1 *Polycentrism and Seriality: (Neo-)Baroque Narrative Formations*

Seriality and the (Neo-)Baroque

The preface to the second part of Miguel Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (published in 1615) begins with Cervantes's alter ego, Cid Hamet Ben Engeli, insulting an unnamed author from Tordesillas who published his own sequel to the first part of *Don Quixote* (published in 1605). He tells the reader: "You would have me, perhaps, call him an ass, madman, coxcomb: but I have no such design. Let his own sin be his punishment" (1999, II:551). In the final chapter of the book, however, Hamet Ben Engeli warns: "Beware, beware, ye plagiaries; Let none of you touch me; for this undertaking (God bless the king) was reserved for me alone. For me alone was Don Quixote born, and I for him . . . and in despite of that scribbling impostor of Tordesillas, who has dared, or shall dare, with his gross and ill-cut ostrich quill, to describe the exploits of my valorous knight" (1999, II:74, 1117).

Creating fact out of fiction and blurring fictional space with the reader's space, at numerous points throughout the second part, Cervantes's fictitious character Don Quixote meets other fictitious characters who act as if they inhabit a material realm of existence that parallels the reader's own. Frequently, Don Quixote defends his "authenticity" as the "real" Quixote to individuals who are familiar with another version of the Quixote story: that dealing with the adventures of the "false" Quixote represented in the *Second Part of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*, the Tordesillan sequel to Cervantes' original book. Throughout Cervantes' own sequel to *Don Quixote*, his protagonist continually defends his authenticity to characters in light of the other Quixote. For some characters who have read the Tordesillan sequel, however, it is the "imposter" who constitutes the authentic version of the hero Don Quixote.[1]

Issues of authenticity and the copy recur frequently in *Don Quixote*. In the latter section of part II, Don Quixote happens across a printing house where he and the owner discuss conditions of production that reflect changes occurring in the seventeenth century. Initially, Quixote engages the printer in a discussion about the Castilian translation of the Italian *Le Bagatelle*. As author and translator of the book, the printer is drawn into Don Quixote's queries regarding the validity and authenticity of the translated version with respect to the Italian original (1999, II:62, 1042). In addition to deliberating on artistic issues regarding originality, the two exchange opinions about sales abroad, and Don Quixote asks the author of *Le Bagatelle* if he printed the book himself then sold it to a bookseller. Informing Don Quixote that he receives 1,000 ducats on the first print of 2,000 copies, the author responds to Quixote's question in the negative, observing that if a bookseller were involved, a portion of the profits would go to him. In his words, "Profit I seek, without which fame is not worth a farthing" (1999, II:62, 1002).

The structure and content of *Don Quixote* reflects the changing cultural conditions that nurtured the production of the book and also witnessed the rise of capitalism and mass production. Cervantes frequently and self-reflexively invites the reader to engage in a dialogic relationship with the novel's characters on issues dealing with artistic production in light of historical and economic transformations. In his analysis of Spanish (and European) baroque culture of the seventeenth century, Maravall refers to a number of radical changes that occurred during the period. At that time, urban populations in Europe rose because of the migration of rural populations into major cities. This shift was instrumental in the formation of what was to become mass culture and the modern era. Folk culture began to transform into new forms of popular culture, initiating the beginnings of consumerism on a mass scale (1983, 82). A new market based on an emergent consumer population led to the articulation of different kinds of art, literature, and a variety of "distractions" and new forms of public entertainment associated with a new leisure class. One of the problems addressed throughout the second part of *Don Quixote* is a problem familiar to our contemporary era: the relationship that exists between the copy and the original, and debates regarding authenticity that emerge as a result. Furthermore, the relationship between the copy and the original is placed in *Don Quixote* within the context of serial form, a phenomenon that manifested itself with great force during the seventeenth century as a result of developing social, technological, and economic infrastructures.

Expressing their seriality in alternate ways and through alternate forms of media, contemporary entertainments reveal a serial logic that has emerged from the contexts

of globalization, postmodernism, and advances in new technology. In the last decade in particular, the nexus between contemporary cinema and other media forms has altered dramatically. Entertainment forms such as computer games, comic books, theme parks, and television shows have become complexly interwoven, reflecting the interests of multinational conglomerates that have investments in numerous media companies. One media form serially extends its own narrative spaces and spectacles and those of other media as well. Narrative spaces weave and extend into and from one another, so much so that, at times, it is difficult to discuss one form of popular culture without referring to another.[2] In turn, this phenomenon has given rise to theoretical catchphrases that are believed to be specific to our era—an era of the simulacra and the fragmentation of "meaning."

Evaluating the different ways baroque and neo-baroque forms articulate their serial and polycentric spaces, this chapter explores the spatial configurations shared by the baroque and neo-baroque eras. It is argued that the serial structure integral to the (neo-)baroque is an open form that complicates the closure of classical systems. Lotman's proposition regarding culture and the construction of spatial formations remains the foundation of the ideas that follow. In the context of the seventeenth century, examples such as *Don Quixote* and Louis XIV's Versailles project are analyzed from the perspective of the articulation of a specifically baroque seriality. It is suggested that economic, political, and technological transformations—specifically, the emergence of capitalism in conjunction with the power of the monarchy—resulted in the production of a baroque aesthetic. With respect to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, through an examination of cross-media variations such as the *Alien* serials, consideration is given to issues of economics and globalization. Likewise, the negative assumptions embraced by some postmodern models are viewed through the lens of the neo-baroque. Rather than interpreting the serial logic of contemporary entertainment media as the product of an era steeped in sterile repetition and unoriginality, I will argue that the repetition inherent in serialized form is the result of a neo-baroque "aesthetic of repetition" that is concerned with variation, rather than unoriginality and invariability.

The term "seriality" serves a twofold function. First, it relates to the copy that seeks to reproduce, multiply, or allude to versions of an "original." Second, it suggests the general movement of open (neo-)baroque form. The articulation of the latter form of seriality—especially since the twentieth century—encompasses the series, serial, and sequel.[3] Historically these three forms have developed distinct formal configurations, particularly in more recent times. More recently, however,

the distinctions between them have progressively blurred, highlighting a neo-baroque polycentrism.

Globalization, Seriality, and Entertainment Media

Currently we are immersed in an information age that Jim Collins observes is characterized by new forms of "techno-textuality" (1995, 6). As will be argued further in chapters 2 and 3, this techno-textuality has resulted in new forms of textuality and audience reception; from the perspective of seriality, however, it is driven by technologies that highlight the reproducible nature of the neo-baroque. Audiovisual technologies such as cable television, the VCR, laser disks, DVDs, VCDs (video compact discs), CDs, computers, the Internet, and digital television all highlight our epoch's heightened obsession with the copy. Our VCRs, VCD recorders, and DVD recorders involve technologies that allow us to record and keep copies of our favorite films or television shows; our CD burners can burn copies of cherished computer games or audio CDs; videos and DVDs permit audiences to repeat viewings of recent or older films; cable allows us continual access to repeats of films and television shows that span the history of the cinema and television; and digital television promises a database that will provide access to multiple entertainment formats ranging from films to computer games and the Internet.

The "copy" dimensions of seriality are manifested in the production of serials that seek to reproduce the basic narrative premise of specific stories. Not only has the sequel become a phenomenon associated with contemporary Hollywood cinema, but also in recent decades audiences have been exposed to an increase in story and media crossovers, one that reflects a new aesthetic that complicates classical forms of narration. Batman, like Superman (figure 1.1), began as a character in a comic-book serial in the late 1930s then was accompanied by media crossovers into films in the 1940s and television in the (in)famous 1960s series. More recently, however, the cross-media serialization of Batman has become more extreme. In addition to its multiple comic-book variations (*Batman*, *Detective*, *Shadow of the Bat*, *Legends of the Dark Knight*, *Gotham Nights*, and occasional crossovers into *Robin*, *Nightwing*, and *Catwoman*), the Batman story has also found a popular form of expression in four blockbuster films and numerous computer games. Other serial productions have followed suit. The computer game *Tomb Raider* continued its story in its game sequels and then migrated its story space into two blockbuster films and a comic-book series. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

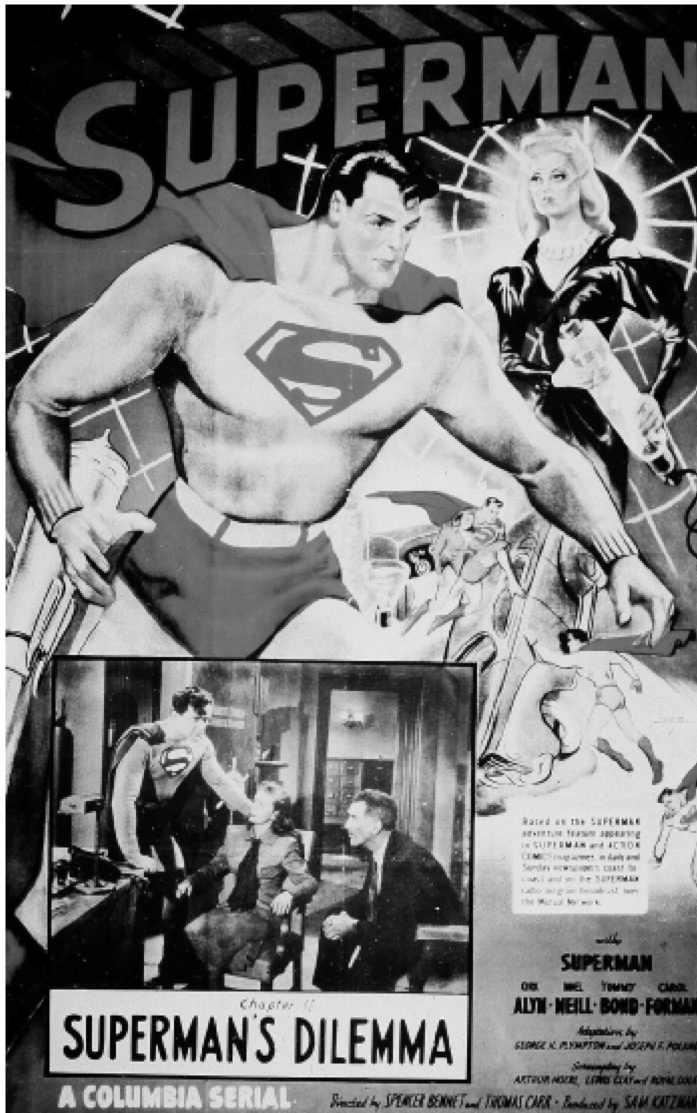

Figure 1.1 An early example of a Superman media crossover: A poster for the B-film serial *Superman's Dilemma* (1948). By permission of The Kobal Collection.

began as a film; its story possibilities expanded into the popular television series, which produced the spin-off *Angel*—and both television series inspired their own comic-book serials. Paul Verhoeven adapted the novel *Starship Troopers* to film in 1999; it then became a digitally animated television series and, more recently, a computer game. In these few of many possible examples, narratives are not centered or contained within one enclosed, static structure (in one film or one comic book). Instead, stories extend beyond their formal and media limits, encompassing rhythmic motions that intersect characters and stories across media. The spatial formations of narratives reveal polycentric movements driven by a like-minded polycentrism from the perspective of economics, in particular, the context of globalization.

The meaning of the word "globalization" is as multifarious and debated as that of the term "postmodernism." Yet certain key concepts recur in any definition of the term. In particular, globalization implies the "expansion of world communication through technological means" and of the "world market through economic means"; cultural theorists such as Fredric Jameson view postmodernism and globalization as being closely intertwined: The logistics of the latter gives rise to the former (Anderson 1998, 62). In the culture of late capitalism, multinational corporations have extended their production to a global level. For Jameson, who identifies postmodernism with a new stage of capitalism, "globalization is a communicational concept which masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings" (1998b, 55). In particular, since the 1980s, national markets have been integrated into an expansive system of economics that spans and connects the globe through transnational corporations whose concern for capital extends across multiple countries (1998b, 57).[4] According to Miyoshi, globalization and transnational corporatism transform society, culture, and the political into a "commercial program" (1998, 259), and the entertainment industry has embraced corporatism to its financial advantage.

Let's consider this commercial program from the perspective of the Alien franchise. Crossover variations on the blockbuster *Alien* films, which were produced by Twentieth Century Fox, have, for example, proved especially successful. Not only did 1979's *Alien* (Scott) inspire its own film sequels, but the movie's stories also migrated into comic-book and computer game formats. As examples of the sequel phenomenon that marks mainstream cinema, the *Alien* films signal a shift away from a centralized or closed narrative that progresses toward resolution and closure. Whereas *Alien* may have closed off meaning by presenting the viewer with narrative closure in the supposed demise of the Aliens,[5] the Alien narrative was then opened up by *Aliens* (Cameron 1986), *Alien^3* (Fincher 1992), and *Alien Resurrection* (Jeunet 1997), so as to

continue the ongoing battle between humans and Aliens. A brief description of the plots of these films makes the point.

In *Alien*, the crew of a commercial spaceship, members of which are on a mission for an Earth corporation, receive what they believe to be an S.O.S. from a nearby planet. Hearing the call, some of the crew travel out to discover the source emitting the signal. A creature emerges from an egglike form and attacks one of the crew-members, Kane. Returning to the spaceship, the crew soon discovers that Kane has been used as an incubator for a rapidly growing Alien being that proceeds to hunt down and kill all the crew members except Ripley, the female heroine. In *Aliens*, after years asleep inside the spaceship sleep pod, Ripley is saved and revived. Joining a military outfit, she journeys back to the planet of Alien origin to discover the whereabouts of missing settlers from Earth who migrated to the planet during the years that Ripley slept. On the planet, she discovers instead an Alien colony, and the quest for human survivors results in the discovery of a young girl named Newt. In *Alien*^{3}, Ripley, sporting a shaved head, finds herself on an isolated prison-planet. Not only do Aliens again pose a threat, but in this third installment of the series, Ripley discovers she has been impregnated by an Alien; this knowledge leads her to orchestrate her own death at the movie's end. *Alien Resurrection* finds a solution to Ripley's demise. Cell remnants from Ripley's dead body are used to clone a new Ripley, who, as a result of her earlier Alien impregnation, has taken on characteristics of the Aliens. In the course of the film, it is revealed that Ripley has "mothered" an Alien child (who has grown into an Alien mother) who, in turn, has also provided Ripley with an Alien-human hybrid grandchild. Despite the implied closure with which each of the first three films ends, the sequel that follows opens up the "Alien" narrative premise by exploring alternative story dimensions.

It is not in the movies alone, however, that the "Alien" narratives continue. The "Alien" story has extended beyond the film medium, and a serial effect is produced by the migration of the film narratives to the comic-book environment by the Dark Horse Comics company, which produced further "Alien" serials, which, in turn, inspired their own sequels.[6] The comic book *Aliens: Earth War* (1991) begins by undercutting the events that presumed the safety of Newt and Ripley at the end of the film *Aliens*. Both wake some years later having to make their way back to the Alien planet. Meanwhile, in the years they have slept, Earth itself has been invaded by the Aliens; as a result, the Aliens' entire story is redirected, with Earth now the focal point of the action. *Aliens: Book One* (1992) takes place ten years after these events, and the protagonist is now Newt. Earth has found a new religion that involves the worship of an

Alien mother, and amid Alien invasion and chaos, Newt manages to fall in love with a cyborg, thereby undercutting the convention of Ripley's mistrust of cyborgs (Ash in *Alien* and Bishop in *Aliens*). *Aliens: Stronghold* (1994) continues with the cyborg theme; readers are introduced to a talking cyborg-Alien creature called Jeri, who is a "good guy" and has developed a penchant for smoking cigars. *Aliens: Music of the Spears* (1994) explores the Aliens-on-Earth scenario further, with humans discovering a new designer drug, a jelly composed of pheromones, whose scent drives Aliens into a frenzy. This drug is especially popular at rock concerts, and during one of these concerts the Aliens go on a pheromone-inspired killing spree.

Moreover, the seriality of the "Alien" stories is not limited to crossovers between film and comics. Seriality has now slipped into a more enveloping entertainment environment. *Alien War*, inspired more by the comic-book variations than the films, sees Earth itself infested by the deadly, acid-bleeding Alien extraterrestrials. But although influenced by the *Alien* comics, *Alien War* is no comic: It is a live-action tour that individuals can take, a tour set in the underground passages of Leicester Square in London. Accompanied by combat soldiers, paying customers are guided through a military installation's labyrinthine corridors, only to discover that the Aliens held captive in the installation's laboratory have escaped. In this version of the "Alien" story, the audience becomes part of the narrative action, stalked through the dark, smoky corridors by people dressed in Alien costumes; and within this live-action serial extension of the Aliens' tale, it is conceivable that participants can take on the role of Ripley, fighting off the Aliens as they lunge toward them. Similarly, the "Alien" story is revised in the computer game *Aliens Trilogy* and in the deceptively titled computer game *Alien: A Comic Book Adventure*. Even traditional comic-book superheroes are not safe from the clutches of the Aliens. Superman does battle with the Aliens when he returns to his home planet in the three-part comic-book serial *Superman vs. Aliens*, and in *Batman/Aliens* Batman confronts the acid bleeding Aliens during one of his missions into the South American jungle. (Batman also has numerous battles with the warrior predators, made famous in the *Predator* films.) The wealth of expanding narrative possibilities continues to unfold and grow.

All the above-mentioned creative serial extensions of the "Alien" story are, however, closely interwoven with and reliant on economic imperatives of globalization and multinational corporatism that drive current entertainment industries. The *Alien* films were produced by Twentieth Century Fox; in turn, Fox formed a partnership with Dark Horse Comics to extend the film franchise into the comic-book medium and similar partnerships with the various computer game companies that produced the

Alien games and with the Scottish-based group who devised the Leicester Square adventure. Finally, the Superman/Alien and Batman/Alien comic-book crossovers were the result of collaborations involving Twentieth Century Fox (which owns the rights to *Alien*), DC Comics (which owns the rights to Superman), and Dark Horse Comics (which was responsible for integrating the two superhero trademarks). Additionally, for the Batman/Alien crossovers, Dark Horse negotiated a deal between Twentieth Century Fox and DC Comics (Batman's originator), the latter company also being a subsidiary of Time-Warner.

The "relationship between economics and aesthetics" has become crucial to the formal properties of entertainment media: Economics gives rise to new aesthetics (Wyatt 1994, 160). Of course, the same may be said of the relationship between aesthetics and economics that eventuated during the classical Hollywood era.[7] Since the 1960s, however, Hollywood has progressively evolved from a "Fordist mode of production, consisting of the vertical organization of the assembly line factory of studios," to a post-Fordist mode of production reliant upon horizontal organization (Gabilondo 1991, 128). Today, film production is only one component of the economic drive of the conglomerates that dominate the contemporary entertainment industry. The contemporary entertainment aesthetics that emerge from this drive support an industry that has multiple investment interests. In turn, the serial structure that manifests itself in entertainment narratives is supported by an economic infrastructure that has similarly expanded and adjusted its boundaries. Hollywood industry has always been concerned with investing in multiple media forms beyond film products.[8] Since the 1980s, however, the transnational effects of globalization have expanded the film industry's economic interests, shifting economic concerns to the global market (Wasko 1994, 6). In addition to the general global expansion that occurred in the 1980s, changes specific to the entertainment industry were nourished by a transnational climate. As Wasko observes, the deregulation of previously regulated media markets, including cable, the development of new computer technologies and the computer game industry, and corporate mergers that integrated companies with diverse media interests contributed to the emergence of an entertainment industry that not only thrived on investment in multimedia forms but aimed at dispersing multimedia entertainment products to a global market.[9]

Current industry affiliations highlight that the polycentrism that informs the story extensions of examples such as *Alien* is also manifested on the level of cross-ownership or multiple investment interests in various media products. For example, the $180 billion merger of America Online and Time Warner in January 2000 is one of many

conglomerate transformations that Warner Brothers has undergone in the last two decades (as have numerous other "film" companies).[10] With each new change in the conglomerate structure, new possibilities for media expansion become possible.[11] Prior to this most recent merger, Warner Brothers business activities included the 1978 takeover of Orion Pictures, followed in 1986 by the acquisition of Lorimar Telepictures Corporation; on March 6, 1989, Time Inc. and Warner Communications merged to become Time Warner; in 1993 Lorimar and Warner Brothers Television joined forces to become WB Television Productions, followed soon after by the formation of the WB Television Network; and in 1996, Time Warner created a storm by acquiring the Turner Broadcasting System for $7.5 billion. The current interests of the corporation reflect its concerns with diversification. Warner Brothers Television has interests in the WB Television Network and Warner Brothers Television Animation; cable investments include Time Warner Cable, CNN, Home Box Office, and Turner Broadcasting; feature film companies consist of Warner Brothers Pictures, New Line Cinema, Castle Rock Entertainment, and Telepictures Productions; Warner Home Video caters to the home video market; publishing interests comprise *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, *Life*, *Entertainment Weekly*, Warner Books, DC Comics, *Mad Magazine*, and Time Life Inc.; music companies include the Elektra Entertainment Group, Warner Brothers Records, WEA Inc., and Maverick Records; retail interests consist of Warner Brothers International Theaters, Warner Brothers Studio Stores, Warner Brothers Recreational Enterprises, and Warner Brothers Worldwide Licensing; theme parks include the Six Flags and Warner Brothers theme parks; and in addition to the merger with America Online, interactive interests comprise Warner Brothers Online.[12]

Taking one of Time Warner's most successful franchises, Batman, as an example: Warner Brothers Pictures reaps the financial benefits from the successful blockbuster film *Batman* and its sequels; DC Comics continues to disseminate the Batman story through the comic book medium; WB Television produces the successful animated *Batman* series and the futuristic *Batman of the Future*; Warner Brothers Records is responsible for the soundtracks for the *Batman* films, including the highly successful Prince soundtrack for *Batman* (Burton 1989); Warner Home Video releases the film and animation products on video; Time Warner Cable ensures delivery of the "Batman" stories on cable; and Time Warner's online ventures vary the "Batman" tale by offering *Gotham Girls*, an online comic serial that focuses on the Batworld "vixens": Batgirl, Catwoman, Poison Ivy, and Harley Quinn ⟨www.gothamgirls.com⟩. In addition, entertainment industries like Time Warner regularly join forces for limited deals

that act as vehicles of further diversification. More recently, the Burger King Corporation offered a *Batman of the Future* Kid's Meal in a promotional partnership with DC Comics and Warner Brothers; this five-week promotion included eight different toys based on characters from the *Batman of the Future* television series that appears on the WB Television Network.[13]

In all these instances, neo-baroque seriality is the end product of an industry that is driven by cross-media extensions and cross merchandizing. The dynamism and the multicentered narratives that characterize entertainment forms of recent years are therefore paralleled by a serial economic rationale that is concerned with self-promotion. Late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century seriality is the outcome of a marketing strategy that aims at squeezing from a product its fullest marketing potential. Financial risk and gain is reduced or amplified by promoting serial variations based on previously successful formulas in the hope of reproducing their success in sequel or cross-media format. At times this entails affiliations with companies beyond the corporate fold. Ideally, however, major economic benefits are to be reaped when a corporation owns subsidiary companies that can serialize a story franchise and thus extend potential profits across the corporation's multiple investment interests.

Capitalism, Seriality, and the Baroque

The serial formations associated with the seventeenth-century baroque are the product of different economic, social, and technological forces than the serial formations associated with the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, yet globalization provided an underlying impetus for serialization in both eras. Globalization has been viewed by some as the final of three stages of global transformation that began in 1945.[14] Others, however, have argued that the twentieth century did not herald a historical break in relation to capitalist expansionism; the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, according to these observers, merely developed along economic lines that were initiated with the first wave of colonialism and early capitalism that began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Mignolo 1998, 32; Miyoshi 1998, 247). As Miyoshi states, "capitalism has always been international," and changes in global expansion since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been a matter of degree (1998, 268). Whichever position we adopt, during our times, global expansion has reached a level not witnessed before.

Dussel understands the social shifts toward modernity and capitalism that were cemented during the seventeenth century as reaching their point of culmination in

the late twentieth century. He states that, with the abdication of the Roman Emperor Charles V in 1557, "the path [was] left open for the world system of mercantile, industrial, and, today transnational capitalism" (Dussel 1998, 10).[15] Considering his comments with respect to the premise of this book, the baroque therefore finds its point of culmination in the neo-baroque. The seriality witnessed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is the product of "late capitalism," and the seventeenth century nurtured the emergence of capitalism's early stage. We have come full circle. From the perspective of economic infrastructures, both eras signaled radical transformations: The seventeenth century ushered in the era of capitalism and closed off connections with feudalist structures; our own era, from Jameson's perspective, signals not an opening, but a closure whereby capitalism finds its zenith in the shape of transnational corporatism and globalization. As suggested in the Introduction, however, both eras, past and present, signal the emergence of new orders. They are epochs of transition in which the "old" coexists with a "new" that is struggling to articulate its presence with greater force until it finally dominates. At the point of the closure of one circle and the opening of another, where the seventeenth century meets the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the baroque and neo-baroque find expression.

John Beverley has stressed that an understanding of the baroque does not solely entail an appreciation of its status as "style-concept"; a fuller comprehension encompasses a complexity of cultural transformations, one of the most significant being "the transition from feudalism to capitalism," a process that had begun in the sixteenth century but progressed more dramatically during the seventeenth (1988, 28). Seventeenth-century Europe has often been associated with royal absolutism, but the role of nobility, as Munck points out, was far from static during this period, changing enough to be "sufficient to merit a shift or crisis" (1990, 145). The initial shift in the role of nobility began in the late fifteenth century, as monarchs and the church accessed newfound sources of wealth and power. During the sixteenth century, Spain, in particular, emerged as the "first modern European state" (Beverley 1988, 27). The potential for capital growth first accompanied Columbus in 1492 on his return to the Hapsburg kings of Spain, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, with gold from Hispaniola (Burkholder and Johnson 1998, 34). Reflecting the early commercial concerns of European exploration, further voyages to the Americas aimed at reaping the financial benefits of rich mineral deposits of the newly discovered countries. During the sixteenth century, the newly established colonies enhanced the economic base of the Iberian kingdoms. The profits of trade, the mining of gold and silver, the export of

sugar and spices all benefited the Crown's coffers—and its control of parts of central Europe, Germany, Burgundy, and the Netherlands—transforming "Castille into the financial core of the Catholic order in Europe" (Stein and Stein 1999, 53).[16] With money comes power.

The seventeenth century, however, was a financial turning point for the Iberian kingdom, bringing a major decline in revenue that came from the New World. In the wake of Philip II's bankruptcy in 1557 (as a result of wars and excessive royal expenses), further systemic crises occurred,[17] as a new capitalist order progressively superseded the power of the Crown. The "first modernity" has been associated with the Iberian colonization of the Americas. It was driven by concerns with establishing a world empire that was headed by monarchical interests. During the "second modernity" of the seventeenth century, Holland (followed by England and France) became the leader of a new world system that initiated a new economic attitude that laid the foundations for capitalism and the establishment of a new economic world system (Dussel 1998, 11–13). This second modernity, which coincides with the baroque era, establishes a new modern paradigm associated with the "governmentalism or the management of an enormous world-system in expansion" (Dussel 1998, 15).

Unlike Iberian expansion through colonization, Dutch expansion occurred through private capitalist enterprises (the East India Company and that of the Western Indies), founded at the turn of the seventeenth century and later followed by the establishment of English and Danish companies, that were private and driven by mercantilism (Dussel 1998, 27).[18] The aggressive nature of this new Iberian capitalist order was evident in the series of wars that raged throughout the seventeenth century, including the Anglo-Dutch Wars in 1652–1654, 1664–1667 and 1672–1674, and later the French-Dutch War of 1674–1678 (Ferro 1997, 56),[19] all fought for commercial and economic control over colonized lands and the seas that provided the routes to them.

Likewise, during the seventeenth century merchants attained greater social power and independence, a shift that was paralleled by greater monarchical unease with regard to their control over the economy and society (Maravall 1986, 13). For Maravall, the phenomenon of the baroque (in particular, the Spanish baroque) was interwoven with urbanization and the emergence of a mass culture that was intimately intertwined with the emerging capitalist system. European cities developed "corporate autonomy" from seigneurial powers.[20] Similarly, the development of mercantile capitalism in countries like Italy and the Netherlands generated a growth in urbanism (Cohen 1985, 96). In addition to the expansion of the urban population throughout Europe, urban growth was even more pronounced in the colonies. By 1630, 58 percent of the

population of Mexico City were Spanish and in Lima, the Spanish population reached 55% with similar growth occurring in other cities (Burkholder and Johnson 1998, 184).

The changing social and economic dynamic fostered an environment that gave rise to a transformed class structure. A new middle class emerged that included entrepreneurs and shopkeepers (Munck 1990, 181). The seventeenth century is characterized especially by the phenomenon of social mobility, and on the basis of capital gains, vertical mobility in the social stratum became increasingly possible (Maravall 1986, 16). In fact, the extent of the transformation of the class system is visible in *Don Quixote*. Written and published during this period of transition, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is littered with examples of characters who, as a result of monetary gains, live comfortable lives traditionally associated with the nobility. Through characters like Teresa Panza, who recognizes the possibilities of upward mobility that a capitalist structure provides, Cervantes explores the social changes that have occurred to allow economic success to advance one's place in the social hierarchy (Cascardi 1997, 185).

Urban growth throughout Europe resulted not only in new urban planning and building to accommodate the growing urban populations but an increase in everyday commodities such glassware, furniture, clocks, paper, books, and other household goods and luxury items (Munck 1990, 116; Maravall 1986, 11), all of which increased the need for businesses that could produce and meet the growing demand. Likewise, there was growing demand for education, printing, and book production (Munck 1990, 116).

The print revolution that commenced in the fifteenth century was boosted in the seventeenth century by the new economy and a developing urban culture (Godzich and Spadacchini 1986, 49).[21] Print culture became instrumental in the emergence of a specifically baroque form of expression. The expansion of the masses into urban environments was accompanied by the mass production of media, which had been steadily on the rise since the Renaissance. During the baroque era the printing industry flourished: The seventeenth century may not have had broadcast television, the cinema, cable television, and the Internet, but it did have books, paintings (addressed to a new middle-class market), popular songs, commercialized theatrical presentations, and reproducible images (Maravall 1983, 83–85). Since the mid-sixteenth century, printed books had been produced inexpensively and in great quantities, and in the seventeenth century the print industry expanded to meet the market needs of an emerging mass audience, one that included audiences in the new and burgeoning colonial cities of the Americas (Burkholder and Johnson 1998, 236). These new printing infrastructures nurtured the commodifiable possibilities of the copy.

The extent of competition opened up by the burgeoning print industry (and the new economic climate) is reflected in the dilemma that confronted the merchant Giovanni Giacomo De Rossi and his etcher Giovanni Battista Falda. In an effort to win Pope Alexander VII's favor, De Rossi and Falda produced a series of prints, *Il nuovo teatro delle fabriche et edificii in prospettiva di Roma moderna*. The book, begun in 1657 and completed in 1665, showed the new and partly finished buildings of modern Rome—all building projects promoted by Alexander VII (Consagra 1995, 188). Aware of the competitive nature of the print industry, De Rossi petitioned the Pope to grant him a twenty-year copyright not only on this book, but all other publications that were produced from his business. On November 29, 1664, De Rossi wrote:

> Most Blessed Father,
> Giovanni Giacomo de Rossi, printer of copperplates at the via della Pace . . . having published at his own expense and discomfort diverse works and being ready to publish others, novelties never before made because he has to suspect that while he is alive, that as he publishes them, they are copied by others, whom would be the total ruin of this poor petitioner. . . . [Such a privilege] would not be a prejudice to the other printers, but rather force each one to make new images that differed from those of the petitioner. (Consagra 1995, 197)

Although he did not grant the twenty-year protection De Rossi requested on his publications, Pope Alexander did grant him a ten-year copyright.[22] As De Rossi's predicament reveals, print technology not only increased the production and dissemination of texts but created a competitive market and new consumers. Additionally, the preference for elite languages such as Latin was yielding to the vernacular as the language of popular publication (Munck 1990, 289).[23] Production and consumption of published materials were no longer limited to the elite upper classes; publications were now available to the emerging middle and, to a lesser extent, lower classes.[24] Printed texts became available to a wider public and, as Godzich and Spadacchini argue, the "addressee was no longer 'homogeneous' but developed a mass-oriented identity that drew on a variety of classes" (1986a, 54). Emerging forms of popular culture—including chapbooks, street music, concerts, opera, pamphlets, ballads, almanacs, novels, and books of secrets and natural magic[25]—addressed themselves to individuals from diverse social groups. A mass culture began to form (Munck 1990, 271, 308–314).

The open nature of the baroque is especially evident in its development of serials generated by print media. Product demand engendered by new mass and middle-class

audiences created a market for sequelizations of novels such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (including the Cervantes and Tordesillan sequels) and Lucas Rodríguez and Lorenzo Sepúlveda's *Romancero general* of 1600 (Godzich and Spadacchini 1986a, 56). *Don Quixote* also refers to Cervantes's *Galatea*. The priest in *Don Quixote* who discusses *Galatea* is of the opinion that it is an inventive book, but notes that although its author "proposes something . . . [he] concludes nothing"; this problem, he suggests, may be resolved in the sequel that Cervantes is writing (1999, I:63).

Additionally, parts I and II of *Don Quixote* relate numerous stories from other novels that are themselves serialized within *Don Quixote* by being retold and extended across numerous chapters. So familiar had audiences become with exposure to multiple story formations that Cervantes, drawing on the seventeenth century's famed play-within-a-play motif, included numerous story "digressions" in his *Don Quixote* sequels.[26]

Printing presses also facilitated a proliferation of image copies of paintings, sculptures, and architecture, providing artists—and the public—with access to works that previously could be seen only in situ or through rarer print versions that had a limited and more elite and specialized audience. In the mid- to late sixteenth century, the demand for prints had increased so dramatically that it instigated changes in conditions of print production (Hind 1963, 118).[27] Once the possibilities of this burgeoning market were recognized, the new profession of the print seller emerged (Hind 1963, 118).[28] Art markets were also transformed as the production of a new leisure culture industry nurtured their expansion. Art production was no longer purely the domain of princely patrons or church officials. Independent art dealers established shops throughout Europe, selling to and ordering commissions for buyers from a new middle-class market. The emerging social hierarchies embodied in mass and middle-class audiences supported a new economy that included the middle-class art dealer: Copies of paintings and mass-produced images became a successful industry.[29]

Jacob van Swanenburgh was a Dutch artist working in Naples during the first decade of the seventeenth century. One of his specializations was the production of infernal landscapes such as *Seven Deadly Sins* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) (figure 1.2) and *Hell Scene* (Lakenhal Museum, Leyden) (figure 1.3), both of which incorporate recurring motifs like the mouth of hell, demonic creatures, and witches' sabbaths. The infernal landscape had been popularized in Italy by northern European artists like Jan Brueghel the Elder, who, during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, had worked almost exclusively for aristocratic patrons such as the Medici in Florence and the Gonzaga in Milan. The demand for such hell scenes, however, and the altered free market conditions that made possible the growth of small business opened up for

Figure 1.2 Jacob van Swanenburgh, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, c.1600–1610, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (Inv. No. SK-A-730). By permission of the Rijksmuseum.

Figure 1.3 Jacob van Swanenburgh, *Hell Scene*, c.1600–1610, Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal (Inv. No. S.251). By permission of the Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal.

artists like Swanenburgh new opportunities directed toward a new consumer. Working during an era that blurred distinctions between science and magic, in 1608 Swanenburgh faced the dreaded Inquisition, having to defend his choice of subject matter. The Inquisition was especially concerned about the fact that three of his paintings (which the Inquisition had recently confiscated) included witches and demons, some of whom were shown abducting children for suspect purposes. Swanenburgh was asked how he was familiar with such events, whether he had met any witches, and how he knew of the rituals involved in witch worship of the devil (Amabile 1891, 17–23).[30] The Inquisition documents recording Swanenburgh's interrogation are fascinating not only in their revelation of the church's paranoia when confronted with the changing scientific conditions of this transitional period in history (an issue I will return to in the latter part of the book), but in the extent to which they highlight the transformed social and economic conditions of the time.

Reflecting the rise of mercantilism and the shift away from courtly patronage, Swanenburgh stated in response to the inquisitors' questions that he painted and sold his paintings from his workshop, which was near the Chiesa della Caritá in Naples. He exhibited his works on the walls of his shop interior and exterior, and his business relied not on aristocratic patronage, but on individuals who happened to pass by his shop—who, ironically, included "many spiritual fathers" who visited the shop and "said nothing" (Amabile 1891, 62). Swanenburgh explained that an unnamed gentleman gave him a smaller version of a scene that represented a meeting of witches, commissioning him to reproduce the work in larger dimensions (1891, 18). Swanenburgh was already known for producing serial variations of similar scenes (such as *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *Hell Scene*, which repeated images of the mouth of hell but varied the characters and actions that inhabited the landscape). He stated that in addition to the copy he had produced for the client, he had also produced a copy of the gentleman's painting for himself. For the larger version produced for his client, he added characters, such as demons and figures of witches, that he had copied directly from a painting by Andrea Molinari, who had a workshop nearby in a street near the Church Spirito Santo.[31] Recognizing the effects of the altered market conditions, artists like Swanenburgh tapped into the financial advantages of mass-produced popular images.

The phenomenon of seriality and the copy also manifested itself in other cultural arenas. During the seventeenth century operas flourished with the support of aristocratic patrons such as the Medici in Florence and the Barberini in Rome. Operatic productions also adjusted, however, to changing social conditions. Opera productions

sponsored by the Medici in Florence accompanied aristocratic events such as marriages and performances were held in theaters built on the property of the aristocracy. These operas and theatrical productions were performed once—and only occasionally repeated—for the event that they commemorated. In Venice, theaters specifically for the purpose of opera and other performances were constructed for the public and supported by ticket sales, and managers were hired to assemble companies of performers and supply performances for an entire season (Palisca 1968, 119). Palisca explains that this system was so successful that by 1700, sixteen theaters had been built and 388 operas had been performed; for the first time librettists, performers, composers, designers, and stage managers were allowed more than occasional opportunities to repeat their work.[32] Traveling troupes that included performers of the commedia dell'arte also became popular, repeating their performances throughout Europe (figure 1.4). Cesti's *Orontea*, for example, was first performed successfully in 1649 at the Teatro Santissimi Apostoli in Venice then repeated over a period of forty years in cities that included Lucca, Rome, Naples, Innsbruck, Florence, Genoa, Turin, Milan, Bologna, and Chantilly (Palisca 1968, 125).

The popularity of theater that reached a diverse audience made permanent commercial theaters financially viable. In the wake of the commercial success of Venetian theaters, theaters were constructed in cities such as Paris, Madrid, and London, offering performances of commissioned plays composed by authors like Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Lope de Vega (Cohen 1985, 136). Reflecting the transitional nature of the times, the seventeenth century witnessed intense competition between public, commercial theaters and the private theaters of the aristocracy. Culture was transforming and commercial theaters continued to thrive, with construction of theaters even expanding to include lower-class areas (Cohen 1985, 267).[33]

Seigneurial Seriality: Serial Form and Baroque Allegory

Seriality also became a potent strategic tool for the aristocracy and the church in the seventeenth century. For these entities, however, seriality became a method for combating an alternative form of competition. During this transitional time, the power of the aristocracy and of the church simultaneously grew and faltered as capitalism and new social formations began to take hold. The spatially invasive logic that underlies the serial and drives baroque form found one of its paramount forms of expression in the project undertaken by France's King Louis XIV to reconstruct the royal residence at Versailles. Following his ascendancy to the French throne in 1661, Versailles became

Figure 1.4 Comics performing in the Piazza San Marco, Venice. Giacomo Franco, *Abiti d'Uomini e Donne Veneziani*, 1610 (Museo Correr, Venice). By permission of The Art Archive/Museo Correr Venice/Dagli Orti (A).

an obsession for Louis XIV, functioning both as a realm of pleasure and a site of his power. Under the reign of his father, Louis XIII, the château at Versailles was a retreat used for hunting purposes; under Louis XIV's reign, not only had Versailles's territory expanded from 500 to 15,000 acres, but by 1682 it had also become the official seat of the French government (Lablaude 1995, 8–16).

The "world" that was to be built at Versailles over some decades became symbolic of Louis XIV's power.[34] Versailles became a microcosm of Louis's dominance as a monarch who had ensured his nation's control of other European nations and new colonies in the Americas. As Lablaude explains, the two main facades of Versailles served ideological functions. The majestic palace that faced the town symbolized the court and the king's power over the French nation and colonial interests. The private garden was for aristocratic eyes and was emblematic of Louis XIV's "reign over the world in microcosmic form" (Lablaude 1995, 12). Furthermore, Louis XIV merged the emblem of the golden sun rays that he had adapted from his ancestor Charles VI with the symbolism of the Greek god Apollo, "deifying himself in the process" (38). In this respect, Louis XIV also adopted an image that had been associated with the Barberini Pope Urban VIII, and in doing so, he also laid claim to the transfer of Urban's power into his own persona and into the country he ruled.[35] Berger outlines in detail the complex Apollonian iconographic program that the Petite Academie (which first met in February 1663) devised, in consultation with the king, for the decoration of Versailles and its gardens (1985, 22). The emblematic rays of sunlight, especially as associated with the sun god Apollo, became a symbol that appeared in serial narratives throughout Versailles: in the gardens, festivals, interior decoration, paintings, and architecture.

Although physically separated from one another in their distribution, serialized narratives connected by the figure of Apollo integrate statue groups that are interspersed throughout the gardens of Versailles. As in the Aliens examples discussed earlier, key iconographic features (the figure of Apollo on the one hand, and Aliens, cyborgs, and Ripley-style heroines on the other) remain as stable features across the serial web. Narrative form becomes dispersed, because each serial example interlaces across a larger story network; nevertheless, the key iconographic motifs (the franchise) reign in the complex series of stories that unravel along their own distinct paths. In the gardens of Versailles, the *Apollo Fountain* (1667–1672) depicts the story of the sun god Apollo rising from the waters in his horse-drawn chariot at dawn, breaking in a new day (figure 1.5). In the *Grotto of Tethys* (1667–1672), his task as Helios-Apollo completed, he descends—bringing dusk with him—into Tethys's (his wife's) underwater world.

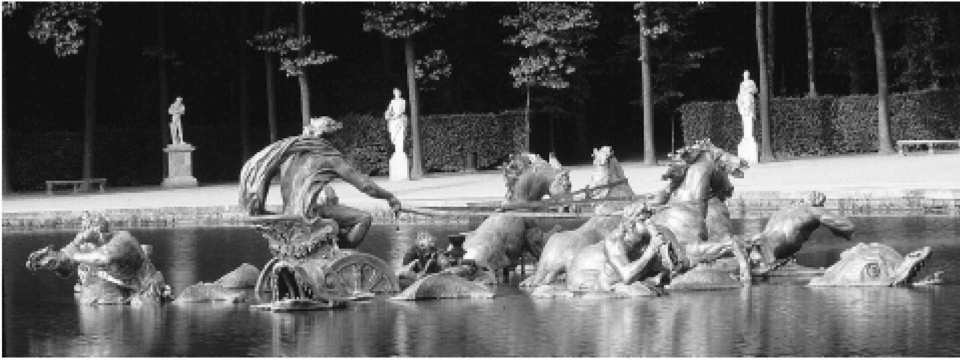

Figure 1.5 *Apollo's Chariot*, Versailles (1667–1672). By permission of The Art Archive/Nicolas Sapieha.

This statue pairing is imbued with a further allegorical dimension whereby "a parallel between the repose of the Sun God and the repose of Louis XIV" is established: Like the sun god, Louis "retires to Versailles after the completion of his royal duties" (Rosasco 1991, 2).[36] Apollo and Louis converge. Louis XIV established himself as the power center of the known world, with Versailles itself as microcosm of the world, and "it was into this palace that the Sun (equated with Apollo) retired every evening after finishing his arduous daily task of illuminating the world" (Berger 1985, 22).[37]

The serial connection between the two statue groups, *Apollo Fountain* and *Grotto of Tethys*, is evident in the symbolic connection that depicts the rising and setting sun. Breaking with the linear sequence of story events, in the *Latona Fountain* (1668–1670) the tale returns to Apollo's past: Outraged by Jupiter's affair with Latona, Juno orders a python to pursue Latona, who is pregnant with Jupiter's children, the twins Apollo and Diana (Berger 1985, 27). The sequel to this statue group, the *Dragon Fountain*, continues the story immediately after the birth of Apollo, and the Python is shown slain by the infant's arrows.[38] Beyond dealing with the mythological events of Apollo's life, the *Latona* and *Dragon* fountains also function as potent allegory that conveyed the power of the Sun King. According to Berger, "Latona represents Anne of Austria the mother of Louis XIV beleaguered with her two children (Louis and his brother Philippe) during the Fronde when Anne was Regent." The "Ovidian story of how Latona and her two divine children were refused water by the wicked peasants, and how Latona called down punishment from heaven" by asking for Jupiter's intervention is allegorically transformed into a story of contemporary significance "warning against those who might challenge a divine-right ruler." The Frondeurs, like the python, will

suffer the "punishment of their rebelliousness" (1985, 27). Significantly, whereas Apollo slays the python in the mythical interpretation, on the allegorical level, Apollo the child is also transformed into Louis XIV, heir to the future throne and punisher of those who question his royal authority.

The fresco designs of Versailles's interior also continued the symbolic associations of Louis XIV with Apollo. Allegorizing contemporary events associated with Louis's reign and the story of Apollo, the series of frescoes throughout Versailles rely on the same seriality that gives meaning to the garden statuary. Part of the vault decoration for the fresco of the *Escalier des Ambassadeurs* (1674–1680, now destroyed) included a painting of *Apollo with the Dead Python*. Depicting another version of the *Dragon Fountain* in an alternate media format, this work, like its sculptural variation, also functioned as an allegory of the Fronde (Berger 1985, 67). The royal suites, or planetary rooms, of Versailles were influenced by the decorative schemes of Pietro da Cortona and Cirro Ferri for the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, with this allusion firmly establishing Louis XIV as successor to the "grandeur of imperial Rome" (Berger 1985, 3, 48). The king's throne room, or the Salon d'Apollon, included the ceiling painting *Rising of the Sun* (c.1672–1681); repeating the subject matter of the gardens' statue arrangement in another media format, the painting depicted Apollo in his horse-drawn chariot as he soared into the sky ushering in the new day.[39] With the central room focusing its design on the sun god Apollo, the other six rooms were dedicated to the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth (with the moon), Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars. Although it is still debatable whether the schema and sequence of the rooms was informed by a Ptolemaic or Copernican solar system, the centrality of the sun god motif as symbolic of the Sun King's power is not an issue of debate.[40]

Construction of the Galerie des Glaces began in 1678. It was designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart and illustrated the propagandistic logic of the decorative schemes that were dispersed throughout Versailles. Whereas the original design centered on narratives dominated by Louis's mythic person, the sun god Apollo,[41] the final fresco scheme represented Louis XIV performing glorious deeds, including his victory in the Dutch war (1672–1678), which established France "as military and diplomatic victor and elevated the international prestige of Louis XIV," and personifications depicting the vices of hostile nations such as Germany, Spain, and Holland (Berger 1985, 52–56). As Berger notes, however, the "long gallery was a room about power" (56). The influence of the Salon de los Espejos, or the Hall of Mirrors, in the Alcarar in Madrid was no mere artistic allusion. The Salon de los Espejos not only included

Hapsburg portraits and functioned as the reception room where Spanish kings received ambassadors and nobility, but it was also a monument to the Spanish Hapsburgs. The Galerie des Glaces not only rivaled the Salon de los Espejos in scope and scale but was symbolically meant to embody Louis's rivalry with and defeat of Spain during his reign (Berger 1985, 57).

As will be explored further in chapter 2, intertextuality in conjunction with seriality became potent vehicles of monarchical absolutism for the aristocrats of the seventeenth century. Such intertextuality and seriality often relied on allegory for the articulation of its meaning. In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1998), Walter Benjamin has famously argued his position regarding the function of allegory in baroque theater, specifically, the German *Trauerspiel* of writers such as Opitz, Gryphius, and Lohenstein. The political function of allegory, according to Benjamin, was integral to baroque logic, and the frequent comparison of the prince with the sun stressed the monarch's "ultimate authority" (1998, 67). Drawing on the example of Spanish theater, in particular, the plays of Calderon, Benjamin suggests that these works delight "in including the whole of nature as subservient to the crown creating thereby a veritable dialectic of setting" (93). As seen in the example of the Versailles project, such allegorical posturing whose function is the display of monarchical power is not limited to the world of theater. Through the process of serialization, at Versailles, the Apollonian allegory geographically and polycentrically invades a space that stands as microcosm to the world itself.

Not perceiving baroque allegory as "a conventional relationship between an illustrative image and its abstract meaning," Benjamin insists that it functions instead as a dialectic "form of expression" that "immerses itself into the depths which separate visual being from meaning" (162–165). Any overt connection between the sign and its meaning is ruptured, "and the hieratic ostentation [becomes] more assertive" (169). As seen in the Apollo program at Versailles, the various serial depictions of Apollo's life serve a more complex allegorical function that collapses the figures of Apollo and Louis XIV into one another, the intent being to highlight the monarch's grandiose obsessions and claims to power. In the words of Benjamin, "Any person, any objects, any relationship, can mean absolutely anything else" (175). He continues: "But it will be unmistakably apparent, especially to anyone who is familiar with allegorical textual exegesis, that all of the things which are used to signify derive from the very fact of their pointing to something else, a power which makes them appear no longer commensurable with profane things, which raises them onto a higher plane, and which can, indeed, sanctify them" (175).

Although they lack the blueness of royal blood that is ostensibly characteristic of the aristocracy, interestingly, contemporary entertainment industries rely on allegorical logic similar to that of the Apollo program at Versailles. Driven by the demands of globalization and multinational corporatism, contemporary entertainment industries have an economic rationale, audience, and allegory of power that is radically different from those espoused by monarchs such as Louis XIV. Nevertheless, the seriality that has become integral to the industry also functions as allegorical vehicle: The sign that is serialized (whether it is Batman, Lara Croft, or *Star Trek*) also becomes an allegorical emblem of the corporate power that gave birth to it (Time Warner, Eidos Interactive, and Paramount/Viacom, respectively, in the examples just given).

An Aesthetic of Repetition and the Drive for Perfection

For Walter Benjamin, the function of allegory as fragment is a crucial one. With regard to the baroque, he observes that "in the use of highly charged metaphors—the written word tends towards the visual. It is not possible to conceive of a starker opposite to the artistic symbol, the plastic symbol, the image of organic totality, than this amorphous fragment which is seen in the form of allegorical script" (1998, 176). "Allegories are," he continues, "in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things. . . . That which lies here in ruins, the highly significant fragment, the remnant, is, in fact, the finest material of baroque creation" (178). What is especially fascinating about Benjamin's deliberations on the literary baroque fragment and ruin is that similar issues of fragmentation and decay recur in the writings of many postmodern cultural theorists. Jameson, in particular, has led the field in this respect. Although theories of the postmodern have been outlined in depth elsewhere and are of concern here only as they intersect with the (neo-)baroque, a brief summation is in order. In "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (1998a),[42] Jameson argues that the expansion of transnational corporatism, technological advancement, and expanded communications has resulted in the "death of the subject": New subjectivities emerge and are characterized by the fragmentation and schizophrenic nature of the subject. Nostalgically presuming that modernist forms retained a sense of totality and "meaning," like Benjamin's ruins, examples of popular culture are viewed as fragmentary, vacantly alluding to and recalling past "signs" in a piecemeal manner. But where for Jameson, especially in the context of consumerism, postmodernism makes few allowances for original creations, in Benjamin's writings I find an alternate, even inspired possibility. In addition to conjuring notions of decay, the ruin and fragment also

engender creativity. That which has succumbed to the ordeals of time also embodies an awareness of the process of time. Likewise, that which has become a fragment may also be metamorphosed into a creation in its own right.

Although Benjamin does not discuss it in these precise terms, from the perspective of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the baroque period, like the postmodern, was also considered to be a period of decay, its art revealing an exuberant style that echoed the collapse of the Renaissance spirit and the classicism it espoused. In fact, this sentiment also found a voice during the seventeenth century. To return to part II of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, the audience is confronted there—in fictional form—with the very debates that plague many postmodernists. Don Quixote himself is the fragmented, schizophrenic, postmodern subject. His library includes numerous books and poems of the heroic and chivalric traditions. Not only does Quixote quote from and allude to many of these during his adventures—*Amadis de Gaul*, *The Adventures of Esplandian*, *Don Olivante de Laura*, *Amadis of Greece*, *The Knight of Platir*, and *The History of the Renowned Knight Tirante the White*, among many others[43]—but they construct him, transforming him from Alfonso Quijada into Don Quixote. These accumulated fragments constitute his subjectivity. Significantly, as Cascardi reflects, *Don Quixote* reflexively unveils the complex array of references at work that inform Cervantes's novel. In addition to the allusions to multiple works and other authors, emphasis is placed on the fact that all "original" models that Don Quixote craves have been lost (1997, 198), existing in an era long gone. Quixote and Jameson have much in common.

In adopting the identity of Cid Hamet Ben Engeli, Cervantes distances himself from the role of author and, in the process, presents a sophisticated understanding of the complexities entailed in debates about authorship and originality. Is there such a thing as an "original"? If so, does its reproduction, through the process of simulation or serialization, render later variations inauthentic? *Don Quixote* provides a context in which a dialogic relationship exists[44] between characters and the opinions they espouse. Like the fictional author Cid Hamet Ben Engeli, Don Quixote is outraged by the discovery of the "fake," ruinous version of his adventures. While visiting the printer in the latter part of the novel, after much civil debate, Don Quixote comes across the *Second Part of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*, written by the "plagiarist" Tordesillan, in the printer's collection of books. Disgusted, Don Quixote storms out of the printing house (1999, II:62, 1043). Earlier, from his room in an inn, Quixote overhears a conversation in the next room: Someone is asking Señor Don Jerónimo to read a chapter of the *Second Part of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*; Don

Jerónimo responds by demanding to know how anyone could read such absurdity from this imposter after reading the original (1999, II:59, 1009). Incensed, Quixote storms into the room and the two comfort him by finding problems with the "inauthentic sequel": The language is Aragonian, the plagiarist sometimes fails to include articles, and Sancho's wife is incorrectly called Mari Gutierrez. Sancho, who had also been present during the reading, added that characters in this second book are not "legitimate" because Cid Hamet Ben Engeli did not compose them (1999, II:59, 1010). Offering an alternative view, however, in chapter 70, Quixote discusses the Tordesillan version of Don Quixote with a musician, who states emphatically that "among the upstart poets of our age, it is the fashion for every one to write as he pleases, and to steal from whom he pleases . . . and, in these times, there is no silly thing sung or written, but it is ascribed to poetical license" (1999, II:70, 1092–1093).[45] Interestingly, a similar reference to poetic license was made by Swanenburgh in his response to the Inquisition: Having outlined the numerous sources from which he copied images, Swanenburgh responded that the confiscated paintings were produced as "una burla" (a joke) or a "capriccio" that inspires flights of the imagination (Amabile 1891, 61–62).[46]

Like the musician in *Don Quixote*, a postmodern theoretical tradition counter to the Jamesonian has also flourished. Numerous writers including Jim Collins and John Docker have considered the postmodern in a more positive light. For these writers, postmodernism is a phenomenon to be celebrated. Among the fragmented, self-reflexive forms of popular culture, they argue, it is possible to find a complex coherence, one that has little to do with a lack of originality or a corruption of meaning that poses a "danger to civilization" (Docker 1994, xvii).[47] Even so, it is the negative associations of the postmodern, especially as it informs contemporary entertainment media, that persist like a litany of ritual observation. Increasingly, the "fractured" narratives typical of seriality have been perceived as reflecting a "dispersal" or "corruption" of meaning: the revelation of a lack of "true" artistry. Reiterating the postmodern stances of Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson, Timothy Corrigan, for example, characterizes contemporary Hollywood film viewing as comprising "distracted viewings" (1991, 16). The "glance aesthetic" familiar to television viewing replaces the "gaze aesthetic" of traditional Hollywood film viewing of the pre-1970s era (31).[48] In a divergence from the concerns of the classical paradigm with continuity, characterization, and closure, contemporary images and narratives are viewed as fragmented. As their significance and meaning is dispersed, signs of narrative coherence are eliminated (6).

Corrigan recognizes that the process of "dispersal" is a characteristic of contemporary cinema's inherently intertextual and serial nature. His argument, however, is informed by nostalgia. He understands current transformations in narrative form as symptoms of a state of cultural degeneration:[49] Contemporary cinema is viewed as resisting legibility and interpretative depth. Whereas the historical reception of films emphasized "reading," thus implying the capacity to interpret, for Corrigan, the postmodern era reflects a Baudrillardian view (see Baudrillard 1983 and 1984). The transformation of popular culture is marked by "social entropy" that leads to the "implosion of meaning" as the spectator engages in an exhausted fascination with signs (Corrigan 1991, 52–63; see also Baudrillard 1983).

According to the holy trinity of postmodern theory—Jameson, Baudrillard, and Lyotard—variations of the same theoretical narrative are often retold. Signs become the means not to the production of meaning, but to economic production and consumption. The drive for "sterile repetition" apparently typical of seriality in postmodern culture suggests that all culturally significant meaning has been destroyed and that all "true artistry" has been exhausted, replaced by the economic concerns of the conglomerate era (Best and Kellner 1991, 125). Julian Stallabrass's *Gargantua: Manufactured Mass Culture* (1996) is, in many respects, exemplary of this tradition. Although Stallabrass asserts his distaste of postmodern models[50]—in particular, models that celebrate postmodernism's open form, its scope for embracing multiple forms of subjectivity, its playfulness—his arguments often parallel those articulated by the postmodern trinity, especially Jameson's ruminations about contemporary economics and capitalist regimes. Discussing the cultural ramifications of globalization, Stallabrass states that "what happens to a culture when it is mass-produced and mass-marketed, like any other industrial product; when, like most other businesses, it is subject to increasing globalization and concentration of ownership; and when, like the rest of society, it is founded on a grossly unequal distribution of resources" (1996, 1).

Cultural production, its aesthetics, its formal qualities, and its relation to audience responses are ultimately reducible to forces of globalization and the corporate power of multinationalism. Above all, Stallabrass castigates mass culture's insatiable appetite for appropriation in the name of monetary gain,[51] for such insatiability thwarts attempts by "high art" to assert itself: "Movie spin-offs, whether of *Indiana Jones* or *Robocop*, are only the most obvious example of an increasing mutual dependence. Flagrant plagiarism and the quoting of cinema plots, motifs and designs are common, a whole sub-genre of games being founded around *Star Wars*" (1996, 86). He asserts that:

> High art may try constantly to work against the productions of mass culture, but it is prey to rapid assimilation as advertisers and designers plunder it for ideas and prestige. This assimilation is dangerous, for in it meaning and the particularity of a word or a style are generally lost, as they come to participate in the competition of equally empty ciphers arbitrarily matched to commodities. (1996, 5)

Stallabrass chastises academics for devising "convenient theory" that seeks "various kinds of theoretical justification" of mass culture at the expense of high art (6). "Much of this theory," Stallabrass continues, "[which] bears the name 'postmodern,' is politically convenient to the status quo, fostering a sense of powerlessness or a facile optimism" (7). Jameson, an optimist? A fosterer of the status quo? Ironically, Stallabrass succumbs to the same nostalgic yearning that is found in many of Jameson's writings. An interplay is established between closed "grand narratives," which are seen as culturally productive and brimming with "meaning," and serial, repetitive structures that are indicative of postmodern culture in the stages of decay asserted to be typical of late capitalism.[52] Because economics and commerce drive the entertainment industry, film critics and theorists often respond to Hollywood and other entertainment industries as forms of commerce rather than an art.[53] As such, criticism places emphasis on the marketable aspects of stories rather than their "originality": The very fact of marketability excludes originality, which "remains the territory of art" (Wyatt 1994, 14). The entertainment industry's drive toward commercialism through repetition is viewed as yielding artifacts that either remain in states of repetitive stasis or move toward states of degeneration. Certainly an important element to the logic of entertainment media is the result of financially motivated concerns for reproducing successful formulas. Reducing popular culture to a perpetual state of invariability and economic rationale, however, fails to come to terms with the inherent formal transformations underlying contemporary entertainments.

It is undeniable that all cultural forms—not only popular culture—must be considered in regard to their economic, political, and ideological ramifications. Approaches such as these are valuable in their articulation of certain aspects of contemporary media, for example, their relation to economic infrastructures and ideological operations. However, the singular focus of such approaches refuses to engage with alternate facets of the formal and structural changes that have occurred in recent years. Such an insistently myopic position closes off other avenues of understanding, avenues that permit us to evaluate and consider the significance and logic of popular culture as an art form whose effects on audiences need not always be understood in a singularly

negative ideological light. In believing this, if I too am succumbing to seeking "theoretical justification," then so be it. I enjoy popular culture and I do not believe its existence needs to be justified. It exists. It will not go away, and our culture cannot return to a state of tabula rasa.

To offer insight into the internal logic of neo-baroque seriality and its propensity for reproducibility, our understandings of entertainment media should also consider other approaches. As Jim Collins observes, what audiences now "conceive of as entertainment has changed so thoroughly that the cultural function of popular storytelling appears to be in a process of profound redefinition" (1989, 16).[54] What alternative paths can we follow to instigate this redefinition? For the moment, I take a leaf out of Benjamin's book. As has been mentioned, for Benjamin, the baroque fascination with the fragment and the ruin is not a negative condition. It is the condition of baroque artistry itself: "For it is common practice in the literature of the baroque to pile up fragments ceaselessly without any strict idea of goals and, in the unremitting expectation of a miracle, to take the repetition of stereotypes for a process of intensification. The baroque writers must have regarded the work of art as just such a miracle" (1998, 178).

Like the fragment and ruin, the seriality particular to allegory accumulates multiple pieces of its kind, seeking to produce a new whole in the process. Like ruins, which contain within them the memory of past existence, an understanding of the meaning of the fragment functions as nostalgic remnant or emblem of the past, but it also reinvents itself as a unique whole that belongs to its own time.[55]

The Fragment and the Whole: Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species

One of the earliest art historians to define the characteristics of classical and baroque form was Heinrich Wölfflin, who said that whereas the classical stresses the closed, the linear, and the "limit of things," the baroque explores the painterly and the open and turns toward the limitless (1932, 14–15). The classical aspects of Renaissance art and the classical Hollywood narrative are typified by a closed form that remains "a self-contained entity pointing everywhere back to itself." Open form, which is characteristic of the baroque, "points outwards beyond itself and purposely looks limitless" (124). Borders reflect a fluidity that opens up and encompasses other narrative formulations. In the neo-baroque realm, classical systems of spatial and narrative organization are disturbed and a dialectic is developed between the whole and the fragment

(Calabrese 1992, 68). Distinguishing between the detail and the fragment, Calabrese states that the detail assumes and depends on its relationship to the whole, whereas the fragment signifies parts of the whole, "but the whole is in absentia" (73). Unlike the detail, the fragment is both reliant on and independent of the whole.

Although the contemporary entertainment industry draws from a pool of common images, characters, styles, or narrative situations, its success lies in its capacity to differentiate both its film products and its cross-media connections (Wyatt 1994, 14), that is, to establish autonomous fragments within a polycentric whole. According to Calabrese, contemporary media operate like the replicants in *Blade Runner* (Scott 1982), marking the birth of a new aesthetic of repetition. The serial, sequel, and series as fragments of an expanding whole are "born of repetition and a perfecting of the working process." From some critical perspectives, "repetition and serialism [are] . . . regarded as the exact opposite of originality and the artistic" (1992, 27). The aesthetic of repetition found in seriality, however, does not merely represent itself as a simulacrum or inferior and unoriginal copy of an evasively authentic model or "original" (45). Comic-book variations of the "Alien" saga, for example, are not the less-creative cousins of the "more authentic" film narratives. In fact, the success of the comics depends on their *refusal* to simply reproduce the film stories. According to the logic of neo-baroque form, in addition to involving similarity and invariability, repetition also embraces variation on a theme.

While emphasizing elements of repetition, the authors of each variation may also be intent on outperforming and developing preceding works: refashioning the past. New story fragments introduced therefore dynamically interact with other story fragments, uniting to create multiple, yet unified, story formations. Within such polycentric systems the notion of the self-contained, closed text disappears and the reader or viewer becomes enraveled in the intricate network of connections that intersect numerous stories and media. The reader or viewer is invited to participate actively in a game that involves the recognition of prior signs and in the variations introduced to the narrative signs. As Calabrese suggests, like the replicants in *Blade Runner*, who were more perfect human versions than the humans themselves, the aesthetic of repetition present in the fragment strives toward perfection. Each variant aims at complicating and competing with other fragments or narrative centers within the neo-baroque, serial whole.

Discussing the baroque fascination with collecting objects of curiosity in the famous *wunderkammers* (a phenomenon to which I will return in later chapters), Horst Bredekamp has provided a fascinating interpretation of the function served by the ancient ruin in collections, especially in catalogues of such collections of the bizarre. In the

late sixteenth century, Michele Mercati, superintendent of the papal botanical gardens under Pius V, founded a natural-history museum that contained objects collected by the Vatican. The frontispiece of his catalogue *Metallotheca*, which was finally published in 1717, comprises a copper engraving by Anton Eisenhoit that includes the Metallotheca in the foreground and, in the distance, an image of a temple "in the form of ruins that have been reclaimed by nature" through the process of erosion (Bredekamp 1995, 18). Again, in the 1677 catalogue of Ferdinando Cospi's *Museo Cospiano*, Cospi stressed the significance of "[t]hose brilliant creations . . . of art and Nature exalting the memory of antiquity" (Bredekamp 1995, 41), and in 1762, the engraver Clement Pierre Marillier depicted the *kunstkammer* as an arcade comprising a massive arch damaged by time. Symbolizing antiquity through the fragmentary ruin, the scene also includes another character that Benjamin associates with the baroque: the figure of the infant Melancholia. In both Eisenhoit's and Marillier's engravings, the scenes include contemporary artifacts such as paintings, sculptures, and sundry scientific objects that belonged to the *wunderkammer*, all representing "evidence of man's creativity" (Bredekamp 1995, 44). As is the case with Eisenhoit's engraving, not only does the ruinous arch in Marillier's scene represent the interface between the creations of man and those of nature, but in including a portrait of Descartes, this ruinous landscape stands as "an affirmation of the truth of Cartesian philosophy, which symbolically radiates rays of sunlight that bypass the infant Melancholia and ultimately illuminate a round mirror. . . . The arch holds in its keystone a key to eliminating the conceptual boundaries between the creations of nature and of man, thereby transforming the ancient ruin into the triumphal arch of Cartesianism" (Bredekamp 1995, 45).

Not only is nature a teacher, but past emblems of human creation serve to reignite and inspire the human imagination to conjure new creations. Reflecting a specifically baroque attitude to art, the *kunstkammer* and *wunderkammer* embodied the baroque function of the fragment and the ruin: References to the past that existed within this microcosmic space coexisted with objects and creations of the present. The two were united in the production of a creative process. The copy magically metamorphosed into an original.

Even though the stories, media, and eras are different, the fluid approach to space, narrative, and the relationship between the fragment and the whole that is visible in Versailles's Apollo allegory finds similar treatment in neo-baroque examples like the "Alien" crossovers. In the Apollonian theme of Versailles, serialization parallels the traversal of the spectator through the gardens and interior. The "Alien" stories, on the other hand, produce seriality through the spatial relocation of the "Alien" narrative across diverse media. Each serial fragment acknowledges its connection to the

"Alien" ruins that predate it, while also recreating itself and refashioning the ruins. If the products of the neo-baroque serve an allegorical function, then each fragment functions as emblem to the entertainment company that gave birth to it. Embodying the potential of the conglomerate, each addition into the serial pool not only repeats but also reasserts the creative possibilities of the franchise. Operating according to the aesthetic of repetition, each additional entry into the system functions as a "guarantee of the dignity of the copy, of its fight to survive. . . . [Its] importance . . . lies precisely in the fact that it accentuates and underlines the physical presence of the past in the present" (Perniola 1995, 42). Ruins discovered from a popular-culture past become monuments of a popular-culture present.

Since the 1980s, the expansion of narrative borders has reached excessive proportions, with a far more fluid interaction occurring across the narrative worlds of different media. Whereas the cinema may have introduced the Alien and the Predator in distinct tales of individual films, their stories have now developed and thrived in intermingled form in the comics, as seen in *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species*, the comic-book continuation of the films *Alien* (Scott 1979) and *Predator* (McTiernan 1987).[56] This twelve-part comic-book series, published by Dark Horse Comics, collapses the stories of two distinct film aliens, the Predator and the Alien, into one series. In the film *Predator* the character Dutch (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) is sent into a South American jungle with a group of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) professionals on a mission to rescue a missing group of individuals. Dutch's team discovers that an unidentified creature (soon to be revealed as an alien hunter) is hunting them. (As a result of the film's title, these aliens have come to be known as Predators.) One by one the team members are hunted down, and in the end, Dutch is left alone to do victorious combat with the Predator. In *Predator 2* (Hopkins 1990) the story continues as the Predator arrives in Los Angeles, seeking to do battle with individuals considered to be warrior material.

The spatial configuration that previously contained each of these aliens within the separate *Alien* and *Predator* films (fragments) is extended by the comic-book series. As the serial continuation of other "Alien" and "Predator" films and comic-book stories, *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species* is the product of a narrative flow or exchange across media borders. Even within the comic-book series, a serial effect is produced: first, through the structure that ends each comic-book episode with a cliffhanger effect, thus revealing the porous borders that frame each episode; and second, through the series' reference to other media examples, including film and television. The issue of intertextuality and self-reflexivity remains fundamental to the logic of the serial in that both depend on audience awareness of preceding examples, implying a spatial and

temporal continuity that intertwines the prior ruins of entertainment culture into a new whole. Boundaries are fluid, and each new fragment introduced into the series whole by necessity transforms the whole.

Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species inhabits a polycentric system. In addition to its serial connection to other popular narratives of its kind, *Aliens/Predator* also possesses a logic of its own, being one of many narrative centers in the "Alien"/ "Predator" stories. It is at once closed (in being contained within its twelve-part series) and expanding (in that it is connected to the multiple other "Alien" and "Predator" stories that exist in a variety of media forms). Within the spectrum of multiple "Alien" narratives like *Alien*, *Aliens*, *Alien Resurrection*, *Aliens: Stronghold*, *Alien Wars*, and *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species*, one narrative center is not given priority over another. Instead, multiple narrative centers dominate, and the resulting polycentric structures engage in a process of intertextual and serial interaction that depends on a dynamic exchange between systems.

Set during a period in Earth's history when Aliens (also known as "Bugs") have invaded Earth, the story of the comic-book series *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species* centers on a female protagonist, Caryn Delacroix (who, we discover, is a clone who had her origins in a woman named Ash Parnall).[57] Caryn is a bizarre union of Dutch from *Predator*—as is echoed in one of the jungle scenarios that recall *Predator*—and Ripley from the *Alien* films. As a genetically engineered human, called a "trophy," Caryn also recalls the "replicants" of the film *Blade Runner* and has been constructed to serve a single function: to be a satisfying wife to her husband, the big corporate boss Lucien Delacroix.[58] True to the science fiction tradition, corporations mean trouble, and things go wrong. Caryn begins having nightmares that seem to collapse into reality, in particular, nightmares about being stalked by a Predator called "Big Mama". The reference to the Predator as "Big Mama" further complicates the extent of interaction and border crossing between media in that, according to prior narrative conventions in the "Alien" series, the mother role is one traditionally assigned to the Alien Mother, not the Predators. Eventually meeting in reality, which, true to baroque form, may also be another layer of the dream, they discover that they share a past (during Caryn's precloned life as Ash Parnall),[59] Caryn and Big Mama team up on a mission that unravels the complexities of Caryn's nightmare. Together they fend off numerous foes, including "teksec" robots engineered to destroy the Aliens (who recall the T-800s in the *Terminator* films), lethal human/Predator/Alien hybrids (bred by the corporation), and an Alien Queen. At one stage well into the final part of the series, Caryn's appearance, as she undergoes one of her many physical transformations,

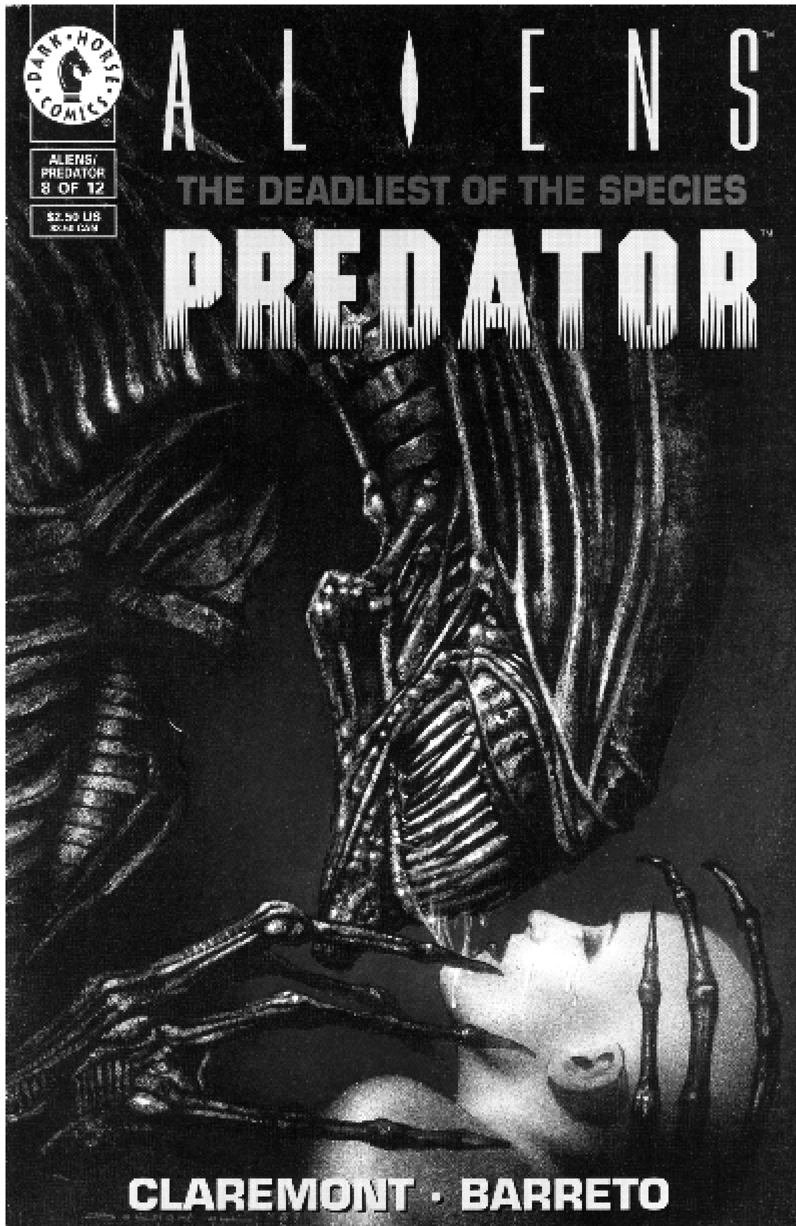

Figure 1.6 Cover page to no. 8 in the Dark Horse Comics series *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species* (1993–1994). By permission of Fox.

alludes to Ripley's famous bald phase in *Alien*^{3} (figure 1.6) and, of course, the association between Caryn and Ripley compels the reader to expect the worst: alien impregnation. What Caryn gives birth to, however, is an Alien/human hybrid that gives humanity (and the predators) hope against future Alien wars (figures 1.7 and 1.8). (The Alien/human hybrid was, in turn, later developed in the film *Alien Resurrection*.) The comic-book series ends, however, with the revelation that a computer-generated being called "Toy" has orchestrated the entire narrative. Like Q (from the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), Toy used hologram technology to immerse his victims in a ruthless game that placed him in the role of God.

Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species takes the basic signs, or what Jim Collins calls the syntactic structures, that also belong to other centers like *Aliens*, *Predator*, and *Blade Runner*, further expanding these syntactic structures, and thereby adding additional centers to the narrative web. In his analysis of the "Batman" myth, Collins has suggested that the complexity of popular culture, revealed in processes of intertextuality and the cross-media effect, immerses each media example in the "negotiation of an array" (that which has already been said).[60] In this instance, the array relates particularly to the "Alien" and "Predator" myths of film and comic-book "originals" and sequels, while also connecting with the array of "that which has already been said" in the films *Blade Runner* and *Terminator* and in the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Within this array, the *Aliens/Predator* comics attempt to map out their own space and center, while also producing labyrinthine connections across stories, serials, sequels, and media. Each addition to the system opens up new narrative meanings that rearrange the signs, codes, and worlds of the "Alien" and "Predator" narratives.[61] Collins's exploration of the array reflects a neo-baroque attitude to open form. All "Alien" fragments or smaller narrative units belong to the larger, multicentered array of the "Alien" narrative and other intersecting narrative universes.

The fragment may succumb to aspects of classical order, yet the (neo-)baroque often draws upon classical form to complicate its structure, with the result that the baroque and classical are in perpetual states of conflict. Within the (neo-)baroque system, the fragment can become the whole (the fragment as classical whole), but the whole can as easily become a fragment within an even greater whole, thus invoking a baroque polycentric system. In one respect, the fragment that is the comic-book series *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species* retains its own narrative center, thus implying classical ordering. The closure so typical of the classical system is, however, within the (neo-)baroque, more susceptible to being reopened, as is evident in the continuation of the "Alien" saga. In the wake of *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species*, not

Figure 1.7 One of the Alien/human hybrids, from no. 6 in the Dark Horse Comics series *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species* (1993–1994). By permission of Fox.

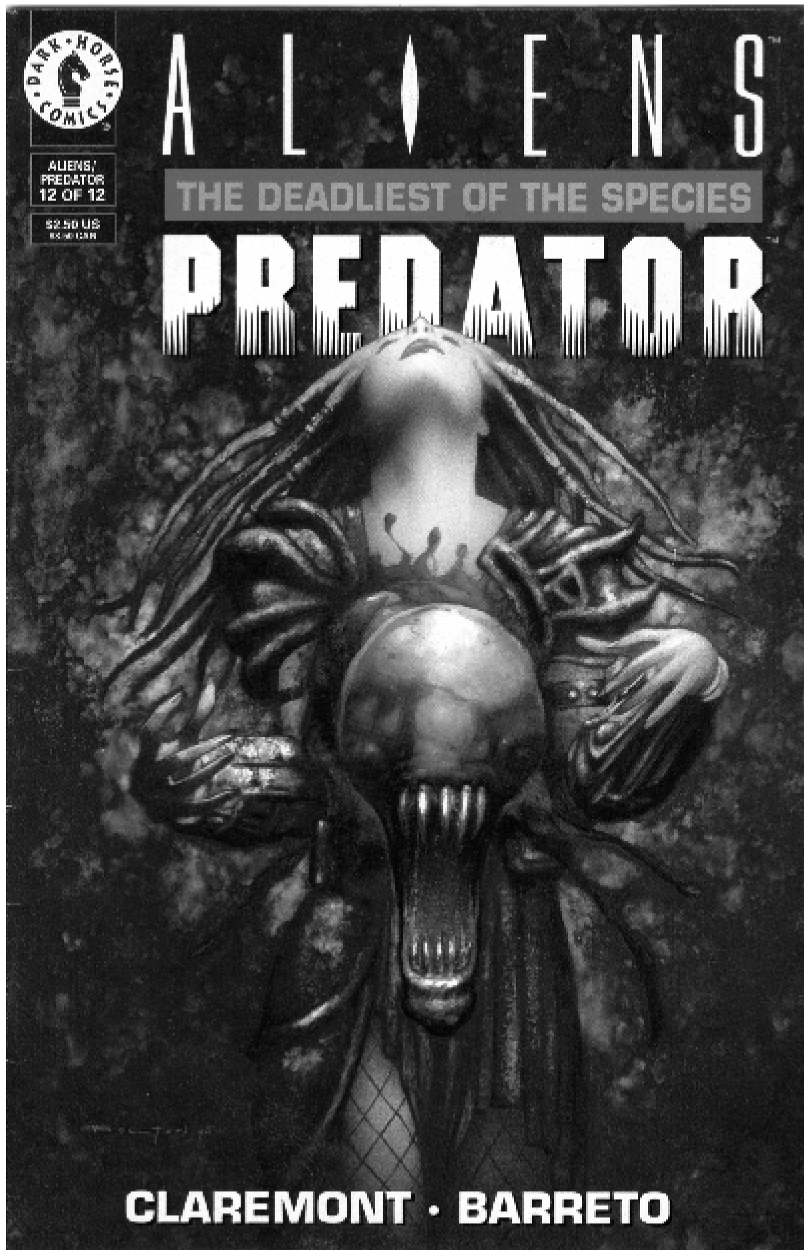

Figure 1.8 Cover to the final issue of the twelve-part Dark Horse Comics series *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species* (1993–1994). By permission of Fox.

only was the film *Alien Resurrection* released, but numerous comic books such as *Aliens vs. Predator: Eternal* (1998), *Aliens: Survival* (1998), and *Aliens: Kidnapped* (1998) have also extended the story further.

The use of multiple narrative centers (multiple originals) typical of seriality requires a reconsideration of traditional perceptions of linearity and closed narrative form. Neo-baroque seriality demands that a single linear framework no longer dominate the whole. Operating on the impetus of a repetitive drive, the baroque work produces "an aesthetic of repetition," and it is precisely this aesthetic of repetition that underlies the logic of the serial whole and its relationship to the fragment. Pleasure for the audience is obtained from fragments that are parts of a whole yet retain their autonomy (Calabrese 1992, 89). Instead of these fragments' being viewed as examples of fractured meaning typical of our postmodern era—of narratives reflecting cultural decay—from a neo-baroque perspective, an alternative logic emerges. It is not a fractured, incoherent system that underlies the logic of the neo-baroque; rather, neo-baroque seriality is concerned with the reconstruction of order, an order that emerges from complex and expanding spaces. Although the audience may initially become disoriented when confronted with the narrative gaps present in some fragments, by understanding the fragments within the context of the whole, the audience can rediscover order (Calabrese 1992, 131).

As with the serial technique of the fugue in music, which was introduced during the baroque era, most famously by Johann Sebastian Bach in his *Art of Fugue* (1750–1751),[62] a polyphonic experience ensues. In the *Art of Fugue*, Bach manipulated one main theme in a cycle of fifteen fugues: The theme is developed, extended, and repeated in cyclical motions; the dialogue between melodies highlights both repetition and variation and, above all, emphasizes virtuosity of performance.[63] The listener recognizes this virtuosity only when each cycle—each fragment—is considered in relation to the system as a whole. Acknowledging himself as virtuoso who masterfully creates uniqueness out of repetition, Bach also added a fugue in which his name (B-flat, A, C, B-natural) was repeated as a theme. Although they involve alternative media, neo-baroque serials involve a similar game of reception that engages the audience on the level of the relationship between fragment and whole. The fragment also invites the reader or viewer, while accepting the fragment on its own terms, to place it gradually within a web of multiple formations. Providing an alternative to Buci-Glucksman's argument that the baroque presents a challenge to reason and order (1994, 22), the (neo-)baroque in fact asserts its own reason that emerges from the order of the labyrinth, a structure that will be explored in chapter 2.