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Artwork: Everydayland as Carefree as Disneyland

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How we keep you coming back for more.

Everydayland as carefree as Disneyland

Evidence of History: Hyperreality and Walt Disney World
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“It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for real itself...”

—Jean Baudrillard (4)

Baudrillard speaks of the nature of simulation and mentions Disneyland by name. Underlying simulation is the concept of the genetic: the ordering of elements to mask an originary position, the process of reproduction. The center, implicitly self-affective and stable, generates the outside, severing the simulation from itself: “No more imaginary coextensivity: rather genetic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation” (Baudrillard 3). The simulation is then both consistent with itself and its origin, which it reinserts in miniaturized form.

Thus is the pattern of history as well, or so says Hegel: “The outcome is the same as the beginning only because the beginning is an end” (quoted in de Man, Allegories 80). It is fair to read the generation of simulacra as a writing of literary texts, in the sense that literature is conventionally suspended from, yet still referentially dependent on, a valuation of historical origin (de Man, Allegories 79). History of literature, literature of history—both have the same structure, which leads to an intriguing question:

Could we conceive of a literary history that would not truncate literature by putting us misleadingly into or outside it, that would be able to maintain the literary aporia throughout, account at the same time for the truth and falsehood of the knowledge literature conveys about itself, distinguish rigorously between metaphorical and historical language, and account for literary modernity as well as for its historicity? (de Man, Blindness 164)

Nietzsche answered this question by equating history with tragedy. The stable Apollo is undermined by the chaos of the Dionysian at origin and end. The genetic consistency of history is then opened by deconstructing the unity between the assertions of presence, easy enough to do given the already open-