

D'Annunzio, Freud, and La Città Morta

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Heavy masses of tufa, piled on top of one another, sealed the doors of these tombs for centuries; then Archaeology, in the person of Professor Mingarelli, the discoverer of this necropolis and now enjoying a well-deserved rest, one day opened the doors of the tumuli, and the dead slowly yawned, rubbed their eyes, and finally got out of their beds and went for a stroll down the Via dell' Inferno, the main street of this city... These citizens, twenty-five centuries old, are invisible but present.¹

In two separate archaeological campaigns dating from 1870 and 1890 Heinrich Schliemann, the German entrepreneur and amateur archaeologist, penetrated an earthen mound in modern Hissarlik and dug through several stratified layers of inhabitation and discovered what he believed to be ancient Troy. In between these two digs Schliemann also initiated a separate excavation of Mycenae and discovered what he believed to be the burial circle of King Agamemnon. Insofar as archaeology demonstrated that myth might hold as fact, Schliemann's excavations of Ilium and Mycenae, Arthur Evans's work at Minos (1900), and Howard Carter's discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb (1922) haunted the development of modernism as much as new technologies might have inspired it.² Acknowledging that the presence of what Colin Rowe and Fred Coetter refer to as a "highly volcanic species of psychological lava" forms the "substratum of the modern city," archaeology serves as an unspoken foundation narrative for the twentieth century, one in which historical time collapses into excavated space and modernism harbors a nostalgia for the future past.³

Long buried cities such as Troy and Mycenae or Rome and Pompeii can be understood as harboring ancient furies that the process of excavation may release into the modern world. This, at least, is the argument that Gabriele D'Annunzio — Italy's legendary poet, politician, soldier, and amorist — proffered in his 1896 play *La città morta* (*The Dead City*). Archaeology functions in *The Dead City* as a pharmakon, that is, both a poison and a cure to social-psychological ailments. In contrast to D'Annunzio's portrayal of ancient Mycenae as a pharmacy containing poisonous drugs, Sigmund Freud interpreted the archaeology of Pompeii, described within Wilhelm Jensen's novella *Gradiva: A Pompeian Fancy* (1903), as exemplifying the release of endopsychic repression.⁴ Despite the opposite curative results of these two dead cities, both D'Annunzio's Mycenae and Freud's Pompeii serve as a loci for atavistic urges and subterranean desires which may be released through the work of the pick. Although archaeology witnessed a rush of excavations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Imperial Rome lay waiting for the archaeologist's pick to penetrate this hardened lava. When Benito Mussolini wielded this pick in order to reveal the Imperial Fora as the symbolic foundation for the Third Rome, he opened up a world in which a world in which *la città morta* threatens to petrify *la città nuova*.

MIASMA

The Dead City presents an archaeologist's struggle against a curse released with the discovery of what Schliemann believed to have been Agamemnon's golden horde. The play was set in view of Mycenae's Lion Gate, near an archaeological site of "rugged rocks" and "cyclopic ruins" that described Clytemnestra's ancient birthplace.⁵ The plot of *The Dead City* involves the dynamics among four characters: the archaeologist Leonardo, his sister Bianca Maria, the poet Alessandro, and the poet's blind wife Anna — D'Annunzio's rendition of Cassandra the prophetess. Soon after uncovering Agamemnon's treasure, Leonardo dresses his sister in the ancient jewels and transforms her into Schliemann's young bride, Sophia Kastromenos, who was photographed wearing the so-called "Treasure of Priam" discovered in Troy.⁶ When Leonardo uncovers Agamemnon's treasure he also reveals dormant incestual drives from which he purges himself by drowning his sister in the fountain of Perseus. D'Annunzio frames this play within range of Medusa's petrifying gaze when he describes Anna's skin as "white as a statue" and portrays Bianca Maria as resembling "Victory unlacing her sandals."⁷ Throughout *The Dead City* and several of D'Annunzio's other writings, human figures metaphorically metamorphose into statues that are unable to resist the slow-moving inertia of ancient tragedy.

D'Annunzio rendered a tacit critique against archaeology in *The Dead City* that he explicated more overtly in his 1900 novel *Il fuoco* (*The Flame*) where the main character, Stelio Effrena, describes the "fat Schliemann" as a "barbarian explorer" who passed "the greater part of his existence among drugs behind a counter."⁸ Here Schliemann's two occupations merge into D'Annunzio's dead city across the space of a drug counter that thematizes the archaeological site as charged with pharmaceutical potential. Leonardo describes his discovery as a superhuman dream. He claims that in one instant his soul passed over thousands of years and "palpitated with the horror" of reliving Agamemnon's antique and violent slaughter.⁹ After "breathing the murderous exhalations" of "hidden sepulchers" each day for two years, he confesses his incestuous desires in strikingly pharmaceutical terms: "Now imagine one who unconsciously drinks a poison, a philter, something impure which poisons his blood and contaminates his soul..."¹⁰ Although archaeology was supposed to cure Leonardo of his long-suffering passion for ancient artifacts, it assumes a toxic role. Bianca Maria laments that the reddish dust of the agora penetrates "blood like a poison" and Alessandro worries that "the earth he digs in is malignant; it seems that exhalations of monstrous crimes still arise from it."¹¹ Agamemnon's, Cassandra's, and Clytemnestra's terrible fates have remained dormant in the dry earth only to be revived in Leonardo's moist aspiration.¹² The archaeologist succumbs to a toxic philter, drowns his sister to cleanse himself of impure desires, and places her

body in the deepest sepulcher. This sacrificial murder and ritual interment thematizes archaeology as a reversal of the psychoanalytic process, a process wherein clinical excavation should perform as a cure rather than as a poison.

PRESCR(Y)PTION

The archeological cure Freud discovered in *Gradiva* involves administering a correct dose of ancient ruins in order to reach a happy ending. Freud became fascinated with the story of Dr. Norbert Hanold, a bachelor archaeologist who fixated upon a pair of feet captured in the plaster cast of a bas-relief (from the Vatican Museum) that depicts a Greek maiden whose pedestrian gait results in the book's title. With the name *Gradiva* serving as an epithet for the "the girl splendid in walking," the marble maiden strolls out of Hanold's fantasies and into the flesh-and-blood body of a childhood friend named Zoë Bertgang who mysteriously appears to the archaeologist in a chance encounter among the ruins of Pompeii.¹³ Eventually Hanold, who mistook Zoë for *Gradiva*'s living ghost, awakens from his delusion, discovers his error, and becomes engaged to his childhood friend. In writing *Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's 'Gradiva'* (1906) Freud usurped Jensen's authorship within his own exegetical study by incorporating a charming but somewhat insignificant novella into his own literary monument. From Jensen to Freud, *Gradiva* continues to wander into paintings and writings by André Breton, André Masson, and Max Ernst as well as into the Surrealist gallery in Paris named in her honor. She survives in contemporary history and theory through Sarah Kofman's and Anthony Vidler's discussions on the uncanny, across Victor Burgin's and Emily Apter's work on fetishism, and into Hélène Cixous's and Jean Baudrillard's critique of psychoanalysis.¹⁴

Although Freud placed Zoë in the role of the analyst, I see the buried city of Pompeii as having assisted in releasing the delusions that led toward Hanold's recovery.¹⁵ Sarah Kofman, a learned scholar on Freud's preoccupations with the visual arts, describes this city in a mixed curative light:

Pompeii is at once a new and ancient city, burned by light and sun but also cloaked in a grey smoke and submerged in ashes and lava — a dead city but also the city of initiation into the mysteries of life and love, as the surviving frescoes attest; a city of two languages, that of the living who speak German, and that of the dead who speak Latin and Greek or maintain an empty silence. This duplicity makes Pompeii the epitome of the city of dreams, a city in which the hero is between consciousness and unconsciousness and, having fled the return of his erotic desires, encounters love, which is one with life. It is a treacherous city which functions like a pharmakon (in the Derridean sense), for those who sojourn there seem to be strange and enigmatic in nature, whether dead or alive, woman or man, ghost or spirit.¹⁶

Rather than a narrowly defined site on the Bay of Naples, I see Kofman as construing the archaeology of Pompeii within a larger pharmaceutical moira that issues from open trenches. Her specific description of the "epitome of the city of dreams" might just as well apply to the more general condition of archaeological sites or to the excavation of Rome, a city whose tumorous ruins and etiolated monuments threaten the living tissue.

Kofman seeks in Freud's Pompeii what amounts to D'Annunzio's depiction of Mycenae, a dead city that functions like a pharmakon. As mentioned in Plato's *Republic*, the Greek word *pharmakon* carries the paradoxical meaning of both poison and cure, while the ceremony of the *Pharmakos*, such as was conducted in ancient Athens, concerned the city's ritual cleansing during Apollo's annual Thargelia festival. At this time a male and female indigent — who had been maintained as *pharmakoi* at the polis' expense — were led outside of the city limits and put to death.¹⁷ When treated by

D'Annunzio, the excavation of dead cities performs as a venomous philter with pharmaceutical potential, releasing repositories of libidinal energy into the open forum.

Implicit, of course, in reading these two texts against each other is the vexing affinity between the "uncanny" and the "pharmakon" as inverted indeterminants each implying its own opposite.¹⁸ Death by Medusa is uncanny; living beings are transformed into statues, no longer subject to the same temporal decay as is transitory and moldering flesh, figures whose latent animation presupposes a return of the repressed. The statue and especially its double evokes the latency of a ghostly twin, of living burial and repressed drives which may be released through the process of excavation. When placed in the context of modern architecture, such as at the *Stadio dei Marmi* or the *Palazzo della Civiltà del lavoro* statues stand as disturbing witnesses within *la città nuova*.

LAPIDARY

Before W.W.I, Austria had dispossessed Italy of Trento and Trieste, while afterward, Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations ignored her claim to the Gulf of Istria. D'Annunzio attempted to remedy this latter affront by leading a group of soldiers into the port city of Fiume on the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia and establishing a regency there that lasted for sixteen months (12 September 1919 to 29 December 1920). Despite the popularity of this action among Italians, it would be Italy's recently restored Prime Minister, Giovanni Giolitti, who would suppress these seditious activities by shelling the city in an attack that D'Annunzio would term the *Natale di sangue*. This was the dispiriting conclusion to D'Annunzio's utopian government that led him to abandon political life for the pastoral surroundings of Lake Garda and to leave in his absence a caesura for Mussolini to fill.¹⁹ If D'Annunzio's 1919 march on Fiume is the direct antecedent of Mussolini's 1922 march on Rome, then the *Via dell'Impero*, which was planned to open on the tenth anniversary of the fascist revolution, memorializes both the poet's as well as Il Duce's presence in the ancient Fora—Rome's dead city.²⁰ The ruins of Freud's Pompeii and D'Annunzio's Mycenae collapse upon the Roman Fora in a cognitive map of fascism that materialized along the *Via dell'Impero*, today's *Via dei fori imperiali*. As Spiro Kostof's important work on this topic has informed us, the Imperial Fora represented to fascism the grandeur of public ceremony and Roman authority, but buried beneath a layer of buildings, they were not sufficiently visible. To remedy this problem, Mussolini initiated a campaign in 1924 to reveal the ruins buried behind the Capitoline Hill, entrusting Corrado Ricci with the excavation just long enough to dig through a dense housing quarter that covered over 80,000 square meters of land and to uncover the fora of Caesar, Augustus, Trajan, and Nerva. Rapid excavation and construction saw to it that the *Via dell'Impero* was completed in time for the anniversary of the march on Rome, celebrated on October 28, 1932. A thirty by nine hundred meter long cut through the Fora linked the Coliseum with Mussolini's balcony at the Palazzo Venezia while bronze statues of all the emperors associated with the fora lined the new street.

Despite Mussolini's public proclamations in favor of preserving Roman antiquity, as the urban historian Anotnio Cederna argues, ruins and Italy's artistic patrimony were of little interest to Il Duce, who was strongly influenced by Marinetti's call to seize "picks, axes, and hammers" in order to "pitilessly destroy the venerated cities."²¹ For Mussolini and the archaeologists who inspired him

it is always a matter of the old hereditary complex of inferiority-superiority tied to a defunct myth: this sort of inverted utopia which was the pretext for making ancient Rome and its empire materially rise again, that *like a petrifying Medusa*, has periodically paralyzed Italy's cultural development.²² (emphasis added)

Cederna seeks the causes of such archaeological delirium under

Medusa's gaze, in ancient mythologies and psychological drives, in the congenital and perpetual "fantasmi italiani" that pass quietly across any political context.²³

In common mythological parlance, Medusa is the Greek deity whose horrifying visage could petrify those who returned her gaze. In Freudian terms, the Gorgon's decapitation is equivalent to the act of castration, while her face engages the concept of apotropaism made explicit by her appearance on Athena's aegis, the *Gorgoneion*.²⁴ This supplementary reading of the Gorgon focuses on the libidinal potential of archeology that D'Annunzio describes in *The Dead City*. The fountain of Perseus located in this dead city not only refers to the mythological founder of Mycenae, but also to his heroic role in slaying the Gorgon. When read in concert with each other, Freud and D'Annunzio present the Gorgon as a symbolic analogue to dead cities and the petrifying outcome of resurrecting Rome's imperial past. Her dominions are the ravaged urbs, the barren countryside, and especially, archaeology's autochthonous city of bones and stones. For the purposes of architecture and urbanism, then, Medusa serves as the *de facto* goddess of ancient ruins, exhumed statues, sculpture galleries, and lapidated worlds—her powers of petrification allowing her to transform living urban centers into dead cities inhabited by immobile statues.²⁵

While Freud possessed a little statue of Athena, replete with the *Gorgoneion*, D'Annunzio displayed copies of Medusa's head throughout the Vittoriale, his last residence located on Lake Garda in northern Italy. He appears in the *Stanza della musica*, the *Stanza della Zambacca* (room of the chambermaid and D'Annunzio's "pharmacy"), and she adorns a doorway in this room that leads to the *Stanza della Leda*. Medusa's powers extend into the realms of madness, terror, and ruination that her apotropaic image evokes. D'Annunzio returns her gaze in the *città terribili of Maia*, where he vividly portrays a dreadful urbanity teeming with the refuse of a psychological sewer.²⁶ Within the *città terribili*, the horror, fever, and odor of death flow through rivers of spilled blood. This apocalyptic vision of modernity seeps up through the sewers of industrial cities as the refuse of dead civilizations that wait to be released through the digging for foundations.

According to Cederna archaeology engaged in a "macabre rite" or "raptus" of urban hygiene that cleansed piazze from all of the intermediate urban history separating Mussolini from imperial Rome.²⁷ Couching their claims within historicized propaganda, the Fascists marched to an anti-historical imperative that was led by Mussolini — the state's chief "gravedigger" — imposing in their path a new-old city where ancient monuments emerged from a "botched embalming" in the throes of a "terrible *rigor mortis*."²⁸ One of the official practices within this urban renewal was *sventramento*, a term that engages Klaus Theweleit's understanding of Medusa's effusive head and the woman's expulsive belly as antagonistic to the fascist male prototype.²⁹ As Giuliana Bruno writes, *ventre* are "the maze of plebeian *vicoli*," a snake-like profusion of streets representing historical layers of inhabitation that characterize so many Italian cities.³⁰ *Ventre* also "is the general Italian term for the interior lower part of the body," that includes the underbelly, the intestines, and the womb.³¹ Thus, *sventramento* implies not only the removal of architectural debris from within ancient monuments, but also a literal disemboweling or hysterectomy that eviscerates the urban body. The Medusan body had to be controlled and her stiffening powers reappropriated by the fascist male.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN REVERSE

Speaking prophetically through the voice of Claudio Cantelmo, the protagonist in *Le vergini delle rocce* (1895, *The Maidens of the Rocks*), D'Annunzio described the gross property speculation that followed Rome's new position as capital of Italy after the 1870 unification:

Living in Rome, I was witness to the most ignominious

violations, the most obscene unions that had ever dishonored a sacred place. Like malefactors in the enclosure of an infamous forest, the evil-doers assembled within a fatal circle of the divine city, which seemed as if it could not raise itself anew unless amid so many boundless ghosts of imperial rule...³²

Claudio described a Rome that was threatened by a "malignant whirlwind" of speculative building, a whirlwind that resulted in the desecration of garden enclaves such as the Villa Sciarra, the Villa Ludovisi, or the Villa Albani: sites where "the pick-axe, the trowel, and bad faith were the arms" and a "species of immense whitish tumor" absorbed the city's life.³³ D'Annunzio's written words offer a piquant contrast to Mussolini's comment uttered when he inaugurated the excavation of Augustus's Mausoleum in 1934: "la parola al piccone."³⁴ Likewise, Mussolini's 1925 speech titled "La Nuova Roma" similarly conveys his ambivalence toward Rome's historical fabric:

Monuments are one thing, the picturesque and so-called local color another ...All the sordid picturesque is entrusted to His Majesty the pick. All this picturesque is destined to come down, in the name of decency, health, and if you wish, the beauty of the capital.³⁵

Mussolini's urban eugenics selectively extracted dead monuments from a living fabric and in so doing demolished substantial and viable quarters of housing for the urban poor who were displaced into "healthful" *borgate* on the periphery of Rome. Mussolini sacrificed disenfranchised groups to the aura of the temple through an archaeology that approached the ritual of the *Pharmakos*, displacing potentially dangerous masses from the infertile city into the supposedly fecund periphery, new towns, or colonies, once their revolutionary potential had been exploited.³⁶

The Dead City offers a furtive glance at the past through prescient visions of rubble heaps, multiple sepulchers, and archaeological fragments which also inhabit Mussolini's disinterment of Rome. D'Annunzio's treatment of archaeology in *La città morta*, both a historical and psychological construct, challenges certain theoretical assumptions regarding modernity that are found within the metaphor of this discipline. If excavation entails destruction and desecration as well as clinical examination, then it is not a politically naive practice. The digging of the trench and the ravaging of several time periods in favor of one privileged moment places the archaeological metaphor closer to the avant-garde's militant impulses than where its museum imperative might initially locate it. The relation between modernity and archaeology forms a second argument external, yet fundamental, to the excavation of Rome. The city of luminous fragments, erotic labyrinths, uncanny encounters, and pharmaceutical recipes functioned as a dominant metaphor for the modern unconscious that permeated late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century aesthetics, where factualized myth transformed history into poetic narratives subject to fictionalized propaganda. If as Theodor Adorno stated, "fascism is psychoanalysis in reverse," and psychoanalysis, according to Freud, is analogous to the science of archaeology, then might we not at least query the possibility of fascism as archaeology in reverse?³⁷ Insofar as D'Annunzio addressed the pharmaceutical potential of archaeology in *La città morta*, he also augured Mussolini's excavation of Rome as a reversed psychoanalysis that appealed to the stony physiognomy of statues and released trembling desires into the forum.³⁸

NOTES

¹ Alberto Savinio, *Speaking to Clio*. Trans. John Shepley. (Vermont: Marlboro Press, 1987; 1939), p. 97.

² Jackson Cope develops this argument throughout *Joyce's Cities*, an attempt to explore "the way those ancients we postmodernists call modern imagined the future through the past, imagined

- permanency as that continuing resurrection of sameness which forces or frees history to overlap itself into shapes we call myth." *Joyce's Cities: Archaeologies of the Soul* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981), p. ix.
- ³ Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978), p. 11.
- ⁴ Freud writes: "There is no better analogy for repression, which at the same time makes inaccessible and conserves something psychic, than the burial which was the fate of Pompeii and from which the city was able to rise again through work with the spade." To Freud, "the interment of Pompeii, this disappearance plus preservation of the past, offers a striking resemblance to repression." Sigmund Freud *Delusion and Dream and Other Essays*, ed. Philip Rieff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), pp. 61, 73. In his analysis of *Gradiva*, Freud adjusted an earlier metaphor between analyst and archaeologist, from *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899-1900), to one between unconscious thought and buried ruins. It is an analogy he would return to in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) in which he portrayed Rome as a continuous archaeology that figures the unconscious. Also see Sarah Kofman, *The Childhood of Art: An Interpretation of Freud's Aesthetics*, trans. Winifred Woodhull (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), p. 69.
- ⁵ *The Flame (Il fuoco)*, 1900 trans. Dora Knowlton Ranous (New York: National Alumni, 1906), 189. And set directions for *The Dead City*, trans. G. Mantellini (New York: Brentano's Publishers, 1923), p. 1.
- ⁶ Schliemann dated the golden treasure discovered from his Trojan excavation at the time of King Priam and the Trojan War (ca 1250 BC). But this attribution subsequently has been amended to somewhere between 2500 and 2200 BC. Schliemann made a similar mistake with the "Mask of Agamemnon" that dates from around 1500 BC. See Hervé Duchêne, *Golden Treasures of Troy: The Dream of Heinrich Schliemann* trans. from French Jeremy Leggatt (New York: Abrams, 1996 first published by Gallimard, 1995).
- ⁷ *The Dead City*, pp. 9, 11.
- ⁸ *The Flame*, pp. 189-190.
- ⁹ *The Dead City*, p. 20.
- ¹⁰ *The Dead City*, pp. 45, 47. On the ritual significance of the incest taboo see Paolo Scarpi, "L'edipo negato e la trasformazione del mito: Considerazioni storico-comparative su <<La città morta>>," *Quaderni del Vittoriale: D'Annunzio e il Classicismo*. 23 (1980): 73-99.
- ¹¹ *The Dead City*, pp. 10, 18.
- ¹² *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* explains that Cassandra was the daughter of King Priam, given the gift of prophecy but cursed with never being believed. After the fall of Troy she was awarded to Agamemnon as his concubine. But when the couple returned to Mycenae, they were murdered by Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, who was later killed by her son, Orestes (117).
- ¹³ Wilhelm Jensen, *Gradiva: A Pompeiian Fancy in Delusion and Dream*, p. 148.
- ¹⁴ Cf. André Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 1; André Masson's painting *Gradiva* (1939); Sarah Kofman, *The Childhood of Art*; Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); Victor Burgin "Gradiva," *Formations of Pleasure* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 14-15; Emily Apter, *Feminizing the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and the Narrative Obsession in Turn-of-the-Century France* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1991), p. 184; Verena Andermatt Conley, *Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1984, rpt. 1991), pp. 15, 29; and Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, trans. Bernard Schutze and Caroline Schutze (New York: Columbia University, Semiotext(e), 1987, rpt., 1988). On Max Ernst's interpretations of *Gradiva* and *Gala Dali* see Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge MA: MIT, 1994). Also see Singley, "Moving Solids" in *Monolithic Architecture*, eds. Rodolfo Machado and Rodolphe el-Khoury (New York: Prestel, 1995).
- ¹⁵ The volcano, for example, is a libidinal marker that even provokes Hanold's waking delusions, ceasing to smoke just after he imbibes a "little bottle of Vesuvio," a wine fermented from grapes grown on the lava slopes. As distilled in the volcanic wine, the wandering ashes and poisonous gasses of Pompeii have now been assimilated within Hanold's body as a kind of amorous potion permeating his unconscious with a pharmaceutical fluctuation among delusion, dream, and reality.
- ¹⁶ Kofman, p. 182.
- ¹⁷ Jacques Derrida cites Tzetzes's description of the event. From a *Thousand Histories*, in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981 originally published as *La Dissémination* 1972), p. 133.
- ¹⁸ As Freud writes, "the uncanny is everything related to the representation of death and to the omnipotence of thoughts." Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 17, p. 243. The uncanny evokes similar chemical ambivalence between the cure and poison of the Pharmakon. If, as Lacoue-Labarthe describes it, the Unheimliche is the "estrangement of the familiar," the Pharmakon, in turn, may be considered to be the familiarizing of the strange; in *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 194. Both vacillate between undefined boundaries and function as false mimesis. The preferred site of the uncanny is the home, threatened by the invading stranger. The familiar and commonplace rendered strange and ominous—reverses the location of the *pharmakoi* invited within the city as the strange and ominous turned familiar and banal. Lacoue-Labarthe also writes of the *Unheimliche* in terms of a "Daedalian artifice, in the genre of the 'living statue.'" He notes H. Damisch and P. M. Schuhl on this subject, writing that what unsettles Plato is "simultaneously that the inanimate being should give itself as something alive, and that this (falsely or illusorily) living thing should never be sufficiently alive, that is, it should always let death show through too much (in other words, 'brute' death, the bad death that the sensible world holds—and not the death that marks the 'separation of the soul and the body' as the beginning of the true 'life of the spirit')." The *deinon*, the *Unheimliche* (as the ex-patriation or exile of the soul, as well) is this unassignable, this 'neither dead nor alive,' that disturbs, or always risks disturbing, the fundamental ontological opposition (between the present and the non-present). This is mimesis, the 'disquieting strangeness' of fiction: undecidably 'itself'" (93).
- ¹⁹ cf. Michael A. Ledeen *The First Duce: D'Annunzio at Fiume* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1977), p. vii.
- ²⁰ On the *Via dell'Impero*, see Spiro Kostof, *The Third Rome: 1870-1950 Traffic and Glory*. There is some debate as to whether or not the *Via dell'Impero* cut through the excavated or unexcavated *Fora*. Kostof writes: "By 1932, when the *Forum of Caesar* had been excavated in part, nearly the entire span of the *fora* (over 80,000 square meters) had been dug up. But according to one estimate, as much as 84% of this was covered over in the end by the modern roadway, ...called the *Via dell'Impero*." In *The Third Rome*, 60. Dr. Allan Ceen has told me in conversations that this was impossible because current excavation is revealing artifacts, which would have to have been re-buried in order to be discovered today. Thus the area underneath the *Via dell'Impero* never was excavated.
- ²¹ Antonio Cederna, *Mussolini Urbanista: Lo sventramento di*

- Roma negli anni del consenso* (Rome: Laterza, 1979), p. 24.
- ²² Cederna, p. 30.
- ²³ Cederna, p. IX.
- ²⁴ Cf. Sigmund Freud "Medusa's Head" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), pp. 273-274.
- ²⁵ Jean-Pierre Vernant and Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone, 1990), p. 192. Not only does Gorgo represent a fusion of human and wild animal features, she also may convey gender ambiguity; at times "her chin is bearded or bristly, and, when portrayed in a standing position, she is frequently given male sexual organs." (194) The authors relate Gorgo to the displaying of female sexual organs "demonstrated most clearly by Baubo" (195). Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux write that "first and foremost, Gorgo is a mask, used in many ways: Displayed on a temple pediment, as a bas-relief, on an acroterium or an antefix, her role appears to have been apotropaic as well as decorative....It was also to be found in the form of an emblem on warrior's shields" (190). Gorgo's mask symbolizes the facial convulsions resulting from the kind of frenetic delirium that provoked Heracles to massacre his own children: "the very incarnation of Gorgo" (194). In an inversion of this process, Gorgo's horror "becomes a kind of protection; the danger, now directed against the enemy" (195). Also see A. Furtwängler and H. L. Ulrichs, *Greek and Roman Sculpture*, trans. Horace Taylor (London: J. M. Dent, 1914, rpt. 1898), pp. 58-60.
- ²⁶ *Maia*, in *Gabriele D'Annunzio: Poesie Teatro Prose*, eds. Mario Praz and Ferdinando Gerra (Milano: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1966), p. 112.
- ²⁷ Cederna, VI and IX.
- ²⁸ Cederna, VIII and X.
- ²⁹ Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, trans. Erica Carter and Chris Turner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 4.
- ³⁰ Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), p. 178.
- ³¹ Bruno, p. 173.
- ³² *The Maidens of the Rocks*, p. 28. *The Maidens of the Rocks (Le vergini delle rocce, 1895)*. Trans. Annetta Halliday Antona and Giuseppe Antona. New York: The Modern Library, 1926.
- ³³ *The Maidens of the Rocks*, pp. 64-66.
- ³⁴ Kostof, pp. 270-272.
- ³⁵ Kostof, p. 287.
- ³⁶ See Ferruccio Trabalzi, "Low-Cost Housing in Twentieth-Century Rome," *Out of Site: A Social Criticism of Architecture* ed. Diane Ghirardo (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), p. 137.
- ³⁷ This quotation may be found in the editor's preface to "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gedhardt (New York: Continuum, 1990), p. 118.
- ³⁸ Herbert Marcuse writes: "The return of the repressed makes up the tabooed and subterranean history of civilization." *Eros and civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon, 1966), p. 16.