

Abstracts

In “Mob Porn,” Jeffrey T. Schnapp traces a speculative history of large-scale group portraiture in western art by means of a reconstruction of the broader setting within which panoramic photographs of human multitudes became graphic highlights of 1930s illustrated magazines. The essay identifies two dominant (and sometimes intertwined) modes for imag(in)ing the formation of the body politic: the *emblematic*, associated with the emergence of symbolic forms out of masses of individuals, and the *oceanic*, associated instead with moments of collective fusion within the framework of the political sublime. The latter informs the practice of panoramic crowd photography whose emergence, evolution, and technical practices are tracked with particular attention to the case of fascist Italy.

Stefan Jonsson’s essay, “The Invention of the Masses: The Crowd in French Culture from the Revolution to the Commune,” provides a detailed examination of a crucial era in the modern history of crowds. From the French Revolution and its earliest critics such as Edmund Burke, through the celebration of the modern urban crowd in Poe and Baudelaire, to the devastating critical attacks on the masses in the wake of the bloody Commune of Paris in 1871, Jonsson traces the shaping of the notion of the crowd in the era of popular sovereignty. Commenting on seminal political, artistic, and literary representations of the masses, Jonsson also notes the importance of the burgeoning social sciences, particularly statistics, in defining this new entity.

Joy Connolly takes the movie *Ben Hur* as the starting point for “Crowd Politics: The Myth of the *Populus Romanus*.” Why is twentieth-century American cinema so fascinated with the Roman crowd? Looking at Roman representations of the *populus*, Connolly explores the ways Roman texts describe these collectivities as not-crowds: as homogeneous, unified, and obedient to their leaders. This is, she argues, a crucial part of the availability of the notion of “the People” for modern theorists of popular sovereignty who seek inspiration in the Roman republic.

William Egginton shows, in “Intimacy and Anonymity, or How the Audience Became a Crowd,” the historical importance of the theatrical audience to the modern notion of the crowd. Examining theatrical institutions from the medieval period to the nineteenth century, primarily in Spain and France, he argues that early modern playhouses, responding to anxieties about unruly spectators, shaped their audiences into the kind of entity that came to worry nineteenth-century crowd theorists. This occurs, for Egginton, along the fault line between intimacy and anonymity. As he writes, “Precisely, in other words, as the rabble (*vulgo*) coalesce and are relegated to a certain negative collectivity, a distance is espoused between the realm of that collectivity (publicity) and an interiority whose depths are theorized as being both constructible and potentially infinite.”

“Sports Crowds,” Allen Guttman’s contribution to the volume, traces sports spectatorship through the centuries, from Greek and Roman games to modern mass athletic spectacles. A distinguishing feature of sports audiences is that the spectators are usually sports *fans*. “They see themselves,” Guttman notes, “as active participants, inspiring the home team with their cheers and demoralizing the visiting team with their taunts.” Guttman explores the ramifications of this psychological identification, showing how collectivities are built on shared affinities, and how this often leads to aggressivity. Although he argues against the idea that such aggression is ultimately cathartic, Guttman notes the importance of such ritual in experiencing the excitement of agonistic contest without running entirely amok.

In “Captive Crowds: Pilgrims and Martyrs,” Susanna Elm provides an outline of the history of religious crowds in western culture, beginning with pilgrimages to Jerusalem in the fourth century, and touching on the Crusades on the way to an analysis of the nineteenth-century apotheosis of

Lourdes as a pilgrimage site. What began as an individual pursuit becomes, Elm shows, a collective phenomenon in the modern era. Pilgrimages are important for crowd theory as they become intertwined with media of communication and reliant on a tension between the modernity of mass mobilization and the ancient lure of the miraculous.

Anton Kaes devotes most of “Movies and Masses” to an analysis of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*. Placing the film in the context of mass uprisings in Vienna, a rise in industrial mass production, and a new culture of mass entertainment, Kaes shows that the movie does not just depict crowds, it also creates the community of moviegoers—heterogeneous and unstable, to the difference of theater audiences—as itself a mass. “Only in the mass medium of film,” he writes, “do the masses become visible to themselves—as spectators.”

The role of the crowd in modern artistic production is outlined by Christine Poggi in “Mass, Pack, and Mob: Art in the Age of the Crowd.” Beginning with a discussion of military painting and early nineteenth-century panoramas, Poggi traces the representation of masses through Manet and Seurat, the avant-gardes of the early twentieth century, and post World War II artists such as Joseph Beuys and John Baldessari. Woven through this story is an account of the importance of media—media of artistic production as well as media of communication—in the creation and representation of the crowd in art.

John Plotz’s lively contribution to this volume, “The Return of the Blob, or How Sociology Decided to Stop Worrying and Love the Crowd,” traces twentieth-century American sociology’s conflicted relationship to the multitude. David Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd* and William Whyte’s *The Organization Man* define 1950s social science as a denunciation of the seductive power of “the social” and its avatar, “the crowd.” How then should we read the success of the

recent return to the social in such critics as Robert Putnam? Plotz's essay responds with a lucid account of the sometimes strained interaction between sociological theory and cultural movements.

Joan Ramon Resina focuses, in "From Crowd Psychology to Racial Hygiene: The Medicalization of Reaction and the New Spain," on two major figures in Spanish crowd theory from the 1930s and 1940s: José Ortega y Gasset and Antonio Vallejo Nágera. If Ortega's *Revolt of the Masses* famously depicts the masses as a quantitative accumulation uncomfortably (and perhaps illegitimately) sharing space with traditional sources of authority, Vallejo relies on medicalized theories of degeneration to paint the masses as the embodiment of a pathological society. Ultimately, Resina argues, "To Ortega's bleak vision of an empire of the masses, fascism opposed a Hispanic empire. . . . The Hispanic doctrine thus became an alternative to the abhorred philosophical snares born of the Industrial Revolution, each, in its own way, proclaiming the triumph of the masses."

In "Crowds, Number, and Mass in China," Haun Saussy outlines some of the major issues in the discussion of crowds in Asia, whose populousness has long been described by westerners as "a mere plurality without individuality, a passive reservoir of labor power awaiting orders from an imperial throne—in short, a crowd of the 'defective' kind." While parsing this western response to Asian crowds, Saussy also offers a nuanced reading of several moments in Chinese imperial history where popular action is described with particular attention to its agency. Throughout, he highlights the importance of linguistic representation of crowds in the creation of a "crowd phenomenon": "The nominalism that would make *crowd* a mere designation in the mind links with the verbal magic that 'does things with words,' for to describe a crowd is, in a more than phantasmatic way, to summon it."

Urs Stäheli's "Market Crowds" explores the use of crowd theory in discussions of financial markets. Beginning with Charles Mackay's prototheoretical crowd treatise, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* (first published in 1852), Stäheli shows how explanations of mass behavior have been used and abused to predict market actions. Stäheli's paper shows why the semantics of the crowd proves to be so attractive for describing financial speculation. If Mackay sees crowd behavior as a crucial element of modern market speculation, he does not address the question of how to deal with the crowd. Stäheli shows how the investment philosophy of the *Contrarians* benefited from crowd psychology. It is here, he argues, that crowd psychology becomes a tool for constructing the ideal speculator.

Charles Tilly's enigmatically titled contribution to the volume, "WUNC," outlines a general theory for the effectiveness of political demonstrations. Participants, observers, and opponents measure demonstrations against an implicit scorecard, he argues, a scorecard that measures WUNC: worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. These elements, in varying combinations, have characterized effective crowd behavior in the modern era. Tilly's essay traces the origin of these values in eighteenth-century social movements and argues for their applicability to demonstrations to this day.

In his essay, "Far Above the Madding Crowd: The Spatial Rhetoric of Mass Representation," Andrew V. Uroskie provides a far-ranging account of the tradition which sees the crowd as a *specific* problem of visual representation, and the way in which this particular question of representing the masses comes to stand in for a more general question of mass representation as such within twentieth-century visual culture. Uroskie examines crowd counting techniques, Soviet constructivism, and popular movies such as King Vidor's *The Crowd*. Ultimately, he concludes that the representation

of collectivities within the visual rhetoric and discourses of artistic modernism was never a secure practice, but rather a difficult and ever-changing terrain of investigation.

Jobst Welge engages with the modernist dynamic of the individual versus the masses in “Far from the Crowd: Individuation, Solitude, and ‘Society’ in the Western Imagination.” Noting the disdain of certain modernist writers for the masses, Welge traces the evolution of such anticrowd sentiments, the public, literary performance of solitude, and the perception and representation of crowds from an “individualist” perspective. Welge’s trajectory from Petrarch to Peter Sloterdijk, through Rousseau, Poe, Nietzsche, and Rilke, provides a detailed analysis of the relation between individuated observers and formations of the crowd. Welge shows here that there is a long tradition of western lit-

erature, both modern and early modern, which expresses the conflicted relationship between the individual and the crowd.

In “Agoraphobia: An Alphabet,” Jessica Burstein’s abecedarian exploration of the psychological ramifications of modern crowds in popular and academic culture, connections are nothing if not unexpected. Allegory, for instance, is defined as Etymologically, wandering outside of narrative. Experientially, talking without being understood by one’s fellow citizens. See *Ténure*.” Burstein’s playful axioms nonetheless reveal the very great extent to which twentieth-century life is saturated with the rhetoric of the crowd, from movies (“H is for *High Anxiety*”) to psychiatry (“D is for *DSM IV*”). Each entry resonates with the fear and attraction produced by public places filled with the multitudes.