next time reading: Minimal Moralia selections; N. Fraser, Chs. 6, 8
- question of the relation of technology to culture with regard to the media -
on the passages - Charles Baudelaire (Verso) "Paris, Capital of the 19th Century"
Anne Friedberg, Window Shopping on the flaneur


epigram - Valery - new relation to technology, space, time re: art

Preface

p. 217 - superstructure evolves more slowly than base
p. 218 explicit positioning of theory in relation to politics
p. 220 work of art is distinguished by its unique location in space and time - this is the "authenticity" of the "original"
  p. 221 that which disappears with mechanical reproduction is "aura" of the work of art -
  reproduction (1) substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence and (2) allows the
  reproduction to "meet" the beholder - in these ways it shatters tradition - especially film [what does he mean by this]
  p. 223 contemporary masses want to bring things closer and to utilize reproduction to do
  so - this makes things lose their aura and presents them to perception as universally equal -
  reality is thus adjusted to the masses and the masses to reality
  p. 224 1st time in history - mechanical repro'd emancipates art from ritual and inserts it
  into politics - functionally
  p. 225 - as art moves away from cult, it increases in exhibition value and today
  photography and film are most suited to this function -
  p. 228 in film the camera presents the performance to the audience and this distancing
  promotes the function of criticism in the audience; identification can only be with the camera
  p. 229 the actor's aura, which requires presence, is gone, along with its "beautiful
  semblance" (p.230) - [but what of an actor's "film presence" ?]
  p. 231 under capitalism, film is not at all revolutionary
  p. 232 - principle of film is that author and reader are reversible positions - e.g. Soviet
  film uses anyone as actor - but capitalism in Europe promotes illusionist spectacles instead
  p. 234 in film the representation of reality by the camera penetrates so deeply that the
  mechanism disappears and pure art results *** READ [What would Adorno say?]
  audience is both critical and receptive because of conditions of collective,
simultaneous experience
  p. 235 - representing the environment thru mech art -
  p. 236 film promotes analysis because what is represented can be easily isolated
  relation of art to technology - art envisions a future that technology enables - e.g. Dada,
  which destroyed aura and p. 238 outrage the public
p. 239 "The mass is a matrix from which all traditional behavior toward works of art issues today in a new form." - [POSTMODERNITY]

p. 239 distraction vs concentration [vs disinterested contemplation of Kant's sublime]

p. 240 - Benjamin's argument against contemplation - perception at points needs tactile adjustment not optical - READ

p. 241- film is received by masses in a state of distraction - this is the elitist critique of film - but such distraction is what film wants - it produces the "absent-minded examiner" or critic

p. 241 fascism = intro of art into politics, culminates in war; war is beautiful [cf. Plato on virtues of the republic]

p. 242 communism answers by politicizing art


p. 227 interpreting art materialistically - abandon contemplative attitude and focus on "critical constellation" in which the past finds itself in the present

  Benjamin connects Fuch's interest in erotica, caricature and technology, all marginalia in relation to art, to a historical materialist position - and mass art, like caricature, evokes the question of its technical reproduction (p.252)

3. "The Author as Producer" (1937)

p. 256 only if a work is "literarily correct" can it be politically correct
p. 257 wants to ask: what is the work of arts position in the relations of production of its time - concern with technique
  - literary tendency can be progressive or regressive in technique
p. 258 "we are in the midst of a mighty recasting of literary forms, a melting-down in which many of the opposites in which we have been accustomed to think may lose their force."
  - p. 260 political tendency is counterrevolutionary as long as writer feels solidarity with workers only in attitude, not as a producer - this is "logocracy" [logocentrism]
  - p. 262-3 "For if it is an economic function of photography to restore to mass consumption, by fashionable adaptation, subjects that had earlier withdrawn themselves from it - springtime, famous people, foreign countries -- it is one of its political functions to renew from within -- in other words: fashionably -- the world as it is."