) and the primitivist aesthetic of Soffici (Fig. 6). Hitler and Mussolini were not the only "creators" able to mold society according to their "sublime" vision; the people themselves were to take on such creative agency under the impact of fascism's mythic constructs.[162]

Such thinking was not confined to interwar fascism. Sorel in fact claimed in his *Reflections on Violence* that mythic images infused workers with a sense of the sublime, since their revolt against the state was inspired by an anticipated cataclysmic revolution designed to regenerate society.[163] If we lend credence to the fascists' allegiance to Sorel's notion of mythic images, we should therefore recognize that the impact of such constructs on the public entailed more than the oppressive politics of Guy Debord's concept of the spectacle.[164] As we have seen, Sorelian myths were meant to enhance an individual's creative capacities and instill a sense of collective purpose—even if the "holy labor" of such individuals had catastrophic results under fascism. Only by examining the dual nature of mythic politics as a belief system that can transform the initiate and as a potential tool for cynical (or sublime) manipulation by political elites will we gain an understanding of fascism's widespread attraction to modernists and ideologues alike.

Mark Antliff is associate professor of art history at Duke University and author of Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde *(1993), co-editor, with Matthew Affron, of* Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy *(1997), and co-author, with Patricia Leighten, of* Cubism and Culture *(2001) [Department of Art and Art History, Duke University , Box 90764, Durham, N.C. 27708-0764].*

Frequently Cited Sources

Affron, Matthew, and Mark Antliff, eds., *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Braun, Emily, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism: Art and Politics under Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Etlin, Richard, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890–1940* (London: MIT Press, 1991).

Gentile, Emilio, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

Notes

My thanks go to my Duke colleagues Patricia Leighten, Rick Powell, Kristine Stiles, and Gennifer Weisenfeld for their comments on this essay, which is related to a study of Georges Sorel's impact on fascist aesthetics in France. A special note of thanks goes to Perry Chapman and to Lory Frankel for their editorial suggestions.

1. Stephanie Barron, "1937: Modern Art and Politics in Prewar Germany," in *"Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany* (New York: Harry

N. Abrams and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), 9–31. Barron's invaluable catalogue includes essays by scholars in a variety of fields devoted to Nazi art and art policy. The catalogue considers the Nazis' responses to music, film, painting, and sculpture and the imposition of Nazi policies and censorship on various state-sponsored cultural institutions, as well as precursors to the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition of 1937.

2. Ibid., 12–13.

3. Dagmar Grimm, "Emil Nolde," in Barron (as in n. 1), 315–20.

4. Barron (as in n. 1), 12. Goebbels, who held a doctorate in philosophy and literature, joined the German National Socialist Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) in 1924 and aided the self-proclaimed leftist Gregor Strasser in developing the party in the north. Goebbels's early cultural views were codified in his semiautobiographical novel *Michael: Diary of a German Destiny* (1931), which celebrated modern art, Expressionism in particular, as the manifestation of a "Christian socialist" revival of the German people who are diametrically opposed, we are told, to the "poisonous bacillus" of Judaism.

5. For a comprehensive survey of modernist art production in Italy under Mussolini (1922–43), see the essays by Philip Cannistraro, Joan Lukach, Enrico Crispolti, Emily Braun, Pia Vivarelli, and Luciano Caramel, in *Italian Art in the 20th Century,* ed. Emily Braun (Munich: Prestel, 1989).

6. John Heskett, "Modernism and Archaism in Design in the Third Reich," in *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich,* ed. Brandon Taylor and Wilfred van der Will (Winchester, Eng.: Winchester Press, 1990), 127.

7. See Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Program, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890–1930* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958).

8. Pierre Birnbaum, "Catholic Identity, Universal Suffrage and 'Doctrines of Hatred,'" in *The Intellectual Revolt against Liberal Democracy, 1870–1945,* ed. Zeev Sternhell (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1996), 233–51.

9. Robert Sayre and Michael Löwry, "Figures of Romantic Anti-Capitalism," *New German Critique* 32 (spring–summer 1984): 42–92.

10. Ibid., 55.

11. Ibid., 57–59.

12. According to Sayre and Löwry, what distinguished conservative or fascist proponents of Romantic anticapitalism from progressive adherents was precisely the degree to which their revolt was either past- or future-oriented. "Revolutionary and/or Utopian Romantics" like Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, or Herbert Marcuse are said to reject "a pure and simple return to organic communities of the past" because they utilize precapitalist values "as a weapon in the struggle for the future." The "predominant" theme of "Fascist Romanticism," on the other hand, "is hatred of the modern world and nostalgia for an organic community of the past," of which the prime example is the German Nazis' longing for "the old tribal and feudal Germany, for traditional peasant life in opposition to the big city." Although they acknowledge that fascist ideologies might contain "elements" that "are foreign or even hostile to Romanticism"—citing the example of Italian fascism's support of Futurism—they nonetheless assert that the German Nazi vilification "of the modern world and nostalgia for an organic community of the past" is more typically fascist. See ibid., 56–57, 60–63, 69–72.

13. See Jeffrey Herf, "Reactionary Modernism Reconsidered: Modernity, the West and the Nazis," in Sternhell (as in n. 8), 131–58; and idem, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Herf's book considers the simultaneous championing of "volkish ideology," "romantic irrationalist ideas," and "modern technology" on the part of such thinkers as Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger, and Carl Schmitt, Nazi ideologues Goebbels and Hitler, and an assortment of German engineers and professors of engineering concerned with the cultural ramifications of modern technology. In Herf's words, "The reactionary modernists were German nationalists who turned the revolt against capitalism and materialism away from backward-looking pastoralism. . . . They saw in technology a thing of beauty, a product of German creativity rather than of Jewish commercialism and internationalism, a phenomenon in tune with totalitarianism rather than with liberal democracy" (Herf [as in n. 8], 134). Herf's research has conclusively refuted any simple association of the Nazis with a wholesale rejection of modernity; however, I agree with historian Roger Griffin that Herf does not sufficiently grasp the centrality "of the myth of renewal" to this "alternative" modernism in fascist ideology. See Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991; reprint, London: Routledge, 1993), 47 (page references are to the reprint).

14. See Paul Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression: The SS, Forced Labour and Nazi Monumental Building Economy* (London: Routledge, 2000); and Barbara Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945* (1968; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985). Lane refers to Hitler's speech, delivered at the annual Party Congress on September 1, 1933, titled "German Art as the Proudest Justification of the German People." As Lane points out, the speech was made in reaction to the debate between Alfred Rosenberg and Goebbels over the value of modernism in art and architecture; as Lane demonstrates, Hitler sought a compromise between the two by endorsing modern technology and design in the realm of architecture while rejecting modern art. Of course, the most horrific example of such thinking was the employment of rationalized bureaucratic systems to facilitate the Holocaust. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989). Jaskot's book is indicative of a new trend in fascist studies that focuses on the competition among various Nazi organizations for economic and cultural hegemony under the Third Reich as well as the "Nazification" of existing governmental institutions. Alan Steinweis has examined the latter subject in his comprehensive evaluation of the Third Reich's Chamber of Culture (1933–45) and its seminal role in the gradual Nazification of the arts in Germany; Marla Stone in turn has studied the complex evolution of state patronage in fascist Italy. See Alan Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Marla Stone, "The State as Patron: Making Official Culture in Fascist Italy," in Affron and Antliff, 205–38; and idem, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

15. Emilio Gentile, "The Conquest of Modernity: From Modernist Nationalism to Fascism," *Modernism/Modernity* 1 (Sept. 1994): 54–87.

16. Sternhell (as in n. 8).

17. Sternhell, "Modernity and Its Enemies: From the Revolt against the Enlightenment to the Undermining of Democracy," in ibid., 12.

18. Griffin (as in n. 13). Other valuable texts by Griffin include *Fascism: Oxford Readers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus,* ed. Roger Griffin (London: Arnold Press, 1998). The former is an invaluable compilation of primary texts and critical analyses related to fascism as a global phenomenon; the latter book considers alternative definitions of fascism within the context of Griffin's own theoretical model.

19. Griffin, 1993 (as in n. 13), 26.

20. For a survey of Sorel's myriad impact, see J. J. Roth, *The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

21. Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence,* authorized trans. T. E. Hulme (1908; reprint, London: Collier-Macmillan, 1961), 28, quoted in Griffin, 1993 (as in n. 13), 125.

22. Sorel (as in n. 21), 127, quoted in Griffin, 1993 (as in n. 13), 28. Sorel relates his definition of myth as a "body of images" expressive of our faculty of "intuition" to Henri Bergson's theory of intuitive perception, defined by the latter as "empathetic consciousness," or a form of "instinct" that had become "disinterested." Bergson wished to stress the role of human will in this state of consciousness, which he related to our capacity for creative action and thought. For a succinct analysis of Bergson's impact on Sorel, see Richard Vernon, *Commitment and Change: Georges Sorel and the Idea of Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 50–61.

23. For a discussion of Sorel's notion of the producer and its impact on fascists in France and Italy, see James Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Zeev Sternhell, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Mark Antliff, "*La Cité française:* Georges Valois, Le Corbusier, and Fascist Theories of Urbanism," in Affron and Antliff, 134–70.

24. As Griffin notes, by exalting heroic violence and military struggle as a core myth, fascism inevitably faced a crisis when it made the transformation from a self-declared revolutionary movement to a stable regime seeking to perpetuate itself. In this instance the need for social stability and order came in conflict with mythic signifiers premised on dynamism and change. One of the challenges facing fascists in Italy and Germany was reconciling these myths with reality once the revolution had been achieved and institutions identified with the old decadent order eliminated. The volatility of fascism's core myth accounts for what Griffin terms the "manic climate of 'permanent revolution'" and "Faustian restlessness" in Italian fascists' and Nazis' simultaneous glorification of war abroad and never-ending search for sources of decadence internal to their geopolitical borders. See Griffin, 1993 (as in n. 13), 39–40.

25. For a concise statement of Sternhell's thesis, see Zeev Sternhell, "Fascist Ideology," in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide,* ed. Walter Lacquer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 315–76; and idem, "The 'Anti-Materialist' Revision of Marxism as an Aspect of the Rise of Fascist Ideology," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, no. 3 (1987): 379–400. Sternhell demonstrates how, reproving the speculative and materialist capitalism of the international financier yet also rejecting the mechanistic foundations of Marxism, fascists such as Valois and Mussolini succeeded in uniting dissident antiparliamentarians from both left and right constituencies. The major difference separating Griffin from Sternhell is the latter's claim that Nazism differed fundamentally from fascism by virtue of its emphasis on racial theory; Griffin, on the other hand, sees racist eugenics as an aspect of its palingenetic or regenerative ultranationalist orientation.

26. See Sternhell (as in n. 23); idem, *La droite révolutionnaire, 1885–1914: Les origines françaises du fascisme* (1978; reprint, Brussels: Complexe, 1985); and idem, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France,* trans. David Maisel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

27. Günter Berghaus has analyzed the impact of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism on Marinetti, the Futurists' continued attraction to the syndicalist dimension of Sorelian politics after World War I, and the equivocation over fascism on the part of dissident factions in the Futurist movement once Marinetti had publicly reconciled himself with Mussolini's regime after 1924.

Such findings point to the important fact that anarchism, though equally opposed to Marxism and parliamentary politics, could serve as a leftist mode of resistance to fascism. See Günter Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909–1944* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996). For a scholarly challenge to Berghaus's reading of Futurism's leftist opposition to Fascism, see Claudio Fagio's insightful review of Berghaus's book in *Modernism/Modernity* 4 (Jan. 1997): 178–81. On the continued popularity of *Sorelismo* in both fascist and antifascist camps in Italy throughout the 1920s, see Roth (as in n. 20), 215–35.

28. Griffin, 1993 (as in n. 13), 32–33.

29. Roger Griffin, "Nazi Art: Romantic Twilight or (Post) Modernist Dawn?" *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995): 103–6. See also Keith Hartley, ed., *The Romantic Spirit in German Art, 1790–1990,* exh. cat., Royal Scottish Academy, and Fruit Market Gallery, Edinburgh, and the Hayward Gallery, London, 1994–95.

30. Griffin (as in n. 29), 104.

31. Berthold Hinz, *Art in the Third Reich* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 108.

32. The integral relation of the Nazi theory of beauty and its degenerate antithesis has been cogently examined by historian George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); and idem, "Beauty without Sensuality/The Exhibition Entartete Kunst," in Barron (as in n. 1), 25–31.

33. Dawn Ades et al., eds., *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators, 1930–45* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995). Griffin has noted this relation himself in a review of the exhibition. See Roger Griffin, "Totalitarian Art and the Nemesis of Modernity," *Oxford Art Journal* 19, no. 2 (1996): 122–24.

34. Iain Boyd Whyte, "National Socialism and Modernism," in Ades et al. (as in n. 33), 258–69. Whyte acknowledges the research of Werner Durth on modernist architecture under the Nazis as key to his own interpretation. See Werner Durth, "Architektur und Stadtplanung im Dritten Reich," in *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung,* ed. Michael Prinz and Rainer Zitelmann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991).

35. Whyte (as in n. 34), 258–63.

36. Ibid., 262.

37. Antliff (as in n. 23), 134–70; on Philippe Lamour's fascist aesthetic theory, see idem, "Machine Primitives: Philippe Lamour, Germaine Krull, and the Fascist Cult of Youth," *Qui Parle* (forthcoming).

38. Emilio Gentile (as in n. 15), 74.

39. For analyses of Mussolini's plans for Rome, see the section titled "Modernism and Fascism," in Etlin, 375–597; and Tim Benton, "Rome Reclaims Its Empire," in Ades et al. (as in n. 33), 120–29.

40. Benito Mussolini, "La nuova Roma" (Dec. 25, 1925), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini,* ed. E. Susmel and D. Susmel (Florence: La Fenice, 1951–63), vol. 20, quoted in Etlin, 392.

41. Benton (as in n. 39), 120–22.

42. Emily Braun, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism: Art and Politics under Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

43. Ibid., 6.

44. Ibid., 188–90.

45. Ibid., 190.

46. See the chapter titled "The Urban Landscapes," in ibid., 44–67; and Emily Braun, "Mario Sironi's Urban Landscapes: The Futurist/Fascist Nexus," in Affron and Antliff, 101–33.

47. Braun, 60–67.

48. Jeffrey Schnapp, *Staging Fascism: 18 BL and the Theater of the Masses for the Masses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). The role of theater in fascist cultural politics throughout Europe is the subject of a valuable anthology edited by Günther Berghaus, *Fascism and Theater: Comparative Studies on Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925–1945* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996). The volume contains an essay by Griffin that considers the palingenetic aspect of fascist theater and an important study by Emilio Gentile analyzing Italian fascist theater as a form of secular religion.

49. Hal Foster, "Forward: Mothertruckers," in Schnapp (as in n. 48), xiii–xviii.

50. See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations,* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 219–54; and introduction to Affron and Antliff, 3–24. For an overview of Benjamin's Marxist aesthetics, see the entry "Walter Benjamin," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics,* ed. Michael Kelly, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. 1, 254–64.

51. As Russell Berman has noted, Benjamin argues that "the emancipatory potential of social modernization" is blocked by fascism, which "mobilises aesthetic categories in order to impede the dissolution of traditional social order." Russell A. Berman, "The Aestheticization of Politics: Walter Benjamin on Fascism and the Avant-garde," in *Modern Culture and Critical Theory: Art, Politics, and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 27–41.

52. Ibid., 38.

53. Ibid., 39.

54. Benjamin (as in n. 50), 254.

55. For a comprehensive study of French literary fascism that makes valuable use of Benjamin's thesis, see David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

56. See Martin Jay, "'The Aesthetic Ideology' as Ideology: Or What Does It Mean to Aestheticize Politics?" in *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 71–83.

57. Historians should consult Christine Poggi's analyses of Futurist collage, which relate that aesthetic to Futurism's prewar and wartime political aims. See Christine Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism, and the Invention of Collage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). More recently Alessandro Del Puppo and Poggi have drawn on the work of historians Walter Adamson and Zeev Sternhell in evaluations of the national syndicalist cultural politics of the journal *Lacerba* (1913–15) and the art of its Futurist contributors. See Alessandro Del Puppo, *"Lacerba" 1913–1915: Arte e critica d'arte* (Bergamo: Lubrina, 2000); and Christine Poggi, "*Lacerba:* Interventionist Art and Politics in Pre–World War I Italy," in *Art and Journals on the Political Front, 1910–1940,* ed. Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1997), 17–62.

58. Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 134–35.

59. Ibid., 135.

60. Ibid., 137.

61. Antliff (as in n. 37).

62. Hewitt (as in n. 58), 135–36.

63. Braun, 145–57.

64. Ibid., 153.

65. Ibid., 153–54.

66. Emilio Gentile, "The Myth of National Regeneration in Italy: From Modernist Avant-Gardism to Fascism," in Affron and Antliff, 27.

67. Gentile's and Mosse's numerous publications have had a profound effect on the study of fascist cultural politics in Germany and Italy. See in particular Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio: La sacralizzione della politica nell'Italia fascista* (1993), translated as *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy; La Grande Italia: Ascesa e declino del mito della nazione nel ventismo secolo* (Milan: Modaroli, 1997); *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista, 1918–1925* (Rome: Laterza, 1975; rev. ed., 1996); and *Storia del partito fascista, 1919–1922: Movimento e milizia* (Rome: Laterza, 1989). For George Mosse, see *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964); *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999); *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980); Mosse, 1985 (as in n. 32); and *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975).

68. See the chapter titled "The New Politics" in Mosse, 1975 (as in n. 67), 1–20.

69. Ibid., 13–14.

70. Ibid., 7–8.

71. See the chapters "National Monuments" and "Public Festivals: Foundations and Development," in ibid., 47–99.

72. Ibid., 70.

73. Ibid., 80.

74. Gentile, 1993 (as in n. 67), 1996.

75. Gentile (as in n. 66), 28, 42–43.

76. Ibid., 28; and Gentile, 3–9.

77. See the chapters titled "The Holy Militia" and "The Fatherland Dons the Black Shirt" in Gentile.

78. For an analysis of Valois's Faisceau movement, see Allen Douglas, *From Fascism to Libertarian Communism: Georges Valois against the Third Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

79. Emilio Gentile, "Fascism as Political Religion," *Journal of Contemporary History* 25 (May–June 1990): 229–51.

80. Giuseppi Leonardi, "Siamo i superatori," *Il Fascio,* Apr. 2, 1921, quoted in Gentile, 21.

81. "For example," writes Gentile, "the blessing of the *gagliaretto,* which was the banner of the 'squads,' was initially adopted as a symbolic ritual of redemption of a community, brought back within the nation's faith" following the "liberation" of a district from the socialists. Gentile (as in n. 79), 243; and idem, 23–25.

82. Gentile, 59.

83. New members were symbolically presented with a party card and rifle, calling to mind Mussolini's 1927 declaration, "The card is a symbol of our faith; the rifle is an instrument of our strength." Ibid., 64–66.

84. Gentile (as in n. 79), 239; and idem, 123–25.

85. Etlin, 439–47; and Gentile, 124–25.

86. Gentile, 125.

87. Etlin, 447.

88. For instance, see analyses of *La mostra della rivoluzione fascista* by the following historians: Braun; Etlin; Gentile; Jeffrey Schnapp, "Epic Demonstrations: Fascist Modernity and the 1932 Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution," in *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture,* ed. Richard J. Golsan (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1992), 1–37; and Stone, 1998 (as in n. 14).

89. Braun, 147. Visitors passed under a building facade dominated by monumental fasces and entered a room devoted to the founding of Musso-

lini's paper *Il Popolo d'Italia* (1914) and the start of World War I; subsequent rooms on the first floor documented the call by Mussolini and other nationalists for Italy's intervention in the Great War (1915), Italy's wartime efforts (1915–18), and the period from the founding of the Fasci di Combattimento to the March on Rome (1919–22).

90. Braun, 152.

91. Romke Visser, "Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanità," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992): 5–22.

92. Schnapp (as in n. 88), 30.

93. Ibid., 25.

94. Walter Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993). Adamson's theoretical approach to Florentine modernism and fascism is outlined in a number of important articles. See Adamson, "The Language of Opposition in Early Twentieth-Century Italy: Rhetorical Continuities between Prewar Florentine Avant-Gardism and Mussolini's Fascism," *Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992): 22–51; and idem, "Fascism and Culture: Avant-Gardes and Secular Religion in the Italian Case," *Journal of Contemporary History* 24 (1989): 411–35.

95. Adamson, 1989 (as in n. 94), 423.

96. Adamson, 1993 (as in n. 94), 18–27, 94–101; and idem, "Soffici and the Religion of Art," 1997, in Affron and Antliff, 46–72.

97. Ardengo Soffici, "Divagazioni sull'arte: Le due prospettive," *La Voce,* Sept. 22, 1910, cited in Adamson, 1997 (as in n. 96), 55–56.

98. Adamson, 1997 (as in n. 96), 48–49. On Cézanne's landscape imagery and its relation to conservative strands of Provençal regionalism, see Paul Smith, "Joachim Gasquet, Virgil, and Cézanne's Landscape: 'My Beloved Golden Age,'" *Apollo* 148 (Oct. 1998): 11–23.

99. Ardengo Soffici, "Religiosità e l'arte," *Il Popolo d'Italia,* Nov. 7, 1922; and idem, "Il Fascismo e l'arte," *Gerarchia,* Sept. 25, 1922, 504–8; both sources are cited in Adamson, 1997 (as in n. 96), 61–63.

100. Walter Adamson, "The Culture of Italian Fascism and the Fascist Crisis of Modernity—the Case of *Il Selvaggio,*" *Journal of Contemporary History* 30 (Oct. 1995): 555–75; and Emily Braun, "Speaking Volumes: Giorgio Morandi's Still Lifes and the Cultural Politics of Strapaese," *Modernism/Modernity* 2 (Sept. 1995): 89–116.

101. Braun, 1995 (as in n. 100), 94–95.

102. Ibid., 96–98.

103. Ibid., 97–109.

104. Ibid., 98.

105. Antliff (as in n. 23), 134–70.

106. J.-L. Forain, "Vlaminck chez MM. Bernheim-Jeune," *Nouveau Siècle,* Mar. 20, 1926, 4, quoted in Antliff (as in n. 23), 158.

107. See the chapter titled "Rusticizing the Modern," in Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

108. Antliff (as in n. 23), 158–60.

109. For a cogent analysis of this paradigm, see Mosse (as in n. 32), 25–31.

110. For an overview of these conflicting discourses, see Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, "Primitive," in *Critical Terms for Art History,* ed. Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 170–84.

111. Russell A. Berman, "German Primitivism/Primitive Germany: The Case of Emil Nolde," in Golsan (as in n. 88), 56–66.

112. This conflation also foregrounds the dual nature of Nolde's Expressionism as "an emancipatory search for a greater range of experience and a regressive flight from the Enlightenment," which led him to uphold Nazism as a primitivizing alternative to the politics of bourgeois liberalism. See Berman (as in n. 111), 60–65.

113. Alfred Rosenberg, quoted in ibid., 58.

114. For an overview of historical analyses of this dimension of fascist cultural politics, see the chapter titled "The Politics of Time and Modernity," in Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 168–84.

115. David Harvey, *The Condition of Post-Modernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). In pt. 3 of his book, Harvey deals with the effect of the rise of capitalism on European conceptions of time and space from the 18th to the early 20th centuries, 201–83.

116. Ibid., 228.

117. Ibid., 238–39.

118. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (1922), trans. Rodney Livingston (1971; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 88–90, quoted in Antliff (as in n. 114), 171–73.

119. In the sections of his book on Le Corbusier, Harvey does not discuss the architect's interest in Taylorism, though he does relate Le Corbusier's interest in corporatism to his alliance with the reactionary politics of Vichy France. See Harvey (as in n. 115), 21–23, 30–31, 34–36, 68–71, 115–16, 127–28, 271, 282. For an assessment of Le Corbusier's Taylorism, see Mary McLeod, "'Architecture or Revolution': Taylorism, Technocracy and Social Change," *Art Journal* 43, no. 2 (1983): 132–47.

120. Harvey (as in n. 115), 271.

121. Ibid., 273.

122. Ibid., 272.

123. Ibid.

124. For a study of Le Corbusier's corporatist period, see Mary McLeod, "Le Corbusier and Algiers," *Oppositions* 19–20 (winter–spring 1980): 53–85.

125. See Romy Golan (as in n. 107), 68–78, for her analysis of Le Corbusier's turn to organicist forms in his architecture and painting in the 1930s.

126. Anson Rabinbach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," in *International Fascism: New Thoughts and Approaches,* ed. George Mosse (London: Sage, 1979), 189–22.

127. For a comprehensive analysis of Valois's corporatism, see Douglas (as in n. 78).

128. See Diane Ghirardo, "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist Role in Regime Building," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39 (May 1980): 109–27; idem, *Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); and Etlin. Other valuable studies on the relation of fascism to architecture include Henry Millon, "The Role of the History of Architecture in Fascist Italy," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 24 (Mar. 1965): 53–59; idem, "Some New Towns in Italy in the 1930's," in *Art and Architecture in the Service of Politics,* ed. Henry Millon and Linda Nochlin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978), 53–59; Cesare de Seta, *La cultura architettonica in Italia tra le due guerre* (Rome: Laterza, 1972); Spiro Kostof, "The Emperor and the Duce: The Planning of Piazzale Augusto Imperatore in Rome," in Millon and Nochlin, 270–325; Giorgio Ciucci, *Gli architetti e il fascismo: Architettura e città 1922–44* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1989); Dennis P. Doordan, *Building Modern Italy: Italian Architecture, 1914–1936* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988); and idem, "The Political Content in Italian Architecture during the Fascist Era," *Art Journal* (summer 1983): 121–31.

129. Etlin, 256–58.

130. See Ghirardo, 1980 (as in n. 128), 122–26; and Etlin, "Le Corbusier, Choisy, and French Hellenism: The Search for a New Architecture," *Art Bulletin* 69 (June 1987): 264–78.

131. See Antliff (as in n. 114), 156–58, 169–70; and idem, "The Jew as Anti-Artist: Georges Sorel, Anti-Semitism, and the Aesthetics of Class Consciousness," *Oxford Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (1997): 50–67.

132. Harvey (as in n. 115), 273.

133. Ibid., 209.

134. Eugen Weber, "France," in *The European Right: A Historical Profile,* ed. Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 22–23.

135. Sayre and Löwry (as in n. 9), 58–59.

136. On anticapitalist anti-Semitism in France, see Pierre Birnbaum, *Les peuple et les gros: Histoire d'un mythe* (Paris: Grasset, 1979). "Les gros" was a term applied by such anti-Semites to a mythical group of international bankers whose mercantile speculation supposedly threatened the economic and political welfare of the French people.

137. On the Sorelian dimension of this discourse, see Antliff, 1997 (as in n. 131), 50–67; for an analysis of claims that the Jew lacked artistic capacities by virtue of pathological inadequacies, see Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991); for a succinct study of Hitler's self-fashioning as artist and its fundamental impact on his political vision, see O. K. Werckmeister, "Hitler as Artist," *Critical Inquiry* 23 (winter 1997): 270–97. Claims that Jews were lacking in artistic ability were supplemented by the widely held belief that Judaism was hostile to the production of graven images, a myth that Kalman Bland has eloquently refuted in his book *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

138. Roger Griffin, "The Fascist Quest to Regenerate Time" (Nov. 1988), in *Electronic Seminars in History,* available from http://ihrinfo.ac.uk/esh/quest.html.

139. Ibid., 15; Griffin refers to Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in Benjamin (as in n. 50), 252–53.

140. Griffin (as in n. 138), 6. Here Griffin is drawing on the early scholarship of Herbert Schneider. See Herbert Schneider, *Making the Fascist State* (1928; reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1968).

141. Griffin (as in n. 138), 8.

142. For a historical analysis of the generational cult of youth in France, Italy, and Germany see Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); for an essay devoted specifically to Italian fascism and the cult of youth, see Bruno Wanrooij, "The Rise and Fall of Italian Fascism as a Generational Revolt," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22 (1987): 401–18. For essays analyzing the aesthetic dimension of the youth cult as manifest in painting, sculpture, and advertising, see Laura Malvano, "The Myth of Youth in Images: Italian Fascism," 232–56, and Eric Michaud, "Soldiers of an Idea: Young People under the Third Reich," 257–80, in *A History of Young People,* vol. 2, *Stormy Evolution to Modern Times,* ed. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). I have recently studied a French variant on this theme in the guise of fascist Philippe Lamour's association of the aesthetic "dynamism" of montage technique, automobile design, and the machine-age photography of Germaine Krull with his own endorsement of Mussolini's youth cult. See Antliff (as in n. 37).

143. See the chapter titled "Mussolini the Myth" in Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Barbara Spackman and Andrew Hewitt have examined the fascist cult of virility and the heterosexual "crisis" pro-

voked by fascism's "homosocial" and homosexual overtones. See Spackman's examination of such issues with reference to Gabriele D'Annunzio, Marinetti, and Mussolini, in *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Andrew Hewitt's study of subsequent critics of fascism (including Jean-Paul Sartre) in *Political Inversions: Homosexuality and the Modern Imaginary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

144. Griffin (as in n. 138), 9. For a comprehensive analysis of fascist ritual politics in Verona, see the chapter titled "Colonizing Time: Rhythms of Fascist Ritual in Verona," in Mabel Berezin, *The Making of the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 141–95.

145. Griffin (as in n. 138) cites the following sources as especially important: Karl Vondung, *Magie und Manipulation: Ideologischer Kult und politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1971); N. Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (Wellington: Aquarian Press, 1985); Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies Vols. I and II* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); and Linda Sculte-Sass, *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996).

146. Eric Michaud, *Un art de l'éternité: L'image et le temps du national-socialisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996); and idem, "National Socialist Architecture as an Acceleration of Time," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (winter 1993): 220–33. Michaud's analysis would have been strengthened had he engaged with the scholarship of Emilio Gentile, Roger Griffin, and George Mosse, who have likewise explored themes of secular religion, Sorelian myth, temporality, and national regeneration in their various publications.

147. Michaud, 1996 (as in n. 146), 288–92.

148. Ibid., 292–303.

149. Ibid., 297–306.

150. See Michaud's analysis of works by Picco-Rückert, Winckler, and Staeger in ibid., 306–12.

151. Ibid., 312–15.

152. Alex Scobie, *Hitler's State Architecture: The Impact of Classical Antiquity* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990).

153. Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 56, cited in Michaud, 1993 (as in n. 146), 229. For a succinct analysis of this theory, see Scobie (as in n. 152), 93–96.

154. Michaud, 1996 (as in n. 146), 329–32; and Michaud, 1993 (as in n. 146), 227–28. Kreis had previously designed the so-called Bismarck Towers, honoring the chancellor who had brought about German unity. Kreis erected five hundred such towers between 1900 and 1910, modeled after the classical tomb of the eastern Gothic king Theodoric the Great (ca. 454–526) at Ravenna (a ruler whom the Germans regarded as a national hero) or the Pantheon in Rome. See Mosse, 1975 (as in n. 67), 36–38.

155. Wilhelm Kreis, quoted in Michaud, 1993 (as in n. 146), 227.

156. Michaud, ibid., 232.

157. Matthew Affron, "Waldemar George: A Parisian Art Critic on Modernism and Fascism," in Affron and Antliff, 171–204; on Guilbeaux, see Nancy Goldberg, "From Whiteman to Mussolini: Modernism in the Life and Work of a French Intellectual," *Journal of European Studies* 26 (June 1996): 153–73.

158. On Lamour's postfascist promotion of Le Corbusier and regional syndicalism in the journal *Plans,* see Mary McLeod *Le Corbusier from Regional Syndicalism to Vichy* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1985); and Golan (as in n. 107), 76–78.

159. See Douglas (as in n. 78). Valois succumbed to a typhus epidemic at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in January 1945.

160. On the etymological and multivalent significance of the sublime, see Baldine Saint Girons, "The Sublime from Longinus to Montesquieu," in Kelly (as in n. 50), vol. 4, 322–26.

161. See Iain Boyd Whyte, "Sublime," in Hartley (as in n. 29), 138–46.

162. Iain Boyd Whyte's conclusions serve as an important reminder to those who would restrict notions of sublime creativity to the fascist elite while confining the masses to the role of "sculptural clay" or "inert stone," to be molded or shaped by an all-powerful leader. Such an extreme bifurcation is posited by Falasca-Zamponi (as in n. 143), 11–13, who claims that Mussolini took on the role of "sublime," "God-like-creator" while subjecting Italian citizens to "depersonalization" and deindividualization." In his role as "artist-politician," Mussolini could only identify "the 'masses' with dead matter, a block of marble to be shaped."

163. See Sorel (as in n. 21), 295.

164. For instance, Falasca-Zamponi (as in n. 143) has identified all aspects of fascist mythmaking, including Sorelian myths, with Guy Debord's notion of a "society of the spectacle." By contrast, Emily Braun has developed a more sophisticated approach by associating Sorel's myth of revolutionary violence with fascism's insurrectional beginnings, as encapsulated in Sironi's series of Urban Landscapes (1919–20). When she does refer to Debord it is with reference to the montage techniques employed in the *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista* (1932). Braun relates the impact of montage on the public to the "one-way direction of communication" that typifies Debord's spectacle, thus separating the fascist use of montage from the emancipatory associations Walter Benjamin attributed to that medium. Having questioned whether montage could indeed have any emancipatory effect, she categorically denies that fascist montage could ever elicit such a "participatory" reaction and instead claims that collage, in fascist hands, is evidence of the "potentially totalitarian powers of the media." This is a subtle argument, but I think Braun, in her effort to account for the use of fascist montage in the context of fascism's totalitarian cultural politics, is too absolute in her disallowance of any ambivalence in its potential function as both "transformative" and "awe-inspiring." See Braun, 152–57; and Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983).