Image & Critique Image - Thought - Text

13/14 September 2003

Conference Convenor: Sunil Manghani

Hosted by:

Nottingham Institute for Research in Visual Culture, and Postgraduate School of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies, University of Nottingham, UK.



Images surely need no introduction, yet all too often that is what we are inclined to give. So, what *else* might we allow images to say or show to us? The specific intellectual and cultural context for this conference has been referred to as the 'visual' or 'pictorial' turn, which raises the problematic of a purported shift away from a typographic or textual culture to a visual one. The recent trends in fields of image studies, visual culture, and visual rhetoric are important markers of just such a shift in intellectual focus. This interest has inspired a wealth of new and exciting research, as well as effecting a redefinition of theoretical concerns and (inter)disciplinary boundaries, which in turn has brought to light new positions, problems and dilemmas. What role, then, might images themselves play in relation to critical inquiry, and how are we to re-think the inheritance of 'textual' or linguistic modes of cultural and political analysis? In order to examine some of these key issues, and also to experiment with new ideas and modes of thinking and research, I am delighted to welcome here both distinguished theorists from across a range of disciplines, and innovative practitioners whose work encompasses both images and text.

Sunil Manghani September 2003

Conference Overview

Location: All conference sessions, registration, and the serving of refreshments will take place in the Lakeside Arts Centre, University of Nottingham, located at the South Entrance of the main University Park campus.

Registration: Saturday morning registration will take place in the reception area of the Lakeside Arts Centre, commencing at 9:45am.

Sessions: All sessions will be held in the Lecture Theatre of the Lakeside Arts Centre, except the workshop, which will take place in the Seminar Room.

Refreshments: Lunch and mid-session refreshments will be served in the Visitor's Centre reception area in the Lakeside Arts Centre. There is also a café located in the centre which will be open all day Saturday, and the afternoon of Sunday.

Day One - Saturday 13 September

U9:45 — TU:T5	Registration
10:15 - 10:30	Welcome
10:30 - 13:15	Session One: Visual Literacy
13:15 - 14:15	Lunch
14:15 - 17:00	Session Two: Placing the Visua
16:00 - 17:30	Workshop – Figuring Thought

Day Two – Sunday 14 September

10:00 - 11:45	Session Intee: Visual Rhelond
12:00 - 13:30	Session Four: VisualTheory
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 15:30	Final Plenary Address
16:00 - 16:30	Summary & Roundtable
	Discussion
16:30	Conference Close



09:45 Registration

10:15 Welcome

Session One: Visual Literacy

10:30	Opening Address: What is Visual Literacy? And Who Has It? James Elkins (School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA)
11:30	Refreshments
11:45	Magicl Writing and Transformation in Photography Jean Baird (Nottingham Trent University, UK)
12:30	Wundtian Scissors and Kantian Glue Derek Bunyard (King Alfred's College, Winchester, UK)
13:15	Lunch

Session Two: Placing the Visual

14:15	Placing and Encounter: Visual Culture's Geographies Gillian Rose (Open University, UK)
15:00	Image, Text, Context and Controversy Alan Schechner (Savannah College of Art and Design, USA)
15:45	Refreshments
16:00	Two Parallel Sessions:
[1] Lecture Theatre 16:00 - 17:00	Two Ways of Seeing - A Confrontation of 'Word and Image' in My Name is Red Feride Çiçekoglu (Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey)
[2] Seminar Room 16:00 - 17:30	Workshop: Figuring Thinking - an exercise in alternative pedagogy!

Sunday 14 September

Session Three: Visual Rhetoric

10:00 The About to Die Image and Journalistic Subjunctivity

Barbie Zelizer (University of Pennsylvania, USA)

10:45 The Speed of Immanent Images: The Dangers of Reading Photographs

Kevin DeLuca (University of Georgia, USA)

11:45 Refreshments

Session Four: Visual Theory

12:00 Cinema All the Way Down

Jon Beller (University of California, Santa Cruz, USA)

12:45 Outside of Place and other than Optical

Jessica Dubow (University of Nottingham, UK)

13:30 Lunch

(Screening: [1] Letters in Red by Rodrigo Velasco, and [2] results of the Workshop)

14:30 Closing Address: Drawing Desire

W.J.T. Mitchell (University of Chicago, USA)

15:30 Refreshments

16:00 Roundtable Discussion

Chair: Marquard Smith

16:30 Conference close

Session Information

The conference sessions are organised around four broad, and undoubtedly interlacing themes: (I) **Visual literacy** – an enquiry into what this mode is and who can lay claim to it, as well as, how such a mode of engagement can be understood to contribute to critical theoretical debates; (2) **Placing the Visual** – a consideration of the relation of images to 'things', and the interface of images, texts and contexts; (3) Visual **Rhetoric** – questioning the role images and the 'visual' play in the understanding and use of critical and cultural theories, including how we might understand images in, and as the writing of philosophy and history; (4) **Visual theory** – to consider the status and efficacy of visual theories following the recent and rapid growth in teaching visual culture and critical art history. The conference will close with a **Summary and** Roundtable Debate in which all panellists will join for a final question and answer session to debate the themes and issues raised throughout the conference.

In addition, as part of a consideration of visual literacy, and using images as a 'practice of thought,' the conference includes a **Practical Workshop**, *Figuring out Thinking*, in which participants will experiment with image manipulation techniques to form critical image constellations.

Session One: Visual Literacy

What is Visual Literacy? And Who Has It?

What should count as visual literacy – the equivalent to the 'ordinary' literacy that is universally taught in colleges – for every college student, whether their subject is arts, science, or medicine? What images should be known to everyone who claims to be an educated participant in contemporary society? What methodologies, what strategies of interpretation should comprise the lingua franca of a visually articulate culture? This lecture frames the problem historically and pedagogically and provides some tentative answers.

James Elkins is Professor of Art History, Theory and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the author of numerous books and articles, his writing focusing on the history and theory of images in art, science, and nature. Some of his books are exclusively on fine art (What Painting Is; Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?). Others include scientific and non-art images and archaeology (The Domain of Images; On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them), and some include natural history as well (How to Use Your Eyes). Recent books include: Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Texts; Pictures and Tears.; and Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction.



Magic! Writing and Transformation in Photography

This presentation is an attempt to develop an idiomatic account of the development of technologies of illusion, and cultural forms of magic that culminate in the invention of photography, by way of Muybridge, Marey & their equestrian adventures as they chart movement in the spasm between the moment and the long slow gaze. The topic evolves in correspondence with a theme in my own artwork that has surfaced at various points over a period of about twelve years; the hieroglyphic trace of the object/image in the photograph, its transformation as it approaches the condition of writing. The paper is the site of conflicts of critical intention as they interpenetrate with photographic practice, as I foolishly try to recuperate the notion of 'magic' in a more positive way, as an unmasking of representation in the very temporary suspension of reality that sometimes occurs in the encounter between the spectator and the photograph when language has momentarily left the scene.

Jean Baird is an artist, occasional author and lecturer.

She graduated in Fine Art at Glasgow School of Art and has subsequently worked, studied and exhibited in both Britain and the United States.

Wundtian Scissors and Kantian Glue

This paper proposes two alternative figurations for critique's relationship to its objects, other than that of gender, reflecting two different conceptions of the objects themselves and the nature of agency within critical reflection. In reaching towards these, the phenomenon of *ekphrasis* – the description of visual experience by means of words – is used to introduce issues relevant not only to this paper but to the general aims of this conference. Principal amongst these are questions of epistemology and the nature of critique itself. Even if critical thinking does not necessarily involve language, it is hard to understand how a linguistically-bound culture such as our own can sustain response to critical interventions outside of this verbal matrix. However, while this may be true of reception in general as currently understood, the production of critical interventions themselves – irrespective of medium – involves agents transacting the transfer of objects from the private to the public domain and vice versa. The two figurations developed in the paper suggest how this process might be articulated, and its epistemological consequences.

Derek Bunyard is Field Leader in Education Studies (Early Childhood) at King Alfred's College, Winchester. Previous work has been in Advertising before joining King Alfred's, and since then in Film Studies, and Art & Design with particular responsibility for photographic studies. His present post allows him to pursue interests in representation, aesthetics and philosophy.

Session Two: Placing the Visual

Placing and Encounter: Visual Culture's Geographies

The literature on visual culture most often locates its claim to be critical in its exploration of the effects of an image. This paper takes that starting point seriously and argues that most discussions of visual culture do not follow through its implications.

The paper argues that the effects of images are located in the people who see them, and that discussions of 'our' visual culture need to explore much more carefully the effects of particular images on particular people. Critical work also needs to explore more carefully the importance of where images are sited and seen, since spaces of display are also fundamental to the effects of visualisations. Specific spaces have their potentialities variously mobilised by the subjects who move through or inhabit them, and their geometries, and their power, are complex and overdetermined.

The paper also argues that these demands apply to the work of those of us who write about visual culture as its critics. We need to think more carefully about how we write and to what effect, and part of that should entail a reflection on where we do various kinds of critical work.

Gillian Rose is Senior Lecturer in Geography at The Open University. She has previously taught cultural, social and feminist geographies at the Universities of London and Edinburgh. Her research interests are currently focussing on how various photographs are 'done' by different viewers in different places, including how a collection of Victorian photos have been archived and exhibited, and how family photographs are worked with in houses and beyond.

Image, Text, Context and Controversy

Against the backdrop of what Norman G Finklestein has called a "Holocaust Industry". I have attempted to demythologize the Holocaust, thus making it again a living demon with which to struggle. My artwork, which deals largely with issues of Holocaust representation became the source of much controversy when it was exhibited at the exhibition Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art. (2002), organized by The Jewish Museum in New York. In this paper I wish to address a number of issues brought up by these works in the context of that exhibition. In doing so I wish both to interrogate these artworks as a way of analysing how images work, as well as to justify my use or manipulation of Holocaust imagery as legitimate, specifically in relation to some of the attacks made about the work.

Other issues I will address include: Issues of cultural ownership (who owns and may use Holocaust images and to what ends?); how images are 'read' specifically in relation to work that exists at the intersection of art, history and politics?; and the relationship between art, criticism, theory and practice in the context of my work.

Alan Schechner is an English born artist living and working in Savannah Georgia. He has lived and worked as an academic and artist in England, Luxembourg and the United States and lived in Israel for eight years where he both volunteered to serve in the army and worked for a number of years in Arab-Jewish relations. His artwork which has been exhibited and discussed internationally deals with a range of social issues including the Holocaust, obscenity and memorialisation and his contributions to the Mirroring Evil exhibtion at the Jewish museum last year generated widespread controversy. He is currently working on a number of projects including a synchronized swim about the Holocaust and an internet based project looking at issues of repressed histories and memorialisation. At present he is exhibiting work in Atlanta and Madrid, and will exhibit work in the Myth of *Nations* exhibition at the German Historical Museum in Berlin in 2004. An extended interview with him conducted by Dr Allesandro Imperato will appear in the upcoming volume of the journal Third Text.

Two Ways of Seeing - A Confrontation of 'Word and Image' in My Name is Red

This paper focuses on two ways of seeing, taking as its frame of reference the novel Mu Name is Red. bu Turkish author Orhan Pamuk, winner of the 2003 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. This book is important for visual culture since it highlights issues of representation in a comparative context. Pamuk's anachronistically created characters confront each other on ways of seeing in sixteenth-century Istanbul, when it was the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The visual narratives of Ottoman miniature painting are elaborated in comparison with the contemporary Renaissance art, unfolding the differences in the depiction of faces in particular. My Name is Red, which appears to be a detective and love story, is interesting not only for the identitu of the murderer but for the reason of murder. which is none other than what has come to be known as the confrontation of 'word and image'. In this sense, the story is also a contemporary tale, dealing with the concepts of representation and resemblance, iconoclasm and fundamentalism in the context of 'East and West'. Italy serves the pivot of the compass defining the scope of this presentation, joining Netherlandish painting and Ottoman miniature tradition at a common juncture. Both ways of seeing will be traced through the sixteenth century, from Hieronymus Bosch to Pieter Bruegel on the one hand and from Bihzad (the master of Persian miniature) to Nakkas Osman (the chief miniaturist of the Ottoman Palace during the second half of the second century) on the other. My Name is Red provides the framework for this journey, with implications for today.

Feride Çiçekoglu has a Ph.D. in architecture (University of Pennsylvania). She has developed a professional interest in literature and cinema after her years as a political prisoner, during the military junta of 1980 in Turkey. Her autobiographical novella, adapted for screen by herself, was made into a film *Don't Let Them* Shoot the Kite which won a number of national and international awards, including *Prix de Public* at Cannes International Film Festival (1989). Since then she has written or contributed to a number of screenplays for documentaries and full-length feature films, such as Journey to Hope (1991 – Academy Award for Best Foreign Film), The Other Side of the Water, The House of Angels, and she has published short stories and novellas which have been translated into several languages. Her latest publications include 'A Pedagogy of Two Ways of Seeing, Journal of Aesthetic Education (2003), and 9/11 New York-Istanbul (2003), which is a bilingual edition. Currently, she is directing the graduate program in Visual Communication Design at Istanbul Bilgi University.

Session Three: Visual Rhetoric

The About to Die Image and Journalistic Subjunctivity

This paper examines the ways in which photographic images have instantiated themselves in Western journalism, both in its coverage of events as they happen and in the recycled knowledge that journalism provides in helping publics to remember events over time. Tracing the utilisation of one particular kind of photograph - photographs of individuals about to die the paper shows how images of people facing their impending death have been imported from artistic representations of the crucifixion and other memorable deaths (among them Socrates and General Wolfe) to depict a wide range of contested and complicated news events in the public sphere. From the assassinations of U.S. presidents, the Holocaust, and Vietnam to the Intifada and September II, the about-to-die moment has surfaced repeatedly in Western journalism, becoming one of the favored visual tropes by which journalists depict war, assassination, atrocity, and geopolitical strife. It is argued that the intrusion of the about-to-die image in journalism illustrates a subjunctive voice of visual representation, and offers a space in which hypothesis, imagination, and conditionality work both against the photograph's referential force and its symbolic meaning. It is an oppositional space to that of journalism, undermining news value by laundering, softening, and rendering contingent complicated events in the public sphere.

Barble Zelizer is the Raymond Williams Professor of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. A former journalist, Zelizer has authored or edited seven books, including the award-winning Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye, Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memoru; and Journalism After September I I (with Stuart Allan). A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Freedom Forum Center Research Fellowship, and a Fellowship from Harvard University's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, Zelizer is also a media critic, whose work has appeared in *The Nation*, the *Jim* Lehrer News Hour, Newsday, and Radio National of Australia. She is presently working on a book on aboutto-die photographs and journalism.

The Speed of Immanent Images: The Dangers of Reading Photographs

As a field, rhetoric has yet to encounter images/ photographs. Our studious gazes at images are always askew, filtered through the terministic screens of old habits, old practices, old concepts. Through recourse to historical context, morality, and transcendent theory we reduce the rhetorical force of images to meaning, domesticating them for our studies. As habits of reception and modes of perception are transformed, our habits of analysis are challenged. In a world moving at the speed of images, criticism premised on the gaze, sustained attention, focus, rationality, and depth of research is rendered archaic. Criticism seeking the rhetorical force of photographs oscillates/vibrates with two tasks facing the intractable immanence of this photograph in its absolute particularity and describing the world called into being by this photograph as part of the public discourse of an image-centric media matrix. These tasks call on us to invent a rhetorical criticism of images that is imbued by images - a criticism premised on speed, distraction, and glances.

Kevin DeLuca is Associate Professor in the Department of Speech Communication and the Institute of Ecology at the University of Georgia. He is the author of *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, and numerous essays on visual rhetoric, critical theory, and the virtues of violence.

Session Four: Visual theory

Cinema All the Way Down

This paper places the social relation known as the image at the centre of contemporary metaphysics and epistemology. It argues that the intensification of image technologies underpins structuralism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism and (post)modern political-economy. These discourses do not explain the image but rather can themselves be explained with reference to the image as the emergent interface between the material exigencies of late capitalist social organisation and human bodies.

Jon Beller works on visuality and the political economy of culture and is currently a Research Fellow in the Department of History of Consciousness, University of California, Santa Cruz. His forthcoming books are Acquiring Eyes: Philippine Visuality, Nationalist Struggle, and the World-Media-System, and The Cinematic Mode of Production:Towards a Political Economy of the Society of the Spectacle.



Outside of Place and other than Optical

Schoenberg never completed his most famous opera, 'Moses and Aaron'. For an important structural reason: the logic of the libretto could not be reconciled with the musical score. But this has a deeper implication. In the last minutes of the opera, Moses, the Hebrew patriarch, does not sing. Against a muted orchestration, he simply declares: 'O word, Thou word that I lack'. If Moses is unable to find the means to convert affective substance into language and representation, it also hints – analogically – at the theoretical distinction between the perceptual and the specular, between the sensual, phenomenal body and its formal, abstractive fulfilments. This paper explores these distinctions in context of a Judaic philosophic tradition and its conceptual links to the notion of nomadic mobility. Looking at the itinerant figure of Walter Benjamin the question it poses is this: How may we see the anti-optical as an expression of the subject freed from the imperatives of territory and territorial identity? How does the Judaic injunction against visual presence relate to the perceptual discontinuities of the mobile body? In short, if we understand spatial mobility as an experience that cannot be incorporated by a simple adaptation of thought (or cognition and representation) how may we see a 'Jewish eye' as introducing a radically critical visual regime: one located outside a culture of specular presence as outside the site of the sedentary?

Jessica Dubow is a Research Fellow in the School of Geography at the University of Nottingham, where she is writing a book about the relationship of geography to philosophy within a Jewish intellectual tradition. She has also lectured in art history, and aesthetic and cultural theory at the University of the Wilwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Drawing Desire

W.J.T. Mitchell is Gaylord Donnelley Distinguished Service Professor of English and Art History at the University of Chicago, and editor of the journal *Critical* Inquiry. His books include: Iconology; Picture Theory; Art and the Public Sphere; Landscape and Power; The Language of Images; and The Politics of Interpretation.

Summary & Roundtable Debate

A final question and answer session will be introduced and chaired by Marquard Smith. All panellists will join to debate the themes and issues raised throughout the conference.

Marquard Smith is Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture in the School of Art and Design History at Kingston University, where he runs the Masters programme in Art History, and is busily putting together a new Masters programme in Visual and Material Culture to begin in 2004. He is a Founder and the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Visual Culture, and carries out research at the interface between visual culture and the medical humanities.

Practical Workshop

Figuring Thinking - an exercise in alternative pedagogy!

Session Leader: Derek Bunyard, King Alfred's College.

The workshop has been developed by a team from King Alfred's College, and is based on a range of pedagogical interventions that seek to provide alternative media experiences from which one can manipulate and draft responses to academic work. Participants will receive several presentations explaining the nature and purpose of the work so far attempted at King Alfred's, and they will be invited to take part in related activities and simulations. A review at the end of the workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to interrogate in a more formal way the purposes and methods featured in the workshop.



Conference Committee & Panel Convenors

Anthea Callen holds the Chair of Visual Culture at the Department of Art History, University of Nottingham, where she is also Director of the Nottinoham Institute for Research in Visual Culture. Recent publications include: 'Muscularity and Masculinity: Dr Paul Richer and modern manhood', Paragraph, Special Edition, vol.26, no. I, Spring 2003; Technique and Gender: Landscape, Ideology and the Art of Monet's Series Paintings', in Anna Gruetzner Robins and Steven Adams (eds.), Gendering Landscape Art (2000); The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique and the Making of Modernity (2000); 'Ideal Masculinities: The Case of Albinus'. in Nicholas Mirzoeff (ed.). The Visual Culture Reader (1998); and The Spectacular Body: Science, Method and Meaning in the Work of Degas (1995). She is currently working on a book, Dangerous Liaisons: Art and Anatomy from Albinus to Freud (for Yale University Press).

Michael Hatt is Lecturer in Visual Culture, Department of Art History, University of Nottingham. He is also Deputy Director of the Nottingham Institute for Research in Visual Culture, and Associate Fellow, Institute of United States Studies, University of London. Recent publications include: 'A Great Sight: Henry Scott Tuke and His Models', in Jane Desmarais, Martin Postle and William Vaughan (eds.), Models and Supermodels: The Artist's Model in Britain (2003); 'Substance and Shadow: Conceptions of Embodiment in Rodin and the New Sculpture', in Claudine Mitchell (ed.), Rodin in Britain (2003); 'Near and Far: Hamo Thornycroft's Mower and the Homoerotics of Labour, Art History, vol. 26, no. 1, 2003; "Making a Man of Him": Masculinity and the Black Body in Mid-Nineteenth Century American Sculpture,' in Kymberly Pinder (ed.), Race-ing Art (2002). He is also co-writing an introduction to art historical methods from Hegel to post-colonialism (for Manchester University Press).

Sunil Manghani is Research Associate at the Nottingham Institute for Research in Visual Culture, and teaches critical theory at the Postgraduate School of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies, University of Nottingham. He is currently writing up his Ph.D. research, which examines specifically 'images of the fall of the Berlin Wall', and more broadly, the role of images in thought and critique. His recent publications are: 'Experimental Text-image Travel Literature,' Theory, Culture & Society, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2003); 'Adventures in Subsemiotics: Towards a New "Object" and Writing of Visual Culture, Theory and Critique Vol. 44, No. I (2003); and 'Picturing Berlin, Piecing Together a Public Sphere,' Invisible Culture, Issue 6 (2003). He is currently collaborating on a book, The Image Reader (for Sage Publications). He is also a co-founder and editor of the journal Situation Analysis.

Jon Simons is Senior Lecturer in Critical Theory, Postgraduate School of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies, University of Nottingham. He is a co-editor of the journal Culture, Theory & Critique, and editor of a special issue on 'Image and Text' (2003). He is the author of Foucault and the Political (1995) and the editor of From Kant to Lévi-Strauss: The Background to Contemporary Critical Theory (2002). Other recent publications include: The Aestheticization of Politics: An Alternative to Left-Modernist Critiques,' Strategies, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1999); 'Ideology, Imagology and Critical Thought: The Impoverishment of Politics,' Journal of Political Ideologies, Vol. 5, No. I (2000); 'Aesthetic Political Technologies,' Intertexts Vol. 6, No. I (2002); and 'Governing The Public: Technologies Of Mediation And Popular Culture,' Cultural Values Vol. 6, Nos. 1&2 (2002). He is currently preparing a new book, *Critical Political Theory in the* Media Age (for Edinburgh University Press and NYU Press).

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Postgraduate School of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies

The School provides a vibrant intellectual environment for both undergraduates and postgraduates interested in studying the rich fields of intellectual endeavour which cover broadly defined areas of critical approaches to literature, culture and society. Teaching and research in the School incorporates innovations at the cutting edge of contemporary scholarship, while also remaining connected to the critical tradition which has evolved since the Enlightenment. There is a regular visiting speaker series which has recently included Chris Norris, Terry Eagleton, Parveen Adams, Malcolm Bowie, Peggy Kamuf, Andrew Benjamin, Sadie Plant, Zygmunt Bauman, Ernesto Laclau, Laura Mulvey, Luce Irigiray and Chantal Mouffe.

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Nottingham Institute for Research in Visual Culture

The Institute is based at the University of Nottingham's custom-built Lakeside Arts Centre, and offers a forum for new and innovative research in visual culture. drawing upon University-wide expertise in visual culture, and with the emphasis upon interdisciplinarity. The Institute was established in 2001 by the Department of Art History, and in collaboration with the Djanogly Art Gallery, the Institute of Film Studies, the School of American and Canadian Studies, and the Postgraduate School of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies.

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