

INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

- 1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.**
- 2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.**
- 3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.**
- 4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.**
- 5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.**

University Microfilms International

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA
St. John's Road, Tyler's Green
High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR

77-20,492

SEABROOK, Roberta, 1941-
THE POETRY OF OCTAVIO PAZ: 1957 TO THE
PRESENT.

City University of New York, Ph.D., 1977
Literature, Latin American

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

© 1977

ROBERTA SEABROOK

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THE POETRY OF OCTAVIO PAZ: 1957 TO THE PRESENT

by

ROBERTA SEABROOK

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Spanish in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The City University of New York.

1977

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Spanish in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4/21/77
date

4/21/77
date

Martin Logick
Chairman of Examining Committee

Martin Logick
Executive Officer

Michèle G. Miller

May Ann Caw
Supervisory Committee

EDITIONS OF PAZ'S WORKS CITED

A. Poetry

Libertad bajo palabra: Obra poética, 1935-1957. 2nd ed. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura, 1968.

Salamandra (1958-1961). Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1962.

Blanco. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1967.

Ladera este (1962-1968). Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969.

Topoemas. Mexico: Era, 1971.

Renga. Spanish translation by Octavio Paz. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1972.

Vuelta. New York: El Mendrugo, 1972.

Pasado en claro. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1975.

B. Prose

El laberinto de la soledad. 2nd ed. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959.

El arco y la lira. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1956, 2nd rev. ed., 1967.

Las peras del olmo. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1957.

Cuadrivio. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1965.

Poesía en movimiento. Prologue by Octavio Paz. Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1966.

Puertas al campo. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1966.

Claude Lévi-Strauss o El nuevo festín de Esopo. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1967.

Corriente alterna. Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1967.

Marcel Duchamp o El castillo de la pureza. Mexico: Era, 1968.

Conjunciones y disyunciones. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969.

Matsuo Bashō: Sendas de Oku. Introduction by Octavio Paz. Translations by Paz and Eikichi Hayashiya. 2d rev. ed. Barcelona: Barral Editores, 1970.

Le singe grammairien. Translated by Claude Esteban. Geneva: Albert Skira, 1972. El mono gramático. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1974.

El signo y el garabato. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1973.

Los hijos del limo. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1974.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One	1
1. Introduction: The "New Analogy" and the Poetry of Octavio Paz	1
2. The Secret Language: Analogy and the Occult as the Mainstream of Modern Poetry	10
3. Irony and Analogy in Modern Hispanic Literature	29
a. Valle-Inclán: "La lámpara maravillosa"	29
b. <u>Modernismo</u>	31
Notes	46
Chapter Two	48
1. The New Analogy in Modern Mexican Poetry: From <u>estri-</u> <u>dentismo</u> to the Poets of Taller	48
2. Towards a Poetic Dialogue: <u>Piedra de sol</u> (1957).	67
3. <u>Salamandra</u> (1962): "The way down is the way out"	79
Notes	107
Chapter Three	118
1. From Breton to Bashō: The Evolution of Imagery and Form in <u>Ladera este</u> (1969) and <u>Renga</u> (1971)	118
2. From Mallarmé to Nāgārjuna: The Impact of Indian Religion and Philosophy in <u>Ladera este</u>	135
Notes	156
Chapter Four	161
1. Preface: The Poem as Microcosmos--Experiments in Form	161
2. Science and Poetry: The Poetics of Space	163
3. Spatial Poetry and the Hermetic Tradition: The Spatial Poem as Emblem	174
4. The "New" Epic: The Long Poem as Analogical Reading and Criticism of the Universe	184

5. The Poem as Ritual Re-creation: Eros and Intellect in <u>Blanco</u> (1967)	208
6. The Paths of Creation: <u>El mono gramático</u> (1972) . .	244
Notes	253
Conclusion: "Hacia el comienzo"	268
Notes	272
Appendix A: "Vrindaban"	273
Bibliography	277
1. Works by Paz	277
2. Works about Paz	279
3. General	282
4. Oriental	294

ILLUSTRATION

A Topography of <u>Blanco</u>	221

Chapter One

où êtes-vous dieux serrés autour de la marne du mot

--Tristan Tzara,
L'homme approximatif¹

'Our tribal chants are advertising slogans. A runic melody is almost unheard of.

--Charles Henri Ford,
"This Is A Prosaic Age"²

1. Introduction: The "New Analogy" and the Poetry of Octavio Paz

The title of this essay is not meant to formalize or define the limits of a stage in the poetry of the Mexican poet Octavio Paz (b. 1914). Rather it marks the perimeter of a field of vision, the measure of a certain portion of Paz's mature work to be explored in pursuit of the underlying unity which molds all of this universal Mexican's poetry. The works to be studied, Salamandra (1962), Discos visuales (1968), Topoemas (1968), Ladera este (1969), Renga (1971), El mono gramático (1972) and Pasado en claro (1975), are sometimes classified as a new stage in Paz's poetry because of their incorporation of spatial experimentation. However they also respond to key questions of metaphysics and aesthetics tendered in the earlier poems and synthesized in Piedra de sol (1957), Paz's initial large-scale master work. To single out any one voice or theme in these poems is to somehow deprive it of its integral part in the whole. Each poem is, in a sense, a part of an ongoing work, whose divisions seek to rhyme not only with each other

but with the universe; for all seek to recapture or redefine that secret rhythm which Plato called the music of the spheres, the cosmic harmony long since obscured by the chaotic and cacophonous quality of modern existence, a harmony reduced in the words of the Chilean poet Enrique Lihn, to "la musiquilla de las pobres esferas."³ The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to illustrate that this search for lost harmony is the basic pulse of Paz's poetry, even in the later poems with their excursions into such diverse fields as Mexican myth, electronic music and Oriental philosophy, and (2) to explore the multiplicity of the later work without losing sight of its rigorously organic development.

Paz's quest for a harmony for the modern age repeatedly leads him back to the beginning of the nineteenth century and to the Romantic poets; for they are the first to face the spiritual crisis engendered by the discoveries of a rationalistic modern age. The pundits of the new science had declared God dead: the French poet Gérard de Nerval's portrait of a crucified Christ crying out to a Father who is no longer there in "Le Christ aux oliviers" becomes the symbol of an age. Artists and thinkers of the late eighteenth century had sought to temper the excesses of Reason by reviving a tradition temporarily eclipsed by the Enlightenment, that of universal correspondence or analogy. For the Ancients and the Renaissance, Nature was God's Book. Whosoever could master her hieroglyphs would be privy to the secrets of the universe. The Romantic poet still finds in language the magic double of the cosmos, but the power of language is threatened by the twin demons of the Scientific age: Reason and Progress. The cyclical time of the

ancient gods has been replaced by the modern notion of linear progression. The Romantics were faced with the task of charting the course of a world wandering through time with no one at the helm. When they did succeed in creating a vision of unity and harmony, it was a vision whose very core was nothingness and death. Thus the "new" analogy must always go hand in hand with irony. The analogical tradition thus transformed becomes, according to Paz, the wellspring of modern poetry; and it is this search for a viable "new" analogy which shapes his own poetry.⁴

Before we can place Paz in the modern analogical tradition we must first have a clear notion of what that term implies. Chapter One attempts to fulfill this need by tracing the development of a modern, analogical tradition introduced to the poetry and thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the occult movements proliferating all over Europe and Latin America. The movements and authors chosen as illustrations are those with the greatest resonance in Paz's own work, and are but the tip of the iceberg of this occult tradition.

There are a number of new obstacles in the path of a modern seeker after universal correspondences and they become steppingstones along the path of Paz's quest. The same questions are posed over and over again; thus they become the leit motifs of the subsequent chapters which offer a chronological commentary of the poems themselves. Technology, the henchman of Progress, is a principal *bête noire* of the visionary poet, replacing the gods of old with creatures neither heavenly nor terrestrial. Perhaps the most arresting portrait of these strange new gods is that sketched by Louis Aragon:

La légende moderne a ses enivrements, et sans doute qu'il se trouve toujours quelqu'un qui croit en montrer l'enfantillage, comme de l'Olympe ou de l'Eucharistie. Je n'écouterai ni le scepticisme ni la peur de la vulgarité. Les signes extérieurs d'un culte, la représentation figurée de ses divinités avant tout m'important, et je laisse aux habiles leurs interprétations de finesse des plus belles histoires auxquelles l'homme ait su mêler le ciel. Je traverserai ces champs énormes semés d'astres.

Si je parcours les campagnes, je ne vois que des oratoires déserts, des calvaires renversés. Le cheminement humain a délaissé ces stations, qui exigeaient un tout autre train que celui qu'il mène. Ces Vierges, les plis de leur robe supposaient un procès de la réflexion point compatible avec le principe d'accélération qui gouverne aujourd'hui le passage. Devant qui s'arrêtera-t-elle donc, la pensée contemporaine, le long de ces routes où des dangers nouveaux la limitent, devant qui humiliera-t-elle la vitesse acquise et le sentiment de sa fatalité? Ce sont de grands dieux rouges, de grands dieux jaunes, de grands dieux verts, fichés sur le bord des pistes spéculatives que l'esprit emprunte d'un sentiment à l'autre, d'une idée à sa conséquence dans sa course à l'accomplissement. Une étrange statuaire préside à la naissance de ces simulacres. Presque jamais les hommes ne s'étaient complus à un aspect aussi barbare de la destinée et de la force. Les sculpteurs sans nom qui ont élevé ces fantômes métalliques ignoraient se plier à une tradition aussi vive que celle qui traçait les églises en croix. Ces idoles ont entre elles une parenté qui les rend redoutables. Bariolés de mots anglais et de mots de création nouvelle, avec un seul bras long et souple, une tête lumineuse sans visage, le pied unique et le ventre à la roue chiffrée, les distributeurs d'essence ont parfois l'allure des divinités de l'Égypte ou de celles des peuplades anthropophages qui n'adorent que la guerre. O Texaco motor oil, Eco, Shell, grandes inscriptions du potentiel humain! bientôt nous nous signerons devant vos fontaines, et les plus jeunes d'entre nous périront d'avoir considéré leurs nymphes dans le naphta.

. . . Il y a un tragique moderne: c'est une espèce de grand volant qui tourne et qui n'est pas dirigé par la main.⁵

Aragon's mechanical idols are frightening enough. Yet Paz offers us an even more disturbing prophecy. Throughout his poems a new cosmic rhythm tries to drown out the "music of the spheres": the throb of the motor struggles to become the pulse beat of life. Technology, the child of man, threatens to become his master as man evolves, not in his own image but toward an ideal of ever-increasing abstraction.

Still another threat to his human identity is to be found

within the poet himself as he probes his consciousness for the secret of his being and that of the universe, the vast abyss which lies between reality and our idea of it. The poets of the nineteenth century poke cautiously at the edge of nothingness like a ferret approaching an unexplored rabbit hole. Some of them dare to plunge into the darkness, but few emerge into Alice's Wonderland. And it is only Stéphane Mallarmé who welcomes this darkness. For Mallarmé man's ultimate identity and destiny is a Nothingness akin to the Buddhist definition of all reality as illusion and emptiness. In the often-quoted March 1866 letter to his friend Cazalis, Mallarmé announces he has discovered the Néant without knowing Buddhism.⁶ Yet like most of the artists of his time, he will be caught up in the study of Oriental thought. The principal attraction of the Eastern philosophies for the modern Western artist is their denial of linear time and historicity, as well as of the Western conception of the individual personality and ego. Instead, they envision an absolute in which all reality, spiritual and physical, is equally integrated, and dissolved. The notion of the ultimate identity of all Being was extremely attractive to those artists whose search for some semblance of universal harmony was threatened by the excesses of positivism. A new Renaissance was born as the scholar, the poet, and the man on the street turned to the East in the belief that its ancient wisdom was somehow closer to the divine source of being than the newer religions of Greece and Rome. This task is still being carried out today. Paz is one of the principal investigators of the possibilities which Oriental art and philosophy hold for the Western mind.

Paz's interest in the problems of analogy and Being lead him

into a number of areas which might seem to make strange bedfellows with poetry and Eastern philosophy. Prime among these is his interest in the structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss to whom he dedicates a book-length study: Claude Lévi-Strauss o El nuevo festín de Esopo (1967). This alliance is not as strange as some of Paz's critics make it out to be. Lévi-Strauss sets out to map the "savage" mind; that is to say he explores pre-literate mythical thought. Both poet and anthropologist seek to decipher the signs and systems of universal experience and uncover a shared logic or harmony. Ultimately both contribute to the re-constitution of a universal language. In La Pensée sauvage Lévi-Strauss shows the basis of primitive thought to be analogical.⁷ And there is yet another aspect of Lévi-Strauss' experience which he shares with Paz, the realization that while systems of one culture can be translated ad infinitum into those of another, there are certain imponderables that can never be translated. Otherness, the goal of the poet as well as of the anthropologist, can never be wholly realized. Paz's confrontation with the thought systems of India reflected in the poems of Ladera este echoes Lévi-Strauss' lament in Tristes Tropiques that he can never hope to fully understand the primitive Latin American tribes among which he is living.⁸ "Civilized" man can never hope to fully recover that sense of oneness with the universe enjoyed by primitive societies.

Yet there is a lesson to be learned from the past. Modern man is still afforded a few glimpses of the Eden from which he was expelled. These rare moments must be shared by the poet, and Paz seeks a language equal to the task. It must be a language which will defy the self-

defeating notions of linear time and logic in order to penetrate the realm of the absolute. The search for a "perpetual present" becomes a hallmark of Paz's work. It is first formulated in a youthful essay on the Spanish poet León Felipe then living in exile in Mexico:

El poeta es un vidente, debe ser un vidente, ha dicho Rimbaud, en una carta célebre ya. "El gran enfermo, el gran criminal, el gran maldito y el supremo sabio". Y, más adelante, la poesía no pondrá ritmo a la acción, se le adelantará". La concepción de Rimbaud, que es la de toda la poesía moderna digna del nombre más que del adjetivo, no hace sino redescubrir el profundo manantial lírico, profético, del hombre. Esta monstruosa sensibilidad del poeta para lo absoluto es de la misma índole que su extraña capacidad para recordar; mediante la memoria sensible, intuitiva, si es posible llamarla así, el poeta, al descender a su infierno, descubre su origen, el origen del hombre y--aún más--las fuerzas anteriores a la misma existencia humana. Por otra parte, al expresar su tiempo, jamás hace un cuadro, un esquema, sino que lo recrea en todo lo que tiene de personal, espontáneo e irreductible. Al recoger en todas estas direcciones--y siempre como experiencia personal--lo esencial de lo real, el poeta logra una especie de "presente eterno", para emplear la expresión de Rolland de Renéville. (L'Experience poétique)⁹

The modern consciousness can only sustain momentary union with the absolute. While mystical contemplation is one avenue to union, it is a path open only to a select few. It is only through the union of physical love that most men escape the lonely prison of the ego and experience otherness. This transforming power of love becomes the fountainhead of Paz's poetry, opening consciousness for a few electric moments. Poetry must be, Paz tells us, "el equivalente, es decir: el doble analógico, de estos estados de excepción. . . ."¹⁰ The quest for a language adequate to the task of describing these ineffable moments is the central quest of contemporary poetry, and it becomes a function of the poem itself. Thus language becomes the subject of much of Paz's poetic scrutiny. If language is indeed a universal hieroglyphics, then the poet is translator, not creator: Paz presents this paradox as one of the key issues of

his prose works on aesthetics, El arco y la lira (1967) and Los hijos del limo (1974). The following paragraph belongs to the latter:

Cada poema es una lectura de la realidad; esa lectura es una traducción; esa traducción es una escritura: un volver a cifrar la realidad que se descifra. El poema es el doble del universo: una escritura secreta El juego de la analogía es infinito: el lector repite el gesto del poeta: la lectura es una traducción que convierte al poema del poeta en el poema del lector. La poética de la analogía consiste en concebir la creación literaria como una traducción; esa traducción es multiple y nos enfrenta a esta paradoja: la pluralidad de autores. Una pluralidad que se resuelve en lo siguiente: el verdadero autor de un poema no es ni el poeta ni el lector, sino el lenguaje.¹¹

Is surrealist automatic writing then the logical outcome of truly analogical language? The tension between the surrealist platform and Valéry's insistence that a poem is crafted, not inspired, does much to determine the course of Paz's poetry, and yields such interesting experiments as Renga (1971) a poem written by four poets in four languages.

Ultimately, however, it is the difficult task of saying the inutterable which dictates the form of these poems. The subject of Paz's language is what Jerzy Peterkiewicz has termed "the other side of silence."¹² In order to reach this other shore of reality Maurice Blanchot tells us that the poet must combine the talents of a deaf mute with those of a master of oratory.¹³ Paz slowly arrives at paradox as the only possible entrance to the reverse side of reality, finding his inspiration in the paradoxes of Buddhism and of such Baroque poets as Quevedo, Góngora and Donne. Eventually the terse conceits of the Baroque temper the surrealist influences evident in the poetry of the forties and fifties. The resulting amalgam achieves the balance of passion and lucidity which Paz considers the poetic ideal.

If the poem is to be the analogical double of the universe, it

must find a form equal to the task. The vastness of the subject invites a "vast" approach: thus in the course of the last two centuries a "new" epic was created, a quest for correspondances, rather than a tale of conquests. Paradoxically enough this twentieth-century long poem or neo-epic is the product of an age which glorifies the fragment and the instant, and which at the same time has perfected the briefest of lyrics. One of the major tensions of Paz's poetry is his effort to balance these poetic extremes. This concern gradually leads him to conceive of the poem as a modern ritual, a recreation of the momentary glimpses of unity afforded modern man through love and poetry. It is this impulse which shapes Blanco, an elaborate collective erotic and poetic ritual as well as an imago mundi and a visual aid to meditation. Surprisingly enough these same principles govern the briefest of Paz's lyrics, the topoemas, or spatial poems. Thus the evolution of analogical forms becomes another counterpoint in the chapters dedicated to the poems.

The method of this study is predetermined by its purpose: to follow the rhythm dictated by the poems themselves and to share in the multiple dialogue which they initiate with each other, with the reader, and with other poems and poets the world over. Since the modern poem must create a new analogy and trace the fractured lineaments of our image of the world, the fragment is of necessity the poetic unit of organization in much contemporary poetry. Paz's poems are an ebb and flow of instants as well as collages of simultaneous possibilities. The ultimate effect is far from chaotic however. I hope that this study will show the remarkably organic development of these poems. To read

the protoplasmic body of Paz's work is rather like watching the waves bending back and forth, depositing their gleanings to trace a shoreline, always changing and yet, somehow the same, reminding the reader of these lines by Marco Antonio Montes de Oca:

Así, el instante a la vida otorga el ser,
 porque con instantes,
 con arrugas que al siguiente vuelco de la ola ya no están,
 brotará alguna vez el sólido poema.¹⁴

2. The Secret Language: Analogy and the Occult as the Mainstream of Modern Poetry

As Paz's work progresses there is an ever-growing awareness of analogy as the great Western poetic tradition. It is a tradition which binds him not only to Dante and Mallarmé but also to the modernista poets of Latin America and to his own contemporaries: José Lezama Lima and Alberto Girri. Paz's poems are, among other things, a dialogue with other poems: they are his contribution to a sort of universal modern poem, an analogy of analogies. More often than not the other interlocutors in this dialogue are the participants in the rich analogical tradition of French poetry which runs unbroken from Nerval to the present days:

En cada uno de los grandes poetas franceses de este período [el romanticismo] se abre y se cierra el abanico de correspondencias de la analogía. Asimismo, la historia de la poesía francesa, de las Chimères a Un coup de dés, puede verse como una vasta analogía: cada poeta es una estrofa de ese poema de poemas que es la poesía francesa y cada poema es una versión, una metáfora, de ese texto plural. Si un poema es un sistema de equivalencias, como ha dicho Roman Jakobson . . . la poesía francesa se resuelve también en un sistema de sistemas de equivalencias, una analogía de analogías. A su vez, ese sistema analógico es una analogía del romanticismo original de alemanes e ingleses. Si queremos comprender la unidad de la poesía europea sin atentar contra su

pluralidad, debemos concebirla como un sistema analógico: cada obra es una realidad única y, simultáneamente, es una traducción de las otras. Una traducción: una metáfora.¹⁵

If the reader is to fully participate in Paz's poetic dialogue, he must first strike up an acquaintanceship with the other participants. Thus I have attempted to first briefly sketch the rich contribution to Paz's poetic of not only the French poets who inhabit his poems but of Hispanic poets who are also immersed in the occult tradition.

Several forces shaped the development of analogical thought in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France. One of these was the newly awakened interest in Oriental thought, an interest shared by the rest of Europe. This so-called New Renaissance of the nineteenth century has its initial impetus in the last quarter of the eighteenth century when important works of Hinduism and Zoroastrianism were first introduced to the West. Heretofore, Western interest in Eastern philosophy was limited to the Confucianism whose long tradition of moral and social order was held up as an example to the governments of the West by seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries to China. The Jesuits were the propagators of the "Sinomania" which characterized the eighteenth century as well, subjugated to the extreme rationalism of the age.¹⁶ As the nineteenth century approaches, however, the East represents not the fountainhead of Reason, but the frontiers of Intuition. The significance of Oriental thought for the nineteenth century is best summed up by the Belgian Symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck who speaks of the "Eastern lobe" and the "Western lobe" of the human brain:

The one . . . produces reason, science, consciousness; the other . . . secretes intuition, religion, the subconscious. . . . More than once they have endeavoured to penetrate one another, to

mingle, to work together; but the Western lobe, at any rate on the most active expanse of our globe, has heretofore paralysed and almost annihilated the efforts of the other. We owe to it extraordinary progress in all material sciences, but also catastrophes, such as those we are undergoing to-day. . . . It is time to awaken the paralysed Eastern lobe.¹⁷

Infused with a new fund of information from the East, the various occult movements which had suffered setbacks during the Age of Enlightenment flourished once more. These movements, chief among them Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, had a common aim inherited from the Renaissance Neoplatonists: to discover the fountainhead of all religions and the true source of divine revelation. For the pre-Romantics as well as for the Christian magi of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this knowledge was to be found in the East, for "primitive" religions were considered to be purer than Christianity since they were closer to the science of creation. According to the Ancients, the key to these mysteries was an original divine language deformed by man; and language remains the key for the Renaissance as well as for modern times.

The initial impetus for the nineteenth century search for the Word came about in the first years of the fifteenth with the arrival in Florence of a manuscript mistakenly believed to have been written in ancient Egypt, the Hieroglyphica of Horapollo. This fifth-century A.D. treatise by an Egyptian scribe erroneously declares that hieroglyphs are really pictorial representations and not phonic symbols, and proceeds to give a fanciful interpretation of their meaning.¹⁸ In 1460 a similar document arrived from Macedonia, a Greek manuscript of the Corpus Hermeticum, which, although actually a pseudo-Egyptian pastiche of the mystic doctrines popular in third-century Greece, was believed to be the authentic revelation of the Egyptian god Thoth, the scribe of the gods

and the divinity of wisdom, given the title of Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice Great) by the Greeks. There is a whole body of magical and philosophical literature attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, who was proclaimed by the Renaissance Humanists to be a priscus theologus, the transmitter of a divine wisdom secured from Orpheus and passed on to Plato. Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation of the Pimander (the first treatise of the Corpus Hermeticum) and the Hieroglyphica became two of the most influential books of the Renaissance. Artists and writers as well as philosophers and theologians subscribed to the idea of a sacred language interpreting God's work. Ficino's disciple, Pico della Mirandola added another dimension to the quest with his espousal of the practical Hebrew Cabala as confirming the truth of Christianity. According to Genesis, God's Word formed the world; and for the Cabalist, therefore, the Hebrew language contains the mysteries of Being. Cabalistic calculations are based on the ten Sephiroth, the names which form the Name of God, and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Hebrew words are abbreviated by the Cabalists and used as talismans, or fashioned into anagrams which serve as aids to mystical meditation. The most complex Cabalist system, Gematria, is a sort of divine algebra in which each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is given a numerical value. Through Gematria the Cabalist hoped to capture all the complexities of creation: this corresponded to the generally held Renaissance opinion that Nature was the Book of God.¹⁹

It is this idea of a divine Book or sacred alphabet which once again captures the imagination of the late eighteenth century.²⁰ Among the most influential thinkers of his time was Court de Gébelin whose

eight-volume Le Monde primitif (1772) attempts to find a common origin of myth in the myths of Egypt. Once hieroglyphs were understood, according to G  belin, the meaning of myth would also be elucidated. That same year Herder in   ber den Ursprung der Sprache refutes the idea of a divine or innate language, formulated by G  belin, proposing instead the notion of a primitive language evolving from circumstance from which other languages developed in their turn. This debate of 1772 incorporates the basic pivots about which subsequent linguistic investigations of poets and scholars alike will revolve right up to the present debate between innatists like Noam Chomsky and the behaviorists. G  belin's tomes influenced many Romantic writers, including Novalis, Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Another seminal figure was Johann Hamann, much admired by the German Romantics. In his Aesthetica in nuce (1762) Hamann maintains that language is the mother of reason and that since God's language is composed of Nature's images, poetry, man's image-making and -receiving faculty, is the original primitive language of human kind. It is up to the poet then to complement the partial gnosis of science. The poet's path to discovery is within himself, thus the poet-seer must journey within: "only knowledge of the self, that descent into hell, can open for us the way to divinization," Hamann declares in the Philologist's Crusade (1759).²¹

It is in this period that the occult societies oppressed by the advocates of Reason come out into the open, eventually capturing the popular as well as the literary imagination. Principal among these sects are the Illuminati, the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons; toward the end of the nineteenth century they will be joined by another

syncretic society, Theosophy. The scope of these societies extends from the Americas to Russia, and their members include an enormous number of the most important artists and thinkers of the century.

The theme of occult and Oriental influences in pre-Romantic and Romantic literature would require several volumes of discussion. The theories of Swedenborg, Mesmer and Lavater profoundly influenced the French and German Romantics. It is in Germany where we first find poetry and the novel plumbing the depths of the subconscious in anticipation of Freud and the Surrealists. In England the Cabalistic poetry of William Blake forms a singular bridge between the Metaphysical poets and the twentieth century. It is in France, however, that the esoteric doctrines become most firmly rooted.

One of the most widely diffused Romantic documents concerning occultism is Nerval's essay "Les Illuminés ou les précurseurs du socialisme" (1852) in which he discusses the contributions of four Illuminist theorists who not only influenced literature and theology, but who had an enormous impact on political thought as well: Martínez de Pasqually, Saint-Martin, Fabre d'Olivet and Pierre-Simon Ballanche.²² Pasqually organized several Masonic societies toward the end of the eighteenth century and also promulgated Cabalistic doctrines in his Traité de la réintégration. Perhaps the most interesting of Pasqually's disciples is Fabre d'Olivet whose theories resonated throughout the poetry of the entire nineteenth century. His translation and commentary of Pythagoras, Les Vers dorés de Pythagore (1813) was the most widely diffused of his studies, but his works on linguistics and the Orient were also held in high esteem. The Illuminists sought to restore

the poet to the role of seer. They were aided in their efforts by the theorists of a nascent socialism who proclaimed the poet to be prophet of a new world to come. The social revolutionaries who most influenced the artistic revolution of the nineteenth century were Claude Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier. The extremely influential magazines published in the 1830's by these reformers, Le Globe and its successor, La Phalange, popularized Illuminist thought in addition to socialist theory. The poet Nerval was one of the contributors to La Phalange, and most of the important literary figures of the time became deeply involved with the occult and socialistic movements and reviews including Vigny, Baudelaire, George Sand and Hugo. In the new social order proposed by Saint-Simon science would occupy the highest place in the hierarchy. Saint-Simon's doctrines were found to be still too closely tied to the Encyclopedia as his disciples sought to finish the blueprint for the new society, and the socialists soon turned to Fourier for a viable alternative.²³

Fourier, a prime influence on not only the socialist and Romantic theorists of France, but also the prophet of a new vision for such diverse figures as the Russian political and literary theorist Aleksandr Herzen, the Russian novelist Feodor Dostoyevski and the American Transcendentalists, fell into disrepute by the end of the century, and was labelled a Romantic reactionary for his diatribes against the abuses of technology. It was the poets who rediscovered Fourier, notably Valéry and André Breton. Breton's lifelong interest in Fourier culminated in his 1947 Ode à Charles Fourier which reawakened both poetical and socio-psychological interest in the nineteenth-century utopian socialist.

Since Paz, too, feels that Fourier, rather than Swedenborg, is the fountainhead of the modern search for a new analogy, I shall briefly outline those aspects of his thought which are of interest to us here.²⁴ Fourier, a textile merchant most of his life, felt that he was ideally suited to attack the failures of bourgeois society from within. A poorly educated man, he constantly railed against the philosophers of his time, accusing them of being far removed from the concerns of the common man. Fourier envisioned a society organized to reflect the ideal state of harmony which ruled the universe according to the neo-Pythagorean philosophy widely disseminated in his time. As Fourier saw it, the world's ills were caused by the abnormal suppression of man's natural instincts and passions, all of which were subjugated to the work ethic which governed bourgeois society, as well as to its moral code which condemned any passionate relationship outside of matrimony. Fourier's solution was a utopian community at the service of the pleasure principle, structured according to a balanced interplay of the personality types of the inhabitants with an equitable rotation of odious work so that each member of the phalanstère, as it was called, simultaneously exercised a number of professions, with intellectual and imaginative pursuits. Interpersonal relationships were based on passionate inclinations, not on the familial structure of bourgeois society: every member of the community was free to move from group to group as he or she felt fit. Fourier was a staunch champion of women's rights, and the women members shared equal status and responsibility with the men. Members who chose to practice sexual fidelity were encouraged to do so. The Fourierists felt that the social institution of marriage destroyed

romantic love, and this is a theme which makes Fourier's philosophy of special interest to the Surrealists and Paz. The works of Fourier which have been most widely circulated are the Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales (1808) and Traité de l'association domestique-agricole (1822). However, a work which is currently exciting interest in Fourier is Le Nouveau monde amoureux, in which he elaborates a detailed theory of sexual harmony. This work is actually a series of notebooks kept between 1817 and 1819, but not published--Fourier intended these theories to be implemented only when a utopian society evolved mature enough to accept them. The notebooks were not published until 1967 as part of the first Œuvres complètes of Fourier.²⁵ All of these works radiate from one central theory, that of universal analogy. The key to this analogy is passionate attraction, which Fourier presents as a universal law manifesting itself in all spheres of existence. All of creation is regulated by the attraction of male and female forces. Although Fourier's system is based on premises akin to those of Linnaeus or Mesmer, his presentation is far more poetical than scientific. Fourier's account of celestial copulation between the stars recalls the passage from Paz's poem Blanco where the lovers in their fusion with the macrocosm become "astros infusorios." Man is always the center of Fourier's vast network of correspondences. Like the Ancients, the French textile merchant seeks to interpret the "great book of Nature"²⁶; however, the hieroglyphs of Nature are interpreted by Fourier in terms of human personality traits or social relationships. Harmful creatures such as the poisonous snake reflected the disharmony afflicting man. As the world achieved perfect harmony these creatures would disappear.

Fourier's "calculus of analogy" was closer to the symbolical representations of alchemy than to the algebra which formed the basis for some of his strangest equations: he depicted a world ruled by a progression and combination of twelve human passions each reflected in a color, musical note, geometrical form and heavenly body.²⁷ Love stands first among these passions. It is according to Fourier an emanation of the divine spirit, and it is also the passion which has been most disfigured by civilization. The truly unique feature of Fourier's vision is its resurrection of the body, but Fourier's contemporaries were unprepared for total revolution in this respect, as he wisely saw. It is only in the last decade or so that poetical and sociopsychological theorists have widely acclaimed the need to re-eroticize, to re-vitalize life--and language.

Similarly it is only recently that the true significance of the poetical movements which derived a great part of their inspiration from Fourierism and occultism has been taken at face value, rather than dismissed as quaint quackery and poetic hocus-pocus. Accordingly, we find contemporary poets turning once more to the wellsprings of modern poetry, Romanticism and Symbolism, in their efforts to decipher a modern analogy. If we wish to understand Paz or any of the many visionary or even hermetic poets in which twentieth-century poetry abounds, we must be able to manipulate the poetic vocabulary of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; for the questions to which today's poetry addresses itself were formulated by the Romantics, and refined by the Symbolists. To understand the genesis of modern verse we must look beyond the "isms" and cataclysms which erupted in the wake of World War I, and look for the

root cause first in the works of Blake, Nerval and the German Romantics, especially Novalis, Jean Paul and Hölderlin; the French and English Romantics, especially Baudelaire and Wordsworth; and most importantly, the work of the French Decadents and Symbolists, whose leading figures Rimbaud and Mallarmé present the most intriguing challenge to the modern poet. Paz's poetics, like that of many a contemporary poet, is inextricably involved with all of these poets. What I have attempted here in the introduction is a presentation of some of the major Romantic and Symbolist themes and preoccupations echoed by Paz. This presentation centers about a few key poems and is intended as an initial approximation to esoteric themes which will be discussed throughout this study. Thus a discussion of the all-important impact of Mallarmé on Paz is reserved for the chapters dealing with the later poems, where Mallarmé's presence is felt most.

Gérard de Nerval is a principal link in the chain between Romanticism and the twentieth century. Nerval searched for unity in the multiplicity of dream and myth: syncretism is the key to his philosophy and poetic. Nerval was, of course, saturated with the Illuminist notion of an unspoiled primitive man and an original language, as well as the neo-Pythagorean vision of universal harmony shared by the various occult movements. While enriching his knowledge of the occult in voyages to Germany and the Orient, Nerval also undertook an odyssey through the world of the subconscious which ultimately led him to an Orphic descent into the hell of madness. The syncretism which marks all of Nerval's poetry is symptomatic of an underlying problem central to the modern consciousness: the death of God and the negation of traditional Christianity.

The death of God precipitates the West into the abyss of nothingness and the absurd. As Paz has pointed out, this death is beyond the ken of philosophy; it is "unthinkable" rather than irrational.²⁸ Thus the faith which had animated even secular art in the West was replaced by anguish and irony: the Romantic poet blasphemed the God who had abandoned him. While it was Nietzsche who most loudly proclaimed God's death to the world, the theme was presented much earlier in the "Dream" (1789) of the German Romantic novelist Jean Paul.²⁹ The Christ of Jean Paul searches the universe only to find no trace of his divine Father and only chaos ruling the universe. While Enlightenment philosophers had replaced God with a deified Reason, they, as well as their Illuminist successors had insisted on a universal principle of harmony and order. Nerval is perhaps the first to respond to Jean Paul's nightmare. His poem "Le Christ aux oliviers" is a response to the "Dream" and offers a new possibility for a world threatened by the loss of God --the eternal return. Nerval's unfathomable divinity is not the one and only God of the West who once dead cannot be resurrected but a God akin to those of the East, one emanation among many of an undifferentiated omnipresent unity. Nerval celebrates this obscure god in the "Vers dorés" dedicated to Pythagoras:

Homme! libre penseur--te crois-tu seul pensant
 Dans ce monde où la vie éclate en toute chose:
 Des forces que tu tiens ta liberté dispose,
 Mais de tous tes conseils l'Univers est absent.

Respecte dans la bête un esprit agissant . . .
 Chaque fleur est une âme à la Nature éclore;
 Un mystère d'amour dans le métal repose:
 Tout est sensible;--et tout sur ton être est puissant!

Crains dans le mur aveugle un regard qui t'épie:
 A la matière même un verbe est attaché . . .
 Ne la fais point servir à quelque usage impie.

Souvent dans l'être obscur habite un Dieu caché;
 Et, comme un œil naissant couvert par ses paupières
 Un pur esprit s'accroît sous l'écorce des pierres.³⁰

God, for Nerval, was an undefinable presence, most poignantly alluded to in these lines which close "Le Christ aux oliviers":

Réponds! criait César à Jupiter Ammon
 Quel est ce nouveau dieu qu'on impose à la terre?
 Et si ce n'est un dieu, c'est au moins un démon . . .

Mais l'oracle invoqué pour jamais dut se taire;
 Un seul pouvait au monde expliquer ce mystère:
 --Celui qui donna l'âme aux enfants du limon.

These lines describe the tensions of an epoch haunted by two terrifying visions: that of a universe governed by no one or nothing and that of a world usurped by a fallen angel. Baudelaire's satanic vision was at least "thinkable"; Lucifer was a very rational explanation for the chaotic state of the world, and the latter half of the nineteenth century saw his deification by the Decadents. Few writers could face the Néant, and only one, Mallarmé, dared glorify Nothingness as synonymous with Being. His position remains fairly unique even today. The poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remain "enfants du limon," "children of the mire", still pondering what or who infused that mire with life: this image provides the title for the sequel to El arco y la lira, Los hijos del limo. Paz's predilection for Nerval is one he shares with the surrealists, and most especially with Breton. One of Nerval's attractions for Breton and the surrealists was his exploration of the world of the subconscious and the dream of such works as Les filles du feu (1854) and Aurélia ou le rêve et la vie (1855). However, it is one recurring

vision which Nerval shares with the surrealists and Paz: woman as the bridge between man and a world in a perpetual state of dissolution and renewal. Nerval became obsessed with the figure of the Egyptian fertility goddess Isis as portrayed by Apuleius in The Golden Ass, a work which Nerval revered, as he was convinced that the nineteenth century was a re-creation of the Alexandrine era.³¹ Over the centuries Isis underwent many metamorphoses as other female deities became associated with her cult from Hecate and Artemis to the Virgin Mary; hence she is portrayed throughout Nerval's work as the archetypal earth mother, a symbol of the renewal of love. The other mythological figure who haunts Nerval's verses is the fay Mélusine, half fish, half woman, condemned to haunt the forests of Lusignan because of her love for a human being.³² Together they symbolize the loss and renewal of love, and, regeneration through that love. For the poet, the three great loves of his life, his mother, Sophie Dawes and the actress Jenny Colonna are embodiments of the Great Goddess; and he sees the death of each as the prelude to another love. It is Nerval's belief in regeneration and the eternal return which motivates his master work, the cycle of sonnets known as "Les Chimères." The original group of sonnets published in 1854 together with Les Filles du feu included, in this order: "El Desdichado," "Myrtho," "Horus," "Antéros," "Delfica," and "Artémis." Poetry for Nerval was the disclosure of esoteric knowledge; he placed the sonnets so that the beginning of the titles spelled out "El Mohaddar," the Arabic for "the hidden." The poems themselves map out a poetic myth of regeneration: the birth of the divine child Horus from primordial darkness, the rebirth of the

ancient gods and the rebirth of love.³³ All these themes coalesce in "Artémis," the poem whose enigmatic first stanza has intrigued generations of poets including Breton and Paz:

La Treizième revient . . . C'est encor la première;
Et c'est toujours la Seule,--ou c'est le seul moment;
Car es-tu Reine, ô Toi! la première ou dernière?
Es-tu Roi, toi le Seul ou le dernier amant? . . .

The sources to which this image has been attributed are many, but all interpretations center about the symbolism of the number thirteen, which for the occult sects in which Nerval was immersed signified death and rebirth, both physical and spiritual.³⁴ Nerval originally intended to subtitle the poem "Le Ballet des heures," so it is obvious that thirteen signifies time reincarnation and the eternal return, since these ideas are a fixation with him, as they are for many Romantics.³⁵ The evocation of Isis by Nerval in Les Filles du feu offers another clue to the significance of this number: the thirteen names of Isis discussed by Apuleius are commented on by Nerval, who repeatedly maintained that the Greek and Christian religions were successive reappearances and transformations of the cult of Isis. An often-proffered interpretation of "Artémis" is that it refers to the thirteenth arcanum of the Tarot pack: Death, a card which represented death and regeneration. The ancient art of divination by means of the Tarot had achieved enormous popularity in the nineteenth century. In accordance with the new interest in things Egyptian, practitioners of the occult held the Tarot cards to be pictorial representations of an original religion, perhaps of the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus, or of the Hebrew Cabala. This theory was widely promulgated by the Rosicrucians. As chief spokesman for a Rosicrucian interpretation of the Cabala, Eliphas Lévi, the Abbé

Constant speculated wildly on the origin of the Tarot.³⁶ That his theories have long since been proved inaccurate need not interest us here, for Lévi's treatises fired the imagination of a half dozen generations of French poets from Nerval and Hugo to the surrealists. It is the Nerval of "Artémis" and Les Chimères who inspired two stylistically disparate works which have profound spiritual affinities:

Breton's Arcane 17 (1944) and Paz's Piedra de sol (1957).

Breton pays homage to Nerval in the pages of a poem-essay which tells of the renewal of love in the midst of the Second World War. His poetic reverie is triggered by his contemplation of the seventeenth card in the Tarot pack, the Star, which signifies renewed hope like the thirteenth arcanum, but without its grim reminder of death. Arcane 17 is, among other things, the journal of the poet's voyage to Canada's remote Gaspé Peninsula. Deserted by his second wife Jacqueline, Breton made the journey with Elisa, who would be his third wife. Their love for one another blots out their frightful memories of the war; and the barren rocks of the Gaspé become beautiful in the light of the Star of the arcana, suddenly transformed into Venus in her double aspect of the morning star and evening star. Mélusine, the once mortal fairy whose cries remind Nerval of his lost love in the sonnets of Les Chimères, appears here as a symbol of the anima or female spirit through whom man communicates with the universe. Avoiding the tragic implications of Nerval's symbolism, Breton looks to the future, not the past:

Un jour un nouvel amour et je plains ceux pour qui l'amour
perd à ne pas changer de visage³⁷

"Artémis," Mélusine and Venus also preside over the unfolding

of Paz's first master poem, Piedra de sol. But Paz's homage to Nerval remains closer to the spirit of the original. Mélusine becomes not the Surrealist symbol of woman as mediatrix between man and nature, but the harbinger of tragedy and loss of love. Like Breton, Paz centers his poem about an encounter with love during wartime. It is a memory of the past, Madrid in 1937, made timeless by the presence of love. It is significant that Breton and Paz turn to Nerval in their mature work; for his vision of love offers an end to the "season in hell" into which they had plunged earlier in the wake of Rimbaud and Lautréamont.³⁷

While Nerval and Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé, all are highly visible presences in Paz's work, there is yet another French poet whose influence is pervasive if not direct, the great Romantic, Victor Hugo, who had quite a following among the Latin American modernista poets, Rubén Darío especially.³⁹ The modernista generations coincide in time with the Symbolist and Decadent movements in France, but they are linked via poetic mutuality of interests to the earlier movements: Romanticism and the Parnasse. Baudelaire and Hugo, together with Poe and Whitman were the mentors of the Latin Americans. Although Charles Baudelaire is often cited for his interest in Swedenborgian occultism because of his sonnet "Correspondances," it was Hugo who spread the gospel of universal analogy to the widest audience. Hugo's career spanned more than 67 years; he was the dean of poets for three generations.⁴⁰ While he first became acquainted with Illuminist thought through his early involvement in the socialist movement, after the drowning of his daughter Léopoldine in 1843 Hugo was a frequent participant in occult activities and seances in an effort to communicate

with his daughter's spirit.⁴¹ He attended these seances in the company of such literary friends as Honoré Balzac, Alexandre Dumas and Théophile Gautier. Among Hugo's many friends in occult circles were the Cabalist Alexander Weill, the magnetist Henri-Marie Delaage and the Illuminist Abbé Alphonse-Louis Constant. The Abbé, who adopted the pseudonym Eliphas Lévi, was imprisoned for his socialist activities and pamphlets. After his release he became a portrait painter. Interested in the occult, he eventually was initiated into Masonic and Rosicrucian sects and became an expert on the Rosicrucian interpretation of the Cabala. Lévi's numerous books influenced not only Hugo but many other writers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴² Hugo's interests are best reflected in Les Contemplations (1856), a collection of poems whose main themes include spiritual gnosis and the poetic imagination. Hugo sees the poet as prophet and magus. That only the poet is capable of seeing the invisible bond between God and the rest of the universe is the message of "Les mages," the epilogue to Les Contemplations in which Hugo sums up the theory of universal analogy which is the cornerstone of his new Christianity.

Ces hommes, ce sont les poètes;

.....

Ils entendent ce que murmure

La voile, la gerbe, l'armure,

Ce que dit, dans le mois joyeux

Des longs jours et des fleurs écloses,

La petite bouche des roses

A l'oreille immense des cieux.

.....

Oui, grâce aux penseurs, à ces sages,

A ces fous qui disent: Je vois!

Les ténèbres sont des visages

Le silence s'emplit de voix!

L'homme, comme âme, en Dieu palpite. . .

.....

Le grand caché de la nature
 Vient hors de l'ancre à leur appel;
 A leur voix, l'ombre symbolique
 Parle, le mystère s'explique,
 La nuit est pleine d'yeux de lynx;
 Sortant de force, le problème
 Ouvre les ténèbres lui-même,
 Et l'énigme éventre le sphinx.

Oui, grâce à ces hommes suprêmes,
 Grâce à ces poètes vainqueurs,
 Construisant des autels poèmes
 Et prenant pour pierres les coeurs
 Comme un fleuve d'âme commune,
 Du blanc pylône à l'apre rune
 Du brahme au flamme romain,
 De l'hiérophante au druide,
 Une sorte de Dieu fluide
 Coule aux veines du genre humain.⁴³

The vision of universal harmony depicted by Hugo here and in a long poem, "Dieu," written about the same time (1855-56) is the culmination of the theory of analogy advanced by Fourier and Restif de la Bretonne. Hugo, like other thinkers of the early nineteenth century places man at the pinnacle of a cosmic hierarchy, second only to God. In "Dieu" we find the passions and problems of mankind reflected in a lower order of nature: the animals. Two notes which grace these poems were slated to rapidly disappear from poetry, threatened by the advances of science. First is the constant insistence on the open lines of communication between man and nature, and the fusion of subject and object. Second is Hugo's eager anticipation of death, secure in the faith it means union with an infinite Being. Hugo's vision was soon obliterated, however, as the discoveries of science rapidly destroyed man's image of reality.

3. Irony and Analogy in Modern Hispanic Literature:
 - a. Valle-Inclán: "La lámpara maravillosa"
 - b. Modernismo

What, then, is happening in Spain during this period? Paradoxically, the saturation of nineteenth-century French literature by Illuminism and other occult or mystical movements has no parallel in Spain. It is not until the turn of the century that we find mysticism as the major impulse in the work of a major figure: Ramón del Valle-Inclán. I would like to dwell briefly on the extended essay in which Valle-Inclán defines his philosophy of art, "La lámpara maravillosa."⁴⁴ The essay is of especial interest not only because it exemplifies the literary tradition under discussion, but because the Galician and the Mexican, so seemingly disparate in style and interests, both seek to probe the workings of the creative consciousness and penetrate the mysteries of language. Eroticism, of course, is a major preoccupation for both. Most important, both exalt the instant as the only way for man to seize the eternal. In their treatment of the last-mentioned theme Paz and Valle-Inclán are uncannily one--we will examine the similarities in detail.

Valle-Inclán's speculations on the creative mind are couched in the language of mystic literature. His sources do include the esoteric doctrines popularized by the various syncretic religious sects which flourished in the nineteenth century, but part of his inspiration is more orthodox, the Spanish mystic Miguel de Molinos.

For the Galician poet the creative process parallels the mystic one. The introduction to "La lámpara maravillosa," "Gnosis," dwells on the distinction the mystics made between meditation and contemplation:

Hay dos maneras de conocer, que los místicos llaman Meditación y Contemplación. La Meditación es aquel enlace de razonamientos por donde se llega a una verdad, y la Contemplación es la misma verdad deducida cuando se hace sustancia nuestra, olvidado el camino que enlaza razones a razones y pensamientos con pensamientos. La Contemplación es una manera absoluta de conocer, una intuición amable, deleitosa y quieta, por donde el alma goza la belleza del mundo, privada del discurso y en divina tiniebla. Es así como una exégesis mística de todo conocimiento y la suprema manera de llegar a la comunión con el Todo Cuando una vez se llega a este final, el alma queda tan acostumbrada al divino deleite de comprender intuitivamente, que para volver a gustarle ya no quiere cansarse con el entendimiento, persuadida de que mejor se logra con el ahinco de la voluntad.⁴⁵

Contemplation, then, is to be the artist's creative "tool"; with it he hopes to achieve gnosis, to penetrate the mysteries of time and the seemingly absurd chaos of human experience. In recounting his early feelings of the futility of an existence destined to be continuously eroded and destroyed, Valle-Inclán echoes the principal preoccupations of "modern" sensitivity:

Antes de llegar a este quietismo estético divino deleite, pasé por una aridez muy grande, siempre acongojado por la sensación del movimiento y del vivir estéril. . . . He consumido muchos años mirando como todas las cosas se mudaban y perecían, ciego para ver su eternidad. . . . El Tiempo era un vasto mar que me tragaba. . . .⁴⁶

Concebir la vida y su expresión estética dentro del movimiento, y de todo aquello que cambia sin tregua, que se desmorona, que pasa en una fuga de instante, es concebirla con el absurdo satánico Consumirse en el vértigo del vuelo sin detenerse nunca es la terrible sentencia que cumple el Angel Lucifer.⁴⁷

Paradoxically Valle-Inclán finds his Eternity in the instant, in a moment's ecstasy of mystical identification with the cosmos: "los instantes se abrían como círculos de largas vidas, y en este crecimiento fabuloso todas las cosas se revelaban a mis sentidos con la gracia de un nuevo significado."⁴⁸ The poet is a seer. He sees, not the future but "una más perfecta visión que del momento fugaz de nuestra vida consigue

el alma quebrantando sus lazos con la carne."⁴⁹ Valle-Inclán's contemporaries--Azorín, Machado, Unamuno--are equally obsessed with Time. But one must turn to another time and another continent to find a kindred spirit. Reading these lines from La lámpara, one is reminded of Paz: "Cuando se rompen las normas del tiempo, el instante más pequeño se rasga como un vientre preñado de eternidad. El éxtasis es el goce de sentirse engendrado en el infinito de ese instante."⁵⁰ A lapidary line from "Viento entero" sums it up. "El presente es perpetuo."⁵¹

How is the poet to express the ineffable experience of that instant? "El poeta debe buscar en sí la impresión de ser mudo, de no poder decir lo que guarda en su arcano, y luchar por decirlo, y no satisfacerse nunca."⁵² Valle-Inclán walks the same tightrope between language and silence traversed by the Romantics and Mallarmé. And it is significant that his metaphor of the mute poet who must speak is echoed by Blanchot decades later.⁵³ Also of interest is Valle-Inclán's espousal of the Cabalistic notion of the Word made Flesh. Language is a universal analogy. It reflects the multiplicity of existence, but it is a manifestation of a divine unity: "El poeta reduce el número de las alusiones sin trascendencia a una divina alusión cargada de significados."⁵⁴

Moving to Latin America we find that the esoteric doctrines we have been discussing do figure importantly in the modernista⁵⁵ literature of the late nineteenth century. While the Muses turn their backs on Spain during the nineteenth century, in Latin America a prodigious amount of first-rate poetry appears.⁵⁶ A great deal of criticism has

been devoted to the decorative motifs of modernismo and its sometimes overly Parnassian excesses. Its cult of esoteric places and ancient times is labelled literary escapism. And perhaps the most burning critical issue seems to be the relationship between Latin American modernismo and parallel peninsular literary movements, such as the Generation of '98. But few critics discuss the transcendental quest underlying the movement, whether Spanish or American. Reading any of the modernistas one is struck by the constant references to mystical and occult philosophies. However, first-rate studies dedicated to this aspect can be counted on the fingers of one hand: Paz's essays on Darío and Lopez Velarde in Cuadrivio, and Gullón's book on modernismo.⁵⁷

The following pages are not a delineation of affinities, but a study of several of the modernista poets who have inspired Paz, which influences are attested to in the Cuadrivio (1965) essays, as well as in the more recent Los hijos del limo (1974).

In these books Paz contradicts the vein of criticism which holds that the vanguard negates modernismo, and he points out that both vanguardista and contemporary movements are a natural extension of modernista ideas even if the later poets reject some of the rhetorical excesses of their more flamboyant fin de siglo counterparts. In a temporal sense Martí and Darío and the poets who follow them are the initiators of modern Hispanic poetry; in another they are sort of spiritual crossroads--a correspondence or a felicitous coincidence which exists outside of time; for they are the interstices not only of Romanticism and the avant garde, but of the East and West. Paz has

eloquently expressed these affinities in the Cuadrivio essays on Darío and the Mexican modernista López Velarde. These essays are exquisitely perceptive since they were conceived in the sixties while Paz was in India and experiencing firsthand the clash between Eastern and Western philosophy, and recreating the modernista experience while seeking to reconcile such very diverse vital and poetic elements: Mexican, Hispanic, French, European and Eastern. I should like to quote extensively from these essays in order to underline some basic elements of a tradition which pervades the mainstream of Latin American poetry from the modernistas to Huidobro, Vallejo, Gorostiza, Borges, Lezama Lima, Díaz Casanueva, Girri and others.

In the essay on Darío, "El caracol y la sirena," Paz stresses the metaphysical anguish underlying the apparent frippery borrowed from the latest Parisian poetic vogue:

El amor a la modernidad no es culto a la moda: es voluntad de participación en una plenitud histórica hasta entonces vedada a los hispanoamericanos. La modernidad no es sino la historia en su forma más inmediata y rica. Más angustiosa también: instante henchido de presagios, vía de acceso a la gesta del tiempo. Es la contemporaneidad. Decadente y bárbaro, el arte moderno es una pluralidad de tiempos históricos, lo más antiguo y lo más nuevo, lo más cercano y lo más distante, una totalidad de presencias que la conciencia puede asir en un momento único:

y muy siglo diez y ocho y muy antiguo
y muy moderno; audaz, cosmopolita . . .

No deje de ser una paradoja que, apenas nacida, la poesía hispanoamericana se declare cosmopolita. ¿Cómo se llama esa Cosmopolis? Es la ciudad de ciudades. Nínive, París, Nueva York, Buenos Aires: es la forma más transparente y engañosa de la actualidad pues no tiene nombre ni ocupa lugar en el espacio. El modernismo es una pasión abstracta, aunque sus poetas se recrean en la acumulación de toda suerte de objetos raros. Esos objetos son signos, no símbolos: algo intercambiable. Máscaras, sucesión de máscaras que ocultan un rostro tenso y ávido, en perpetua interrogación. Su amor desmedido por las formas redondas y plenas, por los ropajes

suntuosos y los mundos abigarrados, delata una obsesión. No es el amor a la vida sino el horror al vacío el que profiere todas esas metáforas brillantes y sonoras. La perpetua bûqueda de lo extraño, a condición de que sea nuevo--y de lo nuevo a condición de que sea único--es avidez de presencia más que de presente. Si el modernismo es apetito de tiempo, sus mejores poetas saben que es un tiempo desencarnado. La actualidad, que a primera vista parece una plenitud de tiempos, se muestra como una carencia y un desamparo: no la habitan ni el pasado ni el futuro. Movimiento condenado a negarse a sí mismo porque lo único que afirma es el movimiento, el modernismo es un mito vacío, un alma deshabitada, una nostalgia de la verdadera presencia. Ese es el tema constante y central, el tema secreto y nunca dicho del todo, de los mejores poetas modernistas.

. . . . Unos cuantos, Darío el primero, advierten que la modernidad no es sino un girar en el vacío, una máscara con la que la conciencia desesperada simultáneamente se calma y se exaspera. Esa bûqueda, si es bûqueda de algo y no mera disipación, es nostalgia de un origen. El hombre se persigue a sí mismo al correr tras este o aquel fantasma: anda en busca de su principio.⁵⁸

Let us move ahead a decade or so to the years immediately preceding World War I, to the period generally designated as postmodernista. The literature of this period is conveniently pigeonholed by the critics as representing a return to themes revolving about everyday reality. Yet it is in this very decade that the nascent avantgarde begins to publish: Vallejo, Huidobro, etc. One of the most extraordinary figures of the decade is the Mexican poet José Juan Tablada. Paz has acknowledged him to be an important influence on his work, and sees him as a seminal figure for modern Mexican poetry.

Tablada is one of the few cosmopolitan Latin American writers. In a sense he is the first, for although the modernistas fled the provinces (in fact or in imagination), most roads led to Paris, and in time the nouveau mode began to grow a little stale. While Tablada's insatiable urge to see new worlds led him to Paris, Japan and New York, his imagination knew no boundaries. Paz sees Tablada as the perambulatory

poet; the curiosity which prompts Tablada's journeys in time and space is the essence of his poetry, and its modernity: ". . . viajes en el espacio y viajes en el tiempo, . . . hacia el pasado y hacia el futuro, pero sobre todo viajes hacia el presente. Su espíritu curioso siempre estaba en acecho de lo que iba a llegar, siempre en espera de lo inesperado. Su poesía tiende a lo inminente. En esta sensibilidad tan ávida para lo temporal reside, quizá, el secreto de la juventud de su obra y, también, una de sus más obvias limitaciones."⁵⁹

As Hector Valdés has remarked, Tablada is the bridge between modernismo and the avantgarde in Mexican letters.⁶⁰ His modernista verse is already marked by the triad of influences we have seen so many times: France, the Orient and the occult. It is through his reading of nineteenth-century French poets that he initially discovers the other two. The stylized Oriental landscapes of Pierre Loti and the Goncourts inspire his initial attempts at Japanese verse forms, and the marvelous occult world of the Parisian literati soon becomes his. Tablada's friend and employer, Victor Ramond, is a noted Theosophist; and in 1909 the poet joins the Theosophical Society (his mature poetry is punctuated by references of a theosophical nature). A sojourn in Paris (1911-1912) affords him a first-hand knowledge of the nascent vanguard, and further acquaints him with French scholarly works on Oriental art and literature. However, it is only after his own trip to Japan that Tablada makes an original contribution. He introduces the uta, a short popular form rather like a seguidilla, and is the first Spanish-language poet to write hai-ku. Poemas sintéticos (1919) incorporates his initial attempts at writing hai-ku. The

importance of the introduction of this new form lay in its concentration. The image became a poem in itself:

Tierno saúz,
casi oro, casi ámbar,
casi luz.⁶¹

Tablada's is not an isolated voice. The young intellectuals comprising the Ateneo de la Juventud--Alfonso Reyes, Antonio Caso, José Vasconcelos and Pedro Henríquez Ureña--sought to free Mexico from her cultural and literary isolation. Reyes is the outstanding figure of the group, and a prime influence on succeeding generations. Octavio Paz comments on Reyes' significance for his own generation: "He was the first Mexican intellectual to release us from our uncreative, centuries-old absorption in our own culture . . . absorption to the point of total ignorance of other cultures . . . if contemporary literature is more comparatively free, it is because of Reyes' insistence that we grow up and accept the cultures of the English, the French, the Germans, the Orientals and the Greeks as part of our common heritage."⁶² While Reyes is first and foremost a Greek scholar, it was his curiosity about Eastern cultures which spurred discussions among the members of the Ateneo. Vasconcelos recounts their initial haphazard sorties into the strange new world of Indian philosophy: ". . . nos recreábamos en uno que otro libro con emoción análoga a la de un oriental que, ignorante de toda la cultura de Europa, leyese de pronto un diálogo de Platón y un pasaje del Evangelio."⁶³

While all are interested in these Indian studies, it is Vasconcelos who will furthest pursue them. Like the other members of the Ateneo schooled in the tenets of positivism, Vasconcelos seeks to

temper the excesses of that school. His philosophic system seeks to explore all manifestations of an infinite, immutable principle, spiritual as well as material. Positivism had exalted logic and reason at the expense of the tools of transcendental knowledge. Vasconcelos desired to investigate these spiritual paths. He was especially interested in the subconscious, an interest which led him to his initial readings about Indian yogic disciplines. His interest piqued, the young Mexican delved into the entire field of Eastern and esoteric studies. He was horrified by the paucity and poor quality of the literature on the subject, especially that proliferated by the Theosophists.⁶⁴ These theosophical texts, he says, suffer from the failure to point out "la autoridad en que se apoyan las citas, excusándose de hacerlo con pretexto de que tales conocimientos son esotéricos y solo se obtienen después de larga preparación especial. . . ."⁶⁵ The Hispanic reader of the turn of the century was exposed to the East largely through these unscholarly texts. Vasconcelos sought to remedy that defect. His Estudios indostánicos is a unique venture.⁶⁶ It is a systematic historical introduction to all of Indian thought and religious or philosophical literature. Every sect, major or minor, is covered. Vedanta, Buddhism, Jainism, Tantra, Ramakrishna, Vivekenanda, etc.--they are all there, adequately presented for the first time to a Spanish-speaking public. And, the philosophic literature is presented in a highly organized, historically developed series of sketches: the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabarata, the Sutras, the Tantras, the Brahmanas, the Baghavat Gita, the Gita Govinda, etc.

Paz and Vasconcelos share more than an interest in Indian

thought. Although political events of the forties and fifties led to Vasconcelos' alienation from his former literary companions,⁶⁷ his earlier philosophical and esthetic works pose many of the same questions explored in the works of Paz, or Gorostiza, or Montes de Oca, or Aridjis--Vasconcelos sketches the framework for an esthetic and philosophical tradition. The pertinent documents for such a comparison are the works on philosophy and aesthetics, including: Pitágoras (Una teoría del ritmo), Estudios indostánicos, El monismo estético, Filosofía estética and Lógica orgánica.⁶⁸ In all of these, even in the treatise on logic, poetic thought is primordial: "Al comienzo de las grandes culturas, el poeta reúne los caracteres del filósofo y del vidente. Como el Valmiki de los Vedas o el Orfeo griego. Ambos explican el mundo por medio de síntesis poéticas."⁶⁹ As philosophy and religion develop they incorporate poetic vision; when they are blind to this vision, they degenerate . . . into sophistry and cant. Vasconcelos reminds us that philosophy is not a purely intellectual exercise. It is by definition the love of sophia, of wisdom, not of logos:

El Logos separado de la realidad es palabrería vana. Sophia es el conocimiento de la realidad mediante el instrumento del Logos pero también conforme a otros medios de conocimiento que no sospecha el Logos; por ejemplo, la estimación de la calidad en el color, en el sonido; por ejemplo, el goce de la armonía que hace y deshace equilibrios. . . . La Sabiduría abarca la experiencia toda; es ciencia de experiencia desde la más humilde percepción de los sentidos hasta la más alta visión divina del místico.⁷⁰

Sophia or perfect wisdom is the Beatrice of Dante, the unattainable ideal of most great lyrical poetry. It is embodied as the archetypal image of the earth goddess or great mother, and sometimes masquerades as the Muse. It is the union with the Other of which philosophers speak, or with the Absolute sought by mystics. The Buddhist goddess Prajñāpāramitā, the

goddess of this perfect knowledge, will become a central metaphor in the poetry of Paz; and Woman will become the medium through which the poet touches the Goddess.

In the work devoted to logic we find a key word, analogy:

. . . afirmamos que el a priori racional no es un conjunto de formas rígidas, según se nos da en las nociones kantianas, en los axiomas matemáticos o en el logicismo de los neokantianos que identifican el pensamiento con un logos dialéctico, casi mecánico. Verás . . . en el a priori, no un mecanismo, ni siquiera un mecanismo dialéctico . . . el alma racional crea la forma adaptable a la realidad acabada de descubrir y traduce la novedad fenomenal al concepto y así la incorpora al reino de lo inteligible. Reino que abarca . . . todo lo concebible como existente, siempre y cuando demos el a priori la elasticidad necesaria para que sea más que una dialéctica, una capacidad que se vale de la analogía cuando ya no puede darle frutos el silogismo. Según hacen el poeta, el artista y el místico.⁷¹

The search for analogical modes of perception, the desire to imbue thinking with a sense of totality and all its complex movements is what attracts Vasconcelos to Dante, Swedenborg and Fourier.⁷² The latter predilection he, of course, shares with André Breton. Paz, much later, will forge a similar path--Fourier and Swedenborg to Mallarmé and finally Dante.⁷³ Analogy is the pivot about which all of the aesthetics turn. Each of the successive versions further elaborates on this theme--for example, Pitágoras: una teoría del ritmo (1916, 1921), El monismo estético (1918), Estética (1935, 1936, 1945), and Filosofía estética (1952). Esthetic monism seeks out the unifying force which marks great art: "un arte . . . siempre sobresaltado por el descubrimiento de una unidad interna entre las series heterogéneas de los sucesos y los fenómenos. . . ."⁷⁴ To better reveal this unity Vasconcelos proposes a synthetic (or analogical genre) "the symphony as literary form":

Lo fundamental de lo que llamo Sinfonía, es que en este nuevo estilo, el espíritu, no procede por inducciones y deducciones como en la dialéctica racional, no acumula observaciones y datos como en la ciencia; no afirma credos dogmáticos como en la ética religiosa: la síntesis de la sinfonía es una síntesis lograda a base de pathos estético. No convence relacionando y sumando, sino descubriendo las afinidades y fundiéndolas en el sentido divino.

Un libro ordenado a imitación de la Sinfonía beethoveniana será, pues, el estilo adecuado para expresar el pensamiento moderno que no quiere ser, ni limitadamente empírico, ni tradicionalmente formalista, ni moralmente dogmático; un pensamiento totalista; ebrio de mística esencia infinita.⁷⁵

Perhaps we could phrase it another way: the Symphony as the Book, for there is much here to remind the reader of Mallarmé's famous "Livre." There are echoes of the past in these pages--Mallarmé and Dante--and of the present, for Vasconcelos admires Eliot's Four Quartets. Most interesting is the intimation of what George Steiner will formulate in the seventies as the Pythagorean genre, i.e., a diverse work which defies classification yet suggests this sense of unity. Vasconcelos hopes to divest language of its overly intellectual aspect: like the Symbolists he turns to music which is more suggestive, more abstract, for he finds visual metaphors too concrete. Paz will attempt symphonic or Pythagorean texts (Blanco and El mono gramático) and will successfully employ both visual and musical metaphors.

Another very contemporary notion which is a key concept in Paz appears in these treatises: the idea of the body as double of the universe.⁷⁵ Vasconcelos is generally the name least likely to be linked with Paz in any discussion of contemporary Mexican poetry. In later years he was the rather vociferous enemy of the sort of poetry typified by Paz, or Marco Antonio Montes de Oca or Homero Aridjis.⁷⁶ One forgets that Vasconcelos was a continuous contributor to twentieth-century Mexican poetic polemic; indeed his mature works on aesthetics and

philosophy appear in the thirties and forties. He is a formative influence for the poets of the succeeding generations: Contemporáneos⁷⁷ and Taller, even if later he is more of a gadfly than a godfather. Paz, then, continues a tradition which encompasses not only his European literary heritage but the mainstream of Latin American poetry and thought from the modernistas right through the vanguard poets. He is not, as some critics would like to believe, a latter-day literary golem sprung lifesize from the fertile tree of Breton's imagination.

Notes

1. Paris, 1968, p. 51.
2. Flag of Ecstasy: Selected Poems (Los Angeles, 1972), p. 107.
3. La musiquilla de las pobres esferas (Santiago de Chile, 1972).
4. See, for example, the introductory essay in El Signo y el garabato, "La nueva analogía: poesía y tecnología."
5. Le Paysan du Paris (Paris, 1926), pp. 142-44.
6. Correspondance I, eds. Henri Mondor and J. P. Richard (Paris, 1959), p. 207.
7. La Pensée sauvage (Paris, 1962).
8. Tristes Tropiques (Paris, 1955).
9. Taller No. 3, May 1939, p. 41.
10. Cuadrivio, p. 83.
11. Los hijos de limo, p. 187.
12. The Other Side of Silence: The Poet at the Limits of Language (London, 1970).
13. "De l'angoisse au langage," Faux pas, Paris, 1943, p. 12: "uni étroitement à un muet qui a perdu tous les mots, un rhétour maître du discours."
14. "En el umbral de la plegaria," in Delante de la luz cantan los pájaros (Mexico, 1959), p. 78.
15. Los hijos del limo, pp. 99-100.
16. For a brief historical outline of the influence of Eastern sources on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European thought see Gwendolyn Bays, The Orphic Vision: Seer Poets from Novalis to Rimbaud (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1964), pp. 31-33. David Lattimore, "Discovering Cathay," Parnassus: Poetry in Review (Spring/Summer 1973), pp. 5-9, points out how Western writers distorted Chinese sources to meet their own needs.
17. Quoted by Paul-Louis Couchoud in Asiatic Mythology (New York, n.d.), p. 28.
18. The following discussion of Renaissance occult movements and of Hermetism relies heavily on Frances A. Yates' Giordano Bruno and

the Hermetic Tradition (Chicago, 1964), and D. P. Walker's Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella (London, 1958).

19. The system by which the Cabalist hopes to interpret the hidden meaning of the Hebrew characters and numbers which make up the Old Testament is said to have been transmitted by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. However, the first Cabalistic book, the Yetzirah was written circa A.D. 591-1038. The other sacred text, the Zohar, was written down by Moises de León (1250-1305). Scholars believe that the Cabala was influenced by neo-Pythagorean philosophy.
Cabalistic arts were adopted by Christian magi of the Renaissance and Baroque including Pico della Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa and Robert Fludd, and subsequently penetrated occult societies such as the Rosicrucians. The Cabala enjoyed a great vogue among writers in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth it has commanded the attention of such writers as Malcolm Lowry, Jorge Luis Borges and Colin Wilson.
20. The pioneering study of the tremendous impact of the occult on French literature during the nineteenth century was undertaken by August Viatte in Les Sources occultes du romantisme (Paris, 1928), and Victor Hugo et les illuminés de son temps (Montreal, 1942). Recently a number of first-rate studies have been devoted to this topic including the study by Bays, The Orphic Voice and: Robert Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France (Boston, 1968); John Senior, The Way Down and Out: The Occult in Symbolist Literature (Ithaca, 1959); Thomas Williams, Mallarmé and the Language of Mysticism (Athens, Georgia, n.d.).
21. Quoted by Bays, The Orphic Voice, p. 45.
22. See the Œuvres (Paris, 1962).
23. All of Fourier's works cited here are collected in the Œuvres complètes de Charles Fourier (Paris, 1966-68). Nicholas V. Riasanovsky's The Teaching of Charles Fourier (Berkeley, 1969) is a good introduction to Fourier's thought.
24. See Los hijos del limo, pp. 102-03: "La figura de Fourier es central lo mismo en la historia de la poesía francesa que en la del movimiento revolucionario. . . ."
25. Le Nouveau monde amoureux constitutes vol. VII of the Œuvres.
26. Œuvres, VI, p. 450.
27. Ibid.
28. Los hijos del limo, p. 72.
29. Jean Paul (Johann Paul Richter) later included this narrative as part of his novel Siebenkas (1796).

30. All quotes from Nerval's poetry are taken from the Gallimard Poésies et Souvenirs of Nerval, edited by Jean Richer (Paris, 1974), as this is the definitive edition. All discussion of dates and circumstances of publication is based on M. Richer's notes.
31. See Beatrice Didier's introduction and notes to Les Filles du feu suivi de Aurélia (Paris, 1972), for a discussion of the importance of Isis in Nerval's work. Paz shares Nerval's predilection for The Golden Ass; he tells us in the long poem Pasado en claro, p. 25, that Apuleius is one of the favorite books of his youth.
32. See Chapter Two, pp. 72-73, for a more extended discussion of this legend.
33. Gwendolyn Bays (The Orphic Voice) attempts a rigorous explanation of this theme based on the present day grouping of Les Chimères. Although the premise of an original twelve-sonnet grouping is faulty, many of her findings are still valid, and the analysis is worth reading.
34. For a brief recapitulation of critical theories about Nerval see John M. Fein, "La estructura de 'Piedra de sol,'" Revista Ibero-americana No. 78, Jan.-March 1972, pp. 73-94.
35. On this point see Anna Balakian, "The Romantic Background," Literary Origins of Surrealism: A New Mysticism in French Poetry (New York, 1947), especially p. 22 and following.
36. Lévi's most widely circulated works are: Dogma de la Haute Magie (Paris, 1855); Rituel de la Haute Magie (Paris, 1856); La Clef des Grands Mystères (Paris, 1861).
37. Poèmes (Paris, 1948), p. 155.
38. Since the influence of these two poets on surrealism has been widely discussed and documented, I have chosen to pass over it in order to explore the relationship of Nerval to modern poetry.
39. See, for example, Darío's "Victor Hugo y la tumba," Poesías completas (Madrid, 1961), in which he composes a Hugo-like portrait of universal harmony in his praise of the master.
40. Hugo's first essays appeared in 1818. He continued publishing right up to his death in 1885, and had set aside a number of works to be published posthumously. The last of these was published in 1902.
41. This discussion of Hugo is greatly indebted to Viatte's Victor Hugo as well as Bays, and Darnton's Mesmerism.
42. See Note 36.

43. Book VI, poem XXIII of Les Contemplations (Paris: Editions Recontre, 1968), pp. 315, 322, 325, 326.
44. Obras escogidas. 3rd ed. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1965). Future references will be to this edition. In La lámpara maravillosa Valle-Inclán shows himself to be steeped in the occult traditions of the nineteenth century. There are numerous references to the "Logos espermático" as well as to the Emerald Tablets of Hermetism. However, to date the large body of Valle criticism seems to evade the issue of occult or mystic influences. This is curious, considering the specific, indeed didactic, emphasis on these elements, both in La lámpara maravillosa and the poetry. An exception to this critical evasion is Virginia Milner Garlitz's somewhat speculative article, "Teosofismo en Tirano Banderas," Journal of Spanish Studies: Twentieth Century (Spring 1974), pp. 21-30. She rightly contends that Valle-Inclán puts the occult ethic/esthetic of La lámpara to work in Tirano Banderas and analyzes the play of Gnostic, Hermetic, Cabalistic and Neo-Pythagorean elements in that novel. Mrs. Garlitz bases her contention that Theosophy is the primary source of these elements for Valle-Inclán solely on the fact that Méndez Bejarano cites it as the most widely diffused of the esoteric philosophies in that period (Historia de la Filosofía en España, Madrid: Renacimiento, n.d.). However, a comparison of La lámpara and theosophical works (H. P. Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled and The Secret Doctrine) does not conclusively substantiate this thesis. In actual fact, many of the subjects treated by Valle-Inclán--Astral Light, Paracelsus, the Ring of Gyges, etc.--would point to a familiarity with the allied doctrines of Freemasonry and the Rosicrucians. What was the scope of the Galician author's involvement in the occult movement(s)--was he a member of any sect? This question is beyond the scope of the present study. What we do know is that in La lámpara Valle-Inclán clearly defines his position and acknowledges his occult "masters." The first of these is Pico della Mirandola; Paracelsus is also given a place of importance. Valle-Inclán declares his program to be an amalgam of the ideas of these Renaissance magi and of the quietist, Miguel de Molinos.

Why Pico della Mirandola? Throughout La lámpara Valle-Inclán emphasizes (1) that his is a spiritual doctrine and (2) that he seeks to integrate the occult doctrines with the orthodox ones of the church. The Italian magus advanced the theory of a spiritual magic, that is, the invocation of spiritual, i.e., celestial powers, including God himself. The medieval notion of magia naturalis or astral magic which derived its powers from the natural forces of the universe was supplanted by spiritual magic. To this end Pico della Mirandola introduced the allied practices of the Hebrew Cabala and Egyptian Hermetism. The possibility of integrating magic and religion became a burning question for Renaissance theology (see Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition [New York, 1964] for a fascinating discussion of this question and a thorough historical background of the entire question of Hermetism).

45. Obras, p. 639.

46. Ibid., pp. 646-47.
47. Ibid., p. 649.
48. Ibid., p. 647.
49. Ibid., p. 651.
50. Ibid., p. 648.
51. Ladera este.
52. Obras, p. 654.
53. See Note 13.
54. Obras, p. 650.
55. I will use modernista throughout in order to avoid confusion with Anglo-American Modernism, a movement generally held by critics to begin with the avant garde and post-Symbolist writers of the twenties. Cyril Connolly (The Modern Movement, New York, 1966), however, names Baudelaire as the first Modernist and sees the movement extending from 1880 through the late fifties, and including such disparate writers as Breton and William Carlos Williams. This calls to mind Juan Ramón Jiménez's insistence that modernismo is the literary movement of the twentieth century--see El modernismo: notas de un curso (1953) (Mexico, 1962). I have made no distinction between modernista and so-called post-modernista writers as Paz does not. For an explanation of Paz's negation of the concept of post-modernism see the subsequent discussion in this chapter.
56. As Paz points out, Bécquer and Rosalia de Castro still move in the Romantic sphere. They cannot be compared to the Symbolists or modernistas.
57. Paz: "El caracol y la sirena (Rubén Darío); "El camino de la pasión (Ramón López Velarde)" in Cuadrivio, Ricardo Gullón: Direcciones del modernismo. 2d ed., Madrid, 1971.
58. Cuadrivio, p. 23.
59. Peraś del olmo, p. 82.
60. See Valdés' introduction to the Obras, vol. 1 (Mexico, 1971), p. 14.
61. Ibid., p. 370.
62. Interview by Selden Rodman, Tongues of Fallen Angels (New York: 1974).

63. Obras completas, vol. 3 (Mexico, 1959), pp. 88-89. Vasconcelos also states here that the Ateneo's interest in Indian thought dates from 1911.
64. Obras, vol. 3, pp. 133-34. Vasconcelos characterizes Mme. Blavatsky as a "prestidigitadora" who plagiarizes "obras mediocres de magia popular . . . que ni siquiera aprendió en la India misma, sino en libros y transcripciones europeas."
65. Ibid., p. 134.
66. México: Ediciones México Moderno, 1920.
67. Paz comments on Vasconcelos' condemnation of the younger writers in Selden Rodman, Fallen Angels, p. 139.
68. These works, and others, are contained in vols. 3 and 4 of the above-cited Obras.
69. Obras, vol. 4, p. 94.
70. Obras, vol. 4, pp. 538-39.
71. Obras, vol. 3, "Lógica orgánica," p. 545. The underlining is mine.
72. References to the three are scattered throughout the works, and include an article on Fourier (and one on Saint-Simon) in Historia del pensamiento filosófico (1937), Obras, vol. 4, pp. 353-54.
73. This transition from Swedenborg to Dante is discussed in Chapter Four.
74. Obras, vol. 4, p. 23, "El monismo estético."
75. Ibid., p. 10.
76. Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 1266-70.
77. In this context we must remember that Carlos Pellicer, one of the triumvirate of Contemporáneos, was the friend and boon travelling companion of Vasconcelos.

Chapter Two

1. The New Analogy in Modern Mexican Poetry: From estridentismo to the Poets of Taller

The intervening years between the founding of the Ateneo (1911) and the emergence of the Taller generation of poets (1938) saw the genesis of two poetical groups, the estridentistas and the poets known as the Contemporáneos.¹ I say groups, not generations, for they developed concurrently. The year 1922 marks the revolt of the estridentistas who embraced the dizzying plethora of "isms" exploding on the European literary scene. This brief revolt produced only one poet of any stature, Manuel Maples Arce. The machine-age metaphors of the new movement, as well as its glorification of modern technology, were wholesale transplants from Italian futurism, transplants which never took root--the idea of a futuristic urban utopia projected on the incongruous reality of Mexico City in the 1920's was not daring, but simply ludicrous.² Maples Arce and his friends advocated political as well as poetical reform; but their talents were not equal to the task. And the great poets of the moment, Alfonso Reyes and the nascent generation which would come to be known as the Contemporáneos, chose not to join their European contemporaries, the surrealists, in a revolt intended to make poetry a vital force in everyday life. The estridentistas had little influence on the mainstream. They were neither link nor catalyst. Their role was parenthetical--the Contemporáneos did not

appear in the wake of estridentismo but coexisted with it, forming a strong link between Reyes and Vasconcelos and the poets of Taller.

Any attempt to define the so-called Contemporáneos must remain provisional, for this was a "group" without manifestoes or a fixed membership. One of the "members," Jaime Torres Bodet, called it "un grupo de soledades" and this remains the best definition.³ What links these poets is their common participation in a series of literary reviews. Although the group is often described as crystallizing with the formation of Ulises (1927-28), many of the contributors to this magazine and the subsequent Contemporáneos (1928-31) collaborated in earlier efforts dating from 1917, when Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano, José Gorostiza, Jaimes Torres Bodet, Carlos Pellicer and Enrique González Rojo, students at the Universidad Nacional, cemented a friendship formed when all attended the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria and became literary collaborators as well, contributing to Pegaso (1917) and the student Review, San-Ev-Ank (1918). While at the Universidad Nacional the young poets were influenced by the modernista poet González Martínez and the Ateneo. Indeed, in 1918 Ortiz de Montellano, Gorostiza and Torres Bodet formed a second Ateneo de la Juventud. 1920, the crucial year for the group, marked the fall of Carranza and the succession of Obregón to the Presidency. Named Acting Rector of the Universidad Nacional in this year, José Vasconcelos launched both his educational reforms and his patronage of Mexico's outstanding new writers, whom he appointed to government offices. Torres Bodet, still in his teens, became Secretary of the Escuela Preparatoria where among the students he "discovered" Salvador Novo and Xavier Villarrutia,

and brought them into the group. When in 1922 Vasconcelos was appointed Minister of Public Education under Obregón, all his young protégés received posts. Torres Bodet acquired the key office of Director of Libraries. About this time Jorge Cuesta and Gilberto Owen joined the circle. Two magazines appeared during these years: México Moderno (1920-1923) and La Falange (1922-1923). The reviews flourished or declined subject to the varying political fortunes of the participants. Following the resignation of Vasconcelos in '25, Bernardo J. Gastelúm as his political successor becomes the new sponsor of the group's literary activities. However, under Calles Gastelúm was shunted to the Health Minister, and the dispersal of the group was begun. However, by 1927, they managed to launch Ulises. The new journal, like its predecessors, had but one aim: to serve as a forum for new ideas. Poets and writers from all of Europe and the Americas appeared in the pages of México Moderno and La Falange as well as Ulises. Reported accusations of anti-nationalism assailed the magazines. Contemporáneos (1928-31) inherited both their platform and their enemies. By 1928 the circle is already full-fledged as evidenced by the anthology published in that year by Editorial Contemporánea, Antología de la poesía mexicana moderna. While Jorge Cuesta is the author of the prologue, the editors are the entire group.

Inspired by the catholicity of interests of the Ateneo, the younger poets range far afield in their investigations. The succession of periodicals shows a lively interest in such writers as Eliot, Gide, Valéry and Apollinaire who had become classics overnight. Oddly enough one also finds studies and translations of the French surrealists.⁴ In

practice, however, only rarely do the Mexican poets approximate surreal language or experiment with automatic writing. However, many of the Contemporáneos shared the surrealist quest for an absolute, and its exploration of the subconscious and dreams. It is this vein of their poetry which will be exploited by Paz's generation. Torres Bodet, for example, briefly a surrealist, produced a surrealist novel, Margarita de niebla (1927), which he later suppressed. Perhaps the poetry most influenced by surrealism is that of Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano. Initially inspired by Baudelaire to plunge "Au fond de l'inconnu" he emerges to find a world of dreams which he shares with Nerval, Lorca and the surrealists. The language and form of most of his initial attempts at poetry look back to modernism; however, two volumes prefigure the mature poetry of Paz and Efraín Huerta. Red (1928) includes a number of surrealist prose poems; Sueños (1930-33) is an "open" book, incorporating dream transcriptions and automatic writing. The handful of poems found in this slim book represent the poet's finest work. I should like to quote one to illustrate the continuity of thought apparent in the generations of Contemporáneos and Taller:

En donde acaba el cuerpo y comienza la noche
 río oscuro y profundo como la noche blanca
 de alma, mar de sombra
 iluminada.
 En donde acaba el sueño y principia la llama
 que negras sombras negras anohecen,
 una voz, la más pura
 prendida a los escombros de la nada
 triunfa de luz sin mancha
 enardecida
 petrificada.⁵

Ortiz de Montellano, like Gorostiza, somehow never succeeds in piercing the imminent clarity he pursues. Transparency, a key word in Paz's

poetics, doesn't figure in the vocabulary of his predecessors. For if clarity is transparent, it affords a vision of "otredad"; their search for the absolute leads to a blindingly brilliant dungeon--marked by the periphery of the ego. Ortiz de Montellano speaks for all when he calls himself: "robinson ciudadano de mi pecho."⁶

The quality which unites the introspective Contemporáneos is paradoxically enough their solitude, their separateness. This isolation has led some critics to the facile conclusion that this generation was apolitical and anti-nationalistic. That nothing is further from the truth can be seen from an examination of the individual biographies --all served Mexico and served her well. It is true, however, that most were pillars of the middle class, while the younger poets of the 30's, including Paz, are attracted by Marxist philosophy. Politics, of course, doesn't enter into the poetry of Torres Bodet and his companions. Surprisingly enough the younger group does not deplore its absence. What is more important to the participants in Taller is that this poetry remains an intensely private and exclusive "literary" pursuit rather than a vital revolutionary force, one which will explore universal questions, a poetry made by all. Here lies the key difference between the two groups as Paz sees it:

Cierto, los problemas técnicos--quiero decir: el lenguaje--constituyeron una de nuestras preocupaciones centrales. Pero jamás vimos la palabra como "medio de expresión". Y esto--nuestra repugnancia por lo literario y nuestra búsqueda de la palabra "original", por oposición a la palabra "personal"--distingue a mi generación de la de "Contemporáneos". La poesía era actividad vital más que ejercicio de expresión. No queríamos tanto decir algo personal como, personalmente, realizarnos en algo que nos trascendiese. Para los poetas de "Contemporáneos" el poema era un objeto que podía desprenderse de su creador; para nosotros, un acto. O sea: la poesía era

un "ejercicio espiritual". De ahí el interés de Efren Hernández (quien compartió algunas de nuestras preocupaciones) por los místicos españoles y el de Quintero, Huerta, Vega Albela y el que esto escribe por poetas como Novalis, Blake o Rimbaud. A todos nos interesaba la poesía como experiencia, es decir, como algo que tenía que ser vivido. Veríamos en ella a una de las formas más altas de la comunión. No es extraño, así, que amor y poesía nos pareciesen las dos caras de una misma realidad. O más exactamente: las dos alas. El amor, como la poesía, era una tentativa por recobrar al hombre adánico, anterior a la escisión y a la desgarradura.⁷

For the new group forged by the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War poetry and revolution are the faces of a single coin. Yet they continue to draw strength from their somewhat staid predecessors. The Contemporáneos reach artistic maturity in these same years. During the 1930's and '40's three generations coexist in a rewarding interdependence. The legacy of one group is that of all, three, for each has mapped out a portion of what Anna Balakian has termed the "Road to the Absolute," the Romantic and Symbolist exploration of the unconscious which prefigures surrealism.⁸ In the pages of Contemporáneos Paz, Huerta, Quintero and Vega Albela discover "el mundo de los sueños, las misteriosas correspondencias de Baudelaire, la analogía de Nerval, la inmensa libertad de espíritu de Blake."⁹

Scanning the pages of Contemporáneos and Taller one finds a continuity of interests, including the Romantics mentioned above, Apollinaire, Reverdy, the surrealists, and . . . Valéry, whose impassioned attacks on passion and irrationalism would seem to make him a peculiar bedfellow in the dream world of Nerval and the surrealists. Yet Paul Valéry was a sort of catalyst in the genesis of Mexican poetry from the 1920's to the 1940's in the sense that he was both influence and irritant. Although Valéry (born in 1871) was writing poetry in the

1890's, most of his poetry was not published in book form until the 1920's. Therefore, his poetry and speculative essays exhorting a poetry of the intellect furnished a counterpoint to surrealist manifestoes proclaiming the supremacy of the subconscious. Vasconcelos had explored the mutual dependence of poetry and philosophy on intuitive knowledge. Gorostiza, like Valéry, looked into the mirror of his mind and was stunned by the very nothingness which Valéry feared would come with death. Valéry, self-styled Narcissus, found solace in his physical self. Gorostiza, oblivious of his physical self, looks through the mirror of self symbolized by the glass of Muerte sin fin (1929) and finds not the eventual death threatening Valéry but endless, all-encompassing death. His great poem is an elegy for the intellect. Perhaps it is also an elegy for language. Gorostiza and Valéry continue a tradition initiated by Mallarmé: the poem which turns inward upon itself, and comments upon itself in the process of becoming, passing from thought to imperfect word, and finally to silence.

Paz seems to be addressing Valéry and Gorostiza¹⁰ in his first prose contribution to Taller, an ars poetica which is valid for his entire opus:

. . . y la naturaleza, frente a mí, muda e indiferente . . . ¿Que mundo inclemente es este, ausente de toda dirección y unidad, irreconciliable, que no permite que el silencio de piedra sea, también, el silencio anhelante del vegetal? ¿Qué estremecimiento une a todas estas dispersas, ciegas y encontradas naturalezas?

Las formas que hacen visible al dios extraño que alimenta la tierra, se me presentan nada más como formas solitarias, y mi alma no goza en ellas; pretendo sumergirme en su dulce y frío torbellino; pero quedo, irreparablemente, extraño, como el aceite del agua. Ésta es la verdadera soledad: sin palabras, estrangulado por un mundo fríamente enemigo. . . .

Pienso que la insatisfacción, verdadera amargura, que nos embarga después de todo intento de integración en la naturaleza no es más que el castigo de nuestra avidez. No estamos hechos para vivir en ella, como ella, sino con ella. El mundo se nos presenta como una forma, como un sutil equilibrio--o desequilibrio--de proporciones; pero nosotros no podemos vivir en su desnuda sencillez: queremos que signifique algo, que deje de ser una presencia, y se convierta en una representación. . . .

Somos, para siempre, los descontentos del universo. Los que siempre pedimos más. Jamás entenderemos su simplicidad y su fuerza, porque cuando lo intentamos lo reducimos a un seco, trunco sistema. . . .

Será preciso aprender a vivir como la hierba o la nube. Aprender a morir, como los frutos. Pero el destino del hombre no es ese sino otro, terrible aprendizaje: el conocer, el penetrar. Y hacer claras y fáciles las cosas, aun a costa de su riqueza y verdad. La verdad no es racional. "Es un pensador, es decir, sabe tomar las cosas de una manera más sencilla de como son" (Nietzsche). Tal es el sino del pensamiento: entender, aun traicionando; no quiere nunca reflejar, no puede nunca soportar lo irregular; siempre aspira a una construcción, a una "representación" ideal. . . . Sólo el hombre ávido que se ha bañado en las llamas de mundo regresa vacío a la casa de los hombres; nunca será un cazador, un hombre que apresa el misterio y luego, como una joya, lo exhibe ante sus hermanos, los que viven de la admiración, los necesarios hermanos de todo cazador. Y un cazador, así se trate de un filósofo, será siempre un comerciante, aunque sea un comerciante de almas.¹¹

Paz's relationship to Valéry is volatile and complex: to a certain degree it reflects the complexities of Valéry's poetics. Let us examine some of the points at which Paz and he converge, and separate.

Valéry all too often is seen as a one-dimensional character, a fabricator of abstract, philosophizing poetry: there is always the temptation to identify him with his creation Monsieur Teste;¹² an exaggeratedly intellectual personage who serves to express but one side of Valéry's complicated nature. Teste is a caricature, not a self portrait. And in the sketches and letters which depict Teste, Valéry himself reminds us that Monsieur Teste is irrevocably bound to Madame Teste, as intellect is to anima. C. M. Bowra defines the unifying principle of Valéry's work thus: "the conviction that each phenomenon must

be examined in itself and stated as it really is."¹³ Could poetry be subjected to such scrutiny? Therein lies the conflict in Valéry's work. He found poetry to be a craft, not a gift from the Muse. Bowra notes that in his poetry "there was a discord between his instinctive sense of its importance and his intellectual analysis and its nature."¹⁴ Throughout his life Valéry felt the conflict within himself between intellect and instinct. Mallarmé faced the same conflict--intellect triumphed as he created his own private world. Ultimately, Valéry makes his pact with the world, admitting that intellect doesn't exist without the body. Sensation becomes the axis of his poetry as he explains in Charmes (1922): "Je . . . vais cherchant/ Dans ma forêt sensuelle / Les oracles de mon chant."¹⁵ It is through the body, or sensation, that Valéry arrives at Mind. Ultimately he is drawn to Life, since it is only through living flesh that he can maintain his intellectual activity. This is, of course, the subject of his best-known poem, "Le Cimetière Marin." However, I should like to refer instead to an essay treating the same subject matter, "Au sujet d'Eurêka" (1921).

In Eureka: A Prose Poem (1848) Edgar Allan Poe attempts a total explanation of the universe. He proceeds from an astronomical and physical explanation to an analogical one, ultimately arriving at the conclusion that Poetry and Truth are one and the same: the findings of Newton and Kepler confirm the Platonic concept of harmony: physically and metaphysically the universe revolves about a Center.¹⁶ Valéry felt a special affinity for Poe and understood the greatness of the man far better than Baudelaire or Darío. In an 1892 letter to André Gide Valéry sums up his fascination with Poe: ". . . avec

lucidité et bonheur il fit la synthèse des vertiges."¹⁷ These words recall Paz's characterization of E. E. Cummings-- "los poemas de cummings son hijos del cálculo al servicio de la pasión."¹⁸ This encounter is not fortuitous. Valéry is a quiet presence in Paz's poetry from the first; he is willing to accept Valéry's dictum that perhaps the first line is inspired, but the poem is made by the poet. What he can not reconcile in the early years is the coexistence of philosophy and poetry, and, therefore, he embraces surrealism's banishment of Reason. Yet he cannot adapt himself to the strictures which automatic writing imposes, and his aesthetic has always been nearer Valéry than Breton, though his relationship with the two is a complex one--in the earlier essays one watches him being pulled in one direction and then the other. In this context it is interesting to compare the two editions of El arco y la lira: 1956 and 1967. In the first edition Paz alludes time and again to Valéry's pronouncements on the art of poetry, but finally qualifies him as "un temperamento predominantemente intelectual" for whom language was "un sistema de signos," and an end unto itself, and who had forgotten the "other" to whom a poem should be directed.¹⁹ This criticism has been deleted from the second edition, while Paz still agrees with Valéry that a poem is the product of craftsmanship, thus rejecting the validity of automatic writing, since it implies a state of passivity which is a poetic, and human impossibility.²⁰ Valéry is a necessary tension or friction both for Paz and for contemporary poetry, a healthy leavening for the excesses of surrealism. There is yet another subtle point of contact between the two poets: each ingests and transforms Mallarmé in order to arrive at his own poetic maturation and

sense of self. Paz's absorption of Mallarmé is not complete until the period encompassing Ladera este (1962-68). Blanco, a complex long poem first published in 1967 and included in Ladera este, is a homage to Mallarmé, yet it also encompasses many of the metaphysical questions so magnificently formulated in Valéry's essay on Poe. Fragments of this essay on the cosmogony as the poetic form par excellence are included here so that we may work towards a merging of these two texts.

He exalts the forces of imagination, not of logic; "The role of the inexistent exists; the function of the imaginary is real . . .":

La cosmogonie est un genre littéraire d'une remarquable persistance et d'une étonnante variété, l'un des genres les plus antiques qui soient.

On dirait que le monde est à peine plus âgé que l'an de faire le monde. Avec un peu plus de connaissances et beaucoup plus d'esprit, nous pourrions, de chacune de ces genèses, qu'elle soit prise de l'Inde, ou de la Chine, ou de la Chaldée, qu'elle appartienne à la Grèce, à Moïse, ou à M. Svante Arrhénius, déduire une mesure de la simplicité des esprits dans chaque époque. On trouverait sans doute que la naïveté du dessein est invariable; mais il faudrait confesser que l'art est très différent.

Comme la tragédie fait à l'histoire et à la psychologie, le genre cosmogonique touche aux religions, avec lesquelles il se confond par endroits, et à la science, dont il se distingue nécessairement par l'absence de vérifications. Il comprend des livres sacrés, des poèmes admirables, des récits excessivement bizarres, chargés de beautés et de ridicules, des recherches physico-mathématiques d'une profondeur qui est digne quelquefois d'un objet moins insignifiant que l'univers. Mais c'est la gloire de l'homme que de pouvoir se dépenser dans le vide; et ce n'est pas seulement sa gloire. Les recherches insensées sont parentes des découvertes imprévues. Le rôle de l'inexistant existe; la fonction de l'imaginaire est réelle; et la logique pure nous enseigne que le faux implique le vrai. Il semble donc que l'histoire de l'esprit se puisse résumer en ces termes: il est absurde par ce qu'il cherche, il est grand par ce qu'il trouve.²¹

Valéry then entertains the notions of All and Nothing, and poses a question: how are we to define "Universe"? The definition proffered places mind as mediator between the particular and the absolute:

Une première forme d'univers m'est offerte par l'ensemble des choses que je vois. . . . J'acquies l'impression générale et constante d'une sphère de simultanéité qui est attachée à ma présence. Elle se transporte avec moi, son contenu est indéfiniment variable, mais elle conserve sa plénitude par toutes les substitutions qu'elle peut subir. Si je me déplace, ou si les corps qui m'environnent se modifient, l'unité de ma représentation totale, la propriété qu'elle possède de M'enclore, n'en est pas altérée. J'ai beau me fuir, m'agiter de toute manière, je suis toujours enveloppé de tous les mouvements-voyants de mon corps, qui se transforment les uns dans les autres et me reconduisent invinciblement à la même situation centrale.

Je vois donc un tout. Je dis que c'est un Tout, car il épuise en quelque sorte ma capacité de voir. Je ne puis rien voir que dans cette forme d'un seul tenant, et dans cette juxtaposition qui m'environne. Toutes mes autres sensations se réfèrent à quelque lieu de cette enceinte, dont le centre pense et se parle.

. . . cette unité,--que compose nécessairement ce que je puis voir dans un instant, cet ensemble de liaisons réciproques de figures ou de taches, où je déchiffre ensuite et assigne la profondeur, la matière, le mouvement et l'événement, où je regarde et découvre ce qui m'attire et ce qui m'inquiète,--me communique la première idée, le modèle, et comme le germe de l'univers total que je crois exister autour de ma sensation, masqué et révélé par elle. J'imagine invinciblement qu'un immense système caché supporte, pénètre, alimente et résorbe chaque élément actuel et sensible de ma durée, le presse d'être et de se résoudre; et que chaque moment donc le noeud d'une infinité de racines qui plongent à une profondeur inconnue dans une étendue implicite,--dans le passé,--dans la secrète structure de notre machine à sentir et à combiner, qui se remet incessamment au présent. Le présent, considéré comme une relation permanente entre tous les changements qui me touchent, me fait songer à un solide auquel ma vie sensitive serait attachée, comme une anémone de mer à son galet.²²

Valéry, too, intuitively that the "present is perpetual." And as one follows his attempts in this and other essays to achieve a synthesis of body, speech, mind--and Mind, one can not help but be reminded of a similar evolution in Paz's poetry. We shall return to this theme with Blanco. For the moment let us just say that there is more to Valéry, than the philosopher manqué. Too often we forget that he sums up his metaphysics thus, "Le réel ne peut s'exprimer que par l'absurde," while defining art as the "union of mathematics and mysticism."²³ In his essays he traces his poetic genealogy: Goethe, Hugo, Balzac, Nerval, Baudelaire, Poe

and Mallarmé as well as Saint-Simon, Fourier, Swedenborg and Bergson, thus claiming for himself a place in the mainstream of analogical tradition.

Mallarmé, Valéry, Gorostiza, the surrealists, all initiate a new poetic mode, the exploration of the origin of thought and its metamorphosis into language. This quest becomes the pivotal point of all of Paz's work, a body of work which even today is a continuing dialogue with the poets of this new sensibility. The tensions which characterize the works under discussion can be found, full-blown, in the earliest work:

Pero yo le digo a ese pensador, a ese cazador, a ese sedentario que se goza en el comercio de la inteligencia, que la vida, en mí, hierve y se agita, negándose a sí misma, muriendo y renaciendo en un fecundo, portentoso desorden. Esto es, indecible, impensable, inefable. Nosotros no sabemos el secreto del universo porque ese secreto consiste en usar de él, de su existencia o mentira, ignorando siempre que lo usamos. Y solo la Poesía, oscura y arrebatada, hiere en el universo y en su secreto; en su obscuridad subterránea, en su luz de sobre-cielo, en su adivinación o videncia, el mundo nos entrega sus formas y lo que alienta detras de ellas. ¿Mas la Poesía no es una apasionada heroica disolución del hombre en el mundo? acaso la Poesía no es la más profunda manera de ignorar?²⁴

Knowledge, "el conocer," is man's mission, and his failing: "La verdad no es racional." Yet the only tool the journeyman poet wields in his terrible apprenticeship is mind. The insoluble dichotomy of this experience is presented in the title and subtitle of these prose fragments, "Vigilias," taken from the "Diario de un sonador." The title recalls the landscapes of Valéry and Mallarmé where dream and wakefulness are confused. But there is the presence in Paz's essay that is lacking in the introspective landscapes of the French poets: the other. The exaltation of love as a physical and spiritual union which overcomes all

dichotomies becomes the cornerstone of Paz's poetics:

En el amor nos despojamos de todo, de las alas y de las palabras; su desnudez es la desasida de la tierra, más pesada, aérea y firme, en su desnuda ligereza, que aire, cielo y agua. Esta es la Poesía del Principio, la poesía de la inmovilidad: nace la danza y nace el hombre, el hombrecillo, el pensador. Pero estar callados, inmóviles, y oír como golpea la sangre, como golpean los ciegos minerales, como golpea la luz, y como contesta el pecho henchido al golpe del planeta que crece, es ser, anónimos, impersonales, eternos otra vez.

. . . Junto a ti crece mi fuerza y trasciendo mi soledad. Tú estás junto a mí, y luego ya no existes sino en mí, en el goce de mis labios en tu oreja, en tu vello que crepita, en tu sexo vegetal y herido terrible y sollozando, en tu cuerpo retoricado y ardiente, que es una llama que yo enciendo. Imagen visible del mundo, sí; pero también fuerza sobre el mundo. Somos un río subterráneo, un agua poderosa, espesa, un llanto inacabable e insistente golpeando las orillas de globo. Corremos sobre la tierra, bajo tierra, como tierra. La cambiamos, podríamos destruirla. Delirio del amor, delirio tuyo, de un cuerpo que hace de la piel una nueva y más profunda conciencia, que hace lúcida a la materia y la inclina sobre sí misma.²⁵

In the Second Manifesto of Surrealism (1930) André Breton alludes to the surrealist search for the point where "life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future . . . are no longer perceived as contradictions."²⁶ For Paz, as for the surrealists, only through the transformation of poetry or love can these oppositions be overcome. This and other affinities bring Paz and surrealism closer and closer. Its influence on Paz's poetry of the late forties and early fifties has received a good deal of critical attention, and attack. However, thus far the only in-depth critical consideration of his subsequent relationship with the surrealists is an unpublished study by José Gabriel Sánchez.²⁷ While Sánchez points out certain surreal vestiges in the later works, he goes along with the general view that Paz's surrealist phase is a transient one. Interestingly enough Sánchez concludes that Paz still extolls surreal theory in his prose while his poetry is

totally divorced from that theory. I hope to show the fallacy of that statement. There is a profound unity of thought, and execution, in all of Paz's work. Surrealism becomes part of the tradition of universal analogy which pervades not only Paz's work, but 20th-century poetry as well. For a brief period after World War II the surrealist vein seemed to have petered out, temporarily eclipsed by existentialism. Since then it has re-emerged as one of the most important forces in contemporary art and thought. As it eluded the iron grip of Breton and escaped the inner sanctum of his group, it underwent a salutary metamorphosis.²⁸ Paz's poetry of the past two decades continues his ongoing dialogue with this "new" surrealism. In order to discuss the later poetry, it is necessary to refer to Paz's earlier relationships with surrealism, at the same time presenting some of the commonplaces of surrealist theory.

As we have seen, Paz was attracted to the surrealist experiment from the first. He has often indicated that his reading of chapter V of Breton's L'Amour Fou was one of the great revelations of his adolescence.²⁹ His experiences in Spain during the Civil War brought him closer to the French poets, since surrealism was partly engendered by the absurdities of World War I. On his return to Mexico, Paz encountered the exiled Spanish poet, Luis Cernuda. It was Cernuda who showed him that surrealism was not an esthetic movement, nor a political one, but an all-encompassing way of life: . . .

A diferencia de Neruda, Lorca o Villaurrutia, para Cernuda el surrealismo fue algo más que una lección de estilo, más que una poética o una escuela de asociaciones e imágenes verbales: fue una tentativa de encarnación de la poesía en la vida, una subversión que abarcaba tanto el lenguaje como a las instituciones. Una moral

y una pasión. Cernuda fue el primero, y casi el único, que comprendió e hizo suya la verdadera significación del surrealismo como movimiento de liberación--no del verso sino de la conciencia: el último gran sacudimiento espiritual de Occidente.³⁰

Cernuda is also the first Spanish-language poet to realize that surrealism is but part of a tradition; he returns to the "fountainhead of modern Western poetry, German romanticism,"³¹ and unveils the secret powers of Jean Paul, Hölderlin and Novalis. Interestingly enough, Paz points out that much of Cernuda's poetry is a dialogue with these poets as well as with Blake and Coleridge: "habla con ellos como si hablase consigo mismo."³² For Paz, too, poetry is a dialogue and communion with the "other." Both he and Cernuda seek to fulfill the surrealist promise of a poetry made by all.

During World War II many surrealists sought refuge in Mexico, among them Benjamin Péret, whose theory of "l'amour sublime" and fine sense of irony complemented Paz's world view. The two became fast friends. During several stays in France during the forties and fifties, the longest one as Mexican Ambassador, Paz became closer and closer to the surrealist coterie including Breton. Many of Paz's poems during these years, especially those collected in ¿Águila o sol? (1949-1950) fall well within the surrealist trajectory. Paz's relationship with the movement during those years is best documented by his own 1954 conference on surrealism,³³ which opens with a refutation of the premature funeral rites for the movement performed by over-hasty critics.³⁴ (Since there is a shocking absence of commentary on this period, the reader must be reminded that it is in this period that a whole new generation of surrealists arises, including such figures as Vincent Bounoure, Guy Cabanel, Joyce Mansour and Henri Pichette among others.)³⁵ Paz

subsequently touches on an issue which was exaggerated all out of proportion by the critics, the question of automatic writing or a surreal style which "perdido su inicial poder de sorpresa, se ha transformado en manera y receta."³⁶ Automatic writing, or the dictation of a line or a poem by the poet's unconscious was intended to be but one tool to aid in the exploration of the other side of reality, the world of the marvelous, of dreams, of madness, a world obscured by the bourgeois values imposed by the Industrial Revolution. Surrealism is not a quixotic exaltation of irrationality, an over-reaction to the Encyclopedia and positivism, or even a re-creation of Byzantine decadence as some of its critics see it,³⁷ and Paz is quick to note this:

Nada más sintomático de cierto estado de espíritu contemporáneo que aceptar sin pestañear la presencia de tendencias que pueden calificarse de surrealistas a lo largo del pasado--el romanticismo alemán, la novela gótica inglesa, como ejemplos próximos--y en cambio negarse a reconocerlas en el presente. Ciertamente, hay un estilo surrealista que, perdido su inicial poder de sorpresa, se ha transformado en manera y receta. El surrealismo es uno de los frutos de nuestra época y no es invulnerable al tiempo; pero, asimismo, la época está bañada por la luz surrealista y su vegetación de llamas y piedras preciosas han cubierto todo su cuerpo.³⁸

The object, no longer defined in terms of utility is transformed by the eye of the imagination and is subject to a whole field of inter-relationships tempered by desire; the pleasure principle instead of the work ethic: "hijo del deseo nace el objeto surrealista..."³⁹ The notion of utility had even sullied the sphere of love, and the surrealists were faced with the task of turning the pumpkin into a suitable vehicle for a princess. The destruction of love by middleclass mores is, of course, one of the great themes of surrealism. It is one of the axes of Paz's poetry and prose.⁴⁰ If, at last, subject and

object become one, the world is transformed into glorious immanence, a "momento paradisiaco."⁴¹ Once, however, this is accomplished, a new consideration arises:

Más allá de su dudoso valor como método de creación, la escritura, automática puede compararse a los ejercicios espirituales de los místicos y, sobre todo, a las prácticas del budismo Zen: se trata de llegar a un estado paradójico de pasividad activa, en el que el "yo pienso" es substituido por un misterioso "se piensa". Lo importante, así, es lograr la ruptura de esa ficticia personalidad que el mundo nos impone o que nosotros mismos hemos creado para defendernos del exterior. El yo nos aplasta y esconde nuestro verdadero ser. Negar al yo no es negar al ser:

Suis-je Amour ou Phébus? Lusignan ou Biron?⁴²

Until this point we have been dealing with commonplaces found in almost any exegesis of surrealist theory and practice. However, the critics have neglected this central question of "I".⁴³ The surrealist disintegration of personality reiterates the central experience of Zen Buddhism; Paz is quick to sense this, and it is in this exploration of being that East meets West in his poetry. As we have seen, the Romantics and Symbolists had already arrived at this crossroads. Breton and his generation continue the encounter, while the East experiences a similar reintegration as Symbolism, Dada and surrealism take root in China and Japan.⁴⁴

This exploration of being is carried out to its fullest in Ladera este and subsequent works. Paradoxically this period of Paz's poetry is sometimes characterized as excessively intellectual and, therefore, at odds with the surrealist theory often expounded in prose works of that same period.⁴⁵ Since conceptions of "self" and notions of language are linked in the related process of thought and imagination, the evolution of one brings about parallel changes in the other. For this reason one cannot hope to study the relationship of Paz's

language to surrealism by isolating it and attempting to distinguish periods of adherence or non-adherence to a preconceived, static (and often erroneous) ideal of surrealist automatic writing. Here we must mention a more easily resolved problem concomitant to the question of language--criticism has sometimes exaggerated the role of automatic writing by making it the First Commandment in a surrealist canon. Paz has repeatedly pointed out that automatism is an impossible state to maintain. He sees it as a technique which helps to liberate consciousness from the confines of the ego and compares it to Zen meditation (Peras del olmo, p. 173). It can not be considered as the basis of artistic creation, nor can it be constantly utilized. Breton never formally tempered his espousal of it in the First Manifesto, but neither did he practice it consistently. Breton's "automatic" texts are few and far between; he could not equal Desno's talent in this direction. In fact, Breton's texts are often carefully elaborated and highly intellectual. Anna Balakian (Breton: Magus of Surrealism) has carefully documented this aspect of Breton's oeuvre. She characterizes his method as that of a verbal rebus. The rebus is a Neoplatonist device or riddle using pictures and words which symbolically represents cosmic truths via analogy. This is an interesting metaphor to consider since hermetism and alchemy greatly influence the surrealists as well as Paz and his generation, especially Alberto Girri and José Lezama Lima. While Breton, Girri and Paz approach the rebus in their invocation of hermetic symbols, Lezama re-creates the hermetic imprese, an elaborate mental constriction designed to shield hermetic knowledge from the uninitiated.

From 1947 on as Breton fails to maintain a closely knit group

of initiates, surrealism is transformed by small doses of intellectual activity, and eventually abandons its insistence on automatism. While it is no longer a special group with a high priest, it has become a vital force in contemporary art once more. Paz is not a surrealist and never was. However, surrealism played an enormous part in shaping his life and poetry. In turn he has contributed much to its transformation and revitalization. We can not define his relationship with it in terms of a surrealist style. Instead we must examine its total impact on thought as well as form. The later poetry is a logical organic outgrowth of the earlier: it transforms surrealism, it does not supersede it.⁴⁶

2. Toward a Poetic Dialogue:
Piedra de sol (1957)

Salamandra (1962) is generally characterized as the point of departure for a new stage in Paz's poetry. The reason given for this division is the introduction of space into Paz's poetics in "Reversible":

En el espacio	
	Estoy
Dentro de mí	
	El espacio
Fuera de mí	
	El espacio
En ningún lado	
	Estoy
Fuera de mí	
	En el espacio
Dentro	
	Está el espacio
Fuera de sí	
	En ningún lado
Estoy	
	En el espacio
Etcétera	

(Salamandra, p. 20)

However, in tracing the genesis of such later works as Blanco (1967) or El mono gramático (1972), one must surely look beyond this slight poem. Linked to the notion of a division of Paz's work is the idea that Piedra de sol (1957) marks the end of an era. And there is a tendency to see it as a return to poetic sanity from the quixotic "madness" of surrealism. Yet with its central metaphor of rebirth it prefigures the testimonies of a new beginning found in Salamandra.

I should like to consider Piedra de sol as a rite of passage in the poetical sense as well as the spiritual one. It is a reflection on the poetry of life, and, too, on the life of poetry: "la poesía de la vida, la vida de la poesía."⁴⁷ And it is a vision of new beginnings. While it is a poem of Presence, it is also a poem of presences. While language or poesis does not appear as an overt theme as it does in Blanco or El mono gramático, it is present in the poem by virtue of a poetic dialogue exchanged with Breton and Péret, who share the round table with Nerval, quoted in the epigram which introduces the poem.⁴⁸ While poet speaks to poet, the poem itself corresponds with, and to--via the mysterious force of analogy--another poem, Breton's master work, Arcane 17 (1947). That this poem is on Paz's mind during these years is attested to by his 1954 essay on surrealism:

En Arcano 17, André Breton habla de una estrella que hace palidecer a las otras: el lucero de la mañana, Lucifer, angel de la rebelión. Su luz la forman tres elementos: la libertad, el amor y la poesía. Cada uno de ellos se refleja en los otros dos, como tres astros que cruzan sus rayos para formar una estrella única. Así, hablar de la libertad será hablar de la poesía y del amor. Movimiento de rebelión total, nacido del nihilismo dadaísta de la primera post-guerra, el surrealismo se proclama como una actividad destructora que quiere hacer tabla rasa con los valores de la civilización racionalista y cristiana. A diferencia del dadaísmo, es también una empresa

revolucionaria que aspira a transformar la realidad y, así, obligarla a ser ella misma. El surrealismo no parte de una teoría de la realidad; tampoco es una doctrina de la libertad. Se trata más bien del ejercicio concreto de la libertad, esto es, de poner en acción la libre disposición del hombre en un cuerpo a cuerpo con lo real. Desde el principio la concepción surrealista no distingue entre el conocimiento poético de la realidad y su transformación: conocer es un acto que transforma aquello que se conoce. La actividad poética vuelve a ser una operación mágica.⁴⁹

The morning star, Venus, is also the central metaphor about which Piedra de sol revolves: its 584 verses correspond to the 584 days which mark the synodical revolution of the planet Venus on the Aztec calendar stone. In a note accompanying the first edition of Piedra de sol Paz sketches the multiple allusions which radiate from this symbol:

En la portada de este libro aparece la cifra 585 escrita con el sistema maya de numeración; asimismo, los signos mexicanos correspondientes al Día 4 Olín (Movimiento) y al Día 4 Ehécatl (Viento) figuran al principio y al fin del poema. Quizá no sea inútil señalar que este poema está compuesto por 584 endecasílabos (los seis últimos no cuentan porque son idénticos a los seis primeros; en realidad, con ellos no termina sino vuelve a empezar el poema). Este número de versos es igual al de la revolución sinódica del planeta Venus [♀], que es de 584 días. Los antiguos mexicanos llevaban la cuenta del ciclo venusino (y de los planetas visibles a simple vista) a partir del Día 4 Olín; el Día 4 Ehécatl señalaba, 584 días después, la conjunción de Venus y el Sol y, en consecuencia, el fin de un ciclo y el principio de otro. El lector interesado puede encontrar más completa (y mejor) información sobre este asunto en los estudios que ha dedicado al tema el licenciado Raúl Noriega, a quien debo estos datos.

El planeta Venus aparece dos veces al día como Estrella de la Mañana (Phosphorus) y como Estrella de la Tarde (Hesperus). Esta dualidad (Lucifer y Vesper) no ha dejado de impresionar a los hombres de todas las civilizaciones, que han visto en ella un símbolo, una cifra o una encarnación de la ambigüedad esencial del universo. Así, Ehécatl, divinidad del viento, era una de las encarnaciones de Quetzalcóatl, la serpiente emplumada, que concentra las dos vertientes de la vida. Asociado a la Luna, a la humedad, al agua, a la vegetación naciente, a la muerte y resurrección de la naturaleza, para los antiguos mediterráneos el planeta Venus era un nudo de imágenes y fuerzas ambivalentes:

Istar, la Dama del Sol, la Piedra Cónica, la Piedra sin Labrar (que recuerda al "pedazo de madera sin pulir" del taoísmo), Afrodita, la cuádruple Venus de Cicerón, la doble diosa de Pausanias, etc.⁵⁰

Olín (Movimiento) and Ehécatl (Viento) are invoked in the lines which open and close the poem and summon Quetzalcóatl to preside over the poetic ritual: "un sauce de cristal, un chopo de agua, / un alto surtidor que el viento arquea." As the Sun Stone is a ritual mapa mundi similar to the Indian mandala, we shall pursue an analogy and indulge in the visualization employed when contemplating a mandala and envision Quetzalcóatl somewhere just above the horizon, as Paz does in a subsequent article:

Quetzalcóatl es, como el fénix del poeta barroco Sandoval y Zapata, "alada eternidad del viento". Su nombre es náhuatl pero es un dios antiquísimo, anterior al nombre con que lo conocemos. Fue una divinidad de la costa, asociado al mar y al viento, que asciende al Altiplano, se asienta en Teotihuacán como un gran dios y, destruida la metrópoli, reaparece en Tula varios siglos después, ya con su nombre de ahora. En Tula se desdobra: es el dios creador y civilizador Quetzalcóatl, deidad que la gente de Tula, recién salida de la barbarie, hereda o roba a Teotihuacán; y es un sacerdote-rey que tiene como nombre ritual el de dios (Topiltzin-Quetzalcóatl). Tula es devastada por una guerra civil religiosa que es también un combate mítico entre las deidades guerreras de los nómadas y el dios civilizador originario de Teotihuacán. Quetzalcóatl--¿el dios o el rey-sacerdote?--huye y desaparece en el lugar "donde el agua se junta con el cielo": el horizonte marino donde aparecen alternativamente Vésper y Lucifer. La fecha de la desaparición y transfiguración de Quetzalcóatl en Estrella de la Mañana es un año ce acatl. El año de su regreso, dice la profecía, será también ce acatl.⁵¹

The Aztec image of the cosmos, the quincunx , resolves the movement of the four cardinal points in a center where all opposites pact. In the poem love is this point of resolution as the body of the beloved is transformed into a microcosm. It is love which gives the poem its unity, not myth or image. The revolution of the Sun Stone is but a ritual gesture re-creating the evolution of the whole. It is love in

all its manifestations which incarnates the word.

In the early part of the poem the presence of Venus conjures up figures from all of Western love poetry, from Petrarch to Breton. If we explore Arcane 17, we find a whole spiderweb of crossroads at which the two poems meet. The spiritual center of Paz's poem is an affirmation of love and life against a backdrop of the Spanish Civil War:

"Madrid 1937." Breton also narrates a story of rebirth through love.

Arcane 17 tells of a journey to the wilds of Nova Scotia's Gaspé Peninsula during World War II. Breton and his wife to be, Elisa, are saddened by exile; she is mourning the death of her 17-year old daughter, and is fighting the despair which prompted a recent suicide attempt. Through love they succeed in putting the past behind. The transformation occurs in the course of the three months of 1944 they spent in a cabin near Le Rocher Percé at the tip of the Peninsula. The Rocher, a great rock bathed by mists and the Northern Lights, becomes a symbol of isolation, resistance, and, ultimately, transformation:

Et c'est pourtant toute la houle de ces bannières, commandée, on l'a vu, par un rejet du drapeau pirate et en proie à une transmutation éblouissante, qui s'empara du rocher jusqu'à paraître faire toute sa substance. Et la proclamation, claironnée aux quatre vents, est en effet d'importance puisque des bouches rayonnantes gansées de soie arc-en-ciel ne se propaga à tous échos que la nouvelle de toujours: la grande malédiction est levée, c'est dans l'amour humain que réside toute la puissance de régénération du monde. "Et un ange fort souleva une pierre semblable à une grande meule de moulin et la précipita dans la mer disant: "C'est avec ce fracas et cette impétuosité que tombera cette grande Babylone et on ne la verra plus." Mais la prophétie omet de dire qu'il est une autre pierre semblable à une grande meule de moulin qui lui fait exactement contre-poids sur la balance des flots, qui s'élève tumultueusement d'autant plus que l'autre s'enfonce: c'est l'amour de l'homme et de la femme que le mensonge, l'hypocrisie et la misère psychologique retiennent encore de donner sa mesure, lui qui historiquement pour naître a dû déjouer la vigilance des vieilles religions furibondes et qui commence à balbutier si tard, dans le chant des troubadours.⁵²

Regeneration comes in the figure of Mélusine, the legendary fay who presides over surrealist writings. Mélusine, according to legend, was doomed to be half human, half water serpent. She marries Raimundin, Count of Poitiers, after appearing to him in an enchanted forest at a magic fountain. This detail echoes the alchemical version of this archetypal legend which depicts Mélusine as issuing forth in a gush of water from the Tree of Life in human form. Melusina builds her beloved Raimundin the castle of Lusignan. According to the legend, Mélusine means "marvelous", and Lusignan is the Greek form of her name. Mélusine was cursed by her mother, Presine, to return to her fishy state on Saturdays. If her mortal husband refrains from looking at her while she is an ondine, all will be well. Alas, Raimundin is tempted and Mélusine is condemned to return to her former state and can only hover over her husband and family, uttering a heart-rending cry if they fall into danger. For the surrealists, Mélusine became a symbol of woman as mediatrice between man and nature, the bridge from I to Thou, and the absorption of the self in the cosmos through the redeeming power of love. Mélusine enters the corpus of Arcane 17 as the embodiment of the vision of courtly love experienced by Breton as he gazes at the evanescent Rocher Percé. The enormous rock becomes fluid as the quality of life is transformed by love.⁵³

Mélusine and the transformation of stone and water form the substructure of Piedra de sol, functioning on a seemingly automatic or archetypal level. While the poem is set in the framework of one universal myth of resurrection, of eternal return, other mythical or legendary forces emanating from the principle of woman as anima⁵⁴ or earth goddess

are simultaneously set in motion, and the poem expands and contracts, is metamorphosed, following a paradoxical path which leads it effortlessly against the current back to the spring waters of its origin, fulfilling the task which Paz set himself in "El cántaro roto" (1955):

hay que soñar hacia atrás, hacia la fuente, hay que remar siglos
arriba,
más allá de la infancia, más allá del comienzo, más allá de las
aguas del bautismo,
echar abajo las paredes entre el hombre y el hombre, juntar de
nuevo lo que fue separado,
vida y muerte no son mundos contrarios, somos un solo tallo con
dos flores gemelas,
hay que desenterrar la palabra perdida, soñar hacia dentro y
también hacia afuera,
descifrar el tatuaje de la noche y mirar cara a cara al mediodía
y arrancarle su máscara,
bañarse en luz solar y comer los frutos nocturnos, deletrear la
escritura del astro y la del río,
recordar lo que dicen la sangre y la marea, la tierra y el cuerpo,
volver al punto de partida,
ni adentro ni afuera, ni arriba ni abajo, al cruce de caminos,
adonde empiezan los caminos,
porque la luz canta con un rumor de agua, con un rumor de follaje
canta el agua
y el alba está cargada de frutos, el día y la noche reconciliados
fluyen como un río manso,
el día y la noche se acarician largamente como un hombre y una
mujer enamorados,
como un solo río interminable bajo arcos de siglos fluyen las
estaciones y los hombres,
hacia allá, al centro vivo del origen, más allá de fin y comienzo.⁵⁵

The opening lines defy clear-cut analysis, evoking simply and beautifully an evanescent complex of archetypes of genesis, creation and cosmic consciousness or pneuma: the fountain, the Tree of Life, wind, the light of spiritual transformation refracted in the alchemical image of crystal:

un sauce de cristal, un chocho de agua,
un alto surtidor que el viento arquea,
un árbol bien plantado mas danzante,
un caminar de río que se curva,
avanza, retrocede, da un rodeo

y llega siempre:

un caminar tranquilo
de estrella o primavera sin premura,
agua que con los párpados cerrados
mana toda la noche profecías,
unánime presencia en oleaje,
ola tras ola hasta cubrirlo todo,
verde soberanía sin ocaso
como el deslumbramiento de las alas
cuando se abren en mitad del cielo.⁵⁶

The poem is an affirmation of the renewal of love in the face of loss.

The theme is prefigured as the flow and brilliance of the first lines are suddenly blocked for a moment in an intimation of loss:

un caminar entre las espesuras
de los días futuros y el aciago
fulgor de la desdicha como un ave
petrificando el bosque con su canto

Yet Presence is soon visible, the world is transformed by the presence of Woman: "cuerpo de luz filtrada por un agata." The agate is the touchstone which invokes the magic presence of Breton. It appears in Arcane 17 (Elisa and Breton search for agates on the beach), and in his poetry.⁵⁷ Breton finds in the lowly agate the crystallization of the surrealist spirit for it contains

cette "eau exaltée", cette "âme de l'eau", qui dissout les éléments et "donne le vrai soufre ou le vrai feu" au témoignage des occultistes. Il est bien clair que la captation de cette eau, dans la mesure où elle agit comme suprême dissolvant, ne laisse rien subsister des apparences conventionnelles.⁵⁸

Paz adopts the agate as his own private talisman and we will find this image echoed later in "Viento entero":

Ágata
El pájaro caído
Entre la calle Montalembert y la du Bac
Es una muchacha
Detenida
Sobre un precipicio de miradas
Si el agua es fuego
Llama

En el centro de la hora redonda
 Encandilada
 Potranca alazana
 Un haz de chispas

(Ladera este, p. 102)

The image of crystal which possesses the same alchemical properties of transformation as the agate communicates Woman's metamorphosis into the legendary corn goddess and her absorption into the universal flux:

tu falda de maíz ondula y canta,
 tu falda de cristal, tu falda de agua,
 tus labios, tus cabellos, tus miradas,
 toda la noche llueves, todo el día
 abres mi pecho con tus dedos de agua,
 cierras mis ojos con tu boca de agua,
 sobre mis huesos llueves, en mi pecho
 hunde raíces de agua un árbol líquido*

The last line recapitulates the opening image of the poem as the image is transmuted into the Tree of Life of the alchemists in an enchanted forest ("O bosque de pilares encantados," p. 238). The stage is set for Mélusine to emerge from the fountain-tree as she does in the alchemical allegory of transmutation⁵⁹ when there is a complete reversal in the tone of the poem (p. 239):

voy por tu talle como por un río,
 voy por tu cuerpo como por un bosque,
 como por un sendero en la montaña
 que en un abismo brusco se termina,
 voy por tus pensamientos afilados
 y a la salida de tu blanca frente
 mi sombra despeñada se destroza,
 recojo mis fragmentos uno a uno
 y prosigo sin cuerpo, busco a tientas,

corredores sin fin de la memoria,
 puertas abiertas a un salón vacío
 donde se pudren todos los veranos,
 las joyas de la sed arden al fondo,
 rostro desvanecido al recordarlo,
 mano que se deshace si la toco,
 cabelleras de arañas en tumulto
 sobre sonrisas de hace muchos años,

*Libertad bajo palabra, p. 239. Following references are to this book.

a la salida de mi frente busco,
 busco sin encontrar, busco un instante,
 un rostro de relámpago y tormenta
 corriendo entre los árboles nocturnos,
 rostro de lluvia en un jardín a oscuras,
 agua tenaz que fluye a mi costado,

busco sin encontrar, escribo a solas,
 no hay nadie, cae el día, cae el año,
 caigo con el instante, caigo a fondo,
 invisible camino sobre espejos
 que repiten mi imagen destrozada,
 piso días, instantes caminados,
 piso los pensamientos de mi sombra,
 piso mi sombra en busca de un instante

With a slight change in emphasis the fluid images no longer represent the unity of the self and the universe but the endless, elusive flow of time. Love and communion are banished by a sense of loss. The poet enmeshed in his own ego seeks an instant of reconciliation through love: "piso los pensamientos de mi sombra / piso mi sombra en busca de un instante." The memories of an adolescent love fuse with mythical and historical tragic loves as Mélusine [Melusina] appears (p. 240):

busco una fecha viva como un pájaro,
 busco el sol de las cinco de la tarde
 templado por los muros de tezontle:
 la hora maduraba sus racimos
 y al abrirse salían las muchachas
 de su entraña rosada y se esparcían
 por los patios de piedra del colegio,
 alta como el otoño caminaba
 envuelta por la luz bajo la arcada
 y el espacio al ceñirla la vestía
 de una piel más dorada y transparente,
 tigre color de luz, pardo venado
 por los alrededores de la noche,
 entrevista muchacha reclinada
 en los balcones verdes de la lluvia,
 adolescente rostro innumerable,
 he olvidado tu nombre, Melusina,
 Laura, Isabel, Perséfone, María,
 tienes todos los rostros y ninguno,
 eres todas las horas y ninguna,
 te pareces al árbol y a la nube,

eres todos los pájaros y un astro,
 te pareces al filo de la espada
 y a la copa de sangre del verdugo,
 yedra que avanza, envuelve y desarraiga
 al alma y la divide de sí misma

She becomes an invisible harbinger of lost love haunting the air with her cries, as the "tú" of the poem is turned to stone and the source of love and unity runs dry: (pp. 243-44):

no hay nada en mí sino una large herida,
 una oquedad que ya nadie recorre,
 presente sin ventanas, pensamiento
 que vuelve, se repite, se refleja
 y se pierde en su misma transparencia,
 conciencia traspasada por un ojo
 que se mira mirarse hasta anegarse
 de claridad:

yo vi tu atroz escama,
 Melusina, brillar verdosa al alba,
 dormías enroscada entre las sábanas
 y al despertar gritaste como un pájaro
 y caíste sin fin, quebrada y blanca,
 nada quedó de ti sino tu grito,
 y al cabo de los siglos me descubro
 con tos y mala vista, barajando
 viejas fotos:

no hay nadie, no eres nadie,
 un montón de ceniza y una escoba,
 un cuchillo mellado y un plumero,
 un pellejo colgado de unos huesos,
 un racimo ya seco, un hoyo negro
 y en el fondo del hoyo los dos ojos
 de una niña ahogada hace mil años

Paz's use of Melusina here is an ironic gloss of the surrealists' presentation of her as a child-woman who puts man in touch with his roots. She becomes the connecting image for the whole first part of the poem. Elsa Dehennin recognizes this when she notes: "Tú" is the cry of Mélusine."⁶⁰

Paradoxically, it is memory which brings revelation and the promise of regeneration as Paz exalts love in the face of war (pp. 245-46):

Madrid, 1937,
 en la Plaza del Ángel las mujeres
 cosían y cantaban con sus hijos,
 después sonó la alarma y hubo gritos,
 casas arrodilladas en el polvo,
 torres hendidas, frentes escupidas
 y el huracán de los motores, fijo:
 los dos se desnudaron y se amaron
 por defender nuestra porción eterna,
 nuestra ración de tiempo y paraíso,
 tocar nuestra raíz y recobrarnos,
 recobrar nuestra herencia arrebatada
 por ladrones de vida hace mil siglos,
 los dos se desnudaron y besaron
 porque las desnudeces enlazadas
 saltan el tiempo y son invulnerables,
 nada las toca, vuelven al principio,
 no hay tú ni yo, mañana, ayer ni nombres,
 verdad de dos en sólo un cuerpo y alma,
 oh ser total . . .

What follows is an attack on bourgeois mores and of exaltation of
 love and poetry as the only weapons capable of changing the world (pp. 248-9):

el mundo cambia
 si dos se miran y se reconocen,
 amar es desnudarse de los nombres:
 "déjame ser tu puta", son palabras
 de Eloísa, mas él cedió a las leyes,
 la tomó por esposa y como premio
 lo castraron después;
 mejor el crimen,
 los amantes suicidas, el incesto
 de los hermanos como dos espejos
 enamorados de su semejanza,
 mejor comer el pan envenenado,
 el adulterio en lechos de ceniza,
 los amores feroces, el delirio,
 su yedra ponzoñosa, el sodomita
 que lleva por clavel en la solapa
 un gargajo, mejor ser lapidado
 en las plazas que dar vuelta a la noria
 que exprime la sustancia de la vida,
 cambia la eternidad en horas huecas,
 los minutos en cárceles, el tiempo
 en monedas de cobre y mierda abstracta

This section parallels Paz's discussion of this subject in El laberinto
 de la soledad (1950) and recapitulates the surrealist statements on this

theme. Sodomy, adultery, and incest are preferable to the horrors of a middle-class marriage. Mysticism supplants surrealism as chastity is offered as an alternative means of union with the Absolute (p. 249):

mejor la castidad, flor invisible
que se mece en los tallos del silencio,
el difícil diamante de los santos
que filtra los deseos, sacia al tiempo,
nupcias de la quietud y el movimiento,
canta la soledad en su corola,
pétalo de cristal es cada hora,
el mundo se despoja de sus máscaras
y en su centro, vibrante transparencia,
lo que llamamos Dios, el ser sin nombre,
se contempla en la nada, el ser sin rostro
emerge de sí mismo, sol de soles,
plenitud de presencias y de nombres 61

Finally the sun's rays give the poet a momentary feeling of oneness with the universe and the poem is volatilized once more. (p. 249):

sigo my desvarío, cuartos, calles,
camino a tientas por los corredores
del tiempo y subo y bajo sus peldaños
y sus paredes palpo y no me muevo,
vuelvo adonde empecé, busco tu rostro,
camino por las calles de mí mismo
bajo un sol sin edad, y tú a mi lado
caminas como un árbol, como un río
caminas y me hablas como un río,
creces como una espiga entre mis manos,
lates como una ardilla entre mis manos,
vuelas como mil pájaros, tu risa
me ha cubierto de espumas, tu cabeza
es un astro pequeño entre mis manos

3. Salamandra*: "The way down is the way out"

With Piedra de sol the way has been chosen and the passage begun.

Salamandra (1962) traces the beginnings of an Orphic ascent from darkness

*Salamandra encompasses the period 1959-1961 and is composed of four sections: "Días hábiles," "Homenaje y profanaciones," "Salamandra," and "Solo a dos voces." The last two sections incorporate poems with the same titles.

which emerges into the dazzling light of Blanco (1967). The existential anguish of the earlier poems is complicated here by a growing awareness of the curses of modern life in a metropolis where the only renewal is urban. The world of dreams populated by the Romantics and surrealists becomes a hellish nightmare programmed by the computer society.⁶² Technology threatens to destroy the human qualities of life: the heartbeat of modern society pulses in Salamandra as the throb of a motor:

Cascada negra de la sangre
 Cascada pétrea de la noche
 El peso bruto de la nada
 Zumbido de motores en la ciudad inmensa
 Lejos cerca lejos en el suburbio de mi oreja
 ("Repeticiones," p. 15)

The book opens with a poem which has been characterized as surrealist in language by critics of all persuasions.⁶³ Since one of the poem's chief concerns is language, let us take a careful look at it. The two axes of "Entrada en materia" are the City and the Word. The city becomes a metaphor for the marvelous replaced by the modern, in the worst sense of that word, as we witness a sort of reverse transmutation as the alchemist's gold becomes base matter. The Kafka-esque city night is presided over by the dark side of the goddess, or terrible avenging angel of the night reminiscent of the Indian deity Kali (p.9):

Piedras de ira fría
 Altas casas de labios de salitre
 Casas podridas en el saco del invierno
 Noche de innumerables tetas
 Y una sola boca carnicera
 Silbato y risa eléctrica
 Algarabía

The metaphor is extended and the city is personified as a harlot, modern life degraded on the altar of Ishtar (p. 10):

to the central metaphors so that the theme is quite clear.

As we penetrate deeper into the poem, we reach the question which is a corollary to the problems raised by reality, how to express it: how does the poet span the chasm between subject and object? Language, deformed and shattered in Man's fall from Paradise no longer bridges the gap (pp. 11-12):

Las ventanas se cierran
 Los muros se cierran las bocas se cierran
 Regresan a su sitio las palabras
 Ahora estamos más solos
 La conciencia y sus pulpos escribanos
 Se sientan a mi mesa
 El tribunal condena lo que escribo
 El tribunal condena lo que callo
 El ojo fijo del muro descarado
 Ruidos imperceptibles
 Pasos del tiempo que aparece y dice
 ¿Qué dice?
 Qué dices dice mi pensamiento
 No sabes lo que dices
 Trampas de la razón
 Crímenes del lenguaje
 Borra lo que escribes
 Escribe lo que borras
 El haz y el envés del español artrítico

The secret affinity or correspondence between woman, poetry and the cosmos is included in the reverse transmutation which is the underlying metaphor of the poem. Language is prostituted like the City-Woman of the opening lines: "promiscuidad del nombre" (p. 13). The metaphor is extended as the words become a skyscraper, which in turn is the Tower of Babel: (p. 12):

Babel babel minúscula
 Otros te hicieron
 Los maestros
 Los venerables inmortales
 Sentados en sus tronos de cascajo
 Otros te hicieron lengua de los hombres
 Galimatías

Palabras que se desmoronan
 Vuelve a los nombres
 Ejes
 Anchas espaldas de este mundo
 Lomos que cargan sin esfuerzo al tiempo

Here we encounter surrealist theory instead of surrealist "language." Rejuvenating language was one of the most important tasks the surrealists set themselves. This whole passage recalls the many passages of Breton, and other surrealists as well, addressed to the same problem, and attacking such venerable 'immortals' as Anatole France. It also recalls the magnificent essay of the French poet Yves Bonnefoy on the same subject.⁶⁶ I mention Bonnefoy here since he and Paz are friends and kindred spirits. Both take much from surrealism but temper passion with the lucidity which is brought to contemporary poetry by Valéry.

Salamandra is a search for form as well as language. This is particularly evident in this first section of the book, "Días hábiles." The spirit of "José Juan Tablada" is invoked in a poem couched in Tablada's own simultaneous form as well as his language (p. 25):

Agua y tierra en ti combatían
Tierno suaz casi ámbar casi luz

Tierra te quedabas y agua te ibas
Estalla en astillas tu grito de vidrio

En mitad del salto inmóvil oías
Notas del Angelus y música china de gatos

Hombre-cohete y también golondrina
Araña en vela que hila con lunas su tela

Paz's initial experiment with this form was "Himno entre ruinas" (La estación violenta, 1948). The experiment becomes practice in the course of Salamandra. In such poems as "Reversible," "Noche en claro,"

"Movimiento," "Duración" and "A través," we see Tablada's experiments with simultaneity, space and the ideogram taking hold. Somewhere along the line the tradition of Tablada is cross-fertilized with a similar tradition of Anglo-American poetry which evolved from the poetics of Ezra Pound⁶⁷ and Paz finds a form suited to his purposes. In this respect, it is interesting to compare the last two poems of the book "A través" and "Salamandra." "A través" is a contrapuntal layering of themes somewhat in the manner of Tablada. However, the complementary themes of body, language and cosmos are purposely confused (pp. 90-91):

En su lecho granate
Siempre está despierta
Y húmeda tu lengua

En el centro del tiempo
En el centro del cuerpo
Lo negro se expande y se contrae
Se acumula y se yergue y se abre
Disparos suntuosas del rojo al amarillo
Vertiginosas bajo cielos estáticos
Creación y destrucción de muchos mundos

Hay fuentes
En el jardín de tus arterias

Con una máscara de sangre
Atravieso tu pensamiento en blanco
Desmemoria me guía
Hacia el reverso de la vida

"Salamandra" presents the same theme of universal analogy, but in such a manner that the eye and the mind can no longer easily isolate the component parts (p. 105):

Xólotl la larva de la mariposa
El doble de la Estrella
El caracol marino
La otra cara del Señor de la Aurora
Xólotl el ajolote)

Salamandra

Dardo solar

Lámpara de la luna
 Columna del mediodía
 Nombre de mujer
 Balanza de la noche
 (El infinito peso de la luz
 Un adarme de sombra en tus pestañas)
 Salamandra

Llama negra
 Heliotropo
 Sol tú misma
 Y luna siempre en torno de ti misma
 Granada que se abre cada noche
 Astro fijo en la frente del cielo
 Y latido del mar y luz ya quieta
 Mente sobre el vaivén del mar abierta
 (Salamandria
 Saurio de unos ocho centímetros
 Vive en las grietas y es color de polvo)
 Salamandra de tierra y de agua
 Piedra verde en la boca de los muertos
 Piedra de encarnación
 Piedra de lumbre
 Sudor de la tierra

Tablada's spirit forms other strange alliances as the book unfolds. For Paz, he is the Mexican initiator of the ironic vein of verse which marks the modern spirit,⁶⁸ a vein also nourished by surrealist wit and black humour. Tablada and the surrealist painter René Magritte share a chuckle in the background as the Chaplinesque figure of a passerby on the stage of life performs a surreal drama of the loss of the sense of the marvelous (p. 23):

PEATÓN

Iba entre el gentío
 Por el bulevar Sebastó,
 Pensando en sus cosas.
 El rojo lo detuvo.
 Miró hacia arriba:
 Sobre
 Las grises azoteas, plateado
 Entre los pardos pájaros,
 Un pescado volaba.
 Cambió el semáforo hacia el verde.
 Se preguntó al cruzar la calle
 En qué estaba pensando.

Another presence shapes the flow of the book, la nada. Nothingness is an almost corporeal presence in the early poetry, presiding over the nocturnes in which Paz continues the anguished interrogation of darkness and silence conducted by Villaurrutia.⁶⁹ "La calle" is but one example:

Es una calle larga y silenciosa.
Ando en tinieblas y tropiezo y caigo
y me levanto y piso con pies ciegos
las piedras mudas y las hojas secas
y alguien detrás de mí también las pisa
si me detengo, se detiene:
si corro, corre. Vuelvo el rostro: nadie.
Todo está oscuro y sin salida,
y doy vueltas y vueltas en esquinas
que dan siempre a la calle
donde nadie me espera ni me sigue,
donde yo sigo a un hombre que tropieza
y se levanta y dice al verme: nadie.

(Libertad bajo palabra, p. 74)

This sense of absence becomes an obsession in the earlier poems: it is literally a dead-end. Gradually the theme is reworked and distilled until Paz finds the terse paradoxical quasi-oriental form he will adopt in Salamandra:

Se pregunta a la vida y contesta: la muerte.
Pero la muerte no contesta

(Libertad bajo palabra: "El ausente," p.96)

Although he does find a way out through the liberating power of love his unwelcome nocturnal visitor returns to haunt him. This is reflected in Salamandra in the short contrapuntal poems which punctuate the first part: "Madrugada," "Aquí," "Amistad," "Certeza," and "Identidad." "Aquí" returns to the setting of "La calle" (p. 17):

Mis pasos en esta calle
Resuenan

En otra calle
Donde oigo mis pasos
Pasar en esta calle
Donde
Sólo es real la niebla.

These crystalline poems capture an icy instant where all becomes lost, even self. They recall the paradoxes of Zen literature and bring to mind similar examples in Chinese poetry, especially this Tzu-Yeh song:

All night I could not sleep
Because of the moonlight on my bed.
I kept on hearing a voice calling:
Out of Nowhere, Nothing answered "yes."⁷⁰

Somehow these poems also recall certain poems of satori, or sudden illumination, written by Japanese Zen masters:

Vainly I dug for a perfect sky,
Piling a barrier all around.
Then one black night, lifting a heavy
Tile, I crushed the skeletal void!
Muso (1275-1351)

I moved across the Dharma-nature,
The earth was buoyant, marvelous.
That very night, whipping its iron horse,
The void galloped into Cloud Street.
Getsudo (1285-1361)⁷¹

These images are manipulated by Paz with irony in order to produce not a vision of unity but of the schism between man and that Absolute.

This experience of nothingness is frightening for the Western consciousness and is a pitfall in any form of contemplation, whether mystical or poetic. It is interesting, in this respect, to consider the parallels between Oriental and Occidental mysticism established by D. T. Suzuki, who bases his analysis on James' Varieties of Religious Experience. According to James the mystic state is ineffable, noetic, transitory and passive. Suzuki enumerates the aspects of satori: it is irrational, intuitive, authoritative, affirmative, as well as impersonal, exalted and momentary. Suzuki points out that it is impersonality which differentiates the Zen experience.⁷²

The same theme is approached in a somewhat different manner in

"Lámpara" in the third cycle of poems: "Salamandra." A chain of eight haiku-like verses, "Lámpara" operates in an inverse order from de-realization to personification:

Contra la noche sin cuerpo
Se desgarrar y se abraza
La pena sola

Negro pensar y encendida semilla
Pena de fuego amargo y agua dulce
La pena en guerra

.....
Ojos de sed pechos de sal
Entra en mi cama y entra en mi sueño
Amarga pena

.....
Sortija de la ausencia
Girasol de la espera y amor en vela
Torre de pena

.....
Contra la noche la sed y la ausencia
Gran puñado de vida
Fuente de pena

(pp. 72-73)

The title, charged with irony, refers to the "lamp" of mystic illumination, a symbol much used in Romantic and post-Romantic poetry as well as in the Buddhist canon where the extinguishing of the lamp represents attainment of Nirvana and the destruction of worldly illusion:

The faithful are extinguished
Like this lamp

Suttanipata, 235

the extinguishing of the lamp
itself was the liberation
of the mind

Therigatha, 116⁷³

Inverted symbols of transcendence, love and transformation underscore the bitterness of the experience and even the fountain becomes a "fuente de pena." Paz's technique here recalls that of José Gorostiza, especially in Muerte sin fin, where there is a progressive, albeit subtle

inversion of archetypal and alchemical symbols of transmutation which builds toward a crescendo of reversal and destruction:

cuando la forma en sí, la forma pura,
se entrega a la delicia de su muerte
y en su sed de agotarla a grandes luces
apura en una llama
el aceite ritual de los sentidos . . .⁷⁴

From solitude is born the desire to communicate. In the last poem of "Días hábiles," entitled "El tiempo mismo," Paz accepts his status as poet and solitary soul: "Escribo / para que me viva" (p. 42). Like Sisyphus, he must ascend, weighted down by the Word, until it is transmuted into the Philosopher's Stone by an experience which transcends time. That sense of infinity in the vision of a momentary accord with the universe. Paradise is here and now in the immanence of a single instant:

Dentro del tiempo hay otro tiempo
Quieto
Sin horas ni peso ni sombra
Sin pasado o futuro
(p. 44)

The entire poem centers about such a glimpse:

El mirlo está sobre la piedra gris
En un claro de marzo
Negro
Centro de claridades
No lo maravilloso presentido
Lo presente sentido
(p. 44)

This fragment could stand by itself as a sort of haiku. It is sketched with the delicacy and economy of a sumi painting, and calls to mind Basho's haiku on "Beauty":

The usually hateful crow:
he, too--this morning,
on the snow!⁷⁵

The image of the blackbird is a self-contained *ars poetica* and philosophy of life. It is the first crystallization of the mood which will dominate Ladera este, as Paz finds a new beginning not in union with the Absolute but here and now in intensified moments of life; "perfection of the finite" he will call it in the often-cited "Felicidad in Herat."⁷⁶ An interesting facet of this poem within a poem is its relationship with two other arts of poetry revolving about the image of the blackbird, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens and "Mirlo fiel" from Canciones de la nueva luz by Juan Ramón Jiménez. Stevens, Jiménez, and Paz share an affinity for Bashō and other Oriental poets. The blackbird becomes a correlative for a poetic tradition which transforms commonplace reality and is transformed by it; its vibrant presence displaces the ethereal swan which glided across modernist inscapes. Paz's presentation is closest, in both feeling and execution, to that of Stevens, whose blackbird appears against a wintry backdrop, like an exclamation mark appended to the vastness of existence:

I

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

IV

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

VII

O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?

IX

When the blackbird flew out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.⁷⁷

Jiménez's blackbird presides over the rites of spring, and his poem loses something in that it lacks the starkness of the other two:

Cuando el mirlo, en lo verde nuevo, un día
vuelve, y silba su amor, embriagado,
meciendo su inquietud en fresco de oro,
nos abre, negro, con su rojo pico,
carbón vivificado por su ascua,
un alma de valores armoniosos
mayor que todo nuestro ser.

Y el mirlo canta, huye por lo verde,
y sube, sale por lo verde, y silba,
recanta por lo verde venteante,
libre en la luz y la tersura,
torneado alegremente por el aire,
dueño completo de su placer doble;
entra, vibra silbando, ríe, habla,
canta. . . Y ensancha con su canto
la hora parada de la estación viva,
y nos hace la vida suficiente.

¡Eternidad, hora ensanchada,
paraíso de lustror único, abierto
a nosotros mayores, pensativos,
por un ser diminuto que se ensancha!
¡Primavera, absoluta primavera,
cuando el mirlo ejemplar, una mañana,
enloquece de amor entre lo verde!⁷⁸

The diffuseness of this poem echoes the monologue inspired by the vision of the blackbird in "El tiempo mismo":

El mirlo está sobre la piedra gris
En un claro de marzo

Negro

Dentro de claridades
No lo maravilloso presentido

Lo presente sentido

La presencia sin más

Nada más pleno colmado

No es la memoria Nada pensado ni querido
No son las mismas horas

Otras

Son otras siempre y son la misma

Entran y nos expulsan de nosotros
 Con nuestros ojos ven lo que no ven los ojos
 Dentro del tiempo hay otro tiempo
 Quieto

Sin horas ni peso ni sombra
 Sin pasado o futuro

Sólo vivo
 Como el viejo del banco
 Unimismado idéntico perpetuo
 Nunca lo vemos Es la transparencia
 (p. 44)

In the second section of the book, "Homenaje y Profanaciones,"

Paz returns to love as the only access to "la otra vida" ("Lauda," p.55):

Entre la vida inmortal de la vida
 Y la muerte inmortal de la historia
 Hoy es cualquier día
 En un cuarto cualquiera
 Festín de dos cuerpos a solas
 Fiesta de ignorancia saber de presencia
 Hoy (conjunción señalada
 Y abrazo precario)
 Esculpimos un Dios instantáneo
 Tallamos el vértigo

 Olfato gusto vista oído tacto
 El sentido anegado en lo sentido
 Los cuerpos abolidos en el cuerpo
 Memorias desmemorias de haber sido
 Antes después ahora nunca siempre

In the third section, "Salamandra," we see the nightmare vision
 of the earlier poems transmuted by desire into a "Noche en claro."

Woman is once more the mediatrice, and even the city is redeemed (pp. 60-61):

Se abrió el minuto en dos
 Leí signos en la frente de ese instante

 La ciudad se abre como un corazón
 Como un higo la flor que es fruto
 Más deseo que encarnación
 Encarnación del deseo
 Algo se prepara
 Dijo el poeta
 Nada se dice excepto lo indecible

Apareció entonces la pareja adolescente
 El era rubio "venablo de Cupido"
 Gorra gris gorrión callejero y valiente
 Ella era pequeña pecosa pelirroja
 Manzana sobre una mesa de pobres
 Pálida rama en un patio de invierno

.....
 Sobre el abrigo de ella color fresa
 Resplandeció la mano del muchacho
 Las cuatro letras de la palabra Amor
 En cada dedo ardiendo como astros



Tatuaje escolar tinta china y pasión
 Anillos palpitantes
 Oh mano collar al cuello ávido de la vida
 Pájaro de presa y caballo sediento
 Mano llena de ojos en la noche del cuerpo
 Pequeño sol y río de frescura
 Mano que das el sueño y das la resurrección
 Todo es puerta

 Todo es puente
 Ahora marchamos en la otra orilla
 Mira abajo correr el río de los siglos
 El río de los signos

"Noche en claro" is dedicated to André Breton and Benjamin Peret, and their presence illuminates the cycle of love poems which end the book. "Movimiento," another of this section's love poems, recalls the telluric love poems of Breton, Péret, Eluard, and Juan Ramón Jiménez:

Si tú eres la yegua de ámbar
 Yo soy el camino de sangre
 Si tú eres la primer nevada
 Yo soy el que enciende el brasero del alba
 Si tú eres la torre de la noche
 Yo soy el clavo ardiendo en tu frente
 Si tú eres la marca matutina
 Yo soy el grito del primer pájaro
 Si tú eres la cesta de naranjas
 Yo soy el cuchillo de sol
 Si tú eres el altar de piedra
 Yo soy la mano sacrílega
 Si tú eres la tierra acostada
 Yo soy la caña verde
 Si tú eres el salto del viento
 Yo soy el fuego enterrado

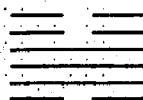
For most readers it recalls Breton's famous madrigal "L'union libre":

Ma femme au sexe de placer et d'ornothorynque
 Ma femme au sexe d'algue et de bonbons anciens
 Ma femme au sexe de miroir
 Ma femme aux yeux pleins de larmes
 Aux yeux de panoplie violette et d'aiguille aimantée
 Ma femme aux yeux de savane
 Ma femme aux yeux d'eau pour boire en prison
 Ma femme aux yeux de bois toujours sous la hache
 Aux yeux de niveau d'eau de niveau d'air de terre et de feu⁷⁹

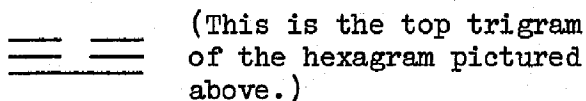
Somehow in the unfolding of these poems a purification of language occurs and the loose-flowing analogy of body and world is transfixed in a sort of secret ceremony, a ritual in which every gesture is sacred.

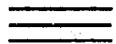
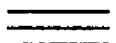
The erotic is ritualized in an exquisite love poem which is inspired by the I Ching, or ancient Chinese Book of Changes:

"Duración."⁸⁰ The I Ching (pronounced Yee Jing) is an oracle used to explain the present and predict the future. According to legend its divinatory diagrams were set down by Emperor Fu Hsi who discovered them on the shell of a tortoise.⁸¹ The basic "Text" in its present form was written circa 1150 B.C., and is ascribed to King Wen and his son Duke Chou; they expanded the original version, solely divinatory in nature, to include counsel for a course of action once the future was foretold. Some seven hundred years later Confucians added a "Commentary" which imparts a somewhat moralistic flavor to the whole. The preliminaries which determine the diagrams on which the reading is based are complicated and not necessary to an understanding of the poem under discussion.⁸² Let us just say by the drawing of sticks one determines a diagram made up of six lines, either broken or continuous, like so:

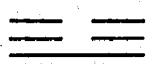


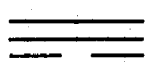
This hexagram corresponds to one of sixty-four to be found in the Text, which represents the changing aspects of the Absolute or unchanging principle (T'ai Chi). The lines reflect the duality harmonized in the whole. The broken lines correspond to the passive quality generally ascribed to the Yin principle: dark, earth, female, while the unbroken ones represent the active attributes of Yang: light, male, heaven. Each hexagram is composed of two trigrams:



There are eight trigrams. In their interaction they symbolize the universal flux. Their imagery concentrates not on the thing-in-itself but on its movement or change, a concept somewhat foreign to Occidental philosophy. These trigrams are: heaven, earth, thunder, water, mountain, wind (or wood), fire and lake. Obviously heaven  and earth  correspond to primal active/passive or male/ female forces. The next three trigrams represent the initiation of movement (thunder), as well as its progress (water) and cessation (mountain). Wind, fire, and lake have feminine attributes: joy and tranquility.

Paz's poem refers to hexagram 32, HENG or Duration:

 CHÊN: thunder, movement, to sprout or quicken

 SUN: wind, wood, bland, mild

Wilhelm's analysis of the "Commentary" gives us a partial key to the poem:

The strong trigram CHÊN is above, the weak trigram SUN below. This hexagram is the inverse of the preceding one. In the latter we have influence, here we have union as an enduring condition. The two images are thunder and wind, which are likewise constantly paired phenomena. The lower trigram indicates gentleness within: the upper, movement without.

. . . Duration is a state whose movement is now worn down by hindrances. It is not a state rest, for mere standstill is regression. Duration is rather the self-contained and therefore self-renewing movement of an organized, firmly integrated whole, taking place in accordance with immutable laws and beginning anew at every ending. The end is reached by an inward movement, by inhalation, systole, contraction, and this movement turns into a new beginning, in which the Heavenly bodies exemplify duration. They move in their fixed orbits, and because of this their light-giving power endures. The seasons of the year follow a fixed law of change and transformation, hence can produce effects that endure.

So likewise the dedicated man embodies an enduring meaning in his way of life, and thereby the world is formed. In that which gives things their duration, we can come to understand the nature of all beings in heaven and on earth.

THE IMAGE

Thunder and wind: the image of DURATION

Thus the superior man stands firm

and does not change his direction.

Thunder rolls and the wind blows; both are examples of extreme mobility and so are seemingly the very opposite of duration, but the laws governing their appearance and subsidence, their coming and going, endure. In the same way the independence of the superior man is not based on rigidity and immobility of character. He always keeps abreast of the time and changes with it. What endures is the unswerving directive, the inner law of his being, which determines his actions.⁸³

The six stanzas of the poem correspond to the lines of the hexagram:

DURACIÓN

Trueno y viento: duración
Y KING

I

Negro el cielo

Amarilla la tierra

El gallo desgarrá la noche

El agua se levanta y pregunta la hora

El viento se levanta y pregunta por ti

Pasa un caballo blanco

II

Como el bosque en su lecho de hojas
 Tu duermes en tu lecho de lluvia
 Tu cantas en tu lecho de viento
 Tu besas en tu lecho de chispas

III

Olor vehemente numerosa
 Cuerpo de muchas manos
 Sobre un tallo invisible
 Una sola blancura

IV

Habla escucha respóndeme
 Lo que dice el trueno
 Lo comprende el bosque

V

Entro por tus ojos
 Sales por mi boca
 Duermes en mi sangre
 Despierto en tu frente

VI

Te hablaré un lenguaje de piedra
 (Respondes con un monosílabo verde)
 Te hablaré un lenguaje de nieve
 (Respondes con un abanico de abejas)
 Te hablaré un lenguaje de agua
 (Respondes con una canoa de relámpagos)
 Te hablaré un lenguaje de sangre
 (Respondes con una torre de pájaros)
 (pp. 77-78)

While marital constancy is often alluded to in the interpretation of this hexagram, Paz avoids the Confucian applications and attunes himself to the archetypal possibilities of a yin/yang interpretation. As the oracle is an analogue of the universe, so is the poem. The reader recognizes the everpresent theme of love as momentary entrée to the eternal and intuits the interplay of cosmic forces even if unfamiliar with the I Ching. However stanzas I and IV seem somewhat surreal to the initiate, although they follow a strict logic within the framework

of the I Ching. Let us again look at I which has a delicate balance of multiplicity of meanings:

Negro el cielo
 Amarilla la tierra
 El gallo desgarrar la noche
 El agua se levanta y pregunta la hora
 El viento se levanta y pregunta por tí
 Pasa un caballo blanco

The first two lines juxtapose heaven and earth and echo the primordial trigrams. The sky is black and prefigures the thunder we are led to expect from the epigram. The yellow earth brings the reader up short. On a realistic level perhaps it refers to the peculiar yellow tinge a summer lightening storm imparts to the landscape. On the symbolic plane these lines allude to the ritual and mythical characterization of heaven as black and earth as yellow. The first two lines are a highly stylized image of genesis. Creativity on a cosmic scale gives way to the particular as Woman enters the poem. She is SUN, the trigram for wind and wood. Her entrance is prefigured by the cock's crow: "El gallo desgarrar la noche." The cock is one of the secondary attributes of SUN, and is used in the oracle to symbolize time. Woman is the paradox embodying time and "duration," for as Paz repeatedly reminds us, death is most visible at the very climax of love, which also affords us a glimpse of the infinite. Sky, earth, wind and water form a kinetic backdrop to the white horse. The horse is linked in the I Ching to both heaven and thunder signs⁸⁴ and sometimes alludes to creative force. Here, however, it is more of a literary allusion, since a white horse or pony appears in Chinese poetry and painting as a symbol of the lover as it is meant to do here.⁸⁵ And, of course, the fortuituous meeting of cock and horse adds another level of appreciation for those familiar with

Lorca's poetry where these images function in much the same manner.⁸⁶

Stanza II presents the beloved intimately identified with the cosmos. She is equated with the wood and wind aspects of SUN as well as with the other feminine signs--fire ("chispas") and lake ("lecho de lluvia"), and is pictured in an attitude of repose.

Stanza III abolishes pronouns as the separate identities of the lovers are fused and they become "sobre un tallo invisible / Una sola blancura." The only word here linked to the I Ching is "vehemencia" which is listed as an attribute of SUN.

Stanza IV is perfectly clear in the light of the hexagram. The lovers are in perfect accord: "Lo que dice el trueno / Lo comprende el bosque." This line is, of course, also an oblique reference to part V of T. S. Eliot's The Wasteland, "What the Thunder Said." Eliot's poem decries the fragmentation of modern existence: it is set in the framework of the Upanishads, and ends with the words "Shantih, shantih shantih." Shantih signifies "The Peace which passeth understanding." Eliot's use of this Upanishadic invocation is ironic; the world does not understand the voice of the Thunder. Paz re-inverts the symbol to signify universal correspondence.⁸⁷

Stanzas V and VI are more evocative of Breton than of ancient oracles. Once again we return to the vein of "telluric" surrealism which Paz so magnificently inhabits with Breton.⁸⁸ Language and the body are doubles of the universe. The last stanza is intriguing in that it somewhat paradoxically offers a double perspective. The poet speaks the language of motion as posited by the masculine trigrams: water, snow and brook run their inevitable, cyclical course and come to rest (piedra

= montaña). The reader expects the complementary feminine signs. But instead of the expected static qualities we find metaphors for frenzied motion: "abanico de abejas," etc. We are face to face with the plurality which sometimes terrifies Paz. Here, however, we find that miraculously duration and change are identical. Woman is "una torre de pájaros."

This poem seems rather slight when compared with such ambitious undertakings as "Noche en claro" or "Salamandra." Yet somehow it is a delicate balancing point for this section. It is a delicately conducted recapitulation of the major themes, and a work of great economy. In it is crystallized the preoccupation with time announced in "Noche en claro," the first poem of this section:

Ciudad Mujer Presencia
Aquí comienza el tiempo (p. 64)

The preceding poem "Movimiento" is its prelude:

Si tú eres la yegua de ámbar
Yo soy el camino de sangre (p. 75)

But its central metaphor is already cast in a single line of "Paisaje pasional":

Tempestad fija
Instante suspendido en el centro vibrante
Entre quietud y movimiento (p. 67)

In the next six poems, "Rotación," "Temporal," "El Puente," "Vaiven," "Complementarios" and "Agua y viento" the reader has a feeling of déjà vu. The imagery and themes of "Duración" are elaborated and re-elaborated. We confront the same landscape as if in a dream:

Agua extendida centelleas
Bajo un relámpago lascivo
Mi pensamiento azul y negro.
(Agua y viento," p. 87)

2

Con orgullo de árbol
 Plantado en pleno torbellino
 Te desvestes Con el gesto del agua
 Saltando de la pena Abandonas tus cuerpos
 Con los pasos sonámbulos del viento
 Te arrojas en el lecho . . .
 ("Vaiven," p. 83)

En la montaña negra
 El torriente delira en voz alta

 Por tu cuerpo dormido
 El viento lucha a oscuras con tu sueño
 ("Temporal," p. 80)

This insistence on repetition is not a criticism. I merely wish to emphasize the very organic development of any given book or section of Paz's work. It is a manner of proceeding in which the parts acquire an extraordinary richness in the context of the whole. Images and themes are built up layer by layer in a sort of poetic palimpsest. And every so often the poem (or book) turns back upon itself in critical contemplation.

And so it happens here. "Salamandra" is a fitting crescendo for this section. Then "Solo a dos voces" furnishes the waited for epilogue to the book. Once again the poet turns from the unexpressible to the only means he has to utter it--language. While the poem "Salamandra" posits the revelations of the instant (Xirau notes that Paz considers this work to be "el desarrollo de una exclamación"⁸⁹), "Sólo a dos voces" is a post mortem, a painful reflection on presence which, since it is glimpsed only for an instant, must needs be past or future, never present; and it is a recounting of the poet's struggle to recapture that moment, to overcome time with language--to return to the origin and "la roja palabra del principio."⁹⁰ The form of the poem is a

familiar one. The work engenders its own commentary, and we see the poet in the night struggling with the recalcitrant words which are mysteriously alive: "Sonaja de simientes."⁹¹ We are privy to the poet's thoughts as the poem unfolds. Simultaneously a second theme or counterpoint is revealed as solitude gives birth to its own semblable, and monologue gives way to dialogue, a "solo for two voices":

Si decir No
 Al mundo al presente
 Hoy (solsticio de invierno)
 No es decir
 Si
 Decir es solsticio de invierno
 Hoy en el mundo
 No
 Es decir
 Si
 Decir mundo presente
 No es decir
 ¿Qué es
 Mundo Solsticio Invierno?
 ¿Qué es decir?
 (Desde hace horas
 Oigo caer, en el patio negro,
 Una gota de agua.
 Ella cae y yo escribo.)

Solsticio de invierno:
 Sol parado
 (p. 109)

The winter solstice, December 22, the darkest day of the year, is the setting; the time is just before dawn. The world echoes the human condition--it is in limbo:

Mundo errante
 Sol desterrado
 Fijeza al rojo blanco
 La tierra blanca negra
 Dormida
 Sobre sí misma echada
 Es una piedra caída

Ánima en pena
 El mundo
 Peña de pena
 El alma
 Pena entrañas de piedra
 (Cae la gota invisible
 Sobre el cemento húmedo.
 Cae también en mi cuarto.
 A la mitad del pensamiento
 Me quedo, como el sol,
 Parado
 En la mitad de mí,
 Separado.)
 (p. 110)

Time is an ominous presence, measured by the water dripping outside in the void of the darkened patio. As the day dawns, the poet defines time, envisioning the Feast of the Virgen de Guadalupe held twelve days earlier. The world is resurrected and explodes into a dazzling moment of light which defies the passage of time ("sol Parado . . .") as the feast becomes a universal fertility rite presided over by Ceres and the Virgen del Prado. The cycle of life and death is defied as the feast metamorphosizes into Easter ("Pascua de Resurrección," p. 111):

The poem is an analogy of the universe and awaits its own Genesis; the Word is the logos spermatikos.⁹²

Incandescencias del candel,
 Muchachas, cestas de panes,
 Pan de centeno y pan de cebada,
 Pan de abejas, pan de flor,
 Altar vivo los pechos,
 Sobre mesa de tierra vasos de sol;
 Como y bebo, hombre soy.
 (Sonaja de simientes, poema:
 Enterrar la palabra,
 El grano de fuego,
 En el cuerpo de Ceres
 Tres veces arado;
 Enterrarla en el patio,
 Horadar el cemento
 Con la gota tenaz,
 Con la gota de tinta.

Para la diosa negra,
 Piedra dormida en la nieve,
 Dibujar un caballo de agua,
 Dibujar en la página
 Un caballo de yerba . . .)
 (p. 111)

At this point all levels of meaning kaleidoscope into one. The insistent drop of water ("la gota tenaz") becomes the black drop of ink; by virtue of its color the ink (the Word) is transformed into the obsidian-black goddess (la diosa negra), a metaphor designating the Virgen de Guadalupe, who is in turn visualized as a black stone asleep in the snow of winter ("Piedra dormida en la nieve").⁹³ The stone is not the philosopher's stone, but al alchemical transmutation does occur--the poem becomes a vital force as a horse of grass emerges on the page. Alas, memory fades: the marvelous stone becomes the hard cement of the patio; the words, once seeds, are barren pebbles:

(A solas con el diccionario
 agito el ramo seco,
 Palabras, muchachas, semillas,
 Sonido de guijarros
 Sobre la tierra negra y blanca,
 Inanimada.
 En el aire frío del patio
 Se dispersan las vírgenes.
 Humedad y cemento.)
 (p. 112)

The feast, Paz tells us, is a moment outside time, a magic space, especially in Mexico where it is the only moment of communion for the otherwise solitary Mexican nature. In El laberinto de la soledad, he describes the feast of the Virgen de Guadalupe evoked in the poem: "Durante los días que preceden y suceden al 12 de diciembre, el tiempo suspende su carrera, hace un alto y en lugar de empujarnos hacia un mañana siempre inalcanzable y mentiroso, no ofrece un presence redondo y

perfecto, de danza y juerga, de comunión y comilona con lo más antiguo y secreto de México. Un tiempo deja de ser sucesión y vuelve a ser lo que fue, y es, originariamente: un presente en donde pasado y futuro al fin se reconcilian."⁹⁴ For the Mexican the cosmic ritual of the feast represents a special kind of escape. Paz's comments on this point in El laberinto explain the bitter note struck in "Solo a dos voces":

La Fiesta mexicana no es nada más un regreso a un estado original de indiferenciación y libertad; el mexicano no intenta regresar, sino salir de sí mismo, sobrepasarse. Entre nosotros la Fiesta es una explosión, un estallido. Muerte y vida, júbilo y lamento, canto y aullido se alían en nuestros festejos no para recrearse o reconocerse, sino para entrededorarse. No hay nada más alegre que una fiesta mexicana, pero también no hay nada más triste. La noche de fiesta es también noche de duelo.

Si en la vida diaria nos ocultamos a nosotros mismos, en el remolino de la Fiesta nos disparamos. Más que abriarnos, nos desgarramos. Todo termina en alarido y desgarradura: el canto, el amor, la amistad. La violencia de nuestros festejos muestra hasta que punto nuestro hermetismo nos cierra las vías de comunicación con el mundo. Conocemos el delirio, la canción, el aullido y el monólogo, pero no el diálogo.⁹⁵

Poem and feast are one in the final analysis; each is re-creation as well as celebration. The poet must defy the inexorable passage of time. Memory ("raíz en la tiniebla") is his only defense. Paradoxically here it is not memories which haunt him, but something far worse: that which he has forgotten, and cannot express. Words become wraiths as Paz recapitulates the theme of "Entrada en materia":

Los nombres no son nombres
No dicen lo que dicen
Yo he de decir lo que no dicen
Yo he de decir lo que dicen
.....
El sagrario del cuerpo
El arca del espíritu
Los labios de la herida la herida de los labios⁹⁶

Poet, Word, World--all return to the Purgatory of contemporary existence

as the magic space dissolves:

Decir es penitencia de palabras,
La zona negra y blanca,
El húmedo cemento, el patio,
El no saber que digo
Entre la ausencia y la presencia
De este mundo, echado
Sobre su propio abandono,
Caído como gota de tinta.

(La letra no reposa en la página:
Memoria la levanta,
Monumento de viento.
¿Y quién recuerda a la memoria,
Quién la levanta, dónde se implanta?
Frente de claridad, alumbramiento,
La memoria es raíz en la tiniebla.)

Come tiniebla,

Come olvido:

No lo que dices, lo que olvidas,
Es lo que dices:

Hoy es solsticio de invierno

En el mundo

Hoy estás separado

En el mundo

Hoy es el mundo

Ánima en pena en el mundo.

(pp. 114-115)

Notes

1. For clarity "Contemporáneos" when referring to the group, is not underlined.
2. The estridentistas included Germán List Arzubide and Luis Quintanilla, as well as the exiled Guatemalan poet and novelist Arqueles Vela. Italian futurism is a prime influence on estridentismo, as is evidenced by Maples Arce's long poem Urbe (1924), a futuristic paen to the glories of the metropolis. Raul Leiva (Imagen de la poesía mexicana contemporánea (México, 1959), considers estridentismo to be the Mexican version of futurism. However, an examination of such texts as El movimiento estridentista by List Arzubide shows a wealth of images and rhetoric derived from Dada and surrealism.
3. For this and other background information concerning the Contemporáneos see Merlin H. Foster, Los contemporáneos, (1920-1932): perfil de un experimento vanguardista mexicano (México, 1964), for a meticulous study of the available documents, and a letter from Salvador Novo to the author containing a lengthy commentary on the genesis of the group.
4. See Jorge Cuesta, "La poesía de Paul Eluard," Taller No. 12, Vol. IV, pp. 130-36.
5. Sueño y poesía (México, 1952), p. 199.
6. Ibid., p. 46. Raul Leiva, op. cit., mistakenly dates this poem, "Estudios," as part of the original "El trompo de siete colores" (1925). However, it is one of the poems added to the section of the same name when the above-cited selected works were published in 1952.
7. Peras del olmo, pp. 75-76.
8. Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute, 2d ed. (New York, 1970).
9. Peras del olmo, p. 75.
10. Perhaps this statement is also aimed at Vasconcelos or Ortega y Gasset who advised the young poet thus, as Paz recounts in "El tiempo mismo," Salamandra, p. 42:

Hace veinte años me dojo Vasconcelos
 "Dedíquese a la filosofía
 Vida no da Defiende de la muerte"
 Y Ortega y Gasset

En un bar sobre el Ródano
 "Aprenda el alemán
 Y póngase a pensar
 Olvide lo demás"

(p. 59)

11. Taller No. 1, December 1938, pp. 3-4.
12. The Teste sketches were first collected in book form by Gallimard (Paris) in 1926 as Monsieur Teste. The text of an expanded 1946 version is included in the Œuvres (Paris: Gallimard, 1960). Of particular interest are the "Extraits du Log-Book de Monsieur Teste," a parody of Valéry's own notebooks (he was a prodigious journal writer). All subsequent references to Valéry's work are to the two-volume 1960 Œuvres.
13. The Heritage of Symbolism (London, 1962), p. 18.
14. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
15. "Aurore," Œuvres, vol. I, p. 1112.
16. See Chapter Four, pp. 192-3, for further discussion of Poe's influence on twentieth-century poetry.
17. Quoted in Œuvres, vol. I, pp. 1778-79. Juan Ramón Jiménez analyzes Poe's relationship to modernismo along these same lines--see Modernismo, notas de un curso (1953) (México, 1962), pp. 63, 75. In this same study Jiménez indicates his familiarity with Valéry's dialogue with Poe (p. 279). Jiménez's prose poem "Espacio", Poesía española, No. 28, April 1958, is, in part, his contribution to that dialogue; in the first of its three parts he invokes the cosmogonies of Poe and Valéry and formulates his own. Paz, in turn, admires "Espacio." However, we are not so much concerned with "back-door" influences, as with the contributions of Poe, Mallarmé, Valéry, Jiménez and Paz to a way of conceiving poetry and the poem which culminates in Blanco, which is, of course, also a cosmogony. This genesis is concretely developed in the course of Chapter Four.
18. Puertas al campo, p. 91.
19. El arco y la lira, 1957, p. 49.
20. El arco, 1967, p. 244.
21. Œuvres, vol. I, p. 862.
22. Ibid., pp. 864-65.
23. The quotes from Valéry are from, respectively, the Œuvres, vol. II, "Analecta" and vol. I, "Situation de Baudelaire," p. 598.
24. Taller No. 1, December 1938, p. 5.
25. Ibid., p. 6.
26. Manifestes du surréalisme (Paris: Éditions Jean Jacques Pauvert,

1966), pp. 76-77. Since this edition contains many of Breton's theoretical statements on surrealism, I have cited it throughout. I have somewhat arbitrarily chosen to translate the titles of the Manifestoes, and some short quotes, in order to interrupt the flow of the chapter as little as possible.

27. "Aspects of Surrealism in the Work of Octavio Paz," 1970, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado.
28. Two prime sources regarding the many new surrealist writers flourishing after World War II are Jean Louis Bedouin's La poésie Surréaliste, 2d edition (Paris, 1970), which includes poems by Paz and the Peruvian surrealist poet César Moro, and J. H. Matthews' Surrealist Poetry in France (Syracuse, 1969). For a more general view of surrealism in relation to post-war French poetry in general see Serge Gavronsky, Poems & Texts (New York, 1969). For what Paz considers to be trajectory of surrealism, the best source is his "Cronología de surrealismo" in Plural No. 17, February 1973, which traces surrealism through 1966.
29. See Rita Guibert's interview with Paz in Seven Voices (New York, 1973), p. 232.
30. Cuadrivio, p. 175.
31. Ibid., p. 176.
32. Ibid., p. 177.
33. Reproduced in Las peras del olmo, pp. 165-83.
34. Maurice Nadeau was largely responsible for this premature burial. See Histoire du Surréalisme (Paris, 1945).
35. See Note 28 above.
36. Peras del olmo, p. 167. See also: El arco y la lira, "El verbo desencarnado."
37. See, for example, Julien Benda, La France byzantine: ou, Le triomphe de la littérature pure (Paris, 1945).
38. Peras del olmo, p. 167.
39. Ibid., p. 170.
40. Cf. El laberinto de la soledad and Conjunciones y disyunciones.
41. Peras del olmo, p. 171.
42. Ibid., pp. 173-74.

43. This theme is often superficially treated as pertaining only to the theme of the double. See, for example, Rachel Phillips, The Poetic Modes of Octavio Paz (New York, 1972).
44. All three movements have profoundly marked modern Japanese poetry. See, for example, T. Fitzsimmons, Japanese Poetry Now (New York, 1972) and Shinkichi Takahashi, Afterimages: Zen Poems (New York, 1972).

Symbolism transformed modern Chinese poetry, including that of Chairman Mao. See Robert Payne's The White Pony for a small sampling of twentieth-century verse. Mao counsels the younger poets and artists not to heed his example--lyricism is a luxury which China cannot afford and Art should educate the people in the goals of Communism. However, Symbolist works have not been banned and condemned, as they have been in the Soviet Union. And of late, China has again begun to exalt the art of its glorious past. There is not sufficient material available in the West to measure the impact, if any, of contemporary Western poetry on Chinese verse.
45. R. Phillips in The Poetic Modes depends too much on stylistic guidelines. J. Sánchez concludes that the "surrealist" ideology of Paz's recent prose is not carried out in the works. However, he seems to have little knowledge of the evolution of surrealism in the last three decades, and presents Allen Ginsberg as a surrealist based on his free life style, which is patent nonsense. [The seminal poetic figures in surrealism in this country are Charles Henri Ford and Philip Lamantia. The Beat poet who has been most influenced by Surrealism is Lawrence Ferlinghetti, whose poetry incorporates Oriental influences as well. Currently there are a number of little reviews dedicated to surrealism. And, a number of young American poets have come to surrealism through Paz, whose work is widely available in translation.] While this part of Sánchez's analysis is weak, the bulk of the dissertation, dedicated to ¿Águila o sol? is an accurate analysis.
46. In addition to Professor Balakian's fundamental work, the following are useful aids to an understanding of these points: J. H. Matthews, Surrealist Poetry in France (Syracuse, 1969); Mary Ann Caws, Surrealism and the Literary Imagination: A Study of Breton and Bachelard (The Hague, 1966). Jules Monnerot, La Poésie moderne et le sacré (Paris, 1945).
47. Peras del olmo, p. 164.
48. See Chapter One, pp. 22-26.
49. Peras del olmo, p. 171.

50. Mexico: Tezontle, 1957. Helpful sources for understanding Paz's use of Aztec myth symbolism are Raúl Noriega, La piedra del sol y 16 monumentos astronómicos del México antiguo: símbolos y claves (México, n.d.), and Laurette Sejourné, Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico (New York, n.d.). Paz cites Noriega in this note to the first edition, omitted in subsequent editions. I do not intend to dwell on this aspect of the poem as it already has been analyzed and re-analyzed. In my opinion, the best treatment is that of José Emilio Pacheco, "Descripción de 'Piedra de sol'" in Aproximaciones a Octavio Paz, ed. Angel Flores (México, 1974). Pacheco is also the only commentator to accurately pinpoint the tragic significance of the famous lovers evoked in the first part of the poem: Mélusine, Heloise, and Petrarch's Laura, etc. Piedra de sol has received the most, and sometimes the worst, commentaries of any of Paz's works: a topography of this really quite lucid work is, alas, necessary here. The present analysis is a superficial one, and merely aims to establish the continuity of this work with the later ones. A poem "is" and "says"; sometimes it also "speaks with." Paz's poem is not a re-creation of Breton's, but it seems in part a reaction to and against it. Typical surrealist images of communication and plenitude are often used here to underscore the emptiness of existence without love. How much of this dialogue is consciously directed at the surrealists is hard to determine. Paz has said that Piedra de sol contains a good deal of automatic writing (see Rita Guibert, Seven Voices, N.Y. 1973, p. 217).
51. "Entre orfandad y legitimidad," Plural no. 46, July 1975, p. 2?.
52. Arcane 17 (Paris: Pauvert, 1965), pp. 54-55.
53. The biographical details of the journey to the Gaspé and the legend of Mélusine are recounted by Anna Balakian in André Breton: Magus of Surrealism (New York, 1971), pp. 201-13.
54. For a psychological and alchemical analysis of the symbol of Mélusine, see the works of C. G. Jung, especially Alchemical Studies, Princeton, 1967, pp. 173-80; 315; 318; and The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (Princeton, 1968), pp. 24-27.
55. Libertad bajo palabra, 2d ed. (México, 1968), p. 236. All citations of Libertad bajo palabra refer to this edition.
56. Piedra de sol quotes are from Libertad bajo palabra, pp. 237-54.
57. See also Poèmes (Paris: 1947), p. 112: "la molle intuition de l'agate oëillée. . . . aux paupières."
58. Préliminaires sur Matta, Paris, 1947.

59. See Jung, Alchemical Studies, p. 315.
60. "Stone and Water Imagery in Paz's Poetry," in The Perpetual Present: The Poetry and Prose of Octavio Paz, ed. I. Ivask (Norman, Okla., 1973).
61. This passage is passed over by critics except for John M. Fein, "La estructura de 'Piedra de sol'," Revista Iberoamericana, Jan.-March 1972, who is baffled by this section of the poem, and characterizes the path of chastity as "una breve, enigmática e inesperada visión de Dios" (p. 91). Fein interprets the list of love's varied manifestations as a "serie de imágenes de lo feo" to be preferred to the "tedio del tiempo común y corriente" (p. 91).
62. See Paz's treatment of this subject in "Los signos en rotación," El arco y la lira, 1967.
63. See, for example, Mauricio de la Selva, "Octavio Paz, búsquedas infructuosas," Cuadernos de Bellas Artes, México, 1963, IV, no. 7, pp. 17-25; also Rachel Phillips, "The Surrealist Mode," in Poetic Modes, pp. 70-75.
64. Baudelaire, Oeuvres (Paris, 1957).
65. Neruda in the Primera Residencia (in "Walking Around," for example), like T. S. Eliot in "The Wasteland," strikes a more melancholic and tedious note, closer to Jules Laforgue than to Baudelaire. Paz's city poems seem to flourish in periods of poetic and spiritual stress; they elaborate the same imagery, as in a recurring nightmare. One such example is the book-poem Vuelta (México, 1971), written after his return to Mexico City from India:
- putas
 pilares de la noche vana
 En el bar a la deriva
 al amanecer
 el deshielo del enorme espejo
 donde los bebedores solitarios
 se contemplan
 a si mismos
 El viento
 hojea los periódicos
 noticias de ayer
 más remotas
 que una tablilla cuneiforme. . . .
66. Yves Bonnefoy, "La Poésie française et le principe d'identité," in Un rêve fait à Mantoue (Paris, 1967), pp. 91-126.
67. Paz's growing interest in Pound's poetics is evinced throughout Los hijos del limo.
68. See "Estela de José Juan Tablada," Perras del olmo, pp. 80-89; also "Traducción y metáfora" in Los hijos del limo.

69. For example, these lines from "Estancias nocturnas," Obras (México, 1966), p. 62:
 En la noche resuena, como en un mundo hueco,
 el ruido de mis pasos, prolongados, distantes.
 Siento miedo de que no sea sino el eco
 de otros pasos ajenos, que pasaron mucho antes.
70. Arthur Waley, Translations from the Chinese (New York, 1941), p. 34.
71. Lucien Stryk and Takashi Ikemoto, Zen: Poems, Prayers, Sermons . . . (New York, 1963), pp. 4-5.
72. Essays in Zen Buddhism, II (London, 1934), pp. 33-36.
73. Buddhist Texts through the Ages, ed. Edward Conze et al. (New York, 1964), p. 92.
74. Poesía, p. 140.
75. Harold Henderson, An Introduction to Haiku (New York, 1967), p. 18.
76. Ladera este, p. 52.
77. The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York, 1972), pp. 92-94.
78. La estación total con Canciones de la nueva luz (Buenos Aires, 1946), pp. 139-141.
79. Poèmes (Paris, 1947), p. 57.
80. Ibid., pp. 77-78. The explanation of the I Ching is based on two texts: (1) Cary F. Baynes' English rendering of Richard Wilhelm's translation of The I Ching or Book of Changes, 3d ed., Princeton, 1967, with an introduction by Jung; (2) John Blofeld's version, I Ching: The Book of Change, New York, 1968. I have adopted Blofeld's version of "I" as "change" rather than "changes." Chinese ideograms have neither gender nor number, so this is an arbitrary decision. "Change" has a more metaphysical connotation and echoes the critical faction which interprets the oracle as a reflection on the nature of universal flux. "Changes" is favored by those who see it as a precursor of the Confucian moral code. The I Ching predates both Taoism and Confucianism, and influenced the first Taoist sage, Lao Tzu, as well as Confucius. For an in-depth historical perspective concerning Taoism and Confucianism, see H. G. Creel, Chinese Thought (New York, 1953), and Henri Maspero, Le taoïsme et les religions chinoises (Paris, 1971). Paz probably utilized the widely diffused Wilhelm version since "duration" as the translation of "hêng" is peculiar to Wilhelm. It is interesting to note, however, that Paz's interpretation of the I Ching prefigures that of Blofeld, whose commentary is published six years later--Salamandra appeared in 1962.

81. Rubén Darío is probably the first Latin American poet to mention the tortoise oracle:

La tortuga de oro camina por la alfombra
y traza por la alfombra un misterioso estigma,
sobre su carapacho hay grabado un enigma,
y un círculo enigmático se dibuja en su sombra.

Esos signos nos dicen al Dios que no se nombra
y ponen en nosotros su autoritario estigma;
ese círculo encierra la clave del enigma
que a Minotauro mata y a la Medusa asombra . . .

"La tortuga de oro",
Poesías completas (Madrid, 1961),
pp. 1122-23.

This sonnet is dedicated to the Mexican modernista poet Amado Nervo, another devotee of the occult. Like the I Ching to which it alludes, the tortoise image is a metaphor of flux. The shell is a cryptic analogy of the universe; the circle of its shadow symbolizes the cyclical nature of existence and the illusory nature of reality, as well as its duality. Paz comments on this poem in the Cuadrivio essay on Darío, saying it seems to be a key work, although it is perplexing (pp. 60-61). He makes no mention of the poem's allusion to the oracle, but instinctively intuit its meaning. "Duración" operates equally as well out of context. Neither poet wishes to be hermetic. Rather Paz echoes the modernista need to reincorporate myth and ritual into vital and poetic experience in an age ravished by the symbolic death of God.

82. Blofeld explains the preliminary ritual and choosing of sticks in full. Two points might be emphasized. First, the Book is a sacred object and treated with great care and respect--it is a tool to aid contemplation. Second, it is similar in function to the Pythagorean vision of the universal harmony symbolized by numbers. By dividing a bundle of sticks the practitioner arrives at three numbers which determine whether the resulting line is straight or broken. The numbers also have additional significance in the interpretation of the line. This process is repeated six times in order to arrive at the hexagram.
83. Wilhelm, pp. 126-27.
84. The horse is the symbol of the "heaven" trigram. However, a horse often figures in the prognostications associated with thunder. This image is not a clear-cut specific reference like the wood or the cock, unless, of course, it stems from an actual consultation of the oracle. See Blofeld, p. 216.
85. For the reader of Chinese poetry, this line evokes a famous poem from the Book of Songs, "The White Pony":

Pure is the white pony
Who comes to me swiftly
Like a duke, like a marquis

Let us enjoy ourselves completely,
 Let us prolong our lovemaking,
 Let us take our ease.

This poem is the title poem of Robert Payne's anthology, The White Pony (London, 1949), p. 31.

86. Examples of the use of this image by Lorca are legion. And, of course, the Spanish poet often poeticizes the wind and other natural forces, endowing them with sexual connotations. "Preciosa y el aire," (Obras completas [Madrid, 1960] must surely come to mind. A poem which is a virtual orchestration of these elements is "Thamar y Amnon" from the Romancero gitano (O. C.). The imagery of the initial portrait of Thamar recalls the "torre de pájaros," etc., of the last stanza of "Duración":

Thamar estaba soñando
 pájaros en su garganta,
 al son de panaderos fríos
 y cítaras enlunadas.
 Su desnudo en el alero,
 agudo norte de palma,
 Pide copas a su vientre
 y granizo a sus espaldas.

.

The whinnying of horses underscores the ensuing seduction scene as Amnon attempts to make love to his sister:

Déjame tranquila, hermano.
 Son tus besos en mi espalda
 avispas y vientecillos
 en doble enjambre de flautas.
 Thamar, en tus pechos altos
 hay dos peces que me llaman,
 y en las yemas de tus dedos
 rumor de rosa encerrada.

Los cien caballos del rey
 en el patio relinchaban.
 Sol en cubos resistía
 la delgadez de la parra.
 Ya la coge del cabello,
 ya la camisa le rasga.
 Corales tibios dibujan
 arroyos en rubio mapa.

Many other poems come to mind, among them:

Verde que te quiero verde.
 Verde viento verdes ramas.
 El barco sobre la mar
 y el caballo en la montaña

("Romance sonámbulo," O.C., p. 430)

Verte desnuda es recordar la tierra
 La tierra lisa, limpia de caballos.

("Cásida de la mujer tendida,"
O.C., p. 570)

87. Cf. The Complete Poems and Plays (1909-1950), pp. 37-55.
88. I refer again, of course, to Breton's "L'union libre."
89. Ramón Xirau, Octavio Paz: el sentido de la palabra (México, 1970), p. 90. "Había dicho Paz que el poema puede concebirse como el desarrollo de una exclamación. Una doble exclamación (agresiva, dirigida al animal, dirigida a la tierra materna) hace que el poema se abra y respire en dos comienzos de fiesta."
90. "Salamandra," Salamandra, p. 106.
91. Salamandra, p. 109.
92. Saul Yurkievich in "Octavio Paz, indagador de la palabra," (Fundadores de la nueva poesía latinoamericana [Barcelona, 1964]) briefly touches on the theme of language in "Solo . . ." citing also what he considers to be a parallel in this quote from Corriente alterna: "El sutra Satasahasrika expone la doctrina en cien mil estrofas; el Eksaksari en una sílaba: a. En el sonido de esa vocal se condensa todo el lenguaje, todas las significaciones y, simultáneamente la final ausencia de significación del lenguaje y del mundo" (p. 70). The "final ausencia" of Corriente alterna implies a state akin to the Buddhist shūnyatā. However, "Solo" says something slightly different as it alludes to the Romantic/symbolist notion of a lost language which did express the plenitude of the Absolute. The reader will find a complement to the poem in "Mariposa de obsidiana": "En la noche de las palabras desgolladas mis hermanas y yo, cogidas de la mano, saltamos y cantamos alrededor de la I, única torre en pie del alfabeto arrasado" (Libertad bajo palabra, p. 193).
93. The cult of the Virgin incorporates Aztec ritual. She is sometimes known as Itzpapalotl or the "mariposa de obsidiana." See Paz's prose poem by that name, Libertad bajo palabra, pp. 193-95). The portrait which is offered there foreshadows the imagery and mood of "Solo . . .". The goddess is the "madre del pedernal" and "la olla primordial." This last metaphor is made quite vivid in the poem:

Hoy es solsticio de invierno:

Canta el gallo

El sol despierta.

Voces y risas, baile y panderos.

Sobre el suelo entumido

Rumor de faldas de muchachas

Como el viento corriendo entre espadanas,

Como el agua que brota de la pena.

Muchachas,

Cántaros penantes,

El agua se derrama,

El vino se derrama,

Penetra las entrañas,
La piedra se despierta:
Lleva un sol en el vientre.
Como el pan en el horno,
El hijo de la piedra incandescente
Es el hijo de nadie.

94. El laberinto, p. 39. Oddly enough Xirau (El sentido de la palabra, pp. 40-44) is the only critic to comment upon the importance of the fiesta, or ritual, in Paz's aesthetic.

95. Ibid., p. 44.

96. Salamandra, p. 13.

Chapter Three

1. From Breton to Bashō: The Evolution of Imagery and Form in Ladera este (1969)* and Renga (1971)

The precision and concreteness of imagery introduced in Salamandra becomes increasingly more evident in the poems of the period 1962-68 collected in Ladera este (1969). An important factor in this metamorphosis is Paz's interest in the multiple possibilities of a slender Japanese poetic form, the haiku. The Mexican poet first discovered this form through the experiments of Spanish-language poets, among them Antonio Machado, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Efrén Rebolledo and José Juan Tablada. A 1952 visit to Japan furthered his exploration of the poetry of that country; and in 1955 Paz and a Japanese friend, Eikichi Hayashiya, undertook the translation of a travel diary by Japan's most famous haiku master, Matsuo Bashō, the Oku no Hosomichi. This translation, the first in a Western language, appeared in 1957 as Matsuo Bashō: Sendas de Oku; a revised edition appeared in 1970.¹ Haiku in the poetry of the West has undergone a number of transformations, and disfigurations, since its initial appearance in nineteenth-century France. Since there is much confusion regarding the use of the terms haiku and haikai in their original context, some definitions are in order.² Haiku is too often described as a verse form: 17 syllables

*Ladera este contains poems from the period 1962 to 1968, including a second edition of the previously published Blanco (1967). This chapter deals with its first two sections, "Ladera este" and "Hacia el comienzo." Chapter Four treats the third section, Blanco, and the separately published Topoemas, 1968.

divided 5, 7, 5. This is simply not true; the senryu, another type of Japanese poem, is identical in form.³ What distinguishes a haiku is its contents. Linking Nature to human nature in its brief images, it alludes to the mystery of existence. A sense of timelessness may be one of its commonplaces. Cor van den Heuvel describes the haiku image as "now in one of these timeless moments when it flashes forth an unspoken message of the oneness of existence."⁴ For example, this contemporary haiku by Robert Speiss:

A long wedge of geese;
straw-gold needles of the larch
on the flowing stream.⁵

Then there is the haiku whose essence is the opposite, not a projection of an epiphany but of a sense of loss, an intimation of time's passage:

Hair, in my comb's teeth
the color of autumn wind--
this whole day is gray.
Clement Hoyt⁶

Still another conveys a state of suspended animation or vacuity. Paz commenting on this Zen-inspired "abolición del instante" chose this example by Ryoto:

No hablaron una palabra
el anfitrión, el huesped
y el blanco crisantemo.⁷

Cor van den Heuvel captures this suspended state in a not very classical haiku . . .⁸

tundra

This last selection dramatizes an important element of the haiku-- silence. Alan Watts defines the haiku as "the wordless poem."⁹ Its brevity suggests the epigram or the miniature, yet it is vast. One can meander through Western 'intimations of mortality' which tend toward the thirty-two stanzas of Mr. Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" only to find their sense congealed by Bashō in a frisson of syllables:

Un viejo estanque
salta una rana,
chasquido.¹⁰

Since the haiku participates in the cosmos, it is especially fitting that it originated as part of a communal poem. The medieval Japanese poets who composed haikai no renga (or comic linked verse) prefigured the cadavre exquis¹¹ of the surrealists as well as Lautréamont's prophecy of a "poetry made for all." The haiku is ultimately derived from the renga, a form of linked verse which originated in the twelfth century and was a sequence of from 50 to 100 verses alternating 17- and 14-syllable lines. Renga was a serious and formal poetry until it gave way to the demands of an expanding monied middle class. Jest and satire so permeated the form that an entirely new poetry was created, the haikai no renga or renku, also written by two or more poets, and alternating stanzas of 5-7-5 and 7-7. The seventeenth-century poet Matsuo Bashō founded a school of his own, eliminating the element of caricature but retaining colloquial language so long as it expressed truth and beauty. The opening verse of the series is called a hokku and must contain a kigo or season word; there are numerous other rules for the construction and linking of verses. The initial verse or hokku was also cultivated as a poem in itself and soon developed into the haiku which embodied the spirit of Bashō's haikai no renga. While haikai no renga is often tinged with a gentle irony, broader comic effects gradually developed by the middle of the eighteenth century in a new form also based on the 5-7-5 hokku stanza, the senryu.¹² The pungent wit of senryu is close to the modern sense of irony we have seen in discussing Western poetry: this couplet by William Blake is in the spirit of senryu:

The child's eyes and the old man's reasons
 Are the fruits of the two seasons.
 ("Auguries of Innocence")

A more classic example is this senryu by Mamebô:

Time was,
 when in this mirror
 I was charmed by myself.¹³

The resonance of the haiku in Ladera este is colored by that book's setting: the chaotic confusion of sensations and perceptions which confront the poet during a six-year sojourn in India as the Mexican Ambassador to that country. The extreme discipline of the haiku becomes a counter-balance to the overwhelming profusion of India, a profusion which somehow evokes a sense of loss and absence, what Paz terms "pánica presencia" in these lines from Ladera este:

Una pandilla
 De monos mendicantes. Increíble
 Mente trepada, una cabra amarilla
 Sobre una piedra puntiaguda. Un cuervo
 Sobre la cabra. Y la invisible,
 Aunque constante, pánica presencia:
 No arafia o cobra, lo Innominal . . .
 ("Cerca del Cabo Camorín," p. 43)

There are very few moments in Ladera este in which Paz evokes the traditional haiku form. The most notable of these is perhaps "Prójimo lejano":

Anoche un fresno
 A punto de decirme
 Algo--callóse.
 (p. 79)

Yet even though the haiku form as such rarely stands by itself among the later poems, its presence, interwoven throughout, is constantly to be noted. Often the haiku serves as a counterpoint to underscore the incongruity between India's natural beauty and the sorry state of her

politics, as in these interfaced vignettes from "Utacamud":

En la veranda del Cecil Hotel
Miss Penélope (pelo canario,
Medias de lana, báculo) repite
Desde hace treinta años: *Oh India*
Country of missed oportunities . . .
Arriba
Entre los fuegos de artificio
De la jacaranda,
Graznan los cuervos,
Alegremente.
(Ladera este, p. 41)

When a poem in its effort to render the invisible threat of the abyss wanders too far into a surreal abstraction the concreteness of haiku serves to render the invisible visible, as in this stanza from "Himachal Pradesh (1)":

Vi
El vértigo petrificado
El jardín suspendido de la asfixia
(Una mariposa atigrada
Inmóvil sobre la punta de un aroma)
(Ladera este, p. 65)

Another spirit, akin to that of haiku, is also to be sensed in these poems--that of the Chinese poets of the T'ang dynasty who influenced Bashō to develop the more metaphysical line of haiku. It is not surprising that Bashō and the T'ang poets Tu Fu and Li Po are Paz's most admired mentors in this area. Their influence increasingly shapes Paz's imagery, giving his language the freshness and directness sought by these poets. Paz's preference for these three poets seems to be based on certain nuances of feeling and expression shared by all. Let us look more closely at the haikai and haiku of Bashō. A complex theoretician, Bashō developed an esthetic which was a reflection of a way of life and thought. Paradoxically enough the Japanese poet, in spite of the restrictions he imposed on form, is a spiritual ally of surrealism.

Studying Bashō's esthetics one is reminded of Eluard's "Donner a voir."¹⁴ Bashō sought to communicate a freshness of vision and to replace the excessive formalism and symbolism of court poetry with realism. Chinese poetry was a stylistic model for Bashō's contemporaries; for Bashō it offered a new way of seeing, and his mature poetry is gradually infused with the sense of Zen or Tao which marks the haiku. Like the surrealists, Bashō sought to restore meaning to a language which had become divorced from life, and penetrate the essence of the thing-in-itself. This was to be accomplished by skilled craftsmanship, not by transcribing the musings of the unknown. His best poems are marked by the interplay of passion and lucidity found in Paz. Bashō's renga or linked verse operates on a principle of association akin to analogy. It is dependent on the subtle interplay of the senses and in its execution resembles the montage of modern poetry. However it was the concrete immediacy of its images which most attracted Western poets. Anglo-American Imagism is the somewhat distorted by-product of that vision.¹⁵ The note of simplicity was translated, the sense of vastness was lost.

Let us put the cart before the horse for a moment to consider Paz's Renga, which although published in 1971 was conceived in April of 1969.¹⁶ The "authorship"--Paz, the Italian Edoardo Sanguinetti, the English poet Charles Tomlinson and Jacques Roubaud, a French poet who elaborates his own poems in the Japanese manner--retired, in the best Orphic manner, to the basement of a Paris hotel. They produced, Paz tells us, not a traditional renga, but "su metáfora, una de sus posibilidades o avatares."¹⁷ In circular rotation each poet contributed a

stanza to a sonnet; there are twenty-seven sonnets. In some of these one is aware of the different "voices"; in others a communal chant evolves. This example from the bilingual edition gives the reader the opportunity to also experience the poem without being aware of language differences:

The given is ground. You are bound by it
as the eyes are bound--by a frame of nearnesses
surrounding things half-seen: thick, bare
calligraphy and confusion of boughs on air:

est donnée la confusion des arbres
d'infiniment petites poussières
mouches sur le grain du papier herbes
bouches blanc dans le sol de la vue.

Confusa ritorni, confusione diffusa, insetto incerto,
scabbia per ogni mia palpebra, spada per l'iride, scena
nuda: il tuo ombelico è l'occhio del mio albero, aperto
paesaggio di catene, di fruste: siringa per la mia vena:

Suelo, árboles, marañas, rayo fijo
(Ares y Eros): la escritura respira: mar nupcial.
(Renga, III¹)

The Western poet, or reader, participating in a renga must meet the challenge of impersonality: the renga is the exorcism of the ego.

Renga is, of course, a homage to Bashō and his disciples. It is also an attempt to extend the links of a tradition whose only Western antecedents are Homer and the surrealists. Dedicated to André Breton, Renga attempts to fulfill his (and Lautréamont's) prophecy of a poetry made by all. In a preliminary essay "Centro móvil," Paz outlines the analogies between surrealism and the renga:

Las afinidades y analogías entre los juegos surrealistas y el renga son numerosas y profundas. Más que coincidencias son rimas, correspondencias: uno de los lugares en que se cruzan Oriente y Occidente. No menos notables son las diferencias. Me limitaré a mencionar la más importante: la actividad surrealista disuelve la noción de obra en beneficio del acto poético; en el

renga los autores se anulan como individuos en beneficio de la obra común. En un caso se exalta a la experiencia poética; en el otro, al poema. En el primero: preeminencia de la subjetividad; en el segundo, de la obra. En uno y otro la intrusión del azar es una condición del juego pero las reglas que producen su aparición son distintas y aún opuestas. Entre los surrealistas el azar opera en un espacio abierto: la pasividad de la conciencia crítica. (Señalo, al pasar, la índole paradójica de esta pasividad: es voluntaria y deliberada, el resultado de la actividad crítica de la conciencia.) El poeta surrealista aspira a alcanzar ese estado de absoluta distracción que invita y provoca la descarga de la energía poética reconcentrada. En el renga, el azar opera como uno de los signos del juego--el signo sin nombre, la corriente invisible que acelera o retarda la carrera, la fuerza que tuerce el volante y cambia la dirección del poema. El azar no aparece en un espacio libre sino dentro de los carriles de las reglas; su función consiste en trastornar la regularidad de la escritura por interrupciones que distraen al poema de sus metas y lo orientan hacia otras realidades. En el juego surrealista: distracción que atrae la concentración máxima, el estallido fijo de André Breton; en el renga: máxima concentración que produce la distracción liberadora, la ruptura por la cual brota el instantáneo chorro de poesía. ¿Estamos ante el mismo azar o designamos con el mismo nombre a dos fuerzas distintas y que sólo tienen en común su capacidad para perturbar nuestros sistemas mentales y vitales?

Paz's essay dissolves into poetry as his "I" is encroached upon by the group and the poem:

sensación de vergüenza: escribo ante los otros, los otros escriben frente a mí

sensación de voyeurisme: me veo manipular frases, las veo unirse, desunirse, volverse a unir. Les mots font l'amour en mi página, en mi cama. Hermosa, aterradora promiscuidad del lenguaje. El abrazo se vuelve pelea; la pelea, danza; la danza, oleaje; el oleaje, bosque. Dispersión de signos. Concentraciones de insectos negros, verdes, azules. Hormigueros sobre el papel. Volcanes, archipiélagos desparramados. Tinta: astros y moscas. Escritura-estallido, escritura-abanico, escritura-marisma. Alto: el que escribe se detiene, alza la cara y me mira: mirada vacía, plena, estúpida, excelsa. Escribir, jugar, copular: ¿agonizar? Los ojos cesan de ver--y ven. ¿Qué ven? Ven lo que se está escribiendo y al verlo lo borran. Escribir es leer y borrar signos escritos en un espacio que está dentro y fuera de nosotros, un espacio que es nosotros mismos y aquello en que cesamos de ser nosotros para ser ¿qué o quién?;

sensación de regreso: descenso a la cueva mágica, caverna de Polifemo, escondrijo de Alí Babá, catacumba de los conspiradores, celda de los acusados, sótano de los castigados en el colegio, gruta submarina, cámara subterránea (Proserpina, Calipso), vagina

del lenguaje, cala de la ballena, fondo del cráter. Los trabajadores del subsuelo, los gnomos de la palabra, los mineros de signos, los perforadores y dinamiteros de los significacos. Topos, ratas, lombrices. Venerables serpientes, augustos dragones: guardianes del tesoro enterrado, el cofre de hierro lleno de hojas secas, el tesoro de la loca sabiduría. Vergüenza, soberbia, irrisión. Paso de la angustia a la risa, del golpe de pecho a la pirueta, del aislamiento a la fraternidad. . . .

Turning from this geyser of words to the constraint of the main text, the eye prods the mind to considerations of form. Why the sonnet, why not use the haiku? The course the poets set themselves is zig-zag, "una confluencia," unlike the temporal progression of their Japanese model which evolves in a straight line. The form engenders its own associations: the sonnets of courtly love, of dialectical passion. Slowly, the Verb becomes incarnate. Tomlinson exults in the discovery in a passage invoking Donne (III⁷):

language of silence; sufficiency of touch,
o my America, my new-found-land explored,
unspeaking plenitude of the flesh made word¹⁸

We are left with a distillation of a collective, rather than personal identity. Dr. Suzuki says it far better than I can: "Christianity, which is the religion of the West, talks of Logos, Word, the flesh, and incarnation, and of tempestuous temporality. The religions of the East strive for excarnation, silence, absorption, eternal peace. To Zen incarnation is excarnation; silence roars like thunder; the Word is no-Word, the flesh is no-flesh. . . ."¹⁹

These same tensions underly Ladera este, the high noon of Paz's trajectory: incarnation and incantations, word and flesh, seek to dispel the dark night of the soul:

are in play. We are first submerged in the light of the summer solstice,
in a moment outside of time:

Una muchacha real
Entre las casas y las gentes espectrales
Presencia chorro de evidencias
Yo ví a través de mis actos irreales
La tomé de la mano
Juntos atravesamos
Los cuatro espacios de tres tiempos

Lovemaking and warmongering are superimposed as two other threads are
woven into the warp of the poem, first a reference to the uprisings in
the Dominican Republic, then an anecdote of eighteenth-century inhuman-
ity:

En los jardines de su alcázar de estío
Tipú Sultán plantó el árbol de los jacobinos
Luego distribuyó pedazos de vidrio
Entre los oficiales ingleses prisioneros
Y ordenó que se cortasen el prepucio
Y se los comiesen

Meanwhile, the lovers, impervious to time, are stretched out in
eternity:

El presente es perpetuo
En el pico del mundo se acarician
Shiva y Parvati
Cada caricia dura un siglo
Para el dios y para el hombre

The moment is mythified; it is also visualized in a series of sensorial
images sketched with the economy and delicate control of a scroll
painting:

Dos o tres pájaros
Inventa un jardín
Tú lees y comes un durazno
Sobre la colcha roja
.....
Un adolescente de ojos verdes te regaló
Una granada
Al otro lado del Amu-Darya
Humeaban las casitas rusas
El son de la flauta usbek
Era otro río invisible y más puro²⁴

These lines invoke the poet-painters of the haiku tradition and the landscapes of T'ang poetry, especially those of Tu Fu:

"Clear after Rain"

Autumn cloud blades on the horizon.
 The west wind blows from ten thousand miles.

 The desert trees shed their few green leaves.
 The mountain pears are tiny but ripe.
 A Tartar flute plays by the city gate.
 A single wild goose climbs into the void.²⁵

There is an extraordinary bond between the two poets. Paz's translations of Tu Fu are in a sense his own, for example:

Viejos fantasmas, nuevos,
 Zozobra, llanto, nadie.

 Andrajos de neblina
 Cubren la noche, a trechos
 Contra la nieve, el viento.

 Ceniza el fuego. El hombre
 ya no habla: susurra.
 ¿A quién decir mi canto?²⁶

Rhythm is the motor force of Ladera este; it shapes the organization of the poetic elements and their disposition on the page as well. Paz's conception of rhythm is prosodic and metaphysical, spatial and temporal. It is an expression of universal harmony; the poem unfolds via analogy and the line of verse is not measured by syllables or feet but is shaped by the limits imposed by speech and thought:

El metro es una medida que tiende a separarse del lenguaje.
 El ritmo jamás se separa del habla, porque él mismo es habla,
 núcleo original del que brotaron palabras, metros y conceptos. El
 metro es procedimiento, manera; el ritmo, temporalidad concreta.²⁷

Paz's prosody is influenced by the vein of English-language poetry which runs from Pound, Cummings and Williams to Olson, Creeley and Snyder. His initial rapport is with Cummings. In recent years he has

(cenizas.)
 El hombre
 (Con el índice)
empezó a pensar
 (categorico)
 hace cinco mil años
 (el pandit me mostraba)
 Aquí
 (los Himalayas,
 las montañas más jóvenes del planeta.)
 ("Himachal Pradesh [21]," p. 67)

The zigzag lines of still other poems express dialectical opposition or confirm identity as they separate and merge:

La poesía
 Es la ruptura instantánea
 Instantáneamente cicatrizada
 Abierta de nuevo
 Por la mirada de los otros
 La ruptura
 Es la continuidad
 La muerte del Comandante Guevara
 También es ruptura
 No un fin
 Su memoria
 No es una cicatriz
 Es una continuidad que se desgarró
 Para continuarse
 La poesía
 Es la hendidura
 El espacio
 Entre una palabra y otra
 Configuración del inacabamiento
 ("Carta a Leon Felipe," Ladera Este,
 p. 92)

While some poems are dispersed on the page by their own energy, others seek a center of gravity and incarnate as almost palpable presence.

These tend to be chains of images derived from the haiku:

Blanco el palacio,
 Blanco en el lago negro.
 Lingam y yoni.

Como la diosa al dios
 Tú me rodeas, noche.

Fresca terraza.
Eres inmensa, inmensa
A la medida.

Estrellas inhumanas.
Pero la hora es nuestra.

Caigo y me elevo,
Ardo y me anego. ¿Sólo
Tienes un cuerpo?

Pájaros sobre el agua,
Alba sobre los párpados.

Ensimismados,
Altos como la muerte,
Brotan los mármoles.

¿Encallan los palacios?
Blancura a la deriva.
(from "El día en Udaipur," p. 6)

That the erotic vein is the mother lode of Ladera este is by this point self-evident. If the main melody is a madrigal, the contrapunto is furnished by humour, irony and some philosophic speculation. Most of the irony is directed at discrepancy between past and present in India. We are prompted to belly laughter in "Madurai":

MADURAI

En el bar de British Club
--Sin ingleses, *soft drinks*--
Nuestra ciudad es santa y cuenta
Me decía, apurando su naranjada,
Con el templo más grande de la India
(Mainakshi, diosa canela)
Y el garaje T.S.V. (tus ojos son dos peces)
El más grande también en el subcontinente:
Sri K. J. Chidambaram,
Yo soy familiar de ambas instituciones.
Director de The Great Lingam Inc.,
Compañía de Autobuses de Turismo.
(Ladera este, p. 49)

The series entitled "Golden Lotuses" strikes a somewhat more bitter note. It is a masterful caricature of an aging "woman of the

world," an ex-courtesan whose once magnificent house is crumbling away,
a metaphor of her own hollow façade:

Jardines despeinados,
Casa grande como una hacienda.
Hay muchos cuartos vacíos,
Muchos retratos de celebridades
Desconocidas. Moradas y negras,
En paredes y sedas marchitas
Las huellas digitales
De los monzones giratorios.
Lujo y polvo. Calor, calor.
La casa está habitada por una mujer rubia.
La mujer está habitada por el viento.
(Golden Lotuses [3], p. 34)

The title emphasizes the irony. In a note Paz refers us to The Golden Lotus, an erotic Chinese novel revolving about the life of concubines in old China. The blond heroine of Paz's trilogy, hence "golden," is no competition for the lovely young heroines of the novel:

Delgada y sinuosa
Como la cuerda mágica.
Rubia y rauda:
Dardo y milano.
Pero también inexorable rompehielos.
Senos de niña, ojos de esmalte.
Bailó en todas las terrazas y sótanos,
Contempló un atardecer en San José, Costa Rica,
Durmió en las rodillas de los Himalayas,
Fatigó los bares y las sabanas de África.
A los veinte dejó a su marido
Por una alemana;
A los veintiuno dejó a la alemana
Por un afgano (Golden Lotuses [2], p. 32)

The third level of allusion here is most probably an ironic reference to the golden lotus as Buddhist symbol of divine illumination. One thinks of another Chinese classic, The Golden Flower, a guide for the seeker of ultimate wisdom, and of such female divinities as Prajñāpāramita and Padmapāli, both of whom hold the symbolic lotus. However, to equate these poems wholly with this sacred symbol, as Rachel Phillips does, is

totally misleading.³⁰ The heroine of the poem is no earth mother, but a travesty on the Goddess. Paz makes this abundantly clear with his reference to "The Golden Lotus," and, tongue in cheek, within the poem: the "lady" lives in "Proserpina Court, int. 2, Bombay" surrounded by her entourage: snakes and toads, cowed servants and a long-suffering Parsi lover.

2. From Mallarmé to Nāgārjuna: The Impact of Indian Religion and Philosophy in Ladera Este

In this day and age when the Western half of the world is showing a hitherto unparalleled interest in the philosophy and religion of the East, any first-hand account of Eastern modes of life and thought assumes a very special importance. Thus the experience of Paz in India, Afghanistan and Ceylon transmuted into the poetry of Ladera este, occupy a key position not only in his work, but in the modern poetical tradition. Ladera este es a work without precedent: its author's highly analytical eye takes in the entire crazy-quilt of religious and philosophical systems which populate the Indian subcontinent. We see not only the influence of the East on a Western sensibility, but also the horrendous impact of Western modes of religion and government foisted upon India in the heyday of the British Raj. Paz's sense of irony is honed to its sharpest in these portraits:

En el patio del club seis eucaliptos
se ahogan en una luz casi miel,
tres ingleses supervivientes del *British Raj*
comentan con un *sikh* el *match* de *cricket* en Sidney,
unas matronas indias juegan *bridge*, un paria
lava el piso en cuclillas y se eclipsa,
un astro negro se abre en mi frente

como una granada (EN PARIS PRENDEN FUEGO
A LA BOLSA, TEMPLO DEL CAPITALISMO),
los pinos ensombrecen la colina.

("Himachal Pradesh [3], " Ladera este, p. 71)

However, we are also made privy to the incursions of Indian thought into Paz's attempt to trace the outlines of mind and spirit. The position which Paz takes vis-à-vis Indian thought, or Oriental thought for that matter, is a very particular one, the result of a specialist's familiarity with the subject. Since his position is reflected in several rather metaphysical poems in Ladera este, as well as in Topoemas (1968), I feel this fact warrants a brief historical sketch of the philosophies Paz must consider to arrive at his own personal convictions.

While the great pantheon of gods and goddesses of Hinduism, the principal religion of modern India, makes a number of appearances in the pages of Paz's prose and poetry, it is Buddhism, no longer a vital force in the country of its birth, which most colors Paz's thinking. His especial interest is Mahāyāna Buddhism, the branch of Buddhism which was to develop into the Ch'an and Zen systems of China and Japan, and which is the basis of Tibetan Buddhism.

Early Buddhism (it developed about 500 B.C.) was characterized by its denial of personality and matter. What the West terms personality or ego was described by the Buddhists as a series of moral and mental components (dharma), which were in a constant state of flux, having no underlying unifying or stable factor. Physical "reality" was considered to be in the same state of flux, a sort of perpetual becoming. Salvation was regarded as an escape from this cycle to a totally quiescent state (nirvāna). Forces which fomented the turmoil

of life were seen as degrading. When Buddhism first appeared, India was divided by a new mysticism opposing orthodox Brahmanism. The Buddhists allied themselves with the mystics who sought to achieve illumination through meditation and other yogic practices.

Some five hundred years later a revisionist tendency appears, the Mādhyamika or Middle Way, which will evolve into the Mahāyāna school.³¹ This period saw the pluralistic nature of the earlier phase substituted by a radical monism which discarded the notion of a human Buddha absorbed in a lifeless nirvāṇa and replaced it with a divine Buddha manifested everywhere. The dharma and other elements of the earlier period were judged to be unreal, the product of illusion: empirical reality was but the surface reflection of another, deeper reality. This no-element theory was designated as the theory of shūnyatā, a term generally translated in the West as "emptiness," or "the void." Perhaps the most radical feature of the new Buddhism was this insistence on the ultimate identity of the empirical world and the absolute, or samsāra and nirvāṇa. Logic or reason was also a product of illusion: mysticism or revelation replaced the logical deductions of the earlier schools as the only means of knowing the absolute. The most fascinating figure of the new "Middle Way" is the sage Nāgārjuna who lived in the second century A.D.³² Nāgārjuna becomes the focus of Paz's studies of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Nāgārjuna is the invisible third party in the poem "Lectura de John Cage," perhaps the most philosophical poem of Ladera este, and a reaction on Paz's part to a book by the modern composer John Cage who is a student of Zen: Paz's poem is interspersed with lines from Cage's book, A Year

from Monday. (Middletown, Conn., 1967). Silence which is an important component of the aesthetics of both Paz and Cage is one of the subjects of the poem:

Leído
 Desleído
 *(Music without measurements,
 Sounds passing through circumstances.)*
 Dentro de mí los oigo
 Pasar afuera
 Fuera de mí los veo
 Pasar conmigo.
 Yo soy la circunstancia.
 Música:
 Oigo adentro lo que veo afuera
 Veo dentro lo que oigo fuera.

 La música
 Inventa al silencio,
 La arquitectura
 Inventa al espacio.
 Fábricas de aire.
 El silencio
 Es el espacio de la música . . .
 (Ladera este, pp. 80-81)

As Paz speculates about the elusive concepts of music and silence, he is inexorably led to the problem of the ultimate nature of reality: are music and silence one and the same? No, the poet concludes, silence is an idea, "La idea fija de la música" (p. 81). Music is not an idea but "movimiento, / Sonidos caminando sobre el silencio" (p. 81). As the poem attempts to distinguish sensation from conception it moves to the parallel problem in Buddhist logic, the ultimate identity of nirvāna and samsārā:

Silencio es música
 Música no es silencio.
 Nirvana es Samsara
 Samsara no es Nirvana.
 El saber no es saber:
 Recobrar la ignorancia,
 Saber del saber.

These lines introduce a dialectic of negation that pays homage to Nāgārjuna as well as to Cage. The key line in this section is also the pivotal line of the poem: "Samsara no es Nirvana . . ." (p. 81). The poet and the reader are of the West: reality and Paradise are not interchangeable concepts. This is a logical conclusion, but the next line attacks it--"knowledge" isn't really knowledge. Ignorance is true wisdom. "Ignorancia" here is shūnyatā or the nothingness which is the sense of the absolute interrelatedness of all experience. After reading Cage's book, Paz cannot dismiss the possibilities of shūnyatā:

No es lo mismo
Oír los pasos de esta tarde
Entre los árboles y las casas
Que
Ver la misma tarde ahora
Entre los mismos árboles y casas
Después de leer

Silence:
Nirvana es Samsara
Silencio es música.
(pp. 81-82)

Yet again his mind rejects it--"Música no es silencio . . ." (p. 82). Then Cage intervenes once more with a parenthetical quote: "(Every something is an echo of nothing.)" (p. 82), and the poem is diverted from a mental stalemate to the liberation of consciousness in love:

La tarde

Se ha detenido:
No obstante--camina.
Mi cuerpo oye al cuerpo de mi mujer
(A cable of sound)

Y le responde:
Esto se llama música.
(p. 82)

Love's banishment of dialectics is momentary. We are told that sun isn't snow, and then that Cage either is, or isn't American. However, the poem quickly negates this lapse into reason, declaring sun is

Western sensibility and is sometimes viewed as nihilistic. Since it is an important concept in Paz's poetry and prose, a definition, no matter how tentative, is in order. Western commentators have tried, often without success, to explain the term. Perhaps the best approximation is a joint effort by an Easterner, the Tibetan lama Chögyam Trungpa, and Dr. H. V. Guenther:

Shunyata is usually translated "emptiness" or "void." These translations are thoroughly misleading, because shunyata is a highly positive term. Unfortunately, the early translators were not very sophisticated and allowed themselves to be misled by the sense of shunya in ordinary everyday language. In this popular language, if a glass had no water in it, it could be called shunya. But this is not at all the sense of shunyata in Buddhist philosophy.

Shunyata can be explained in a very simple way. When we perceive, we usually attend to the delimited forms of objects. But these objects are perceived within a field. Attention can be directed either to the concrete, limited forms or to the field in which these forms are situated. In the shunyata experience, the attention is on the field rather than on its contents. By "contents," we mean here those forms which are the outstanding features of the field itself. We also might notice that when we have an idea before our mind, the territory, as it were, delimited by the idea is blurred; it fades into something which is quite open. This open dimension is the basic meaning of shunyata.

This openness is present in and actually presupposed by every determinate form. Every determinate entity evolves out of something indeterminate and to a certain extent also maintains its connection with this indeterminacy; it is never completely isolated from it. Because the determinate entity is not isolated from the indeterminacy and because nevertheless there is no bridge between the two, our attention can shift back and forth between one and the other.³⁴

The vision afforded by such a perception suppresses all distinction between subject and object. It is pretty much the sort of vision which Paz and the surrealists set out to regain for the Western consciousness. Whether the Western mind is capable of sustaining such a vision is another question. For most of us this sense of total harmony with the universe comes for but a moment. In Paz's poems it is triggered by a

Todo en nada,

Plenitud vacía,

Vacuidad redonda como tu grupa!

(Ladera este, p. 139)

Religion, or a sense of the sacred, is in India always colored by the profane. Religious festivals often take on the aspect of a State Fair, and are neither solemn nor circumspect. This coexistence, alien to the West, opens two fascinating avenues of exploration in Ladera este. One of these is, of course, the attempt to create a Western ritual which is still a vital experience, and not an artifact of petrified beliefs. Blanco, a ritual poem, is the solution proffered by Paz. The other avenue of feeling explored in Ladera este is the inability of a foreign observer to really understand Indian mysticism, especially in its most visible application, the frenetic and filthy mendicant monks or sadhus who roam the Indian countryside. An encounter with just such a monk is the stimulus for one of the most remarkable poems of Ladera este, "Vrindaban,"* a work which simultaneously formulates an ethic and an aesthetics.

In this poem Paz again seeks to bridge the gap between body and spirit, subject and object, mind and matter, "I" and "other". Of all the distances which separate the--poet from himself and from the "other"--the most difficult to explore is the illusory interior space which separates the poet and his word. In "Vrindaban" Paz once more explores

*"Vrindaban" is an intricate complex of several simultaneously developed realities and images, and should be read as a whole. The complete text is included in Appendix A.

the relationship of individual consciousness to reality. Like love, poesis is a creative act: to name is to create reality:

Yo era un árbol y hablaba
 Estaba cubierto de hojas y ojos
 Yo era el murmullo que avanza
 El enjambre de imágenes.

(Ladera este, p. 57)

But there are times when the word petrifies, devitalizing instead of creating: "Todo está y no está / Todo calladamente se desmorona / Sobre la página " (p. 57). "Vrindaban" follows a parabola which extends from a jubilant outcry to silence, but ultimately silence engenders language once more. We are once again reminded of Blanchot's characterization of the poet as a deaf mute and a master of oratory.³⁵ Here the problem extends beyond the question of the relative validity of language. In the confrontation of poet and mute ascetic (the poem revolves about the encounter of the poet attempting to rationalize his condition with a sādhū, or wandering ascetic, lost in contemplation) another conflict is implicit: between the ego or consciousness and non-being or the absence of consciousness. Thus the poem is governed by a progressive process of realization and de-realization, and like the other poems belonging to this period is a montage of different realities. It is a dense, ambiguous and intricately fashioned work. To the concrete plan of its development (the silent figure of a sādhū, and the poet simultaneously wandering through the night and seated at his desk writing) one must add another complex of allusions to the mythology, religion and philosophy of India.

"Vrindaban" is a key work of self-definition and self-discovery. The oriental context adds to the ambiguity of the poem on several levels

since the identity crisis herein explored is at once universal and particular (the clash between Occidental and Oriental modes of perception). Projected into an Oriental context, any exploration of the question of identity acquires a peculiar perspective, since, as we have seen, the ego is an invention of the West. It has been said that "Vrindaban" is an ambiguous poem, that it is an essay in contradictions.³⁶ A good deal of this ambiguity centers about the synthetic presentation of Indian systems of thought. The Western reader unfamiliar with these must lose much of the impact of the poem.

The notion of an Absolute is common to all Eastern religions.³⁷ While the means of communion with the Absolute differs radically from sect from sect, there are two common paths: one embraces life, love and nature and is the way of the majority; the other implies total rejection of the phenomenal world, and is achieved through different yogic disciplines: breath control, trance, different mystical or logical systems of meditation. The two paths cross here, and Paz chooses the first:

Los absolutos las eternidades
Y sus aledaños
No son mi tema
Tengo hambre de vida y también de morir
Sé lo que creo y lo escribo
Advenimiento del instante.

(p. 62)

The sadhu embodies the other possibility. We have encountered these same alternatives in Piedra de sol. There they are carefully elaborated:

amar es combatir, se dos se besan
el mundo cambia, encarnan los deseos,
. . .

mejor el crimen,
los amantes suicidas, el incesto

. . .

. . . mejor ser lapidado
en las plazas que dar vuelta a la noria
que exprime la sustancia de la vida,
cambia la eternidad en horas huecas,
los minutos en cárceles, el tiempo
en monedas de cobre y mierda abstracta;
mejor la castidad, flor invisible
que se mece en los tallos en silencio,
el difícil diamante de los santos
que filtra los deseos, sacia el tiempo,
nupcias de la quietud y el movimiento,
canta la soledad en su corola,
pétalo de cristal es cada hora,
el mundo se despoja de sus máscaras
y en su centro, vibrante transparencia,
lo que llamamos Dios, el ser sin nombre,
se contempla en la nada . . .

(Libertad bajo palabra, pp. 248-49)

Love or asceticism? The poet chooses the first; it becomes the capital theme of all his poetry. The "difícil diamante" is a two-fold allusion: to Western mystics who saw in the crystal a symbol of the refraction of God's presence and to the Buddha's attainment of absolute transparency, the perfect knowledge of Prajñāpāramitā. This image is fused with that of the lotus flower (pétalo de cristal) which with its corolla and radiant petals is also the symbol of the Buddha who, fused with the absolute, is both center and periphery.

The theme of the ascetic appears several times in the later work;³⁸ it is most fully developed here. Of the several levels on which the poem unfolds, the most concrete one results from the juxtaposition of the images of the encounter with the sādhu on the wharf and the self-portrait of the poet deep in meditation encircled by the four walls of his house; perhaps he is also restricted by the ego's walls. We have already alluded to the philosophical plane. There is

another sub-strata, a mythological or artistic one. The title submerges us in this world with little explanation. Rather than the present city of Vrindaban (today a bare plain Paz's note indicates) the poem evokes the forest which once covered the plain. The legend of the god Krishna --one of the avatars of the great Hindu god Vishnu--whose youth was spent in this forest in amorous dalliance with the gopis or cowgirls, inspired numerous works, creating a whole school of painting and poetry whose corpus has been steadily growing for more than five centuries.³⁹

The word Vrindaban has more concrete resonances also, for India is a country where life and myth are often confused. In the everyday life of the towns and villages one sees this legend represented in different ceremonies and religious festivals. Of course, the poem emphasizes the hideous contrast between the glorious past and the pathetic reality of the pitiful figures such as the ever-present beggars and filthy sadhus who add a somber note to the scene. What is more important here, however, is the paradoxical identification of sacred and profane. The nature of these celebrations assaults the sensibilities of the Western observer; they are orgiastic and chaotic, as well as cacophonous. Exquisite perfumes temper the odor of the urine thrown upon the celebrants. The frenzy of motion disturbs neither the serenity of the temple images nor the impassive ascetics covered with excrement or ritual ashes.⁴⁰

"Vrindaban"'s montage is nocturnal so as to introduce the threatening presence of the abyss. Nevertheless, from the very first the vaguest sensations acquire a delirious corporeality: the effect is heightened by the use of synaesthesia and other figures of speech: i.e., "follaje . . . de rumores," "pensamientos encendidos" (p. 57). Each

image has a double edge, simultaneously insinuating presence and absence, mind and matter, concretion and de-realization: "cortinas impalpables," "casas apagadas," "hojas y ojos," "yo creo . . . yo veo" (pp. 57-58). Transformed by desire, the night becomes an overwhelming potentiality seeking incarnation. All this is captured in a complex image:

Fiebre de formas
Fiebre del tiempo
En sus combinaciones extasiado
Cola de pavo real el universo entero
Miríadas de ojos
En otros ojos reflejados
Modulaciones reverberaciones de un ojo único
Un solitario sol
Oculto
Tras su manto de transparencias
(p. 59)

The image communicates this feeling to the reader unfamiliar with India, although it may seem irrational. However, it does have a concrete point of reference. The pavo real or peacock figures prominently in the painting of the several schools which since the fifteenth century have portrayed the amorous adventures of Krishna and the cow girl Radha. The lovers always appear in a forest or garden; often a peacock presides over the scene. The landscapes of Oriental poetry and painting are stylized and symbolic. The human body is seen as the double of the universe. The peacock represents desire--Krishna's crown is made of peacock feathers. Here the extended tail of the courtly bird acquires cosmic proportions. Through a series of correspondences: the "eyes" of the tail, the eye itself, the stars, the sun, all of the levels of experience are fused into one.⁴¹

The night also serves for the projection of a sort of chiaroscuro which functions on all of the poetic planes. There is a

scintillating correspondence of illuminations. On the most concrete plane is the image of the poet who writes by lamplight:

Hace unos instantes
 Corría en un coche
 Entre las casas apagadas
Corría
 Entre mis pensamientos encendidos
 Arriba las estrellas
Jardines serenísimos
 Yo era un árbol y hablaba
 Estaba cubierto de hojas y ojos
 Yo era el murmullo que avanza
 El enjambre de imágenes
 (Ahora trazo unos cuantos signos
 Crispados
Negro sobre blanco
 Diminuto jardín de letras
 A la luz de una lámpara plantado)
(pp. 57-58)

The images of lamp and light undergo a metamorphosis as the poem progresses. A duality is established in these first verses; the cosmic light of illumination (in a metaphysical sense) is dissipated by the artificial source of light: the magical stars become a lamp. Correspondingly, the leaves of the tree are reduced to a sheet of paper. Somehow desire manages to incarnate in a splendid moment of sunlight:

Un solitario sol
Oculto
 Tras su manto de transparencias
 Su marea de maravillas
 Todo llameaba
Piedras mujeres agua
 Todo se esculpía
Del color a la forma
 De la forma al incendio
(p. 59)

The vision is consumed by its own intensity: "De la forma al incendio." Paradoxically, it engenders its contrary, and in the light of high noon we return to the phantasmagoria of night:

Where the episode of the sādhū takes place we cannot really know, perhaps in the city of Vrindaban, or perhaps, if we consider the mention of the wharf on which the sādhū sits, in neighboring Mathura on the banks of the Yamuna river, the birthplace of Krishna and a Jain stronghold. Where the incident took place is of little importance. It is much more interesting to superimpose a backdrop provided by one of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras: "Stars, darkness, a lamp, a phantom dew, a bubble / A dream, a flash of lightning and a cloud--thus must we look upon the world . . .".⁴² A lightning flash, a lamp, a sudden and momentary illumination in the darkness of night, the precarious path of the history of man is just the setting chosen here by Paz.

Let us dwell on the figure of the sādhū since his somewhat ambiguous presence has led to misunderstanding of the poem as a commentary on the misery that is Mother India:

Saltimbanqui

Mono de lo Absoluto

Garabato

En cuclillas

Cubierto de cenizas pálidas

Un sadú me miraba y se reía

Desde su orilla me miraba

Lejos lejos

Como los animales y los santos me miraba

Desnudo desgrefado embadurnado

Un rayo fijo los ojos minerales

Yo quise hablarle

Me respondió con borborismos

Ido ido

¿Adónde

A qué región del ser

A qué existencia a la intemperie de qué mundos

En qué tiempo?

.

Ido ido

Santo pícaro santo

Arrobos del hambre o de la droga

Tal vez vio a Krishna

Árbol azul y centelleante
 Nocturno surtidor brotando en la sequía
 Tal vez en una piedra hendida
 Palpó la forma femenina

Y su desgarradura
 El vértigo sin forma

Por esto o aquello
 Vive en el muelle donde queman a los muertos

(pp. 60-61)

The figure is subject to the double process of concretion and mystification we find throughout the poem. That it operates on a mysterious plane, symbolically designating the "other shore," the far side of reality, is perfectly clear. What does cause some confusion is the degradation of the sādhū who becomes the Monk(ey) of the Absolute. Manuel Durán sees this description as a caricature couched in Western images:

Por otro, la degradación, ágil y atrevida, del santón oriental, que es calificado de "saltimbanqui" y de "mono de lo Absoluto": estamos en una vertiente irónica, occidental, que desvaloriza al "garabato en cuclillas" que nos mira desde su lejana orilla Nos ofrece, además, una visión--muy occidental--de circo y de parque zoológico, es, también saltimbanqui y--visión caricaturesca, a medias irónica--"mono de lo Absoluto". La visión es sobrecogedora en su ambigüedad: ante nosotros se despliega una presencia, rechaza en parte y en parte admirada.⁴⁴

We can all agree that the image synthesizes an attitude which we in the West find paradoxical: the identity of spirit and matter. We have already commented upon the peculiar fusion of sacred and profane throughout India. Although his portrayal here is tinged with irony, that irony is expressed in metaphors derived largely from Eastern realities which fact serves to heighten the irony.⁴⁵

Let us consider all the elements of the description.

1. The terms saltimbanqui and payaso proceed from an oriental context:

the sādhū is a wandering monk who somewhat resembles a medieval juglar.⁴⁶

The sometimes scandalous conduct of the sadhu is subject to much discussion throughout Indian religious literature. Some sects require vows of chastity and self-abnegation, others do not.

2. "Mono de lo Absoluto" is not a caricature, but a paradox. The image captures the physical appearance of the seated man; however, it is also an epithet referring to the Buddha who was once re-incarnated as a monkey whose tribe while fleeing from grave danger encountered a river too deep to swim. They tried to extend a rope, and the rope fell short of the far shore. One monkey offered himself as an extension of the rope. This was the Buddha who became a bridge for his companions to cross; or, in allegorical terms, the Buddha helped the other being to reach the other shore of transcendental wisdom (prajñā). To apply the epithet is, of course, an irony, but it is a universal irony, not a Western satire. Buddhism as we have seen originally was concerned with individual enlightenment. It is only much later that the Mahāyāna school introduces the figure of the Bodhisatva, a Buddha who rejects the state of nirvāna to help others in their search. Let us reiterate. The road which the sādhu has chosen is solitary. Its end is the negation of being and liberation from the perpetual cycle of rebirth. The vacuity (this is the only term in which the West can conceive of this state) of nirvāna is defined as the undefinable, the unspeakable; thus this path can only lead to total silence.

The Western reader would have difficulty in reconciling the figure of Christ with a simian Redeemer. He must keep in mind that animals are sacred in India. Myriads of monkeys scramble about the temples. On the mythological plane we have Hanumān, king of the monkeys,

whose exploits in defense of the divine Rama are recounted in the Rāmāyana. Hanumān, also the ninth author of grammar will subsequently be the inspiration for Paz's El mono gramático (1972).

3. "Esto o aquello." The ultimate irony is the most accessible: the sādhu must remain an ambiguity. As brought out in discussing "Lectura de John Cage," Buddhism employs the formula samsāra is nirvāna, i.e. phenomenal and transcendental realities are one; "this is that" is a corollary expression of the absolute identity of contraries. Paz here ruptures the unity: he can never discern the motives of the sadhu

The impossibility of communication herein expressed is not primarily between East and West. Silence is but one answer. The other road open to East and West alike is to embrace the cycle of life and death, and seize the instants of eternity afforded by love or poetic insight, to be incarnated by desire, instead of obliterated by the ego's chimera. Bashō says it thus:

¡Admirable,
aquel que no piensa: "la vida huye",
al ver el relámpago!⁴⁷

Since the reader recreates and remakes the poem, I should like to add to the montage these words of Rimbaud: "J'écrivais des silences des nuits, je notais l'inexprimable."⁴⁸ They are conjured up at any rate because Paz's poetry, like all of modern poetry, partakes of the works of Rimbaud and Mallarmé, who cast doubt on the possibility of ever expressing the ineffable with so imperfect a tool as language. Later poets, especially Paz and the surrealists, have attested to the progressive alienation of the poet from his words. Projected against the poetic

frustration of an entire century, the affirmation of the last verses acquires a moving impact: "Hablo siempre contigo Hablas siempre conmigo / A oscuras voy y planto signos" (p. 63). The forest of "Vrindaban" will send forth green thoughts, verdant like young shoots.

Notes

1. See Paz's essay on haiku in his introduction to the 2d ed. (Barcelona, 1970), pp. 7-28.
2. This material is treated in depth in The Haiku Anthology, ed. Cor van den Heuvel (New York, 1975); Donald Keene, Japanese Literature (New York, 1955); and Harold Henderson, An Introduction to Haiku (New York, 1958). The most complete bibliography, Gary Brower's Haiku in Western Languages (Metuchen, New Jersey, 1972), has an ample section on Spanish-language haiku. For an overview of the more formal court poetry from which the haiku evolved, see Robert Brower and Earl Miner, Japanese Court Poetry (California, 1961).
3. Both the senryu and the haiku developed from the classic tanka, a two-stanza poem whose second stanza was 5.7.5 (Syllable is a somewhat misleading term since the Japanese jion or sound-symbol is much shorter than an English syllable, but is closer to a Spanish or Italian syllable).
4. The Haiku Anthology, p. xxx.
5. Ibid., p. 149.
6. Ibid., p. 51.
7. Peras del olmo, p. 58.
8. The Haiku Anthology, p. 163.
9. Quoted by Van den Heuvel, p. 163.
10. Peras del olmo, p. 8.
11. Cadavre exquis, a surreal exercise in composition: a poem or painting whose component parts are simultaneously and independently elaborated by the individual participants.
12. See R. H. Blyth, Senryu: Japanese Satirical Verses (Tokyo, 1949).
13. Ibid., p. 63.
14. Paz's insistence on uncovering the real face of "reality" is shared by Eluard: "Voir c'est recevoir, refléter, c'est donner à voir," "Avenir de la poésie, (1937)," Œuvres complètes, vol. 1 (Paris, 1968), p. 525. Eluard's preoccupation with haiku produced "Pour vivre ici: onze haï-kaï" (1920)—see vol. 1 of the Œuvres, p. 51:

Le vent
Hésitant
Roule une cigarette d'aire.

His subsequent work has an economy of language rare in surrealism.

15. See Chapter Four, pp. 194-5, for a discussion of Imagism.
16. The prefatory essays by the four poets elaborate upon the theory of classical renga. For additional theory, plus a literal translation of a renga see Maeda Cana, The Monkey's Raincoat (New York, 1973). Mrs. Maeda carefully outlines how the translations evolve from the original. The delicate sumi paintings which illustrate this book also serve to remind the reader that haiku and senryu are always accompanied by paintings or sketches. The haibun or diary containing both poetry and prose is also always illustrated. Poet and painter are often one and the same in Japan, and in China as well.
17. This and all other Paz quotes re Renga are from his introductory essay, "Centro móvil." Renga is not paginated.
18. "O my America! my new-found-land. . ." is verse twenty-seven of Donne's elegy, "To His Mistris Going to Bed."
19. Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis (New York, 1963), p. 10.
20. Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, ed. C. T. Onions (London, 1966).
21. Cuadrivio, p. 90.
22. Ibid., p. 75.
23. Paz explicates this theory in "Los signos en rotación," an essay added to El arco y la lira in its second edition.
24. The quotes from Viento entero are from Ladera este, pp. 102; 103; and 102/105, respectively.
25. Kenneth Rexroth, One Hundred Poems from the Chinese (New York, 1956), p. 16.
26. Octavio Paz, "Poemas de Tu-Fu: traducción y notas," El Nacional, Caracas, 10 April 1958. His versions are based on Rexroth's English --see Note 2 .
27. El arco y la lira, 1st ed., pp. 70-71.
28. Pound's poetics are treated by Paz in Los hijos dellimo. El signo y el garabato contains an essay on Williams.
29. Selected Writings (New York, 1966), pp. 29, 19 and 16, respectively.
30. The Chin P'ing Mei (The Golden Lotus) is, together with the Hung Lou

Mêng (Dream of the Red Chamber and Monkey, one of the few first-rate Chinese novels, as this genre was not considered a serious art form by the Chinese. The Golden Lotus is an erotic classic in the West, along with such erotic treatises as the Kama Sutra. Phillips seems to have been led astray by Paz's erroneous transliteration in the note to the poem: "King Ping Mei." Phillips, pp. 35-38, glosses Heinrich Zimmer's explanation of the religious symbolism of the lotus in India in Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Literature (New York, 1946). The lotus is, of course, also a symbol of illumination in Chinese Buddhism, and the novel's title is most certainly tinged with this irony.

31. One can note the development of Paz's interest in Buddhism in the chapter of El arco y la lira entitled "La otra orilla," as well as in two essays included in Corriente alterna, "Ateismos" and "Nihilismo y dialéctica." Paz cites the foremost Western authority on Buddhist dialectics, F. Th. Stcherbatsky (see Corriente alterna, p. 62), on whose Buddhist Logic (New York, 1962) I have partially relied for the following sketch of the Mādhyamika and Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism. I am also indebted to the works of H. V. Guenther and D. T. Suzuki listed in the Bibliography. Other useful books on this subject include those of W. Y. Evans-Wentz and the Lama Govinda listed therein.

The other main tendency of Buddhism, the Hīnayāna, is the more conservative of the two, basing its precepts only on the teachings of the Buddha. By the first century A.D. Hīnayāna Buddhism held sway over Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, while the more liberal form was found in India proper. Subsequently, Mahāyāna Buddhism crossed the border to Tibet and China, and eventually Japan. Buddhism was at the peak of its power in India during the early Middle Ages. It then entered a period of decline, and was totally destroyed by the rule of the Moslems commencing in the sixteenth century.

32. A good introduction to Nāgārjuna is K. Venkata Ramanan's exploration of his principal work, Nāgārjuna's Philosophy as Presented in the 'Mahā-Prajñāpāramitā-Śāstra' (Tokyo, 1966).
33. The Sanscrit is "Natti-anatti" and "Tat tvam asi," respectively.
34. The Dawn of Tantra (Los Angeles, 1975), pp. 26-27.
35. Maurice Blanchot, Faux pas (Paris, 1943), p. 12.
36. See, for example, Manuel Durán, "La huella del Oriente en la poesía de Octavio Paz," Revista Iberoamericana No. 74, January-March 1971, pp. 97-116, and in the same number, Guillermo Sucre, "La fijeza y el vértigo," pp. 47-72.
37. A good general introduction to Oriental religion, philosophy and art is Nancy Wilson Ross' eloquent Three Ways of Asian Wisdom: Hinduism, Buddhism and Zen and Their Significance for the West (New York, 1966).

38. See, for example, these lines from Vuelta aimed at Wang Wei, a Chinese poet and painter of the T'ang dynasty, who abandoned a civil service career in his fifties in order to retire to the country and meditate upon Tao:

(Preguntas

que leyes rigen "éxito y fracaso"

Flotan

los cantos de los pescadores ante la orilla inmóvil

Wang Wei al Prefecto Chang
desde su cabaña en el lago

Pero

yo no quiero una ermita intelectual
en San Angel o Coyoacán

(verses 108-116)

39. For an introduction to the artistic treatments of the erotic Krishna legend see W. G. Archer, The Loves of Krishna in Indian Painting and Poetry (New York, 196), and the poetic translations of Deben Bhattacharya, especially Love Songs of Chandidas, the Rebel Poet-Priest of Bengal (New York, 1970), and Love Songs of Vidyapati (New York, 1970?).
40. A vivid portrayal of one of these festivals is given by McKim Marriott in Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes, ed. Milton Singer (Honolulu, 1966).
41. See Archer, The Loves of Krishna. This image also recalls the alchemical symbol of the cauda pavonis, or peacock's tail, which symbolizes the wholeness of the alchemical transmutation (the peacock's tail contains all colors)—see C. G. Jung, Alchemical Studies, 2d ed., (Princeton, 1968), pp. 230-32.
42. Buddhist Texts through the Ages, ed. Edward Conze et al. (New York, 1964), p. 92.
43. Buddhist Mahâyâna Texts, ed. E. B. Cowell et al. (New York, 1969), p. 144.
44. "La huella del Oriente en la poesía de OP," p. 100.
45. This deprecation of the sadhu is also to be found in Indian religious literature, for example, these lines from a Tantric text, The Song of Saraha, included in Conze's anthology. I use this example since Paz cites The Song of Saraha in Ladera este (p. 179).

With ashes these masters smear their bodies,
And on their heads they wear matted hair
.
.
.
The Jain monks mock the Way with their appearance,
.
.
.

. . . naked and with dishevelled hair,
 Enslaving themselves with their doctrine of release,
 If by nakedness one is released,
 Then dogs and jackals must be so.

(p. 225)

46. See, for example, Surajit Sinha, "Vaisnava Influence on a Tribal Culture," in Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes: "Most of the sādhus take care to attain proficiency in some art, such as singing, poetry, dancing or flute playing, in addition to the art of exposition of religious doctrines. These aesthetic achievements add to their charisma and quite often aid in the winning of disciples" (p. 81).
47. Quoted by Paz in Péras del olmo, p. 163.
48. This is the penultimate line of "Alchimie du verbe" from "Un Saison en enfer," Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1963), p. 233.

Chapter Four

Venus is the power
 to bind young Mars or any god of
 iron and fire
 within the Page, the Zero
 everywhere centered, circumferentially
 nowhere--
 the Mrof, or
 that which reflects your mind
 in its instant incomprehensibility
 at any distance
 George Quasha¹

1. Preface: The Poem as Microcosmos--Experiments in Form

The critical method pursued in this chapter reflects the complexity of its subject method: Paz's search for a form adequate to express a new analogy. Therefore, in the spirit of Ariadne, the reader is proffered this slender skein of discursive logic as a guide to the convolutions of the chapter's ground plan. The initial essays deal with the unity of purpose of the seemingly disparate miniscule poems such as Topoemas (1968) and the long poem Blanco (1967). A subsequent section follows the maze-like progress of Blanco in a section-by-section analysis. Then the reader is invited to follow the path which Paz traces through a forest of words in El mono gramático (1972), an ageneric composition which explores the creative process. El mono gramático is an indispensable companion piece to Blanco: each work is an irradiation from the same poetic prism.

These poems enter into a five-fold dialogue: with the cosmos,

with the poet, with the reader, with each other--and with the whole of poetic creation. In this last function they traffic with tradition as well as with the avant garde. The poets of the Baroque--Góngora, Quevedo, Gracián and Donne--hold court here, and offer our age brand-new vistas. Mallarmé is, of course, the doyen of the group; but Wordsworth and many others have their say. And Pound and his friend Dr. Williams are there, too, even though they are beleaguered by the rest of the bards. Blanco, which Paz considers to be his best work, presents Paz's answers to some of the main questions raised by modern poetry. In order to fully savor this complex poem, the reader must then pursue a number of avenues of thought: this is the function of the poetic background material presented in this chapter. The reader is referred to the footnotes for Paz's treatment of the specific question or poet in essay form.

Blanco and El mono gramático present another difficulty, the unfamiliar Indian background on which they are staged. Since that branch of Indian thought known as Tantrism is the very backbone of Blanco, a brief description of this esoteric discipline is given as a preface to the analysis of the poem itself. Yet Blanco is designed not as a Tantric ritual but as a rite of rites. Thus the actual analysis stresses its universal quality. A highly complex poem, Blanco is a poem designed not for Tantric adepts, but for poetic ones. The last section of the chapter focuses on Paz's poetic autobiography, Pasado en claro (1975).

2. Science and Poetry: the Poetics of Space

In "Vrindaban" luminous thoughts and words are first sown across the inky blackness of the night sky like starry constellations; however, man inhabits history, not eternity, and these thoughts-stars-seeds are translated to the blank page, only to be nurtured by lamplight.² So that they may sprout, there must be a spontaneous combustion of consciousness:

Los universos se desgranar
Un mundo cae
Se enciende una semilla
Cada palabra palpita
("Viento entero," Ladera este, p. 106)

... mi frente es sol
De pensamientos negros
("El día en Udaipur," Ladera este, p. 26)

The poems of Ladera este incarnate this scattering and gathering up of thoughts and words. Galactic dispersal engenders a gravitational pull toward the center as form mirrors mind. Space and silence ever-increasingly become poetic tools. Thus there is a logical and organic evolution toward spatial poetry: the "topoemas" are a distillation of the essence of these experiments--"Topoema = topos + poema. Poesía espacial, por oposición a la poesía temporal, discursiva. Recurso contra el discurso."³ In these poems the word or phrase is set on the page; like a multifaceted precious stone this sign refracts "illumination" so that meanings radiate in all directions. In a sense this isolation of the word so that it is divested of the everyday contexts of social discourse is derived from Mallarmé's "Un coup de dés" (1897), a poem-constellation whose words were spread about to insure "une vision simultanée de la page."⁴ Thus the eye is forced to consider each word or image in

isolation, uncontaminated by the strictly logical sequence of the phrase --each image is a hypothesis, thus avoiding a recital of the poem.⁵ Eschewing the "tintanabulation" of Poe (or Verlaine), Mallarmé finds his harmony in the silent music of the spheres.

In another sense, the topoëma is a radical modification, or even denial, of Mallarmé's poetics. His extra-terrestrial vision projects man into outer space, defying the pull of gravity, and bypassing as an yet unrealized link in the evolutionary chain. In this respect, it is useful to compare Kate Flores' essay on the "evolutionary context" of the conquest of space with the evolution of modern poetry from Poe's "prose poem" Eureka to Mallarmé's "Un coup de dés," each a self-contained cosmogony. As Poe surveys the universe, a pattern emerges: everywhere he looks there is a gravitation towards a center. Poetry and theology also point to the One who is the center of change. Mallarmé's poem is the radarscope of flux. His vision defies gravity and projects the poem into the ether of space. His spiritual journey towards the "emptiness" of Buddhist philosophy parallels man's evolution into space. Since both these "journeys" raise surprisingly similar philosophical questions, and psychological doubts, we can benefit "poetically" from the scientific exploration of the question proffered by Mrs. Flores:

All evolution . . . has been evolution into space, as well as conquest of space.

Life was once confined, if it did not originate, within the dark density of the primordial bog, closely surrounded by food matter and scarcely space for any but the smallest of beings, all bound to the earth by the gravitational attraction of their viscous medium, from which they could not viably be separated. But eventually life evolved into the comparative brightness and spaciousness of the sea. It was a long, slow evolution. But adaptation to water was essentially adaptation

to attenuated contact with food, diminished gravity and movement in more space and light.⁶

This adaptation was accomplished by development of the sensory system and the brain, not present in life forms in immediate contact with their food supply: "The brain is basically a means of adaptation to space . . . between the body and its food matter."⁷ Life which is in immediate contact with food exists close to the earth and is subject to the force of gravity. Thus movement is a milestone in the evolutionary process. Initially it is circular or rotational due to the influence of gravity. Many natural forms emulate the rotation of the earth and planets, including electrons, atoms and primitive plant-animals. Circular motion is non-conscious. A brain enables the organism to offset the pull of gravity and to move in a straight line; this conscious movement is guided by light and sound and gases. The pattern of their pressure is registered by the brain to produce images. As the brain evolves, its image-making capacity becomes more complex. While sound waves move across the earth's surface (air is subject to gravity), light is unhampered by gravity and moves easily through the vacuum of outer space. Thus vision, the capacity for registering light-produced images becomes the high point of evolution: "the evolution of all living forms might be called From Movement Forced by Gravity to Movement Guided by Light."⁸ Three-dimensional vision is limited to primates and Man.

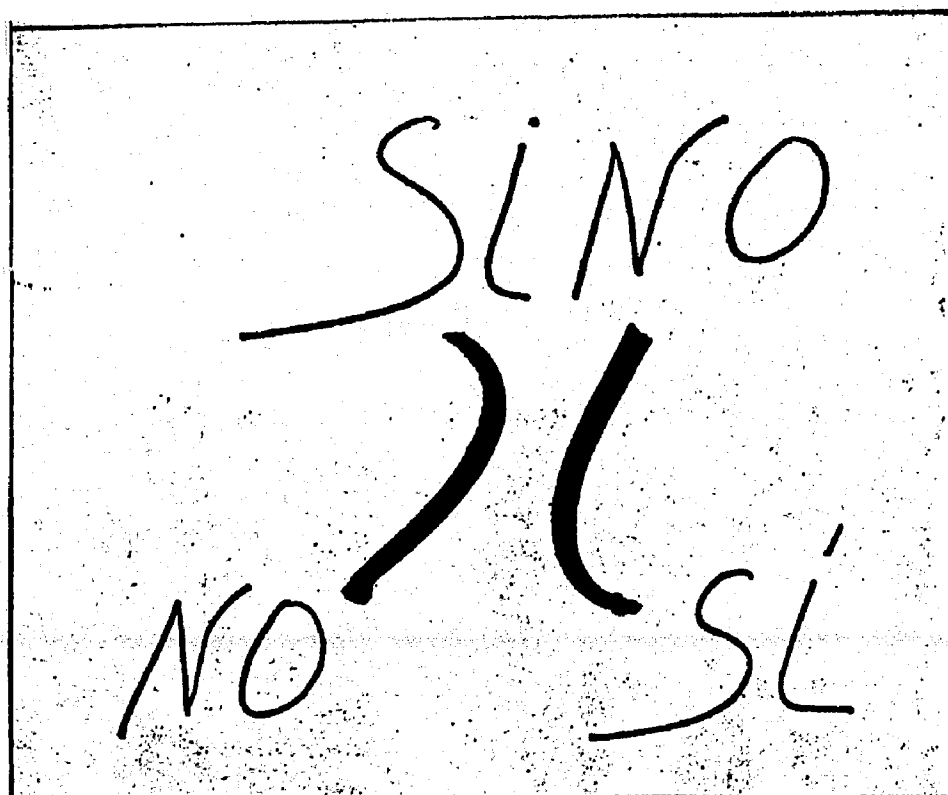
The third dimension is the product of acquired knowledge or memory of past experience of the object seen: movement is no longer required to "know" space. It is a short step from recall to envisioning an object as it might be, and vision becomes symbolic and increasingly abstract. The see-er becomes the seer.

Concomitant to the development of the foregoing argument are three observations that are of especial interest to us here. First is the notation that the expansion of consciousness leads us to an awareness of the other: ". . . all evolution is toward restraint, a restraint based on greater objectivity, less self-centeredness, keener awareness of the other rather than the self alone, and toward freedom of movement based on this awareness."⁹ Next is the observation that further evolution will enhance man's capacity for enlightenment (both literally and figuratively) as he adapts to cosmic radiance. Finally there is the paradoxical sense of uneasiness attached to the projection of such a vision, "the fear and trepidation in the face of all movement outward into more space is an aspect of the common place that nature hates a vacuum . . . that between all matter and space there is an irreducible antithesis."¹⁰

Vacuum . . . vacuity. Emptiness is not the prerogative of the abyss. Orphic descent is also Orphic ascent. Some thirty years before the publication of Le coup de dés Mallarmé began to annotate his own descent into the depth of being in a series of sketches for a never-completed metaphysical drama, "Igitur." The protagonist of these fragments descends from a "chambre du temps" (the room here--and in the poetry--is a symbol of the space-time continuum) into the primeval blackness of the Infinite.¹¹ Once there he casts his dice, then blows out his candle, simultaneously extinguishing being and nothingness. What remains?--the castle of purity: "Le néant parti reste le chateau de la pureté."¹² In the famous untitled sonnet rhyming in "yx" and in "Un coup de dés" Igitur's drama is reinacted, not in the abyss but in the

heavens.¹³ Mallarmé's poetic world both fascinates and repels. The only poet to follow his imaginative flight is the Chilean Vicente Huidobro in whose "Altazor" the poet-magus ascends to the heavens, and in a Gnostic parable of the Fall, plunges back to earth with the Word as his parachute.¹⁴

In the late sixties Paz read and re-read Mallarmé as well as the criticism of Mallarmé's opus.¹⁵ Blanco (1967) and Topoemas (1968) reflect this preoccupation; Blanco is an overt homage to the author of "Un coup des dés." Mallarmé's poetic is modified in the topoema . . . the simultaneous cosmic vision of "Un coup de dés" makes us uneasy. The resultant poem is a seed-form ready to germinate, a tiny cluster of poetic energy.

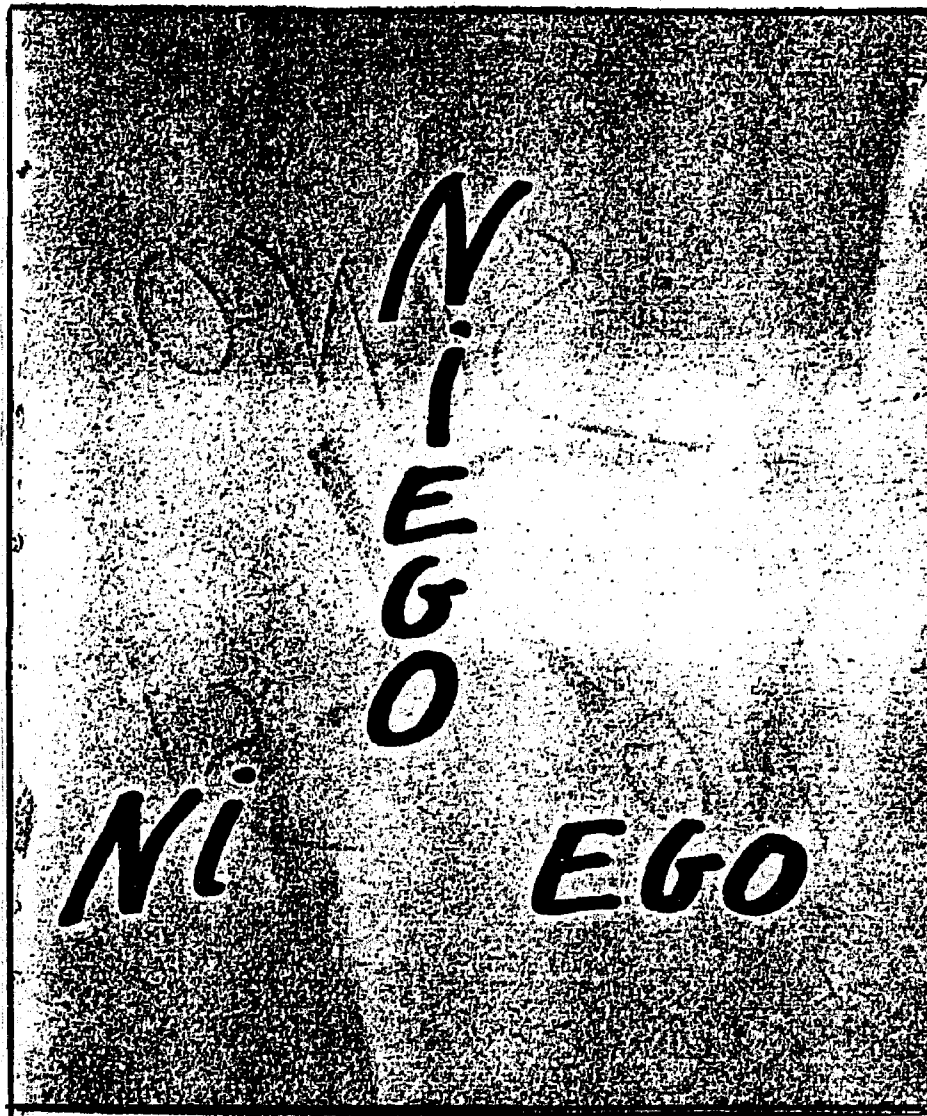


Ideograma de libertad: dos movimientos complementarios. Fisión del sino por la acción de los dos adverbios de afirmación y negación que lo componen; fusión de cada adverbio en su contrario: ota vez sino. Una constelación semántica, en el sentido figurado (el de Mallarmé y los poetas concretos) y en el literal: sino el duplicado semiculto de signo: senal celeste, constelación (signus) ... La distinción gráfica entre sino y signo no se estableció hasta muy tarde. (Joan Corominas, Diccionario críticoetimológico de la lengua castellana)

Although the poem is termed a "semantic constellation" in the Mallarméan sense, this function is most operative on a semantic level. Paz reduces the open field of "Un coup . . ." to one of its components. In the preface to Topoemas, Paz offers these poems as an homage ("implícito, ahora explícito") to, among others, the Concrete poets of São Paulo, especially to Haroldo de Campos.¹⁶ This school of Concrete poetry claims Mallarmé and Pound as its poetic ancestors. While de Campos subscribes to Mallarmé's theory of the poem as embodying "prismatic subdivisions of the idea," he is quick to add that Concrete poetry is the "tension of word-things in space-time" and that it renounces the problem of an absolute, remaining in "the magnetic field of the perennial relative."¹⁷ Paz and the Concrete poets both instinctively draw back from Mallarmé's vision of the infinite. "Eternities . . . are not my theme" we are told in "Vrindaban" (p. 62). The restricted field of the spatial poem becomes a metaphor of man's fragmented consciousness. It encompasses an instant.

There are more facile comparisons to be made between topoesía and the Concrete poem. However, the differences between the two are just as significant. Concrete manifestoes rail against discursiveness and subjectivity. Concrete poet Eugen Gomringer describes how the poem-object avoids the usual logical development of a theme--". . . the

word-group replaces the verse: instead of syntax it is sufficient to allow two, three or more words to achieve their full effect . . . putting down these words [the poet] creates 'thought-objects' and leaves the task of association to the reader, who becomes a collaborator and . . . completer of the poem."¹⁸ Paz's spatial poetry resists this object-ification. All but one of the six poems are philosophical talismans, each with its own commentary, for example "Nagarjuna"--



Nagarjuna: el yo niego alcanza el ego y así la negación se niega. Es el método de reducción al absurdo: *prasanga*, el arte de extraer la consecuencia necesaria de nuestras imprudentes afirmaciones y negaciones. El resultado no es la nada, ya que la nada también es negación del ser, sino la suspensión, *sunya*: un cero pleno, "la vacuidad vacía de su vacuidad". Nagarjuna vivió probablemente a mediados del siglo II de nuestra era.

Saúl Yurkievich notes the subjective and metaphysical coloration of these poems: "Es palabra disparada más allá del plano de sostén; palabra que se abre al espacio profundo, hacia la dimensión metafísica . . . Este verbo espacial es a la par dictum y ludus, oráculo y juego malabar, sacramento y juglaría. . . . Los topoemas presuponen . . . una experiencia personal del mundo, su intencionalidad va más allá de la escritura, desborda el contexto."¹⁹ Thus the poem becomes a contemplative object, a sort of verbal icon. The curious experience of a poet who comments on his own poem within the immediate context of that poem conjures up figures from the past: Saint John of the Cross, and the Renaissance emblem poets. Whereas the Spanish mystic comments on his poems, the emblem poets write verse explications of a visual image, be it a symbolic or mystical diagram, or a representational drawing; their poetic texts range from the metaphysical to the didactic. The evolution of this genre will be discussed shortly. I mention it here to emphasize that the spatial poem is linked to the past, since there is a tendency to tag Concrete poetry as the by-product of our electronic age. Ramon Xirau's essay outlining the theories of the Brazilian Noigandres group explains their close relationship with electronic music composers and their implementation of biofeedback theory in the poem. Nevertheless, as he explores Haroldo de Campos' insistence on objectivity in the poem Xirau notes that such an objectivity is

impossible to maintain: "También en la poesía concreta--sin ser mística --puede percibirse la necesidad de encontrar 'otra' realidad que no sea la cotidiana. Realidad 'objetiva' que trasciende al mundo objetivo que trasciende al mundo objetivo cotidiano."²⁰ It is precisely this possibility of transcendence which marks the permutations of Concrete or spatial poetry in England, Europe and North America.

The Topoemas as well as Discos visuales (1968) participate in this movement toward greater subjectivity. While the spatial poem is a product of the twentieth-century "tradition" of defying tradition, it is also a criticism of modernity's excesses, especially technology, avatar of strange new gods. Mass production and the machine de-vitalize and depersonalize the quality of life. Identity becomes sterilized, homogenized. Initially concrete poetry took on the appearance of an advertising logotype. In an effort to reintroduce a personal note some spatial poets wrote and/or sketched their poems, eschewing the "translation" into type; the poet became calligrapher. "Nagarjuna" and "Ideograma" belong to this tradition: their translation into type would constitute a betrayal of the text. The variations of "hand-made" poetry range from the doodles of Bob Brown to the fusion of painting and poetry such as that accomplished by René Char or Kenneth Patchen.²¹

That the "new" typography can also serve as a tool for the "corporeización de la palabra" Paz notes in "La nueva analogía: poesía y tecnología."²² This text clearly indicates that the Topoemas are a logical step in the development of Paz's philosophy and his form: in short, of his total poetic. Paz tells us technology has destroyed our previous image of the world, thus distorting collective as well as

personal identity. We must form a "new analogy" which integrates technology. The "new analogy" in one guise or another is a preoccupation of all modern poetry. Perhaps Hart Crane felt it most deeply; his despair of ever reconciling poetry and the machine age drove him to suicide. The Futurists with their paeans to Progress were not as far-sighted. The machine meant freedom of movement, and the word was declared free also. Their "parole in liberta" served to fragment vision however. It remains for others to find the reintegrating analogy-- "Libertad bajo palabra." For it is meaning which is the key to the new analogy. The word is our "parasubidas," our tenuous lifeline.

The groundwork for concrete poetry is laid by Dada painters and poets. Irony and a criticism of a bourgeois way of life are the hallmark of the Dada style. Kurt Schwitters discovers the best metaphor for his vein of spatial poetry: Merz poetry (from the German KOMMERZ: commerce).²³ Dada's metaphors are ironic inversions of the stuff of which bureaucracy is made: hence the "rubber stamp" poem. Dada is also the source of "ready-made" and "found" word objects, and of a few weapons conceived to destroy notions of function and meaning, such as the irrational grouping of letters and numbers in collage and the construction of mechanized objects with no practical function, such as Schwitters' Merz Barn which is a maze of inviting forms without any conceivable function, or meaning. Technology emits functions, but not meaning--this is its destructive nature as defined by Paz in his essay "La nueva analogía" Eventually concrete or spatial poetry re-directs its energies to meaning in order to form a new image of the world, or--sometimes--to recapture the pre-modern imago mundi.²⁴

Today's concrete/spatial poetry also originated in part as a criticism of the irrationality of Dada and surrealism. However, in an ongoing attempt at self-criticism, it is checking its own logical excesses, and at the same time renewing ties with the "old" analogy displaced by the scientific "revolution." Ezra Pound's exaltation of the Chinese ideogram as poetic medium furnished the original impetus of spatial poetry. Apollinaire, too, tells us that form is meaning. The first topoema "Palma del viajero," a picture-poem or ideogram, honors this tradition. The equation of language with cosmos is a precept allied to the pre-Enlightenment period. It is reaffirmed by the Romantics who seek the lost secret of the "Alchimie du verbe." From Mallarmé to Borges and Paz modern literature seeks to reconstruct the Book in the image of the world. Thus the ideogram and hieroglyph remind us that spatial poetry continues the Hermetic tradition. The power of the word is magic: "Le mot a maintenant pour lumière le corps entier de l'homme--le corps entiers de l'univers."²⁵ The magus who authored this phrase is the spatial poet Pierre Garnier. The topoema is in a sense a magic rune. As such it serves as an incantatory preface to a more complex ritual; for Blanco is just that, a grimoire, a master book of poetic incantation. Blanco as an experiment in form responds to the same basic quest for a viable analogy which shapes the topoema. A closer examination of the hermetic tradition in poetry helps us to understand the complex genesis of the diverse poetic forms which make up the spectrum of Paz's recent work. Paz himself offers us a starting point when he cites the work of the seventeenth-century emblem poet Baltasar Gracián as obligatory reading for today's poets (Traducción

literatura y literalidad, p. 27).

3. Spatial Poetry and the Hermetic Tradition: the Spatial Poem as "Emblem"

It is curious to note that the twentieth-century picture-poem ultimately has its roots in the Hermetic tradition. To find its origins we must turn to the Renaissance Neoplatonists and Christian Cabalists once more: Marsilio Ficino and his disciple, Pico della Mirandola, are the chief figures in a tangled drama of misunderstanding, a fertile misunderstanding which will yield a new artistic genre, the emblem poem. For clarity's sake, I shall briefly reiterate some of the points already mentioned in Chapter One of this study in a different frame of reference.²⁶ We must go back to the middle of the fifteenth century when the Greek manuscript of the Corpus Hermeticum was brought to Florence from Macedonia. As we have seen, the Corpus was a series of fifteen mystical dialogues in which an Egyptian magus, Hermes Trismegistus was considered to be an alter ego of the Egyptian god Thoth, bestower of moral law and hieroglyphs, and was described as a contemporary of Moses by Cicero; the Church Fathers perpetuated the myth. Though today the Corpus is known to be a composite of Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Mithraism and alchemy written in Alexandria about 100 to 300 A.D., the Renaissance accepted it at face value. Ficino translated the Corpus, not only perpetuating the myth, but embellishing it. In his hands Trismegistus became, together with Zoroaster, the progenitor of sacred wisdom and the initiator of an occult tradition whose high priests included Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and Plotinus. Neoplatonism

formulated the doctrine of the logoi spermatikoi, in which divine intelligence was seen as a storehouse of all possible ideas, and form or reality as the embodiment of these in matter. The universe was envisioned as a cosmic riddle obscured by a veil of appearances.

Another document erroneously dated as belonging to remote antiquity supported this theory: the Hieroglyphica of Horapollo, an Egyptian manuscript from the fifth century A.D., which described hieroglyphs to be a sacred language in which image and idea were inseparable, a sort of cosmic riddle. It was not until 1840 that the translation of the Rosetta Stone destroyed the myth, showing the hieroglyphic alphabet to be a phonetic transcription of syllable-sounds not unlike our own. During the sixteenth century the Hieroglyphica was disseminated throughout Europe. The idea of a lost language captured the imagination of artist and poet alike. And, like the Celtic bards of the Middle Ages, poets once more sought to express arcane knowledge clouded in mystery.²⁸ Fantastic artistic representations of the Egyptian and Hebrew alphabets gave way to the rebus and the imprese, analogical cosmic riddles in pictorial form.²⁹ Soon a new genre evolved, emblem poetry, which sought to wed idea and image. The "emblem" was a sketch or engraving depicting themes from myth or fable, or satires on mores or morals, or incorporating occult symbols, the ourobouros, the caduceus of Hermes, etc. This in turn was accompanied by a poetic text, for example, these lines from George Wither's A Collection of Emblemes (1635) which comments on the picture of an infant reclining on a death's head, the whole encircled by the ourobouros or serpent biting its tail:

When some, in former Ages, had a meaning
 An Emblem of Mortality to make,
 They form'd an Infant on a Death's-head leaning,
 And, round about, encircled with a Snake.
 The Child so pictur'd was to signify
 That from our very Birth our Dying springs;
 The Snake, her Tail devouring, doth imply
 The Revolution of all Earthly things.
 For whatsoever hath beginning, here
 Begins, immediately, to vary from
 The same it was; and doth at last appear
 What very few did think it should become.
 The solid Stone doth moulder into Earth;
 That Earth, ere long, to Water rarifies;
 That Water gives an Airy Vapor birth;
 And thence a Fiery-Comet doth arise:
 That moves until itself it so impair
 That, from a burning-Meteor, back again
 It sinketh down, and thickens into Air;
 That Air becomes a Cloud; then Drops of Rain;
 Those Drops, descending on a Rocky-Ground,
 There settle into Earth, which more and more
 Doth harden still; so, running out the round,
 It grows to be the Stone it was before.
 Thus, All things wheel about; and, each Beginning,
 Made entrance to its own Destruction hath.
 The Life of Nature ent'reth in with Sinning;
 And is for ever waited on by Death:
 The Life of Grace is form's by Death to Sin;
 And there doth Life-eternal straight begin.³⁰

The first such book, Andrea Alciati's Emblematum Liber was published in 1531. By the end of the sixteenth century the vogue had swept most of Europe.³¹ The ex-Dominican magus, Giordano Bruno, came to Oxford to lecture in 1584, and introduced the emblem poem, which became the rage of Elizabethan England, and gained a new dimension, the iconic poem of George Herbert, Robert Herrick and other lesser poetic figures. The iconic poem is identical to the calligramme of Apollinaire: its shape reflects its idea, as for example, in this poem by George Puttenham:

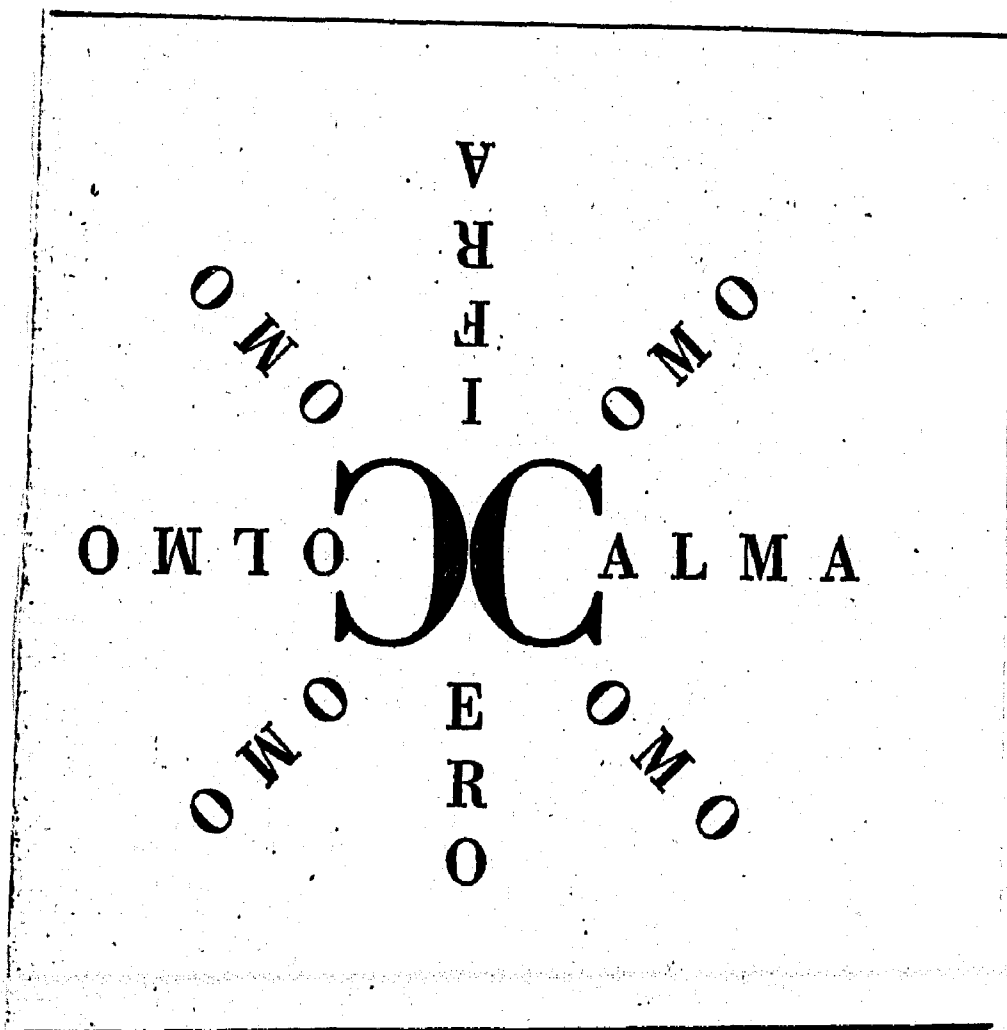
*From God the fountains of all good,
are deriv'd into the world all good
things: and upon her mainlie all the
good fortunes any worldly creature
can be furnisht with. Reads down-
ward according to the nature of the
devise.*

God
On
His
From
Above
Sends love,
Wisdome,
In flie
Com rage,
Bona tie,
And doth give
At that time,
Life & breath
Harts of health
Childre, with
Beauty strength
Reffull age,
And at length
A mild death,
His death bestows
All mens fortunes
Both high & low
And the best things
That earth can have
Or mankind crave,
Good queens & kings
Finally is the same
Who gave you (madam)
Soyson of this Crowne
With yourseigneigne
Impar nable right,
Redoubtable might,
Most prosperous raigne
Eternall re name,
And that your chieft is
Sure hope of heavens bliss. 32

"Wit" was the most highly prized faculty of the day, and conceits abounded in poetry as well as in the hybrid emblem poem. Disrupting traditional notions of time and space the acrostic poem invited multiple readings. This anonymous example may be read in three ways, the third being from right to left:

Your face	Your tongue	Your wit
so faire	so smooth	so sharp
first drew	then mov'd	then knit
mine eye	mine eare	my heart
Mine eye	Mine eare	My heart
thus drawn	thus mov'd	thus knit
affects	hangs on	yeelds to
Your face	Your tongue	your wit ³³

Thus the poem unfolds not in the straight line of logical discourse or linear succession, but with a simultaneity of meanings. Liberating the word and enhancing meaning, was the quest of the sixteenth century, and it is a question still troubling the twentieth century. Paz's initial experiment with spatial poetry, "Reversible" from Salamandra (see p. 20) employs poetry in movement. Paz adds one more dimension to the experiment with the topoema entitled "Cifra":



This poem which deals with the dialectical nature of reality "moves" in a circle, a symbolical negation of opposites:

Cifra al principio esta palabra significó, en nuestra lengua, cero y no únicamente guarismo. El inglés cipher guarda todavía el significado original. Cifra viene del arabe sifr (cero, vacío), que no es sino "the sanskrit word sunya, derived from the root 'svi, to swell.' Our ancestors, with a fine instinct for the dialectical nature of reality, frequently used the same verbal room to denote the two opposite aspects of a situation." (Edward Conze, Buddhism). En este topoema la rotación de la palabras dibuja la cifra cero. Las palabras colmo y calma pueden substituirse por cópula y cosmos, cúmula y cueva o por cualesquiera otras, a condición de que no tengan más de seis letras y no menos de cuatro, comiencen con "c" y entablen entre ellas una relación analoga a la del texto, tal como la describe esta fórmula: Cifra (vacío.lleno)- Calma.

Thus for the Renaissance poet ingenuity is valued not only as a measure of man's intelligence but as a means of emulating the intricacies of God's mind. Poetic analogy is, as it will be for Swedenborg and Baudelaire, an echo of divine harmony, a correspondance. The poem sometimes assumes the shape of a labyrinth. An interesting commentary on this theme is proffered by Padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg in 1633:

Plotinus called the world the Poetry of God. I add, that this Poem is like a labyrinth, which is read in every direction, and gives intimation of, and points to, its Author. Among the poetical devices of antiquity were celebrated Theocritus' flute, the egg, wings and hatchet of Simias of Rhodes. But above all the Panegyric which the Poet Porphyrius addressed to the Emperor Constantine is most cunning and incomparable, and was celebrated by St. Jerome, Fulgentius and Bede . . . All this Panegyric consists of seventeen most artfully contrived labyrinths, where one verse joins and is knitted together with another in different manners, and the praises of Caesar are celebrated in all parts, by the beginnings, the middles and the ends of the lines, and crosswise, from the first letter of the first line to the last letter of the last line, and then, by combining crosswise the remaining letters of the lines between the first and the last, the second letter of the second line, the third of the third, etc., so as to form a thousand other sentiments in the praise of Caesar. So do I imagine the world to be a Panegyric of God.³⁴

The metaphor of the sky as a master emblem of God or a divine cipher to be decoded is, along with the labyrinth, diffused throughout the seventeenth century. The constellations are seen as a divine alphabet or

celestial hieroglyphics by poet and astronomer alike. The Romantics participate in this very same tradition. In "Igitur" and "Un coup de dés" Mallarmé transmutes the metaphor: the cipher alludes not to the plenitude of divine presence but to a transcendent emptiness akin to Nāgārjuna's concept of shūnyatā. Mallarmé in turn becomes Paz's preceptor, and another metamorphosis of the hermetic tradition is effected due to the pressures of our technological age: the analogy of an age which had faith in God is replaced by the "new analogy" of an age shattered by the discovery that space is peopled not by angels, but by the burnt-out shells of other worlds.

Since Blake, as well as Mallarmé, is another mainstream of hermetic insight flowing into twentieth-century poetry via surrealism, let us follow the course of the emblem poem through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The seventeenth century saw the expansion of emblem poetry in conjunction with that of mysticism and metaphysical poetry. Milton and his contemporaries subscribed to the hermetism of the Neoplatonists.³⁵ With the advent of the Enlightenment, the hermetic tradition was subject to much attack, but managed to survive in the work of such visionaries as Christopher Smart and William Blake, whose The Gates of Paradise (1793) is both the culmination of the tradition and the seed of its metamorphosis and rebirth.³⁶ From Blake it is a short step to the Romantics and to the twentieth-century avant-garde which furnishes a new misinterpretation to fertilize the emblematic tradition. Pound and Apollinaire build a new aesthetic based on a somewhat cockeyed vision of the Chinese ideogram as pictograph, and pave the way for imagistes and concrete poets alike--the circle is set in

motion again. It is interesting to note that Apollinaire's poetry follows the metamorphosis from emblem to icon. His first book Le Bestiaire, ou Cortège de Orphée (1911) pays dual homage to the medieval bestiary and the Renaissance emblem poem. The emblems are woodcuts by Raoul Dufy. Since this book is not as widely known as the Calligrammes, I have included an example, the verse accompanying the figure of Orpheus:

ADMIREZ le pouvoir insigne
 Et la noblesse de la ligne;
 Elle est la voix que la lumière fit entendre
 Et dont parle Hermès Trismégiste en son Pimandre.³⁷

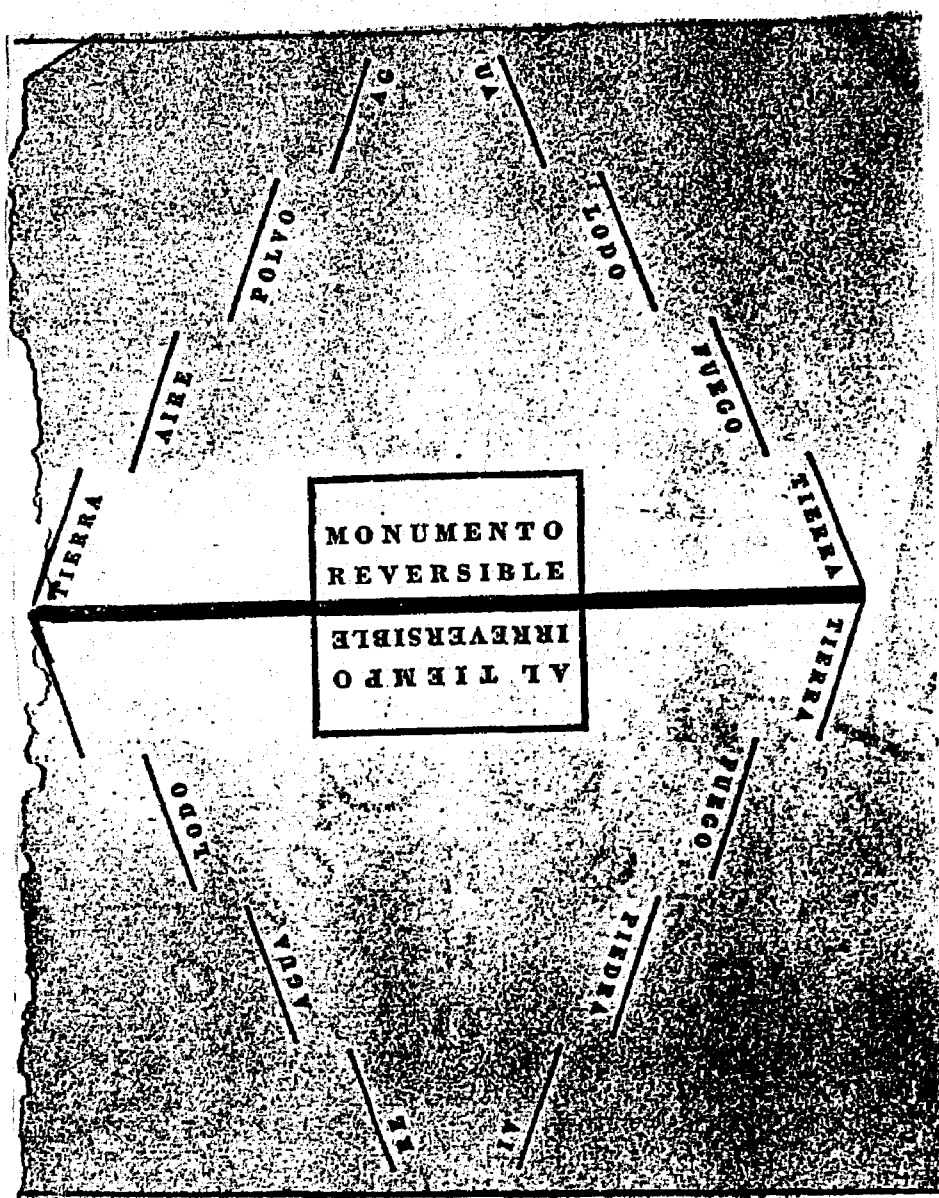
At the moment when hermetism and mysticism have assumed an important role in contemporary thought, the idea and the image are once again united in poetry. Poet and artist are again one and the same: Cummings, Lorca, Picasso, Michaux, Char, etc. Even if the poet does not create his own "emblems," picture and poem can still form an inseparable whole, as we will see in Paz's El mono gramático. Or the poem itself can engender an interior emblem while creating a cosmogony of mind within Mind, as in Blanco. Seen in the light of this tradition the Topoemas are a ritual invocation, and a totally necessary outgrowth of the evolution of Paz's thought.

Blanco is in a sense also an emblem poem, since it is intended to be a verbal mandala. The mandala is a symbolic pictorial representation of the cosmos contained within a circle used as a tool of meditation by Hindus and Buddhists alike in their attempt at union with the Absolute. The adept gradually interiorizes the mandala until his own body in effect becomes the mandala, and is identified with the cosmos. When the mandala is abstracted into a more elementary geometric, non-

representational form, it is called a yantra. A yantra, which can be a square, a circle, a triangle, or even a double line, often incorporates a seed (bija) syllable supposed to emanate from a sacred language. This syllable when intoned by the yogic practitioner is called a mantra. This term, due to the efforts of the Transcendental Meditation movement is currently a household word. Once again the idea of a sacred language has become popularized; the wheel turns . . .

Paz's Discos Visuales (1968) operate in this same system of signs. A cardboard circle with an aperture covers the poem. As it is rotated the phrases of the poem appear in isolation, divorced temporarily from context and the poem appears and disappears on the page, echoing the thought process, and making the reader more aware of the abyss which lies between words. This mechanism also helps to restore to language its original meaning and freshness. These poems are also reversible, and are reminiscent of the dharani, another Indian meditative device which is also a mnemonic: an important phrase is abbreviated to its basic elements and is reproduced in a circle, so worded that the circle has no beginning or end. Tristan Tzara used this device in "Le Chien et la Rose" (1958), a "poème perpétuelle" inscribed in a circular background created by Pablo Picasso.³⁸ The resulting work is reminiscent of the emblem poem or device of the Renaissance. It remained for Paz to incorporate the element of movement.

One of the Topoemas, "Monumento reversible" assumes the shape of a yantra:



It also presents a wide range of analogies as Paz explains: "Monumento reversible: la forma de este topoema alude a la de las pirámides escalonadas de Mesoamérica y a la de ciertos templos de la India y el sudeste de Asia. Asimismo, a las cosmologías de los pueblos que construyeron esos edificios." This symbolic transmutation of elements is an abstraction of the mandala metaphor about which Blanco is constructed.

When the Discos visuales were reproduced in Ladera este, it was typographically impossible to re-create their original sense. "Juven-

tud" (p. 98), for example, should be envisioned as a sort of Mallarméan constellation:

El salto de la ola
 Más blanca
 Cada hora
 Más verde
 Cada día
 Más joven
 La muerte

These spatial poems are magic talismans which accompany a ritual of transformation and transcendence. That ritual is Blanco.

4. The "New" Epic: the Long Poem as Analogical Reading and Criticism of the Universe

The constellation-strewn page of Mallarmé's "Un coup de dés" is in itself an emblem of his most ambitious aspiration: to create a "Book" which would be the true text, or reflection of the universe. He envisioned the history of poetry as a series of readings all competing in an "immense concours pour le texte veridique."³⁹ This work, the "explication orphique de la terre" is compared to the Great Work of alchemy:

. . . j'ai toujours revé et tenté autre chose, avec une patience d'alchimiste, prêt à y sacrifier toute vanité et toute satisfaction, comme on brûlait jadis son mobilier et les poutres de son toit, pour alimenter le fourneau du Grand Œuvre. Quoi? C'est difficile à dire: un livre, tout bonnement, en maints tomes, un livre qui soit un livre, architectural et prémédité, et non un recueil des inspirations de hasard fussent-elles merveilleuses . . . J'irai plus loin, je dirai: le Livre, persuade qu'au fond il n'y en a qu'un tente à son insu par qui-conque à écrit, même les Genies. L'explication orphique de la terre, qui est le seul devoir du poète et le jeu littéraire par excellence. . . .⁴⁰

Mallarmé's "Livre" belongs to the tradition of the Divine book or alphabet which extends from Plutarch to Bacon. It is to be constructed according to a standard not unlike Baroque agudeza: "architectural et prémédité," in short, "le jeu littéraire par excellence."⁴¹ While Mallarmé's work was never realized, his poetry became a medium for the perfection of a language equal to the task he set himself. If the poem was to be the Great Work, language had to be one of its chief concerns --thus a poetic form evolves which comments on the creative process itself, the "critical poem" in Mallarmé's terminology. His preoccupation with an analogical and critical poem reflects what is to be perhaps the main thrust of modern poetry. The initial impetus for these experiments with the critical poem is to be found in Romantic poetry, especially in Germany and England. Though Mallarmé envisioned the perfect accord of mind and universe, he could not translate that vision into words, and saw himself condemned to be "the musician of silence."⁴² Silence and space are part of the matrix of the poetic experience; how to translate them to the field of composition is another problem besetting the critical poem. In Blanco, part of this ongoing quest for the truly analogical work, Paz initiates a dialogue with Mallarmé, and other "critical" poets. The relationship between poetry and science doesn't enter into Mallarmé's poetic. However, it is the schism between the divine image of the world and the scientific one which largely shapes the course of modern poetry, and it is to the dawn of the Scientific Revolution we must turn to understand the poetic one.

Although the "critical" poem need not be an extended one--the concrete poem is a criticism of the function of language--since the criticism arose to fulfill the need of a poem which would be a cosmic

analogy, this criticism is generally found in a new epic form: with language the protagonist--or antagonist--and cognition or expanded consciousness the quest. Elizabeth Sewell suggests that the first "new" or neo-epic is the Systema Naturae (1735) of Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish taxonomer characterized by his commentators as a scientist who was also a poet.⁴³ Linnaeus' zoology encompasses mythology: the Deliciae Naturae culminates in the figure of Orpheus. Throughout the eighteenth century science and poetry work together. La Marcke, as well as Coleridge, finds that imagination is the only true measure of the universe: ". . . les idées, la pensée, l'imagination même, ne sont que des phénomènes de la nature, et conséquemment que de véritables faits d'organisation. . . ." ⁴⁴ In Die Lehrlinge zu Sais (The Apprentices at Sais) the German poet Novalis sketches the relationship between art and natural history:

Men go their several ways, each different from [the] other. Whoever traces these ways out and compares them will find that marvellous figures meet his gaze, figures which seem to belong to that grand cipher and script which is to be found all over the place,--on wings, on the shells of birds' eggs, in clouds, in snow, in crystals and rock formations, on water freezing, in the inward and outward structuring of mountains, of plants, animals, human beings, in the lights of heaven, . . . in the patterns of iron filings round a magnet, and in strange conjunctions of chance. In all of these the mind gropes after the key to that marvelous text, its essential grammar and syntax; but the groping will not take firm and reliable shape, and the key is not forthcoming.⁴⁵

In these years we often find the poet and the taxonomer combined in one person. Goethe is a splendid example of this with his lifelong dedication to botany and his keen interest in taxonomy. Poet and scientist share a common mission, to name, as Goethe points out in a poem dedicated to the man who first classified cloud shapes, "Howards Ehrengedachtnis":

What had no grip or substance for the mind,
 He, first of any, holds it well-defined,
 Limits the illimitable in a frame,
 And names it duly! -- Honour to thy name!⁴⁶

The first of these figures to adapt his vision to the epic form is Erasmus Darwin, Midlands doctor and poet, and the grandfather of Charles Darwin. In The Botanic Garden (1789, 1791) Darwin recapitulates Linnaen taxonomy. His second long poem The Temple of Nature (1803) proposes to "bring . . . to the imagination the beautiful and sublime images of the operations of Nature, in the order, as the Author believes, in which the progressive course of time presented them."⁴⁷ In this poem as Elizabeth Sewall is the first to point out, Erasmus Darwin deals with evolution some fifty years prior to the publication of Origin of the Species. Poetic imagination is a necessary first step in scientific investigation. The Temple of Nature is an Orphic poem: the Eleusinian mysteries provide its metaphoric framework, and one of the chief figures is the muse Urania, mother of Orpheus. Darwin moves from primeval chaos to the emergence of mind in an Orphic ascent which, not unlike Blanco, proceeds from silence to silence, from the "unheard" to the unhearable:

-- Mute the sweet voice, and still the quivering strings
 Now Silence hovers on unmoving wings. --
 Slow to the altar fair Urania bends
 Her graceful march, the sacred steps ascends,
 . . .
 Thrice to the Goddess bows with solemn pause,
 With trembling awe the mystic veil withdraws,
 And . . .
 Lifts her ecstatic eyes to Truth Divine.⁴⁸

In this remarkable poem the "old" analogy is supplanted by the "new":

"hieroglyphic signs;/And clustering stars, portrayed on mimic spheres"
 give way to "Self-moving engines" which "flap their mimic wings."
 Both are incorporated in an evolutionary context in which even the
 "wrecks of death are but a change of forms."⁴⁹

The Temple of Nature is a long-neglected masterpiece. Two years after its publication, 1805, another neo-epic appears, one which will have an enormous impact on the course of modern poetry, Wordsworth's The Prelude, a prodigious effort which in its definitive version has fourteen "Books." The Prelude is the autobiography of Imagination; it is a study of the formation of the poet's mind. Since this work is the inspiration for Paz's most recent long poem, Pasado en blanco (1975) it is worthwhile to dwell on it a bit. Wordsworth's poem was intended as the prelude to a monumental epic showing the relationship of individual and universal mind. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge shared this dream of the Book, and, of course, their vision was also Mallarmé's, especially in the period of his life after 1870.⁵⁰ It is interesting to compare the ineffable vision to which Mallarmé can only allude with Coleridge's earlier, rather concrete plan of attack, formulated in 1797, in which he states that he would devote not "less than 20 years to an Epic Poem. Ten years to collect materials and warm my mind with universal science . . . I would thoroughly know Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Astronomy, Botany, Metallurgy, Fossilism, Chemistry, Geology . . . Medicine -- then the mind of man -- then the minds of men. . . ."⁵¹ Wordsworth sees, with Milton and Dante, that the greatest epic is spiritual, its battles fought not in Trojan wars or bloody Crusades, but in the mind and soul. He is well aware that

scientific analysis and poetic intuition are equally ill-equipped to translate the ineffable into mere language:

Hard task, vain hope, to analyse the mind,
If each most obvious and particular though,
Not in a mystical and idle sense,
But in the words of Reason deeply weighed,
Hath no beginning.

(The Prelude, Book II, p. 232)⁵²

In the early Books of The Prelude, we are given a wealth of details concerning the poet's childhood and schooling, all furnishing an autobiography of the growth of his mind and spirit. In Book V Wordsworth enters into the world of his readings, where in a dream sequence he provides us with an emblem of the imaginative process.⁵³ While reading the Quixote in a seaside cave, Wordsworth falls asleep and dreams of a Bedouin, lance in hand, mounted on a camel, a sort of alter ego of the Spanish knight and his nag:

A lance he bore, and underneath one arm
A stone, and in the opposite hand a shell
Of a surpassing brightness . . .
. . .
. . . the Arab told me that the stone
(To give it in the language of the dream)
was 'Euclid's Elements;' and 'This,' said he,
'Is something of more worth;' and at the word
Stretched forth the shell, so beautiful in shape,
In colour so resplendent, with command
That I should hold it to my ear. I did so,
And heard that instant in an unknown tongue,
Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,
A loud prophetic blast of harmony;
An Ode, in passion uttered, which foretold
Destruction to the children of the earth
By deluge, now at hand . . .

(Book V, p. 243)

The Arab hurries off to bury his two "books":

The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
 And wedded soul to soul in purest bond
 of reason, undisturbed by space or time;
 The other that was a god, yea many gods,
 Had voices more than all the winds, with power
 To exhilarate the spirit, and to soothe
 Through every clime, the heart of human kind.

(Book V, p. 244)

Wordsworth confirms that stone and shell are indeed books. Before dozing off, he had been musing on "poetry and geometric truth" (Book V, p. 243),⁵⁴ and realized that the stone is mathematical knowledge or pure reason, and the shell is the poetic imagination. The Arab is Don Quixote torn between the sanity of Reason and the "madness" of Imagination. While the shell sings of death, it is also the only avenue of liberation. The shell of The Prelude prefigures that of Mallarmé's sonnet ending in "yx," "Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore" and the "seul objet dont le Néant s'honore." Mallarmé's shell--"bibelot" is an emblem of the rapid realization by the Orphic poets of the late nineteenth century that words were ghostly signs of absence. Wordsworth cannot fathom the "beginning" of thought but he knows that there is one by virtue of faith, religious as well as poetic. Yet he is already "modern" in sensing that poetic vision dwells in the imperfect glimpse of an instant rather than in the plenitude of Eternity. The part can only intuit the whole. Paz and Wordsworth both deal with shadows. In The Prelude this is most stirringly expressed in Book V:

... Visionary power
 Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
 Embodied in the mystery of words:
 There, darkness makes abode, and all the host
 of shadowy things work endless changes, -- there,
 As in a mansion like their proper home,
 Even forms and substances are circumfused

By that transparent veil with light divine,
And, through the turnings intricate of verse,
Present themselves as objects recognised,
In flashes, and with glory not their own.

(pp. 254-255)

In Pasado en claro, Paz deals mostly with the shadowy reverse side of reality:

Animales y cosas se hacen lenguas,
a través de nosotros habla consigo mismo
el universo Somos un fragmento
-- pero cabal en su inacabamiento --
de su discurso. Solipsismo
coherente y vacío ...

(p. 35)

And yet there are movements of wholeness: "Es dios: habita nombres que lo niegan" (p. 41). Ultimately the poem is once again the seashell:

Espiral de los ecos, el poema
es aire que se esculpe y se disipa,
fugaz alegoría de los nombres
verdaderos ...

(p. 43)

It remains for Mallarmé to turn the poet into Igitur, the Shade. After Mallarmé, poetry cannot quite recoup the hearty innocence of Linnaeus or Wordsworth. Pasado en claro lies somewhere in between Wordsworth and Mallarmé; for it eschews presence but cannot embrace absence with the confidence of Igitur snuffing out the candle of existence, thus Paz's ultimate self-definition in this poem: "Soy la sombra que arrojan mis palabras" (p. 44).

Mallarmé never wrote his epic analogy, and while he did deeply affect modern poetry, future development of the neo-epic was molded by a factor which Mallarmé had all but shut out from his own work, a tragic sense of time--and history. While origin and eternity mirror one

another in "Un coup de dés," the evolutionary process reflected in the neo-epic or long poem mirrors a good number of growing pains. In the most idyllic of the modern epics, St.-John Perse's Anabase (Paris, 1924), we witness the generation of life from the sea, "la mer au matin comme une presumption de l'esprit."⁵⁵ From there the poem proceeds to images of progressive civilization, the foundation of a city, and a migration to found yet another city. Yet all of this unfolds in ancient times: the poem sings of simple pleasures and vast uninhabited spaces. While St.-John Perse defies time in the belief that through love and the poem we can once "again frequent the truth of the dream,"⁵⁶ most of the other experiments in the neo-epic form are haunted by it, singing not of vast plains but of the debased quality of modern urban life "measured out in coffee spoons," as Eliot puts it.⁵⁷ Science invades poetry once more, and the theory of relativity shapes the modern poem into an analogue of simultaneous visions and instant epiphanies. Thus the fragment became the poetic unit par excellence, raising a whole slew of questions for the poet who wanted to create a sustained work. It is not within the scope of the present study to follow all of the paths opened by the neo-epic or the long poem in the last hundred years.⁵⁸ However, in order to situate Blanco, we must explore some of the main avenues.

Of course, one of the most obvious problems confronting the poet who was tempted to express lyric thoughts in epic form was the problem of extension. The nineteenth century militated against the longer forms, reserving them for the narrative or dramatic. Romanticism exalted the ode as the supreme lyric vehicle.⁵⁹ Poe in his "The

Poetic Principle" attacks what he terms the "epic mania." Moreover, he finds that "a long poem does not exist . . . a poem deserves its title, only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. . . . But all excitements are, though a physical necessity, transient. That degree of excitement . . . cannot be sustained throughout a composition of any great length . . . no long poem will ever be popular again."⁶⁰ These notes have a final ring, yet Poe had written one of the most ambitious analogical works ever attempted, his cosmology Eureka which he subtitled a "prose poem." Poe's argument is often quoted today by critics of literature, and poets, who seek to judge the success of the neo-epic; the dispute over "short" and "long" still rages. Not enough attention is given, however, to the innate duality of Poe's position. The clue to this duality lies in Poe's dialogue with Coleridge's theory of Imagination, which prompts him to formulate his own theory of the Mystic as the most sublime poetic expression. The Mystic, he tells us, suggests the Ideal: "With each note of the lyre is heard a ghostly . . . an august and soul-catching echo. In every glimpse of beauty presented, we catch . . . dim bewildering visions of a far more ethereal beauty beyond."⁶¹ Poe is caught in the grip of the double dilemma which shapes and reshapes the analogical poem of recent years: 1) poetic vision is a lightening flash of imagination, and it is difficult to sustain the excitement of the moment without diluting it, and 2) analogy alludes to a cosmic order and the expression of that cosmic order must be complex. Blake might envision the universe in a grain of sand, but the translation of that vision into words was a life's work. Strangely enough the next step in the evolution of the analogical poem is a poetic grain of

sand, the poem as image. In the years between 1910 and 1920 various movements spring up which attempt to revitalize the poetic symbol by making it spontaneous, concrete and self-sufficient. Thus the over-worked symbols of past ages were replaced by the isolated, visual image, a poem in itself. The Calligrammes of Apollinaire and the Dadaist experiments with the same form are, of course, one of the main camps of the Concrete revolution. However, it is the Anglo-American Imagist movement which most profoundly altered the course of the analogical poem.

Imagism begins as a reaction to the vagueness of French Symbolism. Pound, the chief theoretician of Imagism, had no quarrel with the Symbolist notion of an Absolute, but sought a better poetic vehicle to express what he termed "absolute rhythm."⁶² William Pratt is quick to recognize that Imagism "may properly be viewed as an advanced stage of the tradition that began with Baudelaire's famous 'Correspondances'. . . ."⁶³ The Imagist poem functions much as does the emblem poem or the Indian yantra; through visualization the reader achieves access to a higher order of reality. T. E. Hulme's "The Poet" postulates an Imagist ars poetica and exemplifies its practice:

Over a large table smooth, he leaned in ecstasies,
In a dream.
He had been to woods, and talked and walked with trees.
Had left the world
And brought back round globes and stone images,
Of gems, colors, hard and definite.
With these he played, in a dream,
On the smooth table.⁶⁴

As Imagist techniques are refined, the economy of the image is intensified until the imagist poem approaches the haiku, itself a vital force

in the shaping of the movement due to the efforts of Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell.⁶⁵ Pound finds himself boxed into a somewhat static corner, and attempts to volatize the image. The single image is set by Pound into a whole mosaic of images which interact to form the pattern and rhythm of the poem. It is interesting in this respect to note the etymological derivation of emblem, i.e., the Latin emblema or mosaic inlay.

By the 1920's a simultaneist analogical long poem in which the individual images were juxtaposed in a master mosaic was well in evidence, nourished by such parallel movements as vorticism and Cubism, i.e., Mayakovsky: The Cloud in Trousers (1915); Eliot: The Waste Land (1922); St.-John Perse: Anabase (1924); Pound: Cantos (1925-1948); Hart Crane: The Bridge (started in 1924, publ. 1930). It is curious to find a Russian poet leading the pack, since it was Moscow and St. Petersburg's wont to emulate le dernier cri in poetic modes as practised in Paris. Mayakovsky is an anomaly. At twenty two a youth fresh from the wilds of Georgia with only a high-school education, he took dead aim at the then-entrenched Symbolist group as well as at all the other imported "isms" and shattered their composure for good with his shocking poems, for shocking is the only way to describe them. The Cloud in Trousers opens certain paths for the new long forms to follow. Its fragmented syntax gives precedence to the word and thought, and not the line, anticipating the later experiments of Pound, Cummings and William Carlos Williams. While The Cloud is a long poem, it has no epic pretensions. Since there is a tendency toward the use of neo-epic to describe this new genre in which the poet is hero, and the quest is the questioning of ultimate reality, it is necessary to point out that the

form of these poems sometimes approaches the extension of the epic as in Pound's Cantos or Williams' Paterson or Kelley's The Loom. The most overwhelming neo-epic is, of course, the nine-hundred-page masterpiece of the Greek poet and novelist Nikos Kazantzakis, The Odyssey, a sequel to Homer's epic.

There is a counter movement, however, towards a more musical or dialectical conception of the long poem, which doesn't replace the epic but co-exists right along with it.⁶⁶ The Cloud with Trousers is one example. It is classified as a "tetraptych" by Mayakovsky, and is constructed of four movements in a somewhat musical manner (Eliot also follows in this line; and his Four Quartets is perhaps the most successful adaptation of the mode). The designation "tetraptych" suggests a metamorphosis of the analogical compositions of Wordsworth or Poe, with its allusion to the sacred triptych or tripartite icon depicting religious themes. The Virgin Mary is, of course, the principal subject of the icon, and it is significant that the Maria of the poem refers to two of the poet's many lady loves. The Cloud is, like Eliot's Waste-land, an analogy in reverse in which the traditional symbols of unity and harmony are inverted in order to stress the wholly discordant quality of modern life. Originally titled The Thirteenth Apostle (which title wouldn't pass the censors), The Cloud is a jarring assault on bourgeois sensibility and orthodox religion. Homer, Ovid and Goethe are damned along with the Holy Mother Church. As Mayakovsky knocks on Maria's door, it is transformed into the portal of Heaven. God becomes "Gospodin" god--"mister" god--and St. Peter is envisioned dancing like a medicine show Indian. God won't "open up," and the poem ends

thus:

Hey, you!
Heaven!
Take off your hat!
Here I come!

Silence.

The universe sleeps,
its paw curled
about an enormous star-infested ear.⁶⁷

The analogy inverted by irony of The Cloud in Trousers has its Latin American parallel in the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro's neo-epic, Altazor o el viaje en paracaídas (1931).⁶⁸ Altazor is an important part of the poetic dialogue which Paz sets in motion in Blanco; the other participant in this confrontation of poems is Muerte sin fin, a neo-epic by the Mexican José Gorostiza. Therefore, a gloss of these poems is helpful here. The journey of the poet-magus of Altazor recalls Pound's definition of art: "A man hurls himself toward the infinite and the works of art are his vestiges, his trace in the manifest."⁶⁹ In his parachute journey through infinite space the poet hears the voice of the nameless and faceless Creator:

"Hice un gran ruido y este ruido formó el océano y las olas del océano.

"Este ruido irá siempre pegado a las olas del mar y las olas del mar irán siempre pegadas a él . . .

"Cree la lengua de la boca que los hombres desviaron de su rol, haciéndola aprender a hablar . . . , a ella, ella, la bella nadadora, desviada para siempre de su rol acuático. . . .⁷⁰

The only personage in Huidobro's heaven who seems to be at home is a mysterious Virgin who comes floating by:

Encuentro a la Virgen sentada en una rosa, y me dice:

"Mira mis manos: son transparentes como las bombillas eléctricas. Ves los filamentos de donde corre la sangre de mi luz intacta?

"Mira mi aureola. Tiene algunas saltaduras, lo que prueba mi ancianidad.

"Soy la Virgen; la Virgen sin mancha de tinta humana, la única que no lo sea a medias, y soy la capitana de las otras once mil que estaban en verdad demasiado restauradas.

"Hablo una lengua que llena los corazones según la ley de las nubes comunicantes.

"Digo siempre adiós, y me quedo.

"Ámame, hijo mío, pues adoro tu poesía y te enseñaré proezas aéreas.

"Tengo tanta necesidad de ternura, besa mis cabellos, los he lavado esta mañana en las nubes del alba y ahora quiero dormirme sobre el colchón de la neblina intermitente.

"Mis miradas son un alambre en el horizonte para el descanso de las golondrinas.

"Ámame."

Me puse de rodillas en el espacio circular y la Virgen se elevó y vino a sentarse en mi paracaídas.

Me dormí y recité entonces mis más hermosos poemas.

Las llamas de mi poesía secaron los cabellos de la Virgen, que me dijo gracias y se alejó, sentada sobre su rosa blanda.

Y heme aquí, solo, como el pequeño huérfano de los naufragios anónimos.⁷¹

Huidobro's jet-propelled muse is a gentle parody of the poetry of the turn of the century which depicted the Virgin, or her counterparts such as Isis or Sophia, as an idealized muse who represents the ineffable being which the poet cannot describe in words.⁷² Huidobro's figure

seems to be based on Sophia, the Gnostic Virgin who dared to fly to heaven, and, as punishment for her temerity, was cast into the darkness.⁷³ The evolution of the figure of the muse since 1800 is intimately linked to the evolution of attitudes toward poetic language. The Virgin of Altazor is representative of a midpoint in the swing of the pendulum: Huidobro's "muse" disappears into the void, and he is left with his parachute, the word, to negotiate the rest of his voyage. The Virgin's words to the poet are of great significance. She announces herself as "sin mancha de tinta humana" and captain of the other eleven thousand virgins who were "too restored." Thus Huidobro rejects the traditional idols of inspiration, be they divine or secular muses, clinging to the word as the poet's only link to a higher plane of reality. Here Huidobro recapitulates the progress of decorporealization of the muse and of language wrought since the eighteenth century. For the Baroque poet both physical and spiritual love were the poet's path of transcendence. But for the Romantic and Symbolist poet the muse and communication with an absolute realm are oft-times symbolized in a series of ethereal figures, half Virgin, half woman, ghostly figures who sometimes speak from death, not life.⁷⁴ Language undergoes a like process of depuration. Huidobro deposes these idols, and substitutes the word itself, which becomes "parasubidas," para-rise as well as parachute.⁷⁵ Huidobro's quest for the source of the word ends in silence where language must begin and end. The name of the Creator cannot be spoken in mere words: such is the sense of the angelic incantation uttered by the poet-magus at the end of Altazor:

Ai ia
 Temporía
 Ai ai aia
 Ululayu
 lulayu
 layu yu
 Ululayu
 ulayu
 ayu uy
 Lunatando
 Sensorida e infimento
 Ululayo ululamento
 Plegasuena
 Cantatorio ululaciente
 Oraneva yu yu yo
 Tempovío
 Infilero e infinauta zurrosía
 Jaurinario urarayu
 Montañendo oraranía
 Arorasia ululacente
 Semperiva
 ivarisa tarirá
 Campanudio lalalí
 Auriciente auronida
 Lalalí
 io ia
 i i i o
 Ai a i ai a i i i o ia

(p. 423)

Huidobro's formula might well be an ironic inversion of the Gnostic incantation from the Coptic Ms. Pistis Sophia. In the last part of the text Jesus invokes his Father with magic incantations which are a jumble of Hebrew, Egyptian and Persian. The faithful repeated the formulas without understanding them, with blind faith in the efficacy of the word. This would seem to be the position of the poet as described by Huidobro, and his strange incantation seems to be a jumble of the Gnostic vowel sequence "IAO." Alpha and omega are occult symbols of the totality of Being since they are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Iota is the symbol of the finite within the infinite:

Then Jesus stood up with his disciples at the water of the ocean and He invoked it with this prayer, saying: Hear me my Father, the Father of every Fatherhood, the boundless light:

aeiouo-iao-aoioia
psinother-therinops-nopsither-zagoure-
pagouri-nethmomaoth-nepsiomaoth-markhkhatha-
thobarran-tharnakhakhan-zoroko-thora-jeou-sabaoth.

. . . Jesus was standing at the altar and cried out, 'Jesus, Jesus'; turned himself about it unto the four corners of the world with his disciples, all being wrapped in linen garments, saying: 'iao, iao.' This is its interpretation: Iota--the universe came out of Alpha; they will turn them. O.--will become the completion of all completions.⁷⁶

The Alpha, Omega, Iota symbol is common to a number of occult sects of the nineteenth century, including Masonry. The Pistis Sophia was only unearthed in the late nineteenth century, and it sparked a renewed interest in Gnosticism. (The French translation appeared in 1895). Since the occult had permeated French literature during this century, it is possible that Huidobro was familiar with the Pistis Sophia, as the occult poets greatly influenced his work which is laced with hermetic references. At any rate he had to be familiar with the IAO cryptogram through his interest in the Freemasons: his novel Cagliostro deals with the life of the magus who founded the Egyptian rite of the Masons. It is interesting to note how Huidobro distorts the sequence so that the universe is alluded to as in a state of flux, and so that ultimately we are left with the finite Iota.

It is important to dwell on these points--Paz's image of poetry as "adivinanza" in Blanco recapitulates this metaphor of language as expressed by the great critical poems of our age, including "Un coup de dés." Dice were a time-honored method of divination, akin to the

Tarot pack or the I Ching. This whole aspect of Mallarmé has been somewhat neglected, since most critics choose to ignore the fact that he was fascinated by the occult arts. The divinatory nature of the metaphor of "Un coup" becomes clear when we recall that the preface to "Igitur" declares that it is based on the grimoire, or ritual book of black magic. Igitur tries to read the dice ("Igitur" is a tentative version of "Un coup"), and then the stars, but doesn't attain "vision" until he snuffs out the candle in his dark chamber.

Mayakovsky and Huidobro, faced with the prospect of an analogy which alludes not to God but to nothing, take refuge in the word as their precarious salvation. The failure of the poem as a divinatory medium is the message of Paz's poetic predecessor, the Mexican poet José Gorostiza. In his Muerte sin fin (1939) the word becomes an "open sesame" to the horrors of the abyss. In an earlier poem, "Preludio," the word is described as creating not divine analogy but a "fiction of heaven":

Que, en lugar de esa fé que la consume
hasta la transparencia del destino
no Aquí--escapada al dardo
tenaz de la estatura--
se remonta insensata una palmera
para estallar en su ficción de cielo,
maestra en fuegos no,
mas en puros deleites de artificio?⁷⁷

As Gorostiza unfolds the tragedy of the word he employs all of the traditional symbols provided by alchemy, religion and the occult sciences to indicate plenitude and transcendence in a wholly negative sense. In "Preludio" language emitted into air congeals into "mariposas de escarcha" (p. 83), a reversal of the usual significance attached to

the butterfly, a symbol of the soul, of immortality and of fiery transcendence in the act of love. The word here becomes a tear which traces "en muros de cristal amores de agua!" (p. 84). Water, the symbol of regeneration, and translucency, which is the essence of mystic vision, become the images of nothingness and of imprisonment in the self in Muerte sin fin in which the poet finds himself "Lleno de mí, sitiado en mi epidermis/por un dios inasible que me ahoga. . ." (p. 107). The glass of water, analogue of consciousness entrapped by an invisible force which gives it shape becomes the central metaphor of the poem, accompanied by the mirror which reflects and refracts man's image of himself and the universe, but never reflects the divine Image. Gorostiza is very clear about the pedigree of his "vaso": in the movement of the poem which begins "Pero el vaso en sí mismo no se cumple" (p. 126), he tells us that the vessel is "useless," unlike the vessel or goblet of the occult sciences used to divine the past, present and future.⁷⁸ The diviner would fill the goblets or vessels with wine, oil and water and after contemplating the surface, would see the past in the wine, the present in the oil, and the future in the water: the poet in the "vaso" of consciousness conjures up a blank (pp. 126-27):

En el agua, en el vino, en el aceite,
articula el guión de su deseo;
se ablanda, se adelgaza;
ya su sobrio dibujo se le nubla,
ya, embozado en el giro de un reflejo,
en un llanto de luces se liquida.

The mirror fulfills a similar function since it too was used to foretell the future. Gorostiza also alludes to the mandrake root used as an oracle by sorcerers in a subsequent part of the poem in a similar

context.⁷⁹ The image of the glass of water operates in another context as well. Valéry, for whom Gorostiza feels a great affinity, seeks liberation from the same prison of consciousness which constrains Gorostiza. When he achieves poetic intuition and breaks the shell of self, Valéry compares this liberation to the shattered glass. Thus the work of art is an "histoire brisée."⁸⁰ Gorostiza cannot achieve this paradoxical fragmentary sense of wholeness: this is the theme of Muerte sin fin.

Blanco seems to be a deliberate dialogue with Gorostiza: its ritual of sacrifice and dispersion restores wholeness of vision, making cosmic analogy viable once more. As Paz's poem unfolds he develops the image of a "vaso de sombra" which yields a flower, here the symbol of cosmic vision. The flower, a sunflower, is at the same time a severed head by virtue of its circular shape. A flower formed in Muerte sin fin is also engendered by the image of the "vaso": the water is shaped by the glass into an "orbe tornasol" and a "rotunda flor de transparencia," both analogues of pure mind which in turn yield "un ojo proyectil que cobra alturas," or mind contemplating itself (p. 108).⁸¹ Blanco yields this same progression of vessel, sunflower and third eye as metaphors of illumination; and it is here that the difference resides, for Gorostiza's flower is transformed into a symbol of interior darkness:

flor mineral que se abre para adentro
hacia su propia luz,
espejo ególatra
que se absorbe a sí mismo contemplándose.

(p. 126)

Simultaneously the endless cycle of death and regeneration is condemned as "estril repetirse inédito" (p. 111), unedited like the endless repetition of language. Gorostiza undertakes a diabolical banishment of form, of all creation, including the body:

Después, en un crescendo insostenible
 mirad como dispara cielo arriba,
 desde el mar,
 el tiro prodigioso de la carne
 que aún a la alta nube menoscaba
 con el vuelo de pájaro,
 estalla en el como un cohete herido
 y en sonoras estrellas precipita
 su desbandada pólvora de plumas.

(p. 114)

In Muerte sin fin, the body subjects the poet to death and opacity; in Blanco it is the path to vision, transparency, and woman becomes the divinatory medium: "a d i v i n a n z a." Blanco represents not only a return to a viable analogy, but a further evolution in the form of the critical analogical poem from epic to ritual. While the epic is concerned with collective history, the ritual poem allows the reader a more active participation in the construction of the poem, image of his collectivity. In a sense this form tends to modify the main trend of the long poem--the search for the general in the particular, which eventually yields a neo-epic woven of all of the shards and fragments of daily existence, artifacts with which to reconstruct the image of man. The use of the symbol is subjugated to the notion of the poem as palimpsest, or montage; and poetic order is established via the theory of relativity, with instantaneous preception as architect.⁸² This radical change in form while it reflects the scientific advancement of the

twentieth century is also an adjunct to a change of attitude in poetry in the course of the nineteenth century manifested by the infiltration of common speech into poetic diction and by the freeing of verse from rigid metrical structures. And along with everyday speech, the everyday person is admitted to the poem--the poetic hero is no longer always an almost divine being with an Achilles heel but is all too human. The poet needs to map out the human soul in its own image.

This revolution in diction and subject begins with the Romantics and post-Romantics; Wordsworth and the Russian poet Nikolai Nekrasov are two of the pioneers.⁸³ Eventually it will fuse with other concerns, including the attempt to portray the general in the particular, first formalized as poetic theory by the Russian Symbolist poet Alexander Blok. Blok's neo-epic Reprisals (1911),⁸⁴ a slice of life in St. Petersburg, is the practical application of his theory, and a startling contrast to his Symbolist period culminating in the poems of Beautiful Lady (1904). Since then the scope of the neo-epic has become more cosmopolitan but not necessarily more universal. William Carlos Williams is perhaps the best known exponent of finding universality in the local or particular. We find this quest made explicit in the preface to his neo-epic Paterson (1946-63):

To make a start,
out of particulars
and make them general rolling
up the sum, by defective means--⁸⁵

Paterson is initially envisioned as a ritual of dispersal and reunification, of life transformed by love and the imagination:

: a local pride; spring, summer, fall and the
 sea ... a reply to Greek and Latin with
 the bare hands; a gathering up; a
 celebration;

in distinctive terms; by multiplication
 a reduction to one ... an enforced pause;
 ... a dispersal and a metamorphosis.⁸⁶

The poem is set in the small city of its title and contrasts its present state of urban blight with its bucolic past. Williams alternates an erotic pastoral and ancient fertility rites with fragmented histories of the love affairs of factory girls, their sexuality untouched by eroticism or imagination. But somehow ordinary everyday existence is not eroticized or poeticized, and the fragments are perpetually dispersed. The hoped-for metamorphosis somehow never occurs: Every man continues to be divorced from his origins. Patterson is, with Pound's Cantos, one of the most ambitious example of the rambling sort of neo-epic against which Paz reacts in Blanco and Piedra de sol. He characterizes Patterson thus: "Pertenece a ese género poético . . . que oscila entre la Eneida y el tratado de Economía Política, la Divina Comedia y el periodismo."⁸⁷ Obvious a ritual is of a more formal nature; it requires a carefully limned pattern and a symbolic frame of reference clear to the participants. Eliot's musical development and use of an "objective correlative" offer possibilities, and it is much along these lines that St. John Perse constructs Amers (1957) a ritual poem of genesis in the dawn of civilization presided over by a "Maître d'astres et Navigation" who, like Mallarmé's "Maître," presides over a setting of sea and sky. The poem becomes "Poésie pour assister le chant d'une marche au pourtour de la Mer./Comme l'entreprise du tour d'autel

et la gravitation du chœur au circuit de la strophe."⁸⁸ The problem raised by Williams remains unsolved, how to resurrect ancient rites in modern times, and allow the participation of the reader in the process for ritual is, as Paz observes, recreation, re-presentation: "Todo rito es una representación. Aquel que participa en una ceremonia es como el actor que representa una obra: está y no está al mismo tiempo en su personaje."⁸⁹ The aim of the rite is the dissolution of reality and personality; transmutation to a higher level of consciousness. Poetry and eroticism are perhaps the only paths open to the modern visionary so it is only natural that the poetic "rite" be erotic as well. The free play of imagination needed to achieve this synthesis is hampered by the format of the book. It is significant that the ritual poem literally becomes a plastic object to be placed in a museum. This is the case with the "perpetual poem" created by Tzara and Picasso,⁹⁰ as well as Blanco's most elaborate predecessor, Guy Cabanel's L'Animal Noir, a poem-object whose parts must be assembled by the reader and which cannot be commercially circulated--its fame has been propagated by word of mouth.⁹¹

5. The Poem as Ritual Re-creation: Eros and Intellect in Blanco (1967)

*. . . apprehension perforates at places, through to understanding--as white is at the intersection of blue and green and yellow and red. It is this white light that is the background of all good work.*⁹²

Blanco poses a solution to these problems besetting the ritual "epic." Since it is an erotic ritual it incarnates in the present, and

is simultaneously a re-creation of the past via its elaboration of universal archetypes, which in turn recreate elements of ritual common to most cultures. Paz describes Dante's Comedia as "una alegoría de alegorías"⁹³--Blanco's great efficacy lies in the fact that it is a rite of rites. A parallel synthesis is achieved in its dialogue with modern poetry and its critical modification of its own process. Finally, its intricate development requires the reader's full participation. The intricacies of these and the construction of Blanco are a wonder to behold, and the best critical access to the poem is, quite literally, the re-presentation of it in its totality.

Printed on a single folded page about twelve feet long in the original edition, the poem appears as the reader unfolds it rather like "el viaje inmóvil al que nos invita un rollo de pinturas y emblemas tántricos: si lo desenrollamos, se despliega ante nuestros ojos un ritual, una suerte de procesión o peregrinación hacia ¿dónde?"⁹⁴ The perpendicular text is distributed in a narrow center column interrupted at four intervals by a two-column text. (A rough approximation of its appearance is illustrated on page 222.) The interrupted center column is, Paz tells us, a poem "cuyo tema es el tránsito de la palabra, del silencio al silencio (de lo 'en blanco' a lo blanco--al blanco), pasando por cuatro estados: amarillo, rojo, verde y azul." The dispersion of the poem on the page gives free play to the surrounding blank space and visually reiterates the metaphor of the title: black on white, the letters on the blank page, "archipiélago de signos," progress to an invisible target. The other columns extend the metaphor: the left-hand column is an erotic poem whose four "moments"

correspond to the four elements; the left is the "counterpoint" of the right and moves from sensation to perception, imagination and understanding. The two culminate in a transcendence of ego, a unity in transparency and a temporary pact with the all-pervading "whiteness" which is the reflection of nothingness of *shūnyatā*. This same whiteness characterizes all visionary experience, mystical or poetical: it is the "light" of illumination which encompasses all the colors of the spectrum of perception. The image of the lamp has been characterized as the Romantic analogue of this ineffable vision: blankness or whiteness is the equivalent modern poetic analogue.⁹⁵ In Mallarmé whiteness is so closely identified with the *Néant* that white is soon universally adopted as the paradoxical symbol of the endless source of light which once afforded a glimpse of God but which in modern times blinds instead of illuminates. Since man no longer feels himself part of a divine body he is literally trapped in the shell of his ego and everything exterior to him is a blank. This is the sense of the repeated incantation which illuminates Tzara's *L'Homme approximatif*, "Dehors est blanc."⁹⁶ When modern man breaks his shell it is through sense perception (he constructs his own world and is the creator and not the created), but it is only through imagination that the opaque whiteness becomes clarity, "entendimiento."

The white light of poetic vision is also a plastic metaphor in modern painting, which finds in the refractions of the spectrum the only truly imaginative way of incorporating space in a painting. If, for example, we contemplate a painting by Robert Delaunay, its blocks of pure color jostle each other; some recede, others advance. The end

result is not an imitation of "reality," but nevertheless the illusion of space is created. Since our senses do not clutch at a ready-made image, the picture becomes a simultaneous movement of color. Robert and Sonia Delaunay, like other painters from the Impressionists on, were inspired in their experiments with color by the color theory of the French chemist Eugene Chevreul (De la loi de contraste simultané des couleurs, 1839). Chevreul's theory was introduced to "literary" circles by Baudelaire, and Goethe developed a similar theory.⁹⁷ The Symbolists, too, sense that color "thinks" for itself. Color becomes the tool of the visionary painter, such as Mondrian or Delaunay. It is Delaunay who tells us:

"L'art dans la Nature est rythmique et a horreur de la contrainte. Si l'Art s'apparente à l'Objet, il devient descriptif, divisionniste, littéraire. . . . Pour que l'Art atteigne la limite de sublimité, il faut qu'il se rapproche de notre Vision harmonique: la clarté . . . le mouvement synchrone (simultanéité) de la lumière, qui est la seule réalité. Cette action synchrone sera donc, le Sujet qui est l'harmonie représentative."⁹⁸

Interestingly enough it is Sonia Delaunay who in 1913 collaborates with the French poet Blaise Cendrars in an effort which prefigures both Blanco and El mono gramático, the "simultaneous book." Cendrars's poem "La Prose du Transsiberian et la petite Jeanne de France" is a journey in which the images of the trip fuse with remembered images, rather like the idea of the poetic path developed in El mono. The book unfolds to create the poem (as Blanco does in its original edition); and Sonia Delaunay's accompanying abstract color painting unfolds with the poem.⁹⁹

Blanco's epigrams pay homage to Mallarmé's vision of nothingness

and purity, and announce the poet's transformation of that vision.

The first epigram, from the Hevajra Tantra, announces the erotic ritual to be unfolded: "By passion the world is bound, by passion too it is released."¹⁰⁰ The "seul objet dont le Néant s'honore" of the second epigram is the conch shell of Mallarmé's sonnet rhyming in yx-ix:

"aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore." Mallarmé's shell captures the inexpressable music of the void, as well as the waters of the sea, mother of life and death. The conch is an erotic symbol as well, and it fulfills both functions here in its role of ritual object or emblem.¹⁰¹

This shell appears in Tantric iconography in the same context, so it is only fitting that it should be the first object revealed in the unfolding of this poem/Tantric scroll.¹⁰² Brahmanic mythology and art portray various deities with the conch, including the solar god Vishnu; Sarasvāti, the goddess of eloquence; and Ganesha, the elephant-headed god of intelligence and patron of literature.

The entire imaginative sequence of the poem also recalls the Symbolist art of Odilon Redon who illustrated the works of Poe and Mallarmé, especially Redon's "The Shell," in which the conch is pictured bathed in an almost mystic light. Redon's lithograph "There Was Perhaps a Preliminary Vision Tested in the Flower" shows the flower (of imagination) transformed in an eye which explodes like the sun at the page. Others of his pictures which are a perfect complement to Blanco are "Martyr's Head," "Orpheus" and "The Red Sphinx."¹⁰³ Paz seems to feel this affinity and uses "There Was Perhaps a Preliminary Vision Tested in the Flower" as an illustration in El mono gramático, a text which shares its principal images with Blanco.

Unfortunately, this illustration is only to be found in the first edition: Le singe grammairien (Geneva, 1972).

In the preface to the second edition of Blanco (the version included in Ladera este) Paz offers one more clue to facilitate the reader's entrance into the labyrinth of the poem: the spatial and thematic distribution of Blanco corresponds to "las regiones, los colores, los símbolos y las figuras de una mandala." The mandala is a psycho-cosmogram, a ritual depiction of cosmic forces laid out within the confines of a circle. Within the circle there is a square which resembles the walled garden of alchemy or a maze, with four equidistant gates which in turn lead to another square and four more gates and so on.¹⁰⁴ At the center of the squares are five circles arranged in a sort of quincunx; with each circle containing five more circles. The layout of Blanco recreates the journey from the gate to the center point of the mandala, the target so to speak. The circles contain symbolic religious images, both objects and divinities. Similar isolated circles dot the entire field of the mandala. By meditating on each image, the Buddhist or Hindu visualizes the various stages on the way to cosmic consciousness, and the liberation from the illusions of ego and phenomena; the last step is the blankness of undifferentiated consciousness. The mandala is a visual aid to a process which must be recreated by the practitioner in his own body which is to be visualized as a microcosm. The process is accompanied by ritual gestures or mudras and sacred invocations and incantations or mantras: each stage in the ritual has its own mantra and is also accompanied by one of the elements: fire, water, earth and air merge into cosmic ether at the

center of the mandala. Thus body, speech and mind are integrated into pure consciousness. These psychical stages are the frame of reference in which Blanco unfolds. The mandala is an archetype reproduced the world over by the individual psyche, as Jung has so admirably shown; thus its symbolism is not restricted to initiates. Paz's recreation of the mandala shuns almost all purely Eastern references, as we shall see. Moreover, the popular Transcendental Meditation and yogic movements in the West have made much of this symbolism familiar to mass audiences.

The question has been raised by Ruth Needleman as to whether or not Blanco's complexities narrow its audience to other poets, and ultimately, because of its Tantric affinities, to "poet initiates."¹⁰⁵ Actually Tantra in the last decade has pervaded not only Western mass culture but its literature as well, since it reincorporates the senses into the cognitive or imaginative process.¹⁰⁶ Over the course of several centuries Western spirit was divorced from its body, and we are now witnessing the painful process of, as Norman O. Brown announces in Life Against Death (1959), "the resurrection of the body."¹⁰⁷ Brown in Love's Body (1966) and Paz in Conjunciones y disyunciones (1969) are the two prime commentators of the movement. In the course of his discussion of the complementary signs of "cuerpo" y "no cuerpo," Paz points out one important difference between ancient and poetical ritual:

El rito antiguo se despliega en un nivel que no es del todo el de la conciencia: no es la memoria que recuerda lo pasado sino el pasado que vuelve. Es lo que he llamado . . . la encarnación de los imágenes.

Desde este punto de vista, el arte es el equivalente moderno del rito y de la fiesta: el poeta y el novelista

construyen objetos simbólicos, organismos que emiten imágenes. Hacen lo que hace el salvaje: convierten al lenguaje en cuerpo . . .

Cuadro y poema: ritos solitarios de la contemplación, festín de fantasmas. . . . Las imágenes encarnan en el arte sólo para desencarnar en el acto de la lectura o la contemplación. Además, el artista cree en el arte y no, como el primitivo en la realidad de sus visiones. . . . La sublimación poetica se identifica así . . . con el instinto de la muerte. Al mismo tiempo, la participación con los otros adopta la forma de la lectura. El primitivo también descifra signos . . . sólo que sus signos son un doble de su cuerpo y del cuerpo del mundo.¹⁰⁸

Poetry after the Baroque lost its capacity to read the body of the world; "hablar físicamente de las cosas físicas."¹⁰⁹ Language must recuperate the totality of experience, for if "el lenguaje es la forma más perfecta de la comunicación, la perfección del lenguaje no puede ser sino erótica e incluye a la muerte y el silencio: al fracaso del lenguaje . . . ¿El fracaso? El silencio no es el fracaso sino el acabamiento, la culminación del lenguaje."¹¹⁰ Language is transmuted by silence just as the passionate language of the body culminates in death: identity of opposites. The erotic ritual with its metaphor of body as language helps us to see the far side of reality.

The erotic ritual of Blanco is linked to Tantric practice. The Tantras originated as a practical supplement to the metaphysical doctrines of both Buddhism and Hinduism, and are characterized as means.¹¹¹ Tantric sects are divided into two camps: the right-hand contingent puts Tantric means to strictly symbolical or spiritual uses; the left-hand sects practice ritual copulation (maithuna) in imitation of the union of opposites symbolized by the sexual embrace of Shiva and Parvāti, or other deities such as the yab-yum (or Mother/Father) embrace of Tibetan Buddhist Gods. The erotic Tantric ritual has as its

objective liberation from the senses and passions and employs the yogic practices which are the substrata of all Indian religions: the culmination of the ritual union is the retention of semen which is transformed into bodhicitta: "pensamiento en blanco, vacuidad."¹¹² The interior mandala visualization symbolically reproduces this fusion. Paz comments upon the Buddhist rite extensively in Conjunciones y disyunciones: ". . . concibe al cuerpo como un microcosmos con seis nudos de energía sexual, nerviosa y psíquica; estos centros (cakras) se comunican entre sí, desde los órganos genitales hasta el cerebro, por dos canales: rasana y lalana. . . ."¹¹³ The chakras or centers proceed from the base of the spine to the top of the head. The left psychic channel represents the feminine aspect of personality and intuitive wisdom; the right corresponds to the active male principle. These two psychic veins are united in a third central vein. The arrangement of Blanco's three columns emulates this arrangement. These are the principle veins; however, the total number in both Buddhist and Hindu rites is thirty two. Paz tells us in subtle fashion in his preface that Blanco offers thirty-two separate readings, all fused in the thirty-third, or the poem in its totality. Thirty two also refers to the number of secret Tantric sites scattered throughout India. And, the secret signs of a Buddha are thirty two in number. Finally, thirty-three gods make up Buddhism's heavenly pantheon.

The semen is directed upward along the channels through the sixth chakra located at the back of the head and bursts into a lotus just above the head, the thousand-petalled lotus of illumination. The mental representation of each chakra shows a solar disc emanating from

a lotus. Inscribed on the disc is the seed (bija) syllable of the mantra appropriate to that center. The Hevajra Tantra does not postulate the usual six stages of cognition which accompany the centers, but offers four; and it is this simplified scheme which Paz follows in Blanco: Variety, Development, Consummation and Blank.¹¹⁴

There is only one possible difference between the Buddhist and Hindu rite which is important to the understanding of the poem. The German Tantric scholar Agehananda Bharati claims that the Hindu adept does not practice seminal retention. Bharati theorizes that the semen is offered as a sacrifice in imitation of pre-Aryan fertility rites. No substantiation is offered for the claim, but this is unimportant since Paz accepts the notion with alacrity (in Conjunciones y Disyunciones, p. 89) and makes the central metaphor of union in the poem one of sacrificial dispersal, and subsequent re-integration.¹¹⁵

Language is in various ways an integral part of the ritual since it is believed that Brahma created the universe with sound. The adept visualizes the union of vowels and consonants, for language is male and female, too (Blanco: "falo el pensar y vulva la palabra/espacio es cuerpo signo pensamiento"). The symbolical invocations and incantations known as mantra accompany all phases of the ritual. The mantra functions as a complex of sound and imagery, and is formed (a) by seed syllables which are unhampered by the fixed "meaning" of a word and (b) by actual words which function much like the poetic image. The mantra perhaps most familiar to the West, the "OM Mani Padme Hum," incorporates such a far-reaching circle of meaning that the Lama Govinda's commentary of this mantra became a whole book. However, John Blofeld's gloss of

this mantra will serve our purpose here:

Om stands for the totality of sound and . . . existence. Originally written Aum, it starts at the back of the throat and ends with the lips. It is chief among the sounds to which a mystical creative quality is attached. . . . The A stands for consciousness of the external world; and the U, for consciousness of what goes on inside our minds; and the M, for consciousness of the non-dual, unqualified emptiness of the void.

The next syllable is Mani . . . the Jewel . . . equated with Vajra, the adamant non-substance which is perfectly void . . . the highest value within our own mind. . . .

Padma (of which Padme is the vocative form) literally means the lotus. It is the symbol of spiritual unfoldment whereby the Mani is finally reached.

Hum, like Om is untranslatable. Om is the infinite within the finite and . . . the perception of the void within the non-void, Mind in the form of mind . . . the transcendental in the ephemeral. . . .¹¹⁶

The Tantric texts themselves employ a metaphoric "intentional" language, as the knowledge of the rite might be dangerous to the immature. Thus each image has a double edge and is metaphysical as well as physical: the spiritual union of opposites is symbolized via the vajra (thunderbolt) and the lotus, which in turn are phallus and vulva; the kapala or human skull is also the lotus-vase, i.e., the universe; ravi, sun, is also the rasana or right artery; the drum symbolizes the holy text and so on.¹¹⁷ Paz uses this same technique but his "double" images are drawn from a triple context: universal archetypes, Symbolist imagery and Tantrism.

The left-hand Tantric ceremony is one of the co-efficients of the imagery of the poem; that is to say each image is an analogical complex simultaneously emitting meaning and reference in every direction. Before entering the body of the text, I will first outline some of the highlights of the rite in order to establish a frame of reference for commentary of the text. Blanco incorporates the spirit and not the

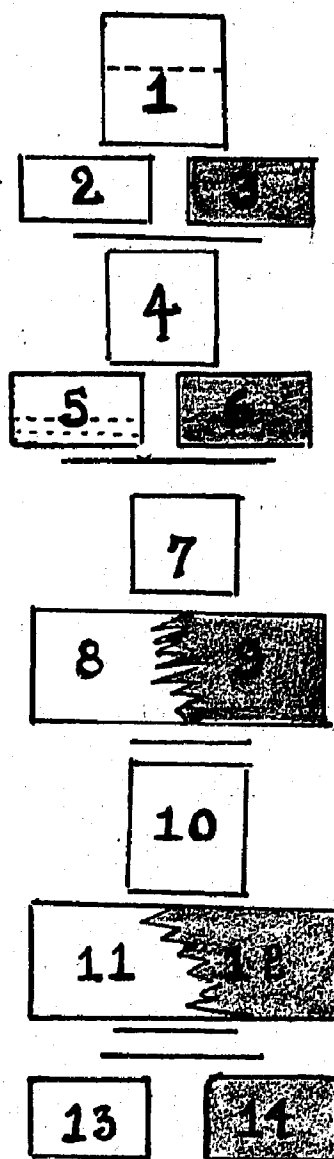
letter of the Tantra so I have taken the liberty of lumping the Hindu and Buddhist ceremonies together, as they are similar in many respects. In most cases the Sanskrit nomenclature has been dispensed with since it adds nothing to the understanding of the poem.

The Tantric ceremony, like its more orthodox counterparts, is prefaced by rites of purification of body and mind and preliminary offerings, including flowers and water, the latter being an oblation to the sun. This water is contained in a vessel placed in front of the seated yogin. Mantras or repetition of ritual invocations are utilized throughout the ceremony. The Hindu rite employs a mantra summoning Sarasvāti, the goddess of eloquence, to the tip of the tongue.¹¹⁸ Both Buddhist and Hindu schools employ the "garland of letters" incorporating all of the alphabet into a mantra with vowels and consonants uniting in a symbol of the coupling of the male and female aspects of experience.¹¹⁹

The setting is isolated: often it is the cremation ground which serves to remind the participants of the ephemeral nature of phenomenal reality, as do the bones worn as ornaments by the participants. The entire conception of the ritual is a violation of orthodox sensibility. Other macabre aspects of the ceremony include the ingestion of forbidden substances allegedly including, in some instances, human flesh; and the presence of a corpse. Tantric scholars have shown that these last two requirements were sometimes quite literally carried out. The participants are seated within a mandala drawn on the ground with powdered chalk or cinnabar. Sacred vessels are incorporated in the design and a vessel containing water, a symbol of the Absolute, is

placed in the center of the circle. The symbolical function of the water corresponds to the acqua permanens in the alchemical vessel of the West. Light and sound, emanations of the Absolute, are introduced via drum accompaniment and a castor oil lamp casts a violet-color glow over the circle. These are but basic elements of an intricate rite. We must also keep in mind that alchemy and astrology also are brought into play in the rite, permeating the physical practice and the mental visualization as well as the exterior trappings.

Paz's use of alchemical symbols is rooted in the alchemical poetic traditions of both East and West. Blanco with its paradoxical structure and alchemical metaphor is closer to the poetry of Donne and Quevedo than to the surrealist liberties which help to shape the earlier works. Paz seeks to reinvest language with the corporeality it still possessed in the seventeenth century. The Baroque influence is already at work in Salamandra, especially in the "Homenaje y Profanaciones a Quevedo," which in a sense is a bridge between Piedra de sol and Blanco: its themes are the death and renewal of love and perception and the transformation of memory.¹²⁰ The absence of love and the phantasms of memory let "la nada" twist perception into a "sentido sin sentido." Blanco is a sustained epiphany, whereas the earlier poem dwells on the spaces between the epiphany and is a poem of absence as well as presence; in this regard it is related to Pasado en blanco. Blanco, like the earlier poem, is an evocation of the alchemy of love, which is the imaginative philosophers' stone as the Baroque was well aware:



KEY:
DOTTED LINES
 REPRESENT
 STANZA DIV-
 ISIONS WITHIN
 BASIC AREA;
SHADED AREA
 DENOTES ITALIC
 VERSES.

A TOPOGRAPHY
 OF
BLANCO

For I am every dead thing,
 In whom love wrought new Alchimie,
 For his art did expresse
 A quintessence even from nothingnesse,
 From dull privations, and lean emptinesse:
 He ruin'd mee, and I am re-begot
 Of absence, darkness, death; things which are not.

(John Donne)¹²¹

The ensuing commentary of the poem follows its progressive unfolding. The accompanying (p. 221) numbered diagram indicates the placement of each section, and the sections are numbered accordingly.

1. Speech is summoned to the tip of the tongue where it lies latent--simultaneously fecund, a seed ready to flower into presence, and empty, absent:

el comienzo		
	el cimiento	
la simiente		
	latente	
la palabra en la punta de la lengua		
inaudita		inaudible
	impar	
grávida		nula
	sin edad	
la enterrada con los ojos abiertos		
inocente		promiscua
	la palabra	
sin nombre		sin habla

The word is an indivisible paradox: this is expressed via anti-thesis: "inaduita"/"inaudible," "grávida"/"nula," "inocente"/"promiscua." The visualization of this antithesis in type forms a mandala or yantra on the page with the word "impar" as the exact geographical center and with the antithetical pairs balanced in surrounding space. The actual physical space occupied by this poem-picture is equally distributed between type and blank space: black and white, speech and silence, presence and

absence--the eye captures the metaphor pre-logically. Moreover, each word-unit is a constellation, a signo, operating within a highly structured system. The initial four lines unfold in a zig-zag logical sequence, a temporal rhythm altered only by reflexive pause. An exercise in simultaneity and paradox, the remainder of the poem employs contrapunto and crescendo and also doubles back on its own sound track by inscribing circular reflections around the key images isolated in the central axis of the poem: "impar," "sin edad," "la palabra." Proceeding from the center one can "read" in any direction of the compass. Because the poem has an extremely plastic quality, the eye is tempted to do so with the result being a kinetic sonnet which is seen as well as heard.¹²² The initial zig-zag moves into interconnecting spirals which also form circles whose nuclei are the isolated words in the central axis: "latente," "impar," "la palabra."

The remainder of this section of Blanco's central vein expands the seed metaphor into a complex, exquisitely wrought image. Language sprouts from the primordial blackness of silence, an Orphic word ascending the mineshaft from subconsciousness:

Sube u baja,
Escalera de escapulario,
El lenguaje deshabitado.
Bajo la piel de la penumbra
Late una lámpara.

The image of the miner's ladder is very carefully chosen; we are told that we are not to be confronted with the aerial acrobatics of Huidobro or the infinite vistas of Mallarmé. The poet is not an aviator but a miner who must penetrate the bedrock of origin. These lines somehow

bring to mind the author of Tungsteno and "Los mineros salieron de la mina," Cesar Vallejo:

Son algo portentoso, los mineros,
remontando sus ruinas venideras;
elaborando su función mental
y abriendo con sus voces,
el socavón, en forma de síntoma profundo!¹²³

In El arco y la lira, where Paz characterizes Vallejo as a poet-miner as opposed to Huidobro as poet-aviator, his metaphoric description of Vallejo's poetic prefigures the metamorphosis of the central images of Blanco: "La palabra, difícilmente arrancada al insomnio, enegrece y enrojece, es piedra y es ascua, carbón y ceniza . . ."¹²⁴

Also, there seems to be a play on the word escapulario: for while Paz explains in a note the technical term, the miner's shoulder ladder, the more common meaning of scapular, a religious image on wool worn under the clothing by Catholics as an act of devotion or symbol of a special order, inevitably crosses the reader's mind. Thus, what the poet fashions is a ladder of images of universal or divine analogy. The lamp becomes an analogue of mind; and the upward trajectory of its light traces a copper stalk, which in turn yields a golden flower:

Superviviente
Entre las confusiones taciturnas,
Asciende
En un tallo de cobre
Resuelto
En en follaja de claridad:
Amparo
De caídas realidades.
O dormido
O extinto,
Alto en su vara
(Cabeza en una pica),
Un girasol

visualization whereby the yogin imagines the mantric seed syllable
 implanted on a solar disc emanating from the body center or chakra.
 The Hevajra Tantra instructs the adept to start the process with the
 syllable "RAM" invoking fire while envisioning union with the goddess
 of fire, Candali, in the chakra corresponding to the navel. The
Hevajra Tantra is unique in that it describes only four chakras instead
 of the usual six or eight and Paz adheres to its symbolism. Thus the
 yellow of the sunflower will yield to the red of fire in the next
 "step" of the poem. Avoiding all mention of the lotus symbol of the
 Tantras so as not to limit the poem to any one context, Paz expands the
 image of the sunflower which is equated with love in Baroque poetry:
 the lover turns toward the beloved as the sunflower turns toward the
 sun.¹²⁸ The parenthetical description of the flower as a head on a
 pike introduces another dimension. Jung points out that the severed
 head suspended on a pike is an archetypal image of mind, and it can be
 intuited by the reader in exactly this manner.¹²⁹ The Orphic tradition
 gives yet another dimension to the image: the severed head of the poet
 continues to sing. Moreover, since Mallarmé is a collaborator in this
 poetic adventure, it would seem to me that this image refers to the
 French poet's "Herodiade," i.e., the third section of this poem, "Can-
 tique de Saint Jean," wherein the severed head of John the Baptist
 sings of his illumination. The head and the sun are fused by Mallarmé
 into a symbol of illuminated mind:

Le soleil que sa halte
 Surnaturelle exalte
 Aussitôt redescend
 Incandescent

Je sens comme aux vertèbres
 S'éployer des ténèbres
 Toutes dans un frisson
 A l'unisson

Et ma tête surgie
 Solitaire vigie
 Dans les vols triomphaux
 De cette faux

Comme rupture franche
 Plutôt refoule ou tranche
 Les anciens désaccords
 Avec les corps

Qu'elle de jeûnes ivre
 S'opiniâtre à suivre
 En quelque bond hagard
 Son pur regard

Là haut où la froidure
 Eternelle n'endure
 Que vous le surpassiez
 Tous ô glaciers

Mais selon un baptême
 Illuminée au même
 Principe qui m'élut
 Penche un salut.

Paz's sunflower transcends pure mind, and speech, and forms a bridge
 to the missing element of the trinity, body.

2-3. As the poems of love and perception begin to fuse, we are
 presented with an antithetical portrait of fire and shadow. The lovers
 are absorbed into the image of the flame. The "physical" picture of
 the left-hand column is transmuted into an emblem in the right column:
 "leona en el circo de las llamas," with its corresponding gloss, "ánima
 entre las sensaciones":

en el muro la sombra del fuego	<i>llama rodeada le leones</i>
el el fuego tu sombra y la mía	<i>leona en el circo de las</i>
	<i>llamas</i>
el fuego te desata y te anuda	
Pan Grial Ascua	<i>frutos de luces de bengala</i>
Muchacha	<i>los sentidos se abren</i>
tu ríes--desnuda	<i>en la noche magnética</i>
en los jardines de la llama	
La pasión de la brasa compasiva	

The lioness in a circus of flames is a transformation of the sunflower, and recalls astrological illustrations of alchemical texts wherein the sun is pictured as an almost human face wreathed in flames. This personification of Ol' Sol is familiar to one and all, having extended into all facets of communication including advertising and comic books. The image also "communicates" with the line from Quevedo incorporated into the text later on: "Las altas fieras de la piel luciente" (see section 3).¹³⁰ The "girl . . . naked in the garden of the flames" is "Pan Grial Ascua." All the levels of mythological or alchemical allusion are fused in this tripartite image.

In the Tantric rite the yogini's naked body is utilized as an altar on which various comestibles are arranged: the rite is literally a fiesta, or feast. From pagan love feast, we are led to Christian tradition: the bread of Christ's body contained in the Host and the Holy Grail. The Grail is also equated with the vessel contained in the furnace of the alchemists, and this leads us to the wholly universal myth of transformation by fire, as well as alluding to the fire of passion.

The lion is also associated with the female Tantric partner or yogini who is visualized in the Buddhist rite as Dākinī, a beautiful woman with a lion's head. The Hindu Mother goddess (Durga) associated

with Tantric left-hand practice rides a lion.

4.

Un pulso, un insistir,
 Oleaje de sílabas húmedas.
 Sin decir palabra
 Oscurece mi frente
 Un presentimiento de lenguaje.
Patience patience
 (Livingston en la sequía)
River rising a little.
 El mío es rojo y se agosta
 Entre sableras llameantes:
 Castillas de arena, naipes rotos
 Y el jeroglífico (agua y brasa)
 En el pecho de México caído.
 Polvo soy de aquellos lodos.
 Río de sangre,
 Río de historias
 De sangre,
 Río seco:
 Boca de manantial
 Amordazado
 Por la conjuración anónima
 De los huesos,
 Por la ceñuda pena de los siglos
 Y los minutos:
 El lenguaje
 Es una expiación,
 Propiciación
 Al que no habla,
 Emparedado

 Cada día
 Asesinado,
 El muerto innumerable.
 Hablar
 Mientras los otros trabajan
 Es pulir huesos,
 Aguzar
 Silencios
 Hasta la transparencia,
 Hasta la ondulación
 El cabrilleo,
 Hasta el agua:

The "bridge" line of the preceding section is visualized in a new emblem: the hieroglyph of "agua y brasa" which refers to the Aztec symbol

of transmutation, literally "burning water."¹³¹ This section is a passage from fire to water. Lanauage is a dry river waiting to emulate passion's flow. History and time intervene for a moment with the references to Spain and Mexico. The poet must elude his past--and time. The quote from the explorer Livingston à propos of drought, "*Patience patience . . . River rising a little*," is another intricate complex of meanings. It alludes to the temporary block of language, and reinforces the metaphor of river as both language and woman as well as introducing the idea of the wasteland ("paramera") which will dominate the poem for a while. And, since the art of "agudeza" does not preclude verbal punning, it alludes to the alchemical state of waiting for the matter to coalesce in the furnace: patiens. The "anonymous conspiracy of bones" which muzzles the poet establishes a back-ground of death, destruction and mouldering history on which to project the forthcoming regeneration in the light of love. This coupled with the "noche magnética" (3. above) echoes the nocturnal cemetery setting of the Tantras. The great beauty of this passage is its definition of the act of poetry: ". . . pulir huesos,/Aguzar/Silencios/Hasta la transparencia."

5-6. The two columns are still not totally united. The right-hand column reiterates the telluric theme of the love poem and transforms it in the initial stanza:

los ríos de tu cuerpo
país de latidos
entrar en ti
país de ojos cerrados
agua sin pensamientos
entrar en mí
al entrar en tu cuerpo
país de espejos en vela
país de agua despierta
en la noche dormida

el río de los cuerpos
astros infusorios reptiles
torrente de cinabrio sonámbulo
oleaje de las genealogías
juegos conjugaciones juglarías
sujeto y objeto abyecto y absuelto
río de soles
'las altas fieras de la piel luciente'
rueda el río seminal de los mundos
el ojo que lo mira es otro río

Paz notes in his essay on Tantric art, "El pensamiento en blanco," that "La visión del cuerpo humano como el doble del universo . . . se desdobra en una fisiología mágica y una alquimia erótica."¹³² We see this double process here as the "river" of the bodies becomes star track, then serpentine path, and then a "torrent of somnolent cinnabar." This last image is alchemical: cinnabar is a prime ore for the extraction of quicksilver which is the alchemist's mercury. The erotic alchemy of the Chinese Tao religion repeatedly names cinnabar as one of the ingredients of the Elixir of Immortality.¹³² Indian alchemy ascribes similar properties to this substance, which is why powdered cinnabar is often used to trace the mandala in which the Tantric rites are performed. The sense of the metaphor is that the lovers are united in a steady flow of quick-silver, a paradox since mercury tends to break into a myriad tiny beads and scatter.¹³⁴ The fire image of the preceeding section is prolonged via the reddish color of cinnabar. The flux embodied in the stanza is summed up in an image which defines the relative "emptiness" of shūnyata: "el ojo que lo mira es otro río."

The second stanza reminds us that it is the eye of the beholder which creates the cosmogony, while the third "eye" of the corresponding left-hand stanza is a reference to Tantric ritual and iconography--a third eye is painted on the forehead of the yogini to symbolize the attainment of bodhicitta or illumination.

7. The three vultures which preside over this section are another reminder of death and disintegration, of the phenomenal world of samsara.¹³⁵ Accompanied by insistent drums, a frenzied fertility rite to insure the greening of the word takes place. The musical

background merges with the extended fertility metaphor with the addition of the flute and drum which are substituted for the parallel Tantaric images of lotus and thunderbolt (suggested by "centella y trueno"):

Paramera abrasada
 Del amarillo al encarnado
 La tierra es un lenguaje calcinado.
 Hay puas invisibles, hay espinas
 En los ojos.
 En un muro rosado
 Tres buitres ahitos.
 No tiene cuerpo ni cara ni alma,
 Está en todas partes,
 A todos nos aplasta:
 Este sol es injusto.
 La rabia es mineral.
 Los colores
 Se obstinan.
 Se obstina el horizonte.
 Tambores tambores tambores.
 El cielo se ennegrece
 Como esta página.
 Dispersión de cuervos.
 Inminencia de violencias violetas.
 Se levantan los arenales,
 La cerrazón de reses de ceniza.
 Mugen los árboles encadenados.
 Tambores tambores tambores
 Te golpeo cielo
 Tierra te golpeo
 Cielo abierto tierra cerrada
 Flauta y tambor centella y trueno
 Te abro te golpeo
 Te abres tierra
 Tienes la boca llena de agua
 Tu cuerpo chorrea cielo
 Tremor
 Tu panza tiembla
 Tus semillas estallan
 Verdea la palabra

8-9. The poem is consummated, and consumed, as are lovers, text
 and world fused and transformed:

se desata se esparce *árida ondulación*
 se levanta se erige *Ídolo entre brazos de arena*
 desnuda como la mente *brilla se multiplica se niega*
 en la reverberación del deseo *renace se escapa se persigue*
 girando girando *visión del pensamiento gavilán*
 en torno a la idea negra *cabra en la peña hendida*
 el vellón de la juntura *paraje desnudo*
 en la mujer desnuda *snap-shot de un latido de tiempo*
 pirausta nudo de presencias *real irreal quieto vibrante*
 inmóvil bajo el sol *inmóvil pradera quemada*
 de color de la tierra *color de sol en la arena*
 la yerba de mi sombra *sobre el lugar de la juntura*
 mis manos de lluvia *oscurecida por los pájaros*
 sobre tus pechos verdes *beatitud suficiente*
 mujer tendida *hecha a la imagen del mundo*
 El mundo haz de tus imágenes

Correspondence then is the "sufficient beatitude" of momentary union, "snap-shot de un latido de tiempo." The texts are conflated, literally fused and rubbed together to ignite. The typography of the original version further underscores this "ignition" as one column is red, the other black.

The pivotal image of this section, and of the poem, is set in motion by the somewhat uncommon word "pirausta." The primary reference here is to the pyrausta family of black and yellow butterflies which range from Europe to Afghanistan. This brilliantly colored insect is the touchstone to a complex of poetic and affective associations, a complex presented somewhat elliptically here, but subsequently elaborated on in El mono gramático (1972), a poem/essay which shares the central themes and experiences of Blanco. Glimpsed poised on an enormous sunflower in a Himalayan meadow, the pyrausta becomes the emblem of an epiphany:

. . . la mariposa aquella que vi un mediodía de Kasauli, cla-
 vada sobre un girasol negro y amarillo como ella, las alas
 abiertas, ya una muy tenue lámina de oro peruano en la que

se hubiese concentrado todo el sol de los Himalayas--están fijos, no allá: aquí, en mi mente, fijos por un instante. La fijeza siempre es momentánea. (p. 29)

The dazzling chiaroscuro of butterfly and flower is metamorphosized into another vision of transcendence: the kaleidoscopic play of firelight on the nude female form:

Una superficie inmóvil sobra la que el fuego proyecta silenciosas, rápidas sombras convulsas . . . uno, dos, tres, cuatro rayos negros emergen de un sol igualmente negro, se alargan, avanzan, ocupan todo el espacio que oscila y ondula, se funden entre ellos, rehacen el sol de sombra de que nacieron, emergen de nuevo de ese sol--como una mano que se abre, se cierra y una vez más se abre para transformarse en una hoja de higuera, un trébol, una profusión de alas negras antes de esfumarse del todo. . . . Esplendor se desnuda. . . . el fuego de la chimenea la cubre de reflejos cobrizos. . . . La luz de la hoguera se enrosca en los tobillos de Esplendor y asciende entre sus piernas hasta iluminar su pubis y su vientre. El agua color de sol moja su vello y penetra entre los labios de la vulva. La lengua templada de ciegas las paredes palpitantes. . . . sombras de una mariposa doble que abre, cierra, abre las alas.
(pp. 41-42)

In Blanco the gold and ebony butterfly fused with the sunflower of illumination suggested in the opening section of the poem evokes a similar metamorphosis and confluence of images. Whiteness or light as a metaphor of the totality of mind coalesces into two culminating images. Thought is limned as the black mass defining the center of an evanescent corolla of desire and illumination: "girando girando/en torno a la idea negra." The right-hand column simultaneously flashes the image of words taking wing, delineating presence like the momentary flash of a dark hawk in flight: "visión del pensamiento gavilán." This intense process of visualization culminates in the equation sex/butterfly.

The visual impact of the pyrausta metaphor is enriched on a more abstract plane by a wealth of literary and mythological symbolism. The butterfly drawn into the candle's flame is an emblem of passion in Renaissance and later poetry. And, of course, the butterfly is a fairly universal symbol of metamorphosis. And there is a possible specific reference to the Pyrausta of Greek mythology, a legendary firefly who sought to be consumed in the fires of passion.

10. The blankness or vacuity of understanding is reached. The five senses whirl not around the whiteness we are led to expect, but around the "introspective" amethyst, here the stone of Venus transformed, as liberated mind:

La palabra se asoma a remolinos
Azules.

Gira el anillo beodo,
Giran los cinco sentidos
Alrededor de la amatista
Ensimismada.

Translumbramiento:

No pienso, veo

--No lo que veo,
Los reflejos, los pensamientos veo.
Las precipitaciones de la música,
El número cristalizado.
Un archipiélago de signos.

. . .

Avanzo,

Mis pasos

Se disuelven
En un espacio que se desvanece
En pensamientos que no pienso.

11-12. The poem builds to a climax as its parts are fused in a metaphor of reintegration and regeneration derived from the Hindu myth of creation. The dispersal of body and language alludes to the

symbolic dismemberment of Shiva's wife, Sati.

derramada en mi cuerpo yo soy la estela de tus erosiones
tu te repartes como el lenguaje espacio dios descuartizado
tu me repartes en tus partes altar el pensamiento y el cuchillo
vientre teatro de la sangre eje de los solsticios
yedra arbórea lengua tizón de frescura el firmamento es macho
y hembra

temblor de tierra de tu grupa *testigos los testículos solares*
lluvia de tus talones en mi espalda *falo el pensar y vulva la*
palabra

ojo jaguar en espesura de pestañas *espacio es cuerpo signo*
pensamiento

la hendidura encarnada en la maleza *siempre dos sílabas enamoradas*
los labios negros de la profetisa *A d i v i n a n z a*
entera en cada parte te repartes *las espirales transfiguraciones*
tu cuerpo son los cuerpos del instante *es cuerpo el tiempo el mundo*

visto tocado desvanecido pensamiento *sin cuerpo el cuerpo imaginario*

Paz recounts the legend in his essay on Tantric art:

Los lugares de peregrinación de los adeptos tántricos son secretos y están distribuidos en los cuatro puntos cardinales según un orden simbólico. La leyenda quiere que Sati, la mujer de Siva, se autoinmole y que el dios, loco de pena, cargue sobre sus hombros el cadáver y, danzando furiosamente, lo disperse por toda la India: en un sitio cayeron los senos de la diosa, en otros la boca y la lengua, en otros el sexo. . . . En cada uno de esos lugares se edificó un santuario.

La geografía religiosa del tantrismo es un homólogo del rito del sacrificio. (Otro ejemplo de geografía mítico-corporal: en algunos Tantras budistas el lugar de predicación de la doctrina es la vulva de Prajnaparamita = Perfecta Sabidura = otra-orilla-alcanzada = vacuidad.) La operación es una reconstitución: la vuelta de los tiempos es un regreso a la unidad. La analogía es más notable si se recuerdan dos antiguos textos. El primero: Sati es hija de Daksa que, según un himno védico (Rg Veda 10.72), es uno de los nombres del dios creador y el origen de la diosa madre. El segundo: el mundo y la humanidad, según otro himno védico (Rg Veda 10.90), nacieron por el autosacrificio de un demiurgo que despedaza su cuerpo de manera semejante al de Sati: "su boca fue el brahman, de sus brazos nació el guerrero, de sus piernas el artesano, el servidor nació de sus pies . . . el aire salió de su ombligo, de su cabeza brotó el cielo, la tierra de sus pies: así se hizo el mundo." 136

The thirty-two places sacred to Tantrics are symbolically represented by the thirty-two poems which make up Blanco. The integration of these poetic parts recapitulates the paradoxical unification of the fragments of experience in love. The image also rests in the framework of the Orphic tradition of language: the severed head of the poet Orpheus continues to sing. The image is not accessible only to initiates. The ritual dismemberment of a god is basic to most of the world's religions, including the Aztec, with its rite of teoqualo or god-eating wherein a dough figure of the god Huitzilopochtli is divided and consumed by the participants. According to legend Huitzilopochtli was slain by the priest Quetzalcoatl and his body divided among all. The Near East abounds with mystery religions with a similar legend: the dismemberment of the Egyptian god Osiris, the sacrificial world bull of Mithraism, the visions of the third-century alchemist and philosopher Zosimus of Panopolis, in which a high priest dismembers himself, and the sacrifice and rebirth of Dionysus Zagreus. Greek alchemy gives us the rebirth symbol of the ouroboros or serpent devouring its tail; European alchemy transforms this image into the self-devouring dragon or lion.¹³⁷ Mircea Eliade finds the same symbolism in the initiation rites of shamanism.¹³⁸ Thus the central image of Blanco is derived not from a new way of "seeing" a relationship between two disparate objects in the tradition of Lautréamont and the surrealists, but from a universal archetype. Thus Blanco operates partially as ritual, substituting a carefully selected set of traditional symbols for free association.

13-14. The symbolism of the preceding verses is reinforced by a creation myth which is both Hindu and universal: wind as pneuma

or universal breath, "Viento entero," ". . . cuerpo/Casa del viento."

Contemplada por mis oídos	Horizonte de música tendida
olida por mis ojos	Puente colgante del color al aroma
acariciada por mi olfato	Olor desnudez en las manos del aire
oída por mi lengua	Cántico de los sabores
comida por mi tacto	Festín de niebla

habitar tu nombre	Despoblar tu cuerpo
caer en tu grito contigo	Casa de viento
La irrealdad de lo mirado	
Da realidad a la mirada	

15. The two poems which form the remaining center column repacitulate the poetic rite and reflect on it. We are first introduced to a series of baroque anthitheses:

En el centro	
Del mundo del cuerpo del espíritu	
La grieta	El resplandor
No	
En el remolino de las desapariciones	
El torbellino de las apariciones	
sí	
El árbol de los nombres	
No	
Es una palabra	
Sí	
Es una palabra	
Aire son nada	
Son	
Este insecto	
Revoloteando entre las líneas	
De la página	
Incabada	
Incabable	
El pensamiento	
Revoloteando	
Entre estas palabras	

Indeed this poem in conception and execution continues and transforms the Baroque epithalamion or marriage song.¹³⁹ Paz's much-revered John Donne would have delighted in Blanco. I must resist the temptation to quote all of Donne's lines which come to mind while reading Blanco,

but the following lines from the marriage song for Lady Elizabeth and Count Palantine will serve as a "sympathetic" talisman:

VII

Here lyes a shee Sunne, and a hee Moone here,
 She gives the best light to his Spheare,
 Or each is both, and all, and so
 They unto one another nothing owe . . .
 . . .

VIII

And by this act these two Phenixes
 Nature againe restored is,
 For since these two are two no more,¹⁴⁰
 Ther's but one Phenix still, as was before.

As the passage progressed yet another imaginative complex is introduced, the nim tree, invoked in the garden of "Cuento de dos jardines" (p. 137, Ladera este) to preside over the poet's marriage:

Chuang Tseu le pidió al cielo sus luminarias,
 Sus címbalos al viento,
 Para sus funerales.
 Nosostros le pedimos al nim que nos casara.

The nim and the background music of the sitar are transformed into "El arbol de los nombres" and the silent music, "inaudita," "inaudible," of universal harmony in what can only be described by Paz's own paradoxical term--"Metamorfosis de lo idéntico" ("Cuento de dos jardines", p. 140):

Son

Tus pasos en el cuarto vecino
 Los pájaros que regresan
 El árbol nim que nos protege
 Los protege
 Sus ramas acallan al trueno
 Apagan al relámpago
 En su follaje bebe agua la sequía

Son
 Esta noche
 (Esta música)
 Mírala fluir
 Entre tus pechos caer
 Sobre tu vientre
 Blanca y negra
 Primavera nocturna
 Jasmín y ala de cuervo
 Tamborino y
 No y Sí
 Juntos
 Dos sílabas enamoradas
 Si el mundo es real
 La palabra es irreal
 Si es real la palabra
 El mundo
 Es la grieta el resplandor el remolino
 No
 Las desapariciones y las apariciones
 Sí
 El árbol de los nombres
 Real irreal
 Son palabras
 Aire son nada
 El habla
 Irreal
 Da realidad al silencio
 Callar
 Es un tejido de lenguaje
 Silencio
 Sello
 Centelleo
 En la frente
 En los labios
 Antes de evaporarse
 Apariciones y desapariciones
 La realidad y sus resurrecciones
 El silencio reposa en el habla

The tree image here is a simultaneous evocation and modification
 of the archetypal image of the cosmic tree of countless mythologies or
 the arbor philosophica of alchemy. The cosmic tree is an imago mundi
 and a symbol of man's union with the divine. Like man, its roots grope
 downward into darkness while its head seeks heaven. In India this
 vital symbol made obvious in everyday life and religion: Buddha obtained

illumination under the Bodhi tree, and a score of other saints Hindu as well as Buddhist are reputed to have sought illumination or preached sermons sheltered by a tree (be it fig, nim, or banian is unimportant here). What the nim reveals to Paz is not divine light, but the light of "presencia suficiente" (p. 30), as Paz explains in Pasado en claro:

No me habló dios entre las nubes;
entre las hojas de la higuera
me habló el cuerpo, los cuerpos de mi cuerpo.
. . . .

Dedos de luz abrían los follajes.
Zumbar de abejas en mi sangre:
el blanco advenimiento.
Me arrojó la descarga
a la orilla más sola. Fui un extraño
entre las vastas ruinas de la tarde.
Atónita en lo alto del minuto
la carne se hace verbo--y el verbo se despena.
Saberse desterrado en la tierra, siendo tierra,
es saberse mortal. Secreto a voces
y también secreto vacío . . .

(pp. 30-32)

The word is not made flesh; the flesh is made word. Sexual love is not a metaphor of divine love, as it is for the mystic poets. It engenders a dialogue, not with the divine but with the self, and all too often with nothingness. When union results, it is the "other," not the Other. The Tantric adept seeks to attain magic powers (siddhi) which enable him to fly through the heavens. The poetic and erotic ritual of Blanco accrues a different kind of siddhi: not the magic of flight but the power to leap from presence to presence, body to body, word to word, across the void which looms between, la muerte,--not immortality but rather trans-mortality, with love and poetry as the bridge. The poet's flight is that of the imagination, the image-making faculty; and in

modern times this means he must fashion his image of the world without the divine image as model.

Yet even if God is dead, his voice still echoes in space, a silent harmony which pervades the poet's song, a music of the mind. This is the sense of the musical motif woven into the fabric of this poem-ritual, and crystallized here in the parenthetical "(música)." There is a corporeal music, as Paz reminds us in "Lectura de John Cage":

En el silencio de mi cuarto
 El rumor de mi cuerpo:
 Inaudito.
 Una día oiré sus pensamientos.
 La tarde
 Se ha detenido:
 No obstante--camina.
 Mi cuerpo oye al cuerpo de mi mujer
 (A cable of sound)
 Y le responde:
 Esto se llama música.
 (Ladera este, p. 82)

141 And, there is the music which is somehow sustained in the nothingness that Buddhists call shūnyatā: "Every something is an echo of nothing." These are the words of Cage who also formulates this Mallarméan admonition to the West: "Not one sound fears the silence which extinguishes it."¹⁴¹ As one's eye comes to rest on this one isolated word, música, there is a conflation of all these musical images, and a momentary pause in which the mind gathers in the strands of an unheard raga alluded to throughout not only Blanco but the greater part of Ladera este via mention of the mridangam and other drum-like instruments, and the flute and the sitar. For Paz, the poem's field of composition is very much like the possibilities of the raga, an improvisational form

subject, however, to a predetermined rhythm--the Sanskrit word "raga" also means "mind." Poetry is measure; we are constantly reminded of this. For Paz the discovery of not only the raga but such composers as John Cage and Anton von Webern confirms his poetic instinct. He recounts that this discovery comes late, during his sojourn in India (1962-1968).¹⁴² That there is a latent affinity between the raga and the poem as conceived by Paz is already evident in Piedra de sol where automatism and improvisation serve a central rhythm, and endless repetition and variation prepare the mind for a sudden transparency, a luminous unity. The poem, like the raga, turns back upon itself to capitulate the main theme. For the Indian, music has an analogical function; it recaptures the rhythm of creation, for Brahma is said to have created the world from sound. Similar principles govern the compositions of the modern Austrian composer Anton von Webern to whom Paz dedicates "Lo idéntico":

Espacios

Espacio

Sin centro ni arriba ni abajo

Se devora y se engendra y no cesa

Espacio remolino

Y caída hacia arriba

Espacios

Claridades cortadas a pico

Suspendidas

Al flanco de la noche

Jardines negros de cristal de roca

En una vara de humo florecidos

Jardines blancos que estallan en el aire

Espacios

Un solo espacio que se abre

Corola

U se disuelve

Espacio en el espacio

Todo es ninguna parte

Lugar de las nupcias impalpables.

(Ladera este, p. 87)

traversed by the poet and his wife, and their subsequent stay in Cambridge where Paz was lecturing at Oxford University.

The road to Galta also leads to India's mythological past. Hanumān the monkey king who came to Rāma's aid in the epic Rāmāyana is the guide. According to the Rāmāyana the monkey leader was the ninth author of grammar as well as a savant; therefore, the notion of animal communication as part of the universal language which poetry can only imperfectly translate enters the warp of the essay: Hanumān succeeds in reducing the forest to a catalog, "Una página de enmarañada caligrafía vegetal" (p. 46). The simian's progress through the forest is a reading of signs along a path. Language is like a path, as it is traversed it appears, then disappears, and so it is that the reader following the path of Paz's language participates in a perpetual metamorphosis. Hanumān's path becomes the poet's, and we are transported to an English garden whose trees become the incarnation of Blanco's "el árbol de los nombres":

Manchas: malezas: borrones. Tachaduras. Preso entre las líneas, las lianas de las letras. Ahogado por los trazos, los lazos de las vocales. Mordido, picoteado por las pinzas, los garfios de las consonantes. Maleza de signos: negación de los signos. Gesticulación estúpida, grotesca ceremonia. Plétora termina en extinción; los signos se comen a los signos. Maleza se convierte en desierto, algarabía en silencio: arenales de letras.

(p. 39)

entre mis labios el árbol desaparece mientras lo digo y al desvanecerse aparece: míralo, torbellino de hojas y raíces y ramas y tronco en mitad del ventarrón, chorro de verde bronceada sonora hojosa realidad aquí en la página:

míralo allá, en la eminencia del terreno, míralo: opaco entre la masa opaca de los árboles, míralo irreal en su bruta realidad muda, míralo no dicho:

la realidad más allá del lenguaje no es del todo realidad, realidad que no habla ni dice no es realidad . . .

(p. 52)

The grotesque ceremony of the trees touched by the erotic transports us to the garden of Eden. It is this very scene which forms the erotic substrata of Blanco, so I shall quote it in its entirety:

Espesura indescifrable de líneas, trazos, volutas, mapas: discurso del fuego sobre el muro. Una superficie inmóvil recorrida por una claridad parpadeante: temblor de agua transparente sobre el fondo quieto del manantial iluminado por invisibles reflectores. Una superficie inmóvil sobre la que el fuego proyecta silenciosas, rápidas sombras convulsas: bajo las ondulaciones del agua clarísima se deslizan con celeridad fantasmas oscuros. Uno, dos, tres, cuatro rayos negros emergen de un sol igualmente negro, se alargan, avanzan, ocupan todo el espacio que oscila y ondula, se funden entre ellos, rehacen el sol de sombra de que nacieron, emergen de nuevo de ese sol--como una mano que se abre, se cierra y una vez más se abre para transformarse en una hoja de higuera, un trébol, una profusión de alas negras antes de esfumarse del todo. . . . Las sombras se enlazan y cubren todo el muro. Se desenlazan. Burbujas en el centro de la superficie líquida, círculos concéntricos, tañen allá abajo campanas sumergidas. Esplendor se desnuda con una mano sin soltar con la otra la verga de su pareja. Mientras se desnuda, el fuego de la chimenea la cubre de reflejos cobrizos. Ha dejado su ropa al lado y se abre paso nadando entre las sombras. La luz de la hoguera se enrosca en los tobillos de Esplendor y asciende entre sus piernas hasta iluminar su pubis y su vientre. El agua color de sol moja su vello y penetra entre los labios de la vulva. La lengua templada de llama sobre la humedad de la crica; la lengua entre y palpa a ciegas las paredes palpitantes. El agua de muchos dedos abre las valvas y frota el obstinado botón eréctil escondido entre repliegues chorreantes. Se enlazan y desenlazan los reflejos, las llamas, las ondas. Sombras trémulas sobre el espacio que respira como un animal, sombras de una mariposa doble que abre, cierra, abre las alas. Nudos. Sobre el cuerpo tendido de Esplendor sube y baja el oleaje. Sombra de un animal bebiendo sombras entre las piernas abiertas de la muchacha. El agua: la sombrea; la luz: el silencio. La luz; el agua; la sombra: el silencio. El silencio: el agua; la luz: la sombra.

(pp. 41-42)

On the tangled branches of the trees is inscribed a story from the Rāmāyana, a harem scene in which the alphabet of the body re-eroticizes language:

[Hanumān] Vio a muchas mujeres tendidas sobre esteras, en variados trajes y atavíos, el pelo adornado con flores; dormían bajo la influencia del vino, espúes de haber pasado la mitad de la noche en juegos. . . . Aquellas mujeres eran ríos: sus muslos, las ribera; las ondulaciones del pubis y del vientre, los rizos del agua bajo el viento; sus grupas y senos, las colinas y eminencias que el curso rodea y ciñe; los lotos, sus caras; los cocodrilos, sus deseos; sus cuerpos sinuosos, el cauce de la corriente. . . . unas dormían recostadas sobre el vientre de una compañera o entre sus muslos y otras apoyaban la cabeza en el hombro de su vecina y ocultaban el rostro entre sus pechos y así se acoplaban las unas con las otras como las ramas de una misma arboleda. Aquellas mujeres de talles estrechos se entrelazaban entre ellas al modo de las trepadoras cuando cubren los troncos de los árboles y abren sus corolas al viento de marzo. Aquellas mujeres se entretejían y encadenaban con sus brazos y piernas hasta formar una enramada intricada y selvática (Sundara Kund, IX)

(pp. 57-58)

While Hanumān deciphers the language of the branches, on another plane the couple see their shadows transformed by the fire's light:

Los cuerpos que se desnudan bajo la mirada del otro y bajo la propia, las caricias que los anudan y desanudan, la red de sensaciones que los encierra y los comunica entre ellos al incomunicarlos del mundo, los cuerpos instantáneos que forman dos cuerpos en su afán por ser un solo cuerpo--todo eso se transformaba en una trama de símbolos y jeroglíficos. No podían leerlos: inmersos en la realidad pasional de sus cuerpos, sólo percibían fragmentos de la otra pasión que se representaba en el muro.

(p. 60)

As the book unfolds mythology and reality fuse in the creation of an erotic and poetic ritual of reintegration which parallels that of

Blanco:

Vuelve al lado de Esplendor y mira los reflejos del fuego deslizarse sobre su cuerpo. . . . Ahora puede verla y abarcarla. Antes sólo había entrevisto pedazos de ella: un muslo, un codo, la palma de una mano, un pie, una rodilla, una oreja escondida en un mata de pelo húmedo, un ojo entre pestañas, la suavidad de las corvas y de las ingles hasta llegar a la zona oscura y áspera, la maleza negra y mojada entre sus dedos, la lengua entre los dientes y los labios, cuerpo más palpado que visto, cuerpo hecho de pedazos de cuerpo. . . nunca el cuerpo

sino sus partes, cada parte una instantánea totalidad a su vez inmediatamente escindida, cuerpo segmentado descuartizado despedazado.

(p. 63)

Al reflejarse en la pared, esos moviminetos inventan una pantomima en la que, festín y ritual, se descuartiza a una víctima y se esparcen sus partes en un espacio que cambia continuamente de forma y dirección, como las estrofas de un poema que una voz despliega sobre la móvil página del aire. Las crecen y el muro se agita con violencia como una arboleda golpeada por el viento. El cuerpo de Splendor se retuerce, se desgaja y se reparte en una, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez porciones--hasta desvanecerse enteramente.

(p. 65)

The free and open format of El mono gramático allows Paz to incorporate the creation myth which shapes the erotic ritual in the text itself; it appears as the converging point of the erotic and poetic motifs of the first part of the book. We learn that Splendor was created by the god Prajapati in the process of creating the world. She was so lovely that the gods desired her and divided her among them. When she appealed to Prajapati, he yielded to her beauty and advised her to perform the sacrificial ritual with its ten offerings. As she made each offering a part of her body was restored. The story is recorded in the Satapatha Brahmana, and Paz comments: "En esta secuencia litúrgica hay diez divinos, diez oblaciones, diez recompensas, diez porciones del grupo del sacrificio, and el Poema que la dice consiste en estrofas de versos de diez sílabas. El Poema no es otro que Esplendor" (p. XX). Myth and reality exist in a perfect symbiosis, each transmuting the other as they fuse into one identity in the first part of this remarkable text. A poem results which is not only created but creates: the second part of the text muses on the insights gained in the unfolding of the first. For although it started out as an essay

on aesthetics for the Skira series provocatively entitled "The Paths of Creation" ("Les Sentiers de la création") it cannot help but be poetry since the poem has become its own best criticism in this century.

While the balance of the book tends to reflect on language, it has one somewhat poetic passage which modifies the beginning of the book, the description on a religious festival which drives home a point implicit in the earlier sections: in India the sacred and the profane are still one and the same. Unlike most of us, the Indian doesn't have to yearn for a lost age when ritual incarnated a perpetual present, for religion still structures everyday life. Yet the sordid and cacophonous features of these festivals is basically repulsive to the Westerner. As Paz says in "Poema a John Cage," *samsāra* just isn't *nirvāna*. It is just as hard to hear the music of the spheres in a Rajasthan village as it is in the noise-polluted cities of the West:

. . . ayes y alas, gong y panderos, el rumor de follajes de las faldas de las mujeres, el ruido de lluvia de los pies descalzos sobre el polvo, risas y quejas: estruendo de agua despeñada, bote y rebote de gritos y cantos, algarabías de niños y pájaros, algaraniñas y pajarabías, plegarias de los perendigos, babeantes súplicas de los mendigros, gluglú de dialectos, hervor de idiomas, fermentación y efervescencia del líquido verbal, burbujas y gorgoritos que escenden del fondo de la sopa baélica y estallan al llegar al aire, le multitud y su oleaje, su multieje y su multiola, su multialud, el multisol sobre la soledumbre, la pobredumbre bajo el alasol, el olasol en su solitud, el solalumbre sobre la podrecumbre, multisola

(p. 102)

To the voices of the monkey grammarian and the poet is added a third voice, the language of painting. The original French-language

143 edition is accompanied by a wealth of photos and paintings, the majority of which enter into a dialogue with the text. Sometimes the book is a commentary of the picture; and in a number of felicitous instances, the picture enters into silent communion with the printed word. (In the subsequent Spanish edition most of the pictures were excluded, resulting in a lamentable mutilation of the original work.) The pictures are ordered by the same organic development which molds the text: the "reading" forms and dissipates images, and, accordingly, the last photo illustration (the ruins of Galta's palace) is produced in ghostly reverse and seems to fade right on the page. The "languages" of the pictorial text are in turn logical, enigmatic, erotic, "realistic," and metaphysical. The photographs taken on the Indian trip while portraits of the place and its people have a habit of turning speculative, i.e., the impenetrable gaze of the grimy and naked mystics encountered on the road. El mono gramático incorporates the three main viaducts by which poetry and art have communicated in the past, namely the verbal "emb-lem," the gloss of a work of art by literature, and the mutual depend-ency of the written and painted image in a single work.¹⁴³ Perhaps the most complex emblem is the final one which knits up all the possibilities of the text: the monkey grammarian as "ideogram of the poet":

Hanumān: mono/grama del lenguaje, de su dinamismo y de su incesante producción de invenciones fonéticas y semánticas. Ideograma del poeta, señor/servidor de la metamorfosis universal: simio imitador, artista de las repeticiones, es el animal aristotélico que copia del natural pero asimismo es la semilla semántica, la semilla-bomba enterrada en el subsuelo verbal y que nunca se convertirá en la planta que espera su sembrador, sino el la otreá, siempre otra. Los furtos sexuales y las flores carnívoras de la alteridad brotan del tallo único de la identidad (p. 133)

Sometime in the last hundred years language has become divorced from art as well as from the body. This has been partially the fault of recent efforts by the aestheticians to divide artistic production into rigid concepts of genre based on temporal or spatial development. It is also perhaps due to that brand of criticism which tars a highly imaginative spirit as escapist. Poets who write poems about a picture are branded as esthetes: Wallace Stevens is a prime example. This attitude runs counter to the accepted interdependence of poetry and art in the past: "ut pictura poesis" Horace tells us. Many of our great poets are artists as well: Blake, Goethe, Lorca, Michaux, Schwitters, Char, Arp, etc. And some of those who are not are our most perceptive art critics: Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Breton, Pound and Paz.¹⁴⁴ In China and Japan, poetry and painting form part of a harmonious whole: all forms of verse from the lyrical to the satirical are accompanied by brush paintings or drawings which re-iterate the experience of the poem. As a rule the poet and the painter are one and the same. The poet Wang Wei, one of China's great poets, is her greatest landscape painter; in Japan Buson enjoys a similar dual fame. In Japan the ageneric hai-bun or travel diary mixing prose, verse and picture of which Bashō's Narrow Road to the Deep North, translated by Paz as Sendas de Oku, is a good example of this totality. And, perhaps the hai-bun is the only form to which El mono can be compared. However, the kinetic creation of Paz's path does have one Western counterpart, the analogical poetical essay created by André Breton and Louis Aragon. Breton's Arcane 17 (1944) and Aragon's Le Paysan de Paris (1926) are accounts of a journey or passage which is both physical and spiritual.

The central quest of all three works is the destruction of man's image of the world by the horrors of war and the advances of "civilization" and the shaping of a "new" analogy. For each poet the path to vision leads to love as the only access to a higher reality. Each of these works stands apart from the rest of the poet's production. In the case of Breton and Aragon, the poem-essay, although it is an open work structured by analogy, is a radical departure from the automatic wholly illogical work they had sought to establish as the surrealist norm. For Paz, El mono gramático is an equally radical departure from the tightly structured recent poems; and his language achieves new heights of intensity. These three defy all notion of genre and pioneer in the establishment of a new order which George Steiner has classified as the Pythagorean genre, i.e., works which are shaped by a hidden cosmic order and not by traditional boundaries of genre, Orphic works. The Pythagorean genre "recalls a time in which literary form was an act of magic, an exorcism of ancient chaos. A time when metaphysics and minerology spoke verse, and words had the driven force of the dance."¹⁴⁵

Notes

1. Somapoetics (Michigan, 1973), p. 27.
2. The seed is an archetypal image of unexpanded consciousness as Northrop Frye comments (Fearful Symmetry, Princeton, 1947, pp. 347-48):

The natural man is, speaking in terms of conscious vision, an imaginative seed. Just as the seed is a dry sealed packet of solid "matter," so the natural mind is a tight skull-bound shell of abstract ideas. And just as the seed is surrounded by a dark world which we see as an underworld, so the physical universe, which surrounds the natural man on all sides, and is dark in the same sense that he cannot see its extent, is the underworld of the mind, the den of Urthona, the cave of Plato's Republic. The majority of seeds in nature die as seeds, and in human life all natural men, all the timid, all the stupid and all the evil, remain in the starlight cavern of the fallen mind, hibernating in the dormant winter night of time. They are embryos of life only, infertile seeds, and die within the seed-world. The possibility of life within them remains in its embryonic form of abstract ideas, shadows and dreams. Some of the dreams are troubled visions of the real world of awakened consciousness: others are the nightmares of paralyzing horror which all minds in a stupor of inertia are a prey to. Here and there a seed puts out a tentative shoot into the real world, and when it does so it escapes from the darkness of burial into the light of immortality. Such a seed, however, would only have begun its development, for the vegetable life is not the most highly organized form of life, because it is still bound to nature. The animal symbolizes a higher stage of development of breaking its navel-string, and his earth-bound freedom of movement is represented in our present physical level.

However, the modern poet modifies the archetype, making the seed represent a return, not to a vegetable state, but to the known, the safe world of reality. The seed marks a return not to the embryo, but to the womb itself, the Great Mudder (Quasha). Seed = word just as shell and husk are also metaphors for language. Its husk encircles reality. The word, the name, saves us from Eternity, plants us in time, i.e. Robert Kelly:

... they pluck soft
exactness
from the shells of words

("Attentions," Kali Yuga [New York, 1970])

. . . or Kelly's "Language is the only genetics." (The Mill of Particulars [Los Angeles, 1973]). To take the next step in poetic evolution, Norman O. Brown tells us is to "Get nothingness back into words;" to "Remain faithful to the earth; but the earth has no other refuge except to become invisible: in us." (Love's Body, [New York, 1966]). Another key critical work devoted to this subject is Marshall McLuhan's Gutenberg Galaxy (Toronto, 1972).

3. The edition cited throughout is Era (Mexico, 1971).
4. "Preface," Oeuvres complètes (Paris; Gallimard, 1945), p. 455. All references are to this edition.
5. Ibid. Mallarmé criticism has made much of the musical system of notation underlying the structure of "Un coup de dés." All too often, however, mention is made of the importance of sound or of sonority in connection with the poem. However, Mallarmé's 'instrumentation' here due to the simultaneous presentation of themes is for a jazz quartet, not for a solitary human voice. The measure here is largely mental. In other poems, notably the sonnet rhyming in "yx," Mallarmé does deliberately use the physical power of the words in an incantation which again eludes recital as well as a logical development of thought.
6. A Step for Mankind: The Evolutionary Context of the Moon Landings, Palenville, New York, 1971, p. 6.
7. Ibid., p. 6.
8. Ibid., p. 15.
9. Ibid., p. 28. Hence the shell as a metaphor of isolation, "The shellfishness of selfishness" (N.O. Brown, Love's Body, p. 44) This metaphor is expanded by Mallarmé in the sonnet rhyming in "yx." See part 2 of this chapter regarding the elaboration of this image in Blanco.
10. Ibid., p. 31.
11. Oeuvres, p. 435.
12. Ibid., p. 443.
13. See Paz's translation and commentary of the sonnet, "El soneto en ix," in El signo y el garabato, 1973.
14. In "Altazor" the word is paracaídas and parasubidas, i.e., an insufficient medium through which to express ineffable experience but at the same time the only salvation from that Eternity in the guise of nothingness which lurks behind the transparency achieved in visionary experience. Also see Note 2 above.

15. See Note 13 above. The translation is dated 1968. Paz has affirmed a number of times in interviews and at readings that Mallarmé is a key influence in the development of Blanco. Subsequently he finds Mallarmé's approach to the Livre solipsistic, and after studying Dante, finds him to be the great poet of the West.
16. The Brazilian movement was initiated in 1952 with the founding of a magazine Noigandres, a name which refers to Ezra Pound's gloss of Arnaut Daniel's use of this obscure word in the fifth Canto. In 1955 Augusto de Campos gave the movement its name. The Brazilians joined forces with the Swiss poet and painter Eugen Gomringer during that same year. The movement has spread throughout the world. Cross fertilization has produced many departures from the original "objective" theory. For Brazil see the comprehensive essay of Ramón Xirau for a comprehensive bibliography ("Teoría de la poesía concreta en Brazil" in Poesía Iberoamericana, Mexico, 1972) as well as Teoría de la poesía concreta (São Paulo, 1965). The most comprehensive European study is Pierre Garnier's Spatialisme et poésie concrete (Paris, 1968). Milton Klonsky (Speaking Pictures) like Garnier sees subjective possibilities for the spatial or picture poem.
17. Plano-piloto para poesia concreta (São Paulo, 1961).
18. Quoted by Milton Klonsky, Speaking Pictures (New York, 1975).
19. "La topoética de Octavio Paz," in Fundadores de la nueva poesía latinoamericana, Barcelona, 1971, pp. 232, 3.
20. Poesía Iberoamericana, pp. 173-74.
21. See, for example, René Char, La nuit talismanique (Geneva, 1972). The hand-written poem is not confined to one page. The most ambitious attempt is a long poem--Back Roads and Faraway Places, Lawrence Ferlinghetti (New York, 1972), inspired by Bashō's travel diaries.
22. El signo y el garabato, p. 19.
23. See Werner Schmallenbach, Kurt Schwitters (New York, 1967).
24. See Paz's essay on Duchamp. Marcel Duchamp o El castillo de la pureza (1968).
25. Garnier, Spatialisme, p. 134.
26. Again, the following material is largely based on Frances A. Yates' Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. Also see Mario Praz, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery, 2nd ed. (Rome, 1964).
27. For discussion of the Cabala, see Chapter One, pp. 13.

28. See Chapter Four, section 6, regarding the emergence of this theme in Paz in El mono gramático.
29. The rebus and the impresse relate to the Buddhist and Hindu mandala, a circular symbolical representation of the cosmos, as well as the Tibetan prayer wheel in that all are intended as implements for meditation, or learning.
30. Quoted by Milton Klonsky in Speaking Pictures (New York 1975), pp. 86-7. Klonsky's book traces the evolution of "emblem" to concrete poetry. It is worthwhile in that it contains a wealth of illustrations not easily come by. However, in his introductory historical sketch, he doesn't discuss the great influence of the Cabala on the Neoplatonists. The book might also mention the Welsh tree alphabet, and the influence of Ramon Llull and alchemy on Renaissance esoteric emblems or diagrams. In addition to Yates and Praz (see Note 1. above), the reader might consult E. Iversen, The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs (Copenhagen, 1961).
31. Spain differs somewhat from the rest of Europe. While emblems and devices enjoyed a great vogue due to the Jesuits' use of them as a didactic tool, they did not infiltrate poetry as such. However, they were verbalized as baroque conceits. Góngora's syntax, for example, emulates the rebus. Baltasar Gracián's Agudeza y arte de ingenio (1649) reflects this preoccupation with the conceit, both verbal and pictorial, commenting on Martial's epigrams and Alciati's emblems. The Mexican poetess Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz did produce an emblem book, Neptuno alegórico, océano de colores . . . (1680). There is a plethora of didactic emblem literature; Saavedra Fajardo's Idea de un Príncipe político cristiano (1640) exemplifies this tendency. Saint Ignatius of Loyola advocated visualization of the horrors of hell as an aid to contemplation, and the imaginista painters executed horrifying visions of the inferno. This practice is similar to the process of visualization employed by the Tantrics, especially by the Tibetan Buddhists who incorporated the infernal iconography of the primitive Bon religion. While the topoema participates in the ideographic "emblem" tradition, Blanco is part of the complementary tendency towards imaginative visualization, though it conjures up paradise, not Hell.
32. Klonsky, p. 47.
33. Klonsky, p. 56.
34. El mundo es un laberinto poético. Trátase de los laberintos de Porphyrio poeta (Madrid, 1633). Quoted by Praz, pp. 19-20.
35. For a detailed study of the importance of Hermetism in Milton's syncretic Christianity, see Denis Saurat, Literature and Occult Tradition (New York, 1930).

36. Blake is the most widely known "emblem" poet of our time since he is a seminal figure in the vein of modern poetry which runs from Romanticism to Symbolism and surrealism. To attempt to choose among the vast valuable Blake bibliography would be an impertinence; however, I will cite one work which deals specifically with Blake's symbols: George Wingfield Digby's Symbol and Image in William Blake (London, 1957), wherein The Gates of Paradise is examined in toto.
37. "Orphée," Œuvres poétiques (Paris, 1965).
38. See Tristan Tzara, ed. R. Lacôte and G. Haldas (Paris: Seghers, 1952), p. 165.
39. Œuvres, p. 367.
40. Ibid., p. 367.
41. Ibid., pp. 662-63.
42. "Sainte," Œuvres, p. 53.
43. The Orphic Voice: Poetry as Natural History (New Haven, 1960). The following discussion of poetry and taxonomy is based on this work.
44. Introduction to part III of Philosophie Zoologique (Paris, 1809), quoted by Sewell, p. 437. Coleridge's and other Romantic theories of the imagination are explored by Morris Abram's The Mirror and the Lamp (New York, 1958).
45. Sewell, The Orphic Voice, pp. 205-06.
46. Quoted by Sewell, p. 256.
47. Ibid., p. 173.
48. Ibid., p. 251.
49. Ibid., p. 250.
50. It is in this year that Mallarmé has his first vision of the Néant. See Thomas Williams, Mallarmé and the Language of Mysticism (Athens, Georgia, 1970), Chap. 3, for the sequence of the letters to Cazalis which record his visions of the Néant during the transitional period (1864-70) leading to his insight into the ultimate nature of Being. From 1870 on he works to find a form and language in which to express that vision. The projected Orphic Book which would be an analogue of the universe is described in "Au Quant au Livre" (1895)--see the Œuvres. 1870 is generally accepted as the turning point in Mallarmé's work: see the critical works by Michaud, Blanchot and Davies listed in the Bibliography.

51. Collected Letters (London, 1956), vol. 2, p. 830.
52. This and subsequent page references to "The Prelude" are to Selected Poems and Prefaces, ed. J. Stillinger (Boston, 1965).
53. I use "emblem" here in its established "genre" sense. Wordsworth describes his vision as "emblem" in "The Prelude," Book XIV, p. 358.
54. For an extensive analysis of the shell image in modern poetry and its symbolism in general, see Gaston Bachelard, La poétique de l'espace (Paris, 1958).
55. Anabase I, Œuvre poétique, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 127. Future page references are to this edition.
56. Amers (Paris, 1957) IX, 4, 2: "tu fréquenteras encore le vrai du songe" (Œuvre, vol. w, p. 245).
57. "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;"--from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," The Complete Poems and Plays (New York, 1971), p. 5.
58. Neo-epic is rather loosely used by contemporary criticism to describe any long poem which describes the quest for an adequate language. This same term is applied to an epic-length poem such as Pound's Cantos or Wordsworth's The Prelude as well as to much shorter long poems with a tightly structured musical development such as the long poems of T.S. Eliot or Paz. This is confusing, so I have reserved the term neo-epic for the book-length poems which deal with perception, and language as expression of an analogical view of the universe. These are also the characteristics of the critical poem envisioned by Mallarmé, so I have generally referred throughout to the "critical and/or analogical long poem."
 Examples of the neo-epic discussed here are mostly limited to those poems which have directly figured in Paz's poetical development. However, no discussion of the neo-epic is complete without mention of the monumental work of Nikos Kazantzakis, The Odyssey: A Sequel (tr. Kimon Friar; New York, 1958). This work, while it has not influenced Paz, is worthwhile reading in conjunction with Piedra de sol and Blanco. Although it posits a more classic solution to problems of the neo-epic, it also revolves about a central sun metaphor and recounts a journey to the whiteness of illumination. Blanco is a universal ritual; The Odyssey is a myth of myths. Too, both poets have made profound studies of the significance of Buddhism for the West.
 Other indispensable readings in this area are the neo-epics of Louis Aragon, especially Le Roman inachevé (1956), Les Poètes (1960) and Le Fou d'Elsa (1963). [All are published by Gallimard, Paris.]
59. See Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp.

60. The Complete Poems and Stories, vol. II, New York, 1951, pp. 1025 and 1021-22 respectively. In Poe's discussion here of the long poem, he defines it as one requiring more than a half hour to read. He is attacking the epic-length poem, and also warns that a poem can be too short.
61. "Marginalia," Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. Dwight MacDonald, New York, 1965, p. 164.
62. "Brancusi," Literary Essays of Ezra Pound (New York, 1968), p. 442: "I have tried to express the idea of an absolute rhythm, or the possibility of it. Perhaps every artist at one time or another believes in a sort of elixir of philosopher's stone produced by the sheer perfection of his art"
63. The Imagist Poem, New York, 1963, pp. 33-34.
64. Ibid., p. 44.
65. Pound's conception of the image and the haiku have contributed much to all of modern poetry, not just Imagism. Miss Lowell's haiku are touched by fin de siècle precosity, and while they do help shape the Imagist interest in haiku, they do not directly influence the mainstream of modern poetry. See the Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell (Boston, 1955).
66. See Note 56.
67. The Cloud in Trousers (Oblako v Shtanakh) is included in Poemy, Stikhotvoreniya (Moscow, 1960). It is also available in the excellent bilingual edition The Bedbug and Selected Poetry (of Vladimir Mayakovsky), ed. Patricia Blake (New York, 1960). These translations are mine.
68. Huidobro's irony is, of course, gentler than that of Mayakovsky which often verges on sarcasm.
69. "Brancusi," Literary Essays, p. 441.
70. From the "Prefacio" to "Altazor," Obras Completas, vol. 1 (Santiago de Chile, 1964) p. 365. All quotes are from this edition.
71. Ibid., pp. 366-67.
72. For example, the figure of Our Lay in Mallarmé's "Les fleurs," Alesandr Blok's Beautiful Lady, or Julio Herrera y Reissig's "Berceuse blanca."
73. Gnosticism, a strange amalgam of Egyptian magic and Christianity, holds that the soul must traverse twenty four aeons before reaching heaven. Christ on his re-ascent to Heaven encountered the weeping

Sophia at the thirteenth aeon. She had glimpsed the highest light and had flown directly to the source, eliminating the prescribed steps. She was punished for her daring by trickery: the deity Adamas cast a light upon the waters and Sophia, deceived, plunged into the abyss. Christ rescued her and she reached heaven. It is Sophia who sent the serpent to tempt Man to eat of the Tree of knowledge. See Kurt Seligmann, Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion (New York, 1971).

74. This tendency to de-materialize woman is exemplified throughout the poetry of Edgar Allen Poe whose "Ulalume" and other poems became a model for the French Symbolists and Latin American modernistas among others. The shadowy female presences with which Mallarmé alluded to love and life, as well as his incarnation of his muse in the impassive "Herodiade," also greatly pervaded subsequent poetry.

This process continues on into the twentieth century in such figures as the elusive "fiel fugada Fili-Melé abolida" described by Luis Palés Matos in "Puerta al tiempo en tres voces" (Poesía: 1915-1956 [Rio Piedras, P.R., 1964], p. 292), or the cycle of poems of the Austrian poet Georg Trakl dedicated to the mysterious "sister": "Rosenkranzlieder," "Passion" (3d version) and "Geistliche Dammerung" (2d version).

75. The "Prefacio" ends on this note (p. 368):

Mago, he ahí tu paracaídas que una palabra tuya puede
convertir en un parasubidas maravilloso como el relámpago
que quisiera cegar al creador.

¿Qué esperas?

Mas he ahí el secreto del Tenebroso que olvidó
sonreír.

Y el paracaídas aguarda amarrado a la puerta como el
caballo de la fuga interminable.

76. This text is reproduced in Seligman, Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion, pp. 63-64. In Conjunciones y Disyunciones, p. 85, Paz states that the final lines of Altazor are mantra or incantation.
77. Poems quoted are from Poesía (Mexico, 1964).
78. The crystal ball of today's fortunetellers is of recent origin; it was 'all the rage' in Victorian England from whence the usage spread. Divination by water or mirror is the rule, not the exception, even more so in Latin America. See, for example, Lydia Cabrera, Otán Iyebiyé: Las piedras preciosas (Miami, 1970). For the alchemical and magical uses of the goblet or vessel, see, for example, Émile Grillot de Givry, Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy (New York, 1954), pp. 306-09. The vase method described in the poem is known as the

"three vases of Artephius." The vase holding the water was made of white earthenware or glass. Divination via a water-filled vessel was incorporated into the Egyptian rite of Freemasonry by the founder of that rite, the mage Cagliostro--see Colin Wilson, The Occult (New York, 1975). The vases of Artephius seem to furnish the iconography for the Four of Cups in the Tarot pack. They would seem to be a familiar poetic motif. See, for example, the copy of an early Poetry magazine cover (Harriet Monroe's Chicago-based magazine published the poems of Imagism and other avant-garde movements) showing a figure under a tree contemplating three vases, while a hand extends from a cloud above proffering the vase of poetic inspiration (reproduced as the cover of The Collected Books of Jack Spicer (Los Angeles, 1975).

79. I.e., "la mandrágora del sueño amigo," Poesía, p. 134. The mandrake root had a somewhat human form and so was preserved in a glass vessel in the hope that it would turn into a tiny creature (the homunculus of alchemy) who could be used as an oracle.
80. Valéry explains this in the prologue to the "Histoires brisées," Œuvres, vol. 2 (Paris, 1960).
81. The sunflower was used by the alchemists as a symbol of illuminated mind. The spherical nature of the vase recalls the stipulation of alchemists that the alchemical vessel be spherical, since it was an analogue of the alchemist's mind in which the transformation of elements would take place. See Grillot de Givry and Seligmann.
82. "Palimpsest" is Pound's term for the process of montage formulated as well as employed in The Cantos.
83. While the post-Romantic reaction to Romantic alienation from society is symptomatic of this movement, it is not the first step.
84. Reprisals (Vozmezdiye) unfortunately has not been translated into any Western language, having been overshadowed by his popular neo-epic poem, The Twelve. See Collected Verse (Sochineniya), Moscow, 1955.
85. Paterson (New York, 1963), p. 11.
86. Ibid, epigraph to entire work.
87. El signo y el garabato, p. 105.
88. "Et vous mers," 3, Amers (Paris, 1957)--Œuvres, vol. II, p. 133.
89. El arco y la lira, 2nd ed., p. 122.
90. See the Seghers anthology of Tzara's work (Paris, 1966), p. 165, for a photograph.

91. Fragments appear in J.L. Bedouin's Anthologie de la poésie Sur-réaliste, 2d rev. ed. (Paris, 1970). The unifying metaphor of the poem is the medieval bestiary.
92. Selected Essays (New York, 1954, p. 122). The progression of colors to white is one of the central metaphors of Book I of Paterson. Another work in which this metaphor is the motor force is the American poet Hart Crane's first book of poems, White Buildings: the poem as a "white" construct. His neo-epic The Bridge ends in a radiant burst of "white" vision (The Complete Poems of Hart Crane; New York, 1958, p. 114):

Of thy white seizure springs the prophecy:
 Always through spiring cordage, pyramids
 of silver sequel, Deity's young name
 Kinetic of white choiring wings ... ascends.
93. El signo y el garabato, p. 21.
94. This and subsequent quotes on the distribution of the text are from the prefatory remarks to the second edition of Blanco included in Ladera este. The description of the physical appearance and unfolding of the poem printed on a single page refers to its original 1966 format.
95. For a discussion of the lamp as Romantic metaphor of mind, see M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York, 1953).
96. (Paris, 1931), Part VI, 2, verse 11. "Dehors est blanc": i.e., outside is (white) (blank) (target): the French word has the same irradiations as the Spanish.
97. For an exposition of Chevreul's theory and additional bibliography see Gustav Vriesen and Max Imdahl, Robert Delaunay: Light and Color (New York, 1967). Also see Ramon Xirau's exposition of the relationship between modern painting and poetry in "Teoría de la poesía concreta del Brasil," Poesía Iberoamericana Contemporánea (Mexico, 1972), especially pp. 170-73.
98. From Delaunay's manifesto, "La lumière" quoted by Vriesen and Imdahl, Delaunay, pp. 8-9.
99. See Vriesen and Imdahl, p. 54. This is not necessarily an influence, perhaps it is a felicitous coincidence.
100. D.L. Snellgrove, ed., The Hejavra Tantra (London, 1951).
101. This is Paz's interpretation of Mallarmé's shell as expressed in the essay which accompanies his translation of the sonnet in El signo y el garabato, pp. 70-86.

102. The two volumes of Ajit Mookerjee, Tantra Art and Tantra Asana (Basel, 1968 and 1971) are the most complete treatment of Hindu Tantric art available. Re the shell, see Tantra Asana, p. 55.
103. The pictures of Redon mentioned here appear in Jean Selz's Odilon Redon (New York, 1971).
104. See Grillot de Givry, Witchcraft, for illustrations of the alchemical maze or garden. Also see G. Tucci, The Theory and Practice of the Mandala (New York, 1970).
105. "Poetry and the Reader," The Perpetual Present: The Poetry and Prose of Octavio Paz (Norman, Okla., 1973), p. 43. Needleman feels that the average reader would be unaware of the "spiritual" use of Blanco. This is a divisive distinction. Blanco functions as a poetic rite and a poetic mandala or emblem to liberate the imagination and free the spirit under its own steam. The images are carefully chosen so that one may apply one's own mythology. Blanco is a poet's poem; however, it is an explicit dialogue with Mallarmé, Huidobro, Gorostiza and Novalis among others.
106. Julio Cortazar's Rayuela (Buenos Aires, 1965), is one example, a novel-mandala transformed by a spirit of play and irony into a game of hopscotch. Tantric principles are important to a number of English-language poets including Allen Ginsburg, Robert Kelly and George Quasha.
107. "The Resurrection of the Body" is the title of the last chapter of Life Against Death (Middletown, Conn., 1966). Love's Body: New York, 1966.
108. Conjunciones y disyunciones, pp. 19-20.
109. Ibid., p. 21.
110. Ibid., p. 23.
111. The Tantric sects were a major force in medieval times. Whether the Tantras are divine revelation like the Vedas or Sutras or a subsequent afterthought of the faithful is a major source of debate among Tantric scholars.
112. Conjunciones, p. 81. This symbolical anatomy is identical in the Hindu rite; therefore, I have avoided the use of specific terminology; and I have not attempted any systematic representation of the history and practices of Tantra, as Pas has done this in Conjunciones--this book should, of course, be read along with Blanco.
113. Ibid.

114. See Snellgrove, ed., The Hevajra Tantra. The chakras (or cakras) correspond to the navel, heart, throat and head. The Hevajra Tantra begins with the invocation of fire (passion) in the navel.
115. Bharati, The Tantric Tradition (London, 1965), offers the most complete bibliography and summarizes diverging critical opinion on various points. He is usually very explicit in his documentation, but he is vague on this point. He cites no examples from the Tantras, quoting instead a contemporary pamphlet written for Tantric adepts. Mookerjee, who is a Hindu Tantric adept specifies (Tantra Asana) that ejaculation must not take place and that if it does the fluid must be withdrawn into the body. This practice is accomplished via yogic disciplines outlined by Mircea Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom (Princeton, 1958), Chapter 6: "Yoga and Tantrism." For further easily accessible studies of Tantrism see studies by Avalon, Blofeld, Guenther and Evans-Wentz in the Bibliography.
116. Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism, London, 1959. When Paz states the mantra is non-conceptual (Conjunciones, p. 84), he is stressing that it is not a fixed logical thought and that it is non-discursive. He adds that the seed syllable (bija) and mantra are . . . "Ricos en sentidos emocionales, mágicos y religiosos" (p. 84). However, since he limits his examples to the bija, comparing it to the kind of Western non-sense poetry characterized by Alfonso Reyes as "jitanjáfora" or by the German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters, as "phonetic poetry" (in Schwitters' Die Blume Anna [Hanover, 1919], there are two poems made solely of the alphabet read backwards, once in capital letters, again in small), there arises a possible misconstrual of mantra as pure sound--i.e., Luisa Perdigó, La estética de Octavio Paz (Madrid, 1975).
117. The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet (New York, 1970), pp. 194-95. Om and Hum are somewhat the equivalent of the Alpha and Omega symbols of Western Hermetism.
118. See Bharati, "On Intentional Language" in The Tantric Tradition.
119. See Bharati, p. 252.
120. The technique of "Homenaje" is intensified Baroque, relying on complex conceits of paradox, antithesis and synaesthesia, and semantic and phonetic puns. It is an exercise in intellect, and is most certainly not surrealist as Rachel Phillips characterizes it --The Poetic Modes of Octavio Paz, pp. 66-68.
121. "A Nocturnall Upon S. Lucies Day."
122. This "sonnet" has only thirteen lines so that "impar" can be centered. Paz has a remarkable ear--and eye--for the sonnet form:

see his prologue to Renga, "Centro Móvil," and his analysis and diagram of Mallarmé's sonnet, "El Soneto en ix," in El signo y el garabato.

123. Tungsteno is, of course, a novel; the poem appeared in Poemas humanos, 1938.
124. 2d ed., p. 96.
125. See Grilhot de Givry regarding the Western alchemical symbolism throughout. See Seligmann, Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion for bibliography on alchemy.
126. Lydia Cabrera's Otán Iyebiyé: Las piedras preciosas (Miami, 1970), is a good guide to the esoteric symbolism of minerals and metals. Alchemical symbolism of the Tantras pervades Indian religious poetry, for example this verse by a wandering Baul poet:

I wished to turn myself
into pure gold
by touching the philosopher's stone
but I could not do it,
alas, I could not.

Copper trickled into it--
making me an alloy.

This poem by Padmalochan appears in Songs of the Bards of Bengal, trans. Deben Bhattacharya (New York, 1969).

Also see the section of Conjunciones entitled "Alquimia sexual y cortesía erótica."

127. For example, in the poem "Notes toward a supreme fiction."
128. See Praz, Seventeenth Century Imagery, or William Blake's poem "Ah! Sun-flower." Breton employs this image in "Tournesol." Since "tournesol" also means "litmus," the sunflower for Breton is a symbol of chemical/alchemical metamorphosis.
129. See C.G. Jung, Psyche and Symbol, ed. V. Laszlo (New York, 1958), pp. 187-95.
130. The lion and lioness symbolize the hermaphrodite, or non-dual nature of the alchemical work. Also, some alchemical manuals portray the alchemical transmutation of elements into a green lion. Paz uses green to indicate union, also.
131. Paz elaborates on the image in a letter to Julian Ríos: "era el jeroglífico de fundación de México - Tenochtitlan. Loz aztecas, en sus vagabundeos por el valle de Mexico . . . vieron un día

flotar entre las aguas del lago un envoltorio. Lo pescaron y encontraron dos leños para hacer fuego. El sentido: la unión del agua y el fuego. Sobre esta metáfora se edificó México." (Reproduced in Solo a dos voces, O.P. and Julian Ríos (Barcelona, 1973). Paz in the letter reminds Ríos that this image is also the "llama mojada" of Novalis. Novalis seems to be included in Blanco's poetic web of references; its principal images are those of Novalis; the impossible blue flower, the wet flame and the idea "Man = Metaphor."

132. El signo y el garabato, p. 47.

133. Paz has written about Chinese alchemical and erotic manuals at great length in Conjunciones, Chapter 4.

134. This is the sense of a poem by Baul poet Guruchand translated by Bhattacharya in Songs of the Bards, p. 66:

The rites of ferocious love
Rest in the essence of
Supreme beauty
And the dignity of the yoga,
As the connoisseur knows

. . . .

The essence of beauty
In the mirror of love
Stares at his face --
The formless.
Within the visible form.
The fire cools in his hands
and quicksilver roosts
On flames ...

135. While vultures abound in a religious context (Buddha delivers his sermons from Vulture Mountain, and the vulture Garuda is an Indian deity), I think these vultures have a very real origin. Of course, they do contribute to the love-against-death imagery of the poem.

136. El signo y el garabato, p. 51.

137. See C.J. Jung, Psyche and Symbol, pp. 168-96.

138. Shamanism, (New York, 1974).

139. Both envision the body as the double of the universe and operate via analogy and paradox.

140. "An Epithalamion, or Marriage Song on the Lady Elizabeth, and Count Palantine being married on St. Valentines day."

- ✓ 141. These lines from Cage's A Year from Monday are quoted in "Lectura de John Cage," Ladera este, p. 53.
- ✓ 142. See Rita Guibert's interview with Paz in Seven Voices (New York, 1974), p.
143. Mario Praz's Mnemosyne: the parallel between literature and the visual arts. Princeton 1970.
144. Paz's book-length criticism, Marcel Duchamp o la Castilla de la pureza, is the best treatment of the artist available. Also, see Paz's essay on Tantric art, "El pensamiento en blanco," El signo, for his views on the relationship of language to modern art.
145. Language and Silence (New York, 1970), p. 90.

Conclusion: "Hacia el comienzo"*

Since it is too early to tell whether the liberties of El mono will effect a corresponding change of form in Paz's poetry, we can only speculate. It is unlikely that it will become a model for future poems, since it is in a sense a master work, the sum and total of vital and poetic experience. Blake, whose master work also fused poetry, prose and emblem in an Orphic dialogue created but one Jerusalem. Yet there are two steps taken along the monkey grammarian's path which must transform not only his future poetry but the work of others as well: the re-eroticizing of language and the head-on confrontation with and acceptance of the cold, hard, wholly intangible yet inexorable fact that the ultimate expression of life and language is death and silence. This journey takes shape in Ladera este, especially in Blanco; its first lap is completed in the long poem which follows El mono gramático, Pasado en el claro (1975). This poem comes face to face with two spectres which are banished by the forces of love in Blanco and El mono gramático: memory and the nothing which lies in wait between two words, the blankness which is the warp and woof of the universe. Language was once a magic incantation with which to recreate the wonders of creation, yet it has become a rabbit's foot or a witch's spell to destroy the demons of silence and the spectres of the void. Somehow in the twentieth century these subjects constitute an awkward pause in our communal conversation. We chatter away from one topic to the next lest the demon seize us:

*"Hacia el comienzo" is the title of the final section of Ladera este.

Paisajes de palabras:

. . .

Brotan allá, en las zonas indecisas
del lenguaje, palustres poblaciones.
Son criaturas anfibias, son palabras.

. . .

. . . No las oigo, que dicen?
No dicen: hablan, hablan.

Salto de un cuento a otro
por un puente colgante de once sílabas.
Duerme con los ojos abiertos,
se acuesta entre las yerbas y amanece rocío,
se persigue a sí mismo y habla solo en los túneles.

(Pasado en claro, p. 33)

If our path through the "bosque pensante," the thinking forest of these poems reaches any sort of conclusion or destination, it is a way station which is everywhere along the path like a shining mirage just out of reach. Perhaps we can fix it in our sights for a moment with an emblem which Paz offers as a definition of his art in Pasado en claro (pp. 24-25):

Nombres anclados en el golfo
de mi frente: yo escribo porque el druida,
bajo el rumor de sílabas del himno,
encina bien plantada en una página,
me dio el gajo de muérdago, el conjuro
que hace brotar palabras de la pena.¹

We are transported to a Celtic sacred grove as the Druid page invokes the gods in the ancient alphabet of the trees. Let us envision the ceremonies through the eyes of the Celtic bard, William Butler Yeats:

From joy the holy branches start,
And all the trembling flowers they bear.
The changing colours of its fruit
Have dowered the stars with merry light;
The surety of its hidden root
Has planted quiet in the night;
The shaking of its leafy head
Has given the waves their melody;

And made my lips and music wed,
 Murmuring a wizard song for thee.
 There the Loves a circle go,
 The flaming circle of our days,
 Grying, spiring to and fro
 In those great ignorant leafy ways....
 ("The Two Trees")

Then the echoes of the Druid's harp carry us through time to a Renaissance bower where the poet tends his garden laid out in the image of man, paradise on earth; but, alas, we are not permitted to stay. The lilting tune of a canzone fades and like Alice through the lookign glass we step into a strange and marvelous garden in which "llama en el tallo de agua/de las palabras que la dicen,/la flor es otro sol."² When the bard speaks, he tells a "tale of two gardens," and we see the bard is Paz, for whom the poem is a magic garden hidden away at the back of reality. The maintenance of this stand on his part has brought accusations of isolation from poets who prefer to frequent Coney Islands of the mind or the fronts of politics and wars. This is the essence of Paz's poetics: a poem is a sacred grove, a garden which exists on a higher plane of reality. The poem belongs to the "other world," the instant transformed by imagination into a fleeting image of the world. The garden of the poem is no shelter from the bustle and flow of life:

Un jardín no es un lugar:

Por un sendero de arena rojiza
 Entramos
 En una gota de agua,
 Bebemos en su centro
 Verdes claridades,
 Ascendemos
 Por la espiral de las horas
 Hasta

La punta del día,

Descendemos

Hasta

La consumación de su brasa.

Rios en la noche: fluyen los jardines

("Cuento de dos jardines," Ladéra este, pp. 130-31)

The garden of the poet, "tránsito" and "pasión," "Se abisma . . . en una identidad."³ Its vistas loom beyond the parapets of consciousness; once committed to their contemplation, the poet cannot turn back. It is a commitment few dare.

If we leave the Druid's grove and follow the path into a "pasado en blanco," a silent music cries out our destination: once again we are off "hacia el comienzo". . .

Notes

1. The "Druid" was the wise man and scholar of the ancient Celtic religion, while the "bard" was its poet. The Druids worshipped in forest groves and had a secret tree alphabet. The Druid is a favorite theme of nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry, and has been accordingly distorted so that the poetic legend has blurred the historical facts. The Druids are sometimes associated with the ruins at Stonehenge but this relationship has yet to be proven by modern archaeology. The sacred well and grove are the only documented sites of Druid worship. There is a sect of "Druids" in England who still worship in the open--their rites are a product of collective imagination. See Stuart Piggott, The Druid (New York, 1968).
2. Pasado en claro, p. 40.
3. "Cuento de dos jardines," Ladera este, pp. 139 and 141.

APPENDIX A

"Vrindraban"

Rodeado de noche
 Follaje inmenso de rumores
 Grandes cortinas impalpables
 Hábitos

 Escribo me detengo
 Escribo
 (Toda está y no está
 Todo calladamente se desmorona
 Sobre la página)

 Hace unos instantes
 Corría en un coche
 Entre las casas apagadas

 Corría
 Entre mis pensamientos encendidos
 Arriba las estrellas

 Jardines serenísimos
 Yo era un árbol y hablaba
 Estaba cubierto de hojas y ojos
 Yo era el murmullo que avanza
 El enjambre de imágenes
 (Ahora trazo unos cuantos signos
 Crispados

 Negro sobre blanco
 Diminuto jardín de letras
 A la luz de una lámpara plantado)
 Corría el coche
 Por los barrios dormidos yo corría
 Tras de mis pensamientos

 Míos y de los otros
 Reminiscencias supervivencias figuraciones
 Nombres
 Los restos de las chispas
 Y las risas de la velada
 La danza de las horas
 La marcha de las constelaciones
 Y otros lugares comunes
 ¿Yo creo en los hombres

 O en los astros?
 Yo creo
 Aquí intervienen los puntos
 Suspensivos)
 Yo veo

Pórtico de columnas carcomidas
 Estatuas esculpidas por la peste
 La doble fila de mendigos

Y el hedor

Rey en su trono

Rodeado

Como si fuesen concubinas

Por un vaivén de aromas

Puros casi corpóreos ondulantes

Del sándalo al jazmín y sus fantasmas

Putrefacción

Fiebre de formas

Fiebre del tiempo

En sus combinaciones extasiado

Cola de pavo real el universo entero

Miríadas de ojos

En otros ojos reflejados

Modulaciones reverberaciones de un ojo único

Un solitario sol

Oculto

Tras su manto de transparencias

Su marea de maravillas

Todo llameaba

Piedras mujeres agua

Todo se esculpía

Del color a la forma

De la forma al incendio

Todo se desvanecía

Música de metales y maderas

En la celda del dios

Matriz del templo

Música de soles enlazados

Música

Como el agua y el viento en sus abrazos

Y sobre las materias que gemían

Confundidas

La voz humana

Luna en celo por el mediodía

Queja del alma que se desencarna

(Escribo sin conocer el desenlace

De lo que escribo

Busco entre líneas

Mi imagen es la lámpara

Encendida

En mitad de la noche)

Saltimbanqui

Mono de lo Absoluto

Garabato

En cuclillas

Cubierto de cenizas pálidas

Un sadú me miraba y se reía

Desde su orilla me miraba

Lejos lejos
 Como los animales y los santos me miraba
 Desnudo desgredado embadurnado
 Un rayo fijo los ojos minerales
 Yo quise hablarle
 Me respondió con borborismos

Ido ido

¿Adónde

A qué región del ser
 A qué existencia a la intemperie de qué mundos
 En qué tiempo?

(Escribo

Cada letra es un germen

La memoria

Insiste en su marea
 Y repite su mismo mediodía)

Ido ido

Santo pícaro santo
 Arrobas del hambre o de la droga
 Tal vez vio a Krishna

Árbol azul y centelleante

Nocturno surtidor brotando en la sequía
 Tal vez en una piedra hendida
 Palpó la forma femenina

Y su desgarradura

El vértigo sin forma

Por estilo o aquello

Vive en el muelle donde queman a los muertos

Las calles solas
 Las casas y sus sombras
 Todo era igual y todo era distinto
 El coche corría

Yo estaba quieto

Entre mis pensamientos desbocados

(Ido ido

Santo payaso santo mendigo rey maldito

Es lo mismo

Siempre lo mismo

En lo mismo

Es ser siempre en sí mismo

En lo mismo

Es ser siempre en sí mismo

Encerrado

En lo mismo

En sí cerrado

(Ídolo podrido)

Ido ido

Desde su orilla me miraba

Me mira

Desde su interminable mediodía
Yo estoy en la hora inestable
El coche corre entre las casas
Yo escribo a la luz de una lámpara
Los absolutos las eternidades
Y sus aledaños

No son mi tema
Tengo hambre de vida y también de morir
Sé lo que creo y lo escribo
Advenimiento del instante

El acto
El movimiento en que se esculpe
Y se deshace el ser entero
Conciencia y manos para asir el tiempo
Soy una historia

Una memoria que se inventa
Nunca estoy solo
Hablo siempre contigo Hablas siempre conmigo
A oscuras voy y planto signos.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Works by Octavio Paz (Includes All Works
Published in Book Form)

A. Poetry

Luna silvestre. Mexico: Fábula, 1933.

¡No pasarán! Mexico: Simbad, 1937.

Bajo tu clara sombra y otros poemas sobre España. Valencia, Spain:
Ediciones Españolas, 1937. 2d ed. Mexico: Tierra Nueva, 1941.

Raíz del hombre. Mexico: Simbad, 1937.

Entre la piedra y la flor. Mexico: Voz Nueva, 1941. 2d ed. México:
Ediciones Asociación Civil Yucatán, 1956.

A la orilla del mundo y Primer día, Bajo tu clara sombra, Raíz del
hombre, Noche de resurrecciones. Mexico: Compañía Editora y
Librería ARS, 1942.

Libertad bajo palabra. Mexico: Tezontle, 1949.

¿Águila o sol? Mexico: Tezontle, 1951.

Semillas para un himno. Mexico: Tezontle, 1954.

Piedra de sol. México: Tezontle, 1957.

La estación violenta. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958.

"Poemas de Tu-Fu." La Nación (Caracas), 10 April 1958.

Libertad bajo palabra: Obra poética, 1935-1957. Mexico: Fondo de
Cultura Económica, 1960. 2d rev. ed., 1968. (Omits forty poems
included in the previous edition.)

Salamandra, 1958-1961. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1962. 2d ed., 1970.

El día en Udaipur. Palma de Mallorca: Ediciones Papeles de Son Arma-
dans, 1963.

Viento entero. Delhi: private edition, 1965.

Vrindaban, Madurai. Delhi: private edition, 1965.

Blanco. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1967.

"Topoemas." Revista de la Universidad de México XXII, No. 10 (June 1968).

Discos visuales. Mexico: Era, 1968.

"¿Poesía latinoamericana?" Amaru (Lima, Peru), No. 8, October-December 1968, pp. 3-8.

Ladera este, 1962-1968. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969.

Topoemas. Mexico: Era, 1971.

Renga. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971.

Vuelta. New York: El Mendrugo, 1972.

Pasado en claro. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1975.

B. Prose

"Vigilias: Diario de un soñador." Taller, No. 1. Dec. 1937. .

El laberinto de la soledad. Mexico: Cuadernos Americanos, 1950. 2d. rev. ed. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959. 3d. ed., 1963. 4th ed., 1964. 5th ed., 1967. 6th ed., 1968. 7th rev. ed., 1969.

El arco y la lira. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1956. 2d. rev. ed., 1967.

Matsuo Bashō: Sendas de Oku. Mexico: Universidad Nacional de México, 1957. 2d. ed. Barcelona: Barral Editores, 1970.

Las peras del olmo. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1957. 2d. ed., 1965.

Fernando Pessoa: Antología. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1962.

Cuatro poetas contemporáneos de Suecia. With Pedro Zekelli. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1963.

II. Works about Octavio Paz: A Selected Bibliography

For a more complete listing, see Alfredo Roggiano's "Bibliography" in The Perpetual Present: The Poetry of Octavio Paz--see "A" below.

A. Books Dedicated to Paz

Céa, Claire. Octavio Paz. Paris: Éditions Pierre Seghers, 1965.

Flores, Ángel, ed. Aproximaciones a Octavio Paz. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1974.

Ivar Ivask, ed. The Perpetual Present: The Poetry of Octavio Paz. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973.

Perdigó, Luisa M. La estética de Octavio Paz. Madrid: Nova Scholar, 1975.

Phillips, Rachel. The Poetic Modes of Octavio Paz. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Xirau, Ramón. Octavio Paz: El sentido de la palabra. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1970.

B. Articles and Essays

Armand, Octavio. "La poesía de Octavio Paz: De la elocuencia a la delincuencia." Envíos (Montclair, N.J.), Nos. 3-4, June 1972, pp. 21-23.

Bellini, Giuseppe. "Octavio Paz: L'esperienza asiatica nella sua poesia." Quaderni Ibero-Americani (Turin, Italy), No. 34, 1966, pp. 103-07.

_____. Quevedo en la poesía hispanoamericana del siglo XX. New York: Eliseo Torres, forthcoming.

Bernard, Judith Ann. "Mexico as Theme, Image and Contribution to Myth in the Poetry of Octavio Paz." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1964.

Bosquet, Alain. "Octavio Paz ou le surréalisme tellurique" in Verbe et vertige. Paris: Hachette, 1961, pp. 186-92.

_____. "Octavio Paz ou le seisme pensif." Nouvelle Revue Française (Paris) 14 December 1966, pp. 1071-75.

- Books Abroad 46 (Autumn 1972), pp. 541-614, "Symposium on Octavio Paz."
- Cortázar, Julio. "Octavio Paz: 'Libertad bajo palabra'." Sur, No. 182, December 1949, pp. 93-95.
- Couffon, Claude. "Entretien avec Octavio Paz." Les Lettres Nouvelles (Paris) 7 January 1959, pp. 106-11.
- Cuadra, Pablo Antonio. Torres de Dios: Ensayos sobre poetas, pp. 39-49. Managua: Academia Nicaragüense de la Lengua, 1958.
- Durán, Manuel. "Libertad y erotismo en la poesía de Octavio Paz." Sur, No. 276, May-June 1962, pp. 72-77.
- _____. "La huella del Oriente en la poesía de Octavio Paz." Revista Iberoamericana, No. 74, January-March, 1971.
- Fein, John M. "La estructura de Piedra de sol." Revista Iberoamericana, No. 78, January-March 1972, pp. 73-94.
- Franco, Jean. "¡Oh mundo por poblar, hoja en blanco! : El espacio y los espacios en la poesía de Octavio Paz." Revista Iberoamericana, No. 74, January-March, 1971.
- Fuentes, Carlos. "El tiempo de Octavio Paz." In Casa de dos puertas, pp. 151-57. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1970.
- García Ponce, Juan. "El otro lado del mundo" [on Ladera este]. La cultura en México, No. 850, 8 October 1959, pp. 9-12.
- Gimferrer, Pedro. "El testimonio de O. Paz." Ínsula, No. 239, 1966, p. 3.
- _____. "Dos nuevos libros de Paz" [On Puertas al campo and Vrindaban]. Ínsula, Nos. 248-49, 1967, p. 23.
- Grande, Felix. "Un escritor errante para lectores errantes" (on Ladera este). Visión (Mexico) 21 December 1969, pp. 112-14.
- Guibert, Rita. "Octavio Paz." Interview in Seven Voices, pp. 183-275. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973.
- Joset, Jacques. "Des 'Mots de la tribu' à la liberté sous parole: Reflexions sur la parole poétique d'Octavio Paz." Marche Romane (Liege, Belgium) 19, No. 4, 1969, pp. 1-30.
- King, Lloyd. "Surrealism and the Sacred in the Aesthetic Credo of Octavio Paz." Hispanic Review 37, No. 3, July 1969, pp. 383-93.
- Leiva, Raúl. Imagen de la poesía mexicana contemporánea, pp. 205-26. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1959.

- Needleman, Ruth A. "Hacia Blanco." Revista Iberoamericana, No. 74, January-March 1971, pp. 177-82.
- Ortega, Julio. "Notas sobre Octavio Paz." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, No. 231, March 1969, pp. 1-14.
- Pachecho, José Emilio. "Descripción de 'Piedra de sol.'" Revista Iberoamericana, No. 74, January-March 1971, pp. 135-46.
- Pezzoni, Enrique. "Blanco: La respuesta al deseo." Revista Iberoamericana, No. 78, January-March 1972.
- Phillips, Rachel. "Topoemas: La paradoja suspendida." Revista Iberoamericana, No. 74, January-March 1971, pp. 197-202.
- Requeña, Julio. "Poética del tiempo en Octavio Paz." Revista de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (Argentina) 7 (March-August 1966), pp. 61-107.
- Revista Iberoamericana, No. 74, January-March 1971. Entire issue devoted to Paz.
- Rodman, Selden. "Octavio Paz." Interview in Tongues of Fallen Angels pp. 135-162. New York: New Directions, 1974.
- Sánchez, José G. "Aspects of Surrealism in the Work of Octavio Paz." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1970.
- Seabrook, Roberta. "La poesía en movimiento: Octavio Paz." Revista Iberoamericana, No. 74, January-March 1971, pp. 161-76.
- _____. "Vrindaban o el bosque pensante." Envíos (Montclair, N.J.), Nos. 3-4, June 1972, pp. 24-35.
- Selva, Mauricio de la. "Octavio Paz: Búsquedas infructuosas." Cuadernos de Bellas Artes (Mexico), No. 7, July 1963, pp. 279-80.
- Sucre, Guillermo. "El poema: Un archipiélago de signos." Imágen (Caracas, Venezuela), No. 24, May 1968, p. 24.
- Wilson, J. "The Poetry of Octavio Paz." M.Ph. Thesis, University of London, 1968.
- Xirau, Ramón. "Dialéctica de la soledad." In Tres poetas de la soledad (Gorostiza, Villaurrutia, Paz), pp. 39-70. Mexico: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1955.
- _____. Poesía hispanoamericana y española, pp. 44-55. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1961.
- Yurkievich, Saúl. "Octavio Paz, indagor de la palabra." In Fundadores de la nueva poesía latinoamericana, pp. 203-36. Barcelona: Barral Editores, 1971.

III. General

- Abrams, M. H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- Alquié, Ferdinand. Philosophie du surréalisme. Paris: Flammarion, 1955.
- Apollinaire, Guillaume. Œuvres poétiques. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1956.
- Apollonio, Umbro, ed. Futurist Manifestoes. London: Thames and Hudson, 1973.
- Aragon, Louis. Le Paysan de Paris. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1926.
- Bachelard, Gaston. La poétique de l'espace. Presses universitaires de France, 1958.
- _____. The Poetics of Space. New York: The Orion Press, 1964.
- Balakian, Anna. Literary Origins of Surrealism: A New Mysticism in French Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.
- _____. Surrealism, the Road to the Absolute. 2d rev. ed. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970.
- _____. Breton: Magus of Surrealism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Baudelaire, Charles. Les Fleurs du mal. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1972.
- Bays, Gwendolyn. The Orphic Vision: Seer Poets from Novalis to Rimbaud. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.
- Bedouin, Jean-Louis, ed. La poésie Surréaliste. 2d ed. Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1970.
- de Beer, Gabriella. José Vasconcelos and His World. New York: Las Américas Publishing Company, 1966.
- Benamou, Michel. Wallace Stevens and the Symbolist Imagination. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Benda, Julien. La France Byzantine: ou, Le triomphe de la littérature pure, Mallarmé, Gide, Valéry, Alain, Giradoux, Suarès, les surréalistes. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945.
- William Blake and John Donne. The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne and the Complete Poetry of William Blake. New York: Modern Library, 1941.

- Blanchot, Maurice. Faux Pas. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1943.
- Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. Isis Unveiled: a Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology. Los Angeles: The Theosophy Co., 1931.
- _____. The Secret Doctrine. Abridged and edited by Elizabeth Preston and Christian Humphries. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967.
- Blok, Aleksandr. Sobrani ye Sochin yenii (Collected Works). Edited by V. V. Goltsyev. Moscow: Government Printing Office, 1929.
- Bonnefoy, Yves. Un rêve fait à Mantoue. Paris: Mercure de France, 1967.
- Boon, James A. From Symbolism to Structuralism: Lévi-Strauss in a Literary Tradition. New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row, 1972.
- Bowra, C. J. The Heritage of Symbolism. London: Macmillan, 1943.
- Breton, André. Préliminaires sur Matta. Paris: n.p., 1947.
- _____. Manifeste du surréalisme. Paris: Kra, 1924.
- _____. Second Manifeste du surréalisme. Paris: Kra, 1930.
- _____. L'Amour Fou. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1937.
- _____. Arcane 17. Paris: Pauvert, 1965.
- _____. Poèmes. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1948.
- _____. Entretiens (1913-1952). Paris: Le point du jour, 1952.
- Breton, André and Legrand, Gérard. L'art magique. Paris: Formes et reflets, 1957.
- Breton, André. Signe ascendant. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1968.
- _____. Manifestes du surréalisme. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1966.
- Brown, Norman O. Life against Death; the Psychoanalytical Meaning of History. Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1959.
- _____. Love's Body. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.
- Bucke, Richard Maurice. Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind. Philadelphia: Innes & Sons, 1901.

- Cabanel, Guy. Maliduse. Beziers, France: La Sodiep, 1961.
- _____. Odeurs d'amours. Paris: E. Losfeld, 1969.
- Cabrera, Lydia. Otán Iyebiyé: Las Piedras Preciosas. Miami: Ediciones CR, 1970.
- Cage, John. Silence. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961.
- _____. A Year from Monday. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1967.
- Callois, Roger. L'homme et le sacré. Paris: Leroux, Presses universitaires de France, 1939.
- de Campos, Haroldo. Plano-piloto para poesia concreta. São Paulo: n.p., 1961.
- Carrión, Alejandro. "Hai-kai y Micrograma." Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana No. 22, 1960, pp. 133-61.
- Carrouges, Michel. André Breton et les données fondamentales du surréalisme. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1950.
- Caws, Mary Ann. The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism: Aragon, Breton, Tzara, Eluard and Desnoes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Caws, Mary Ann. André Breton. New York: Twayne, 1971.
- Char, René. Poèmes et proses choisis. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1957.
- _____. La nuit talismanique. Geneva: Éditions d'Art Albert Skira, 1972.
- Cohn, R. G. Mallarmé's Un Coup de dés. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949.
- _____. Toward the Poems of Mallarmé. Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1965.
- _____. Mallarmé's Masterwork: New Findings. The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1966.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge. Edited by Donald Stauffer. New York: Random House, The Modern Library, 1951.
- Connolly, Cyril. The Modern Movement. New York: Atheneum, 1966.

- Cirlot, Juan Eduardo. Introducción al surrealismo. Madrid: Rev. de Occidente, 1953.
- Crane, Hart. The Complete Poems. New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1958.
- Cummings, Edward Estlin. Complete Poems. 2 vols. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968.
- Darío, Rubén. Los raros. Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1952.
- _____. Poesías completas. Madrid: Aguilar, 1961.
- Darnton, Robert. Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Davies, Gardner. Vers une explication rationnelle du Coup de dés. Paris: José Corti, 1953.
- Digby, George Wingfield. Symbol and Image in William Blake. 2d ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Donne, John. Complete Poetry & Selected Prose of John Donne & Complete Poetry of William Blake. New York: Random House, 1941.
- Eco, Umberto. Opera aperta. Milan: Valentino Bompiani, 1962.
- Eliade, Mircea. Méphistophélès et l'Androgyne. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1962.
- _____. The Two and the One. Translated by J. M. Cohen. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- Eliot, T. S. The Complete Poems and Plays (1909-1950). New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1971.
- Eluard, Paul. Œuvres complètes. 2 vols. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1968.
- Epstein, Perle S. The Private Labyrinth of Malcolm Lowry: "Under the Volcano" and the Cabbala. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.
- Ford, Charles Henri. Flag of Ecstasy: Selected Poems. Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1972.
- Forster, Merlin. Los contemporáneos: perfil de un experimento vanguardista mexicano. Mexico: Ediciones de Andrea, 1964.
- Fourier, Charles. Œuvres complètes. Edited by Simone Debout-Oleskiewicz. Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1966-1968.

- Fowlie, Wallace. Age of Surrealism. London: Dobson, 1953.
- Fumet, Stanislas. Rimbaud: mystique contrarié. Paris: Plon, 1966.
- García Lorca, Federico. Obras completas. 13th ed., Madrid: Aguilar, 1976.
- Garnier, Pierre. Spatialisme et poésie concrète. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1968.
- Garlitz, Virginia Milner. "Teosofismo en Tirano Banderas;" Journal of Spanish Studies: Twentieth Century, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1974, pp. 21-30.
- Gavronsky, Serge. Poems and Texts. New York: October House, 1969.
- Gorostiza, José. Poesía. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964.
- Gracián y Morales, Baltasar. Obras de Lorenzo Gracián. 2 vols. Amberes: Geronymo y Ivanbaut, 1969.
- Graves, Robert. The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth. New York: Creative Age Press, 1948.
- Gray, Eden. The Tarot Revealed. Stroudsburg, Pa.: Inspiration House, 1960.
- Grillot de Givry, Émile. Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy. New York: Frederick Publications, 1954.
- Guibert, Rita. Seven Voices. Translated by Frances Partridge. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973.
- Gullón, Ricardo. Direcciones del modernismo. 2nd ed. Madrid: Editorial Gredos S.A., 1971.
- Hamburger, Michael. The Truth of Poetry: Tensions in Modern Poetry from Baudelaire to the Nineteen-Sixties. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969.
- Hassan Ihab. The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Heidegger, Martin. Hoeldering y la esencia de la poesía, seguida de Esencia de Fundamento. Translated by Juan David García Bacca. Mexico: Editorial Seneca, 1944.
- Herrera y Reissig, Julio. Poesías completas y páginas en prosa. Madrid: Aguilar, 1961.
- Hölderlin, Friedrich. Friedrich Hölderlin: Poems and Fragments. 2nd ed. Translated by Michael Hamburger. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1968.

Huidobro, Vicente. Obras completas. 2 vols. Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1964.

Hugo, Victor. Les Contemplations. Paris: Éditions Recontre, 1968.

Huizinga, Johan. Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture. Boston: Beacon Press, 1955.

Jiménez, Juan Ramón. "Espacio." Poesía española No. 28, April 1958.

_____. El modernismo: Notas de un curso (1953). Edited by Ricardo Gullón and Eugenio Fernández Méndez. México: Aguilar, 1962.

_____. Libros de poesía de Juan Ramón Jiménez. 3d ed. Madrid: Aguilar, 1967.

Jung, Carl Gustav. Psyche and Symbol. Edited by Violet S. de Laszlo. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Anchor Books, 1958.

_____. Alchemical Studies, The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, vol. 13. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

_____. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, 2d ed. Vol. 9, Part 1, The Collected Works of C. G. Jung. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

_____. Psychology and Alchemy. 2d ed. The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, vol. 12. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Kelly, Robert. Kali Yuga. London: Cape Goliard Press, 1970.

Kenner, Hugh. The Pound Era. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971.

Klonsky, Milton, ed. Speaking Pictures: A Gallery of Pictorial Poetry from the Sixteenth Century to the Present. New York: Crown Publishers, Harmony Books, 1974.

Larrea, Juan. Del surrealismo a Machu Picchu. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1967.

Leconte de Lisle, Charles Marie René. Poésies complètes. Paris: A. Lemerre, 1927.

Leger, Alexis. Œuvre poétique. 2d ed. 2 vols. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1960.

Lain Entralgo, Pedro. The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. Tristes Tropiques. Paris: Plon, 1955.

- _____. The Savage Mind. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.
- Leiva, Raúl. Imagen de la poesía mexicana contemporánea. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1959.
- Lévi, Éliphas. Transcendental Magic. New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1970.
- Lihn, Enrique. La musiquilla de las pobres esferas. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1969.
- Lowell, Amy. The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955.
- Lugones, Leopoldo. Obras poéticas completas. Madrid: Aguilar, 1959.
- Mallarmé, Stéphane. Œuvres complètes. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945.
- _____. Correspondance I: 1862-1871, ed. H. Mondor and J. P. Richard. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1959.
- _____. Correspondance II: 1871-1885, ed. Mondor and Austin. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1965.
- Mansour, Joyce. Carré blanc. Paris: Seghers, n.d.
- Maples Arce, Manuel. Urbe. Mexico: Andrés Botos, 1924.
- Marcuse, Herbert. Eros and Civilization, a Philosophical Inquiry into Freud. New York: Vintage, 1962.
- Matthews, J. H. An Introduction to Surrealism. University Park, Pa. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965.
- _____, ed. An Anthology of Surrealist Poetry. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967.
- _____. Surrealist Poetry in France. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1969.
- Mayakovsky, Vladimir. Poemy, Stikhotvoreniya. Moscow: Government Printing Office, 1960.
- _____. The Bedbug and Selected Poetry. Edited by Patricia Blake; translated by Max Hayward and George Reavey. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1970.
- Monnerot, Jules. La Poésie moderne et le sacré. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945.

- Montes de Oca, Marco Antonio. Delante de la luz cantan los pájaros. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959.
- Mossop, D. J. Pure Poetry; Studies in French Poetic Theory and Practice, 1746-1945. Cambridge: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971.
- Nadeau, Maurice. Histoire du Surréalisme. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1945.
- _____. Documents surréalistes. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1948.
- de Nerval, Gérard. Œuvres. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1956.
- _____. Les Filles du feu suivi de Aurélia. Edited by Béatrice Didier. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1972.
- _____. Poésies et Souvenirs. Edited and annotated by Jean Richer. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1974.
- Neruda, Pablo. Primera residencia. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1957.
- Neumann, Erich. The Origins and History of Consciousness. New York: Pantheon Books, 1954.
- Noriega, Raúl. La piedra del sol, y 16 monumentos astronómicos del México antiguo: símbolos y claves. Mexico: Editorial Superación, 1957.
- Oliver, A. Richard. Charles Nodier: Pilot of Romanticism. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1964.
- Olson, Charles. Selected Writings. New York: New Directions, 1966.
- Ortiz de Montellano, Bernardo. Sueño y poesía. Mexico: Imprenta Universitaria, 1962.
- Palés Matos, Luis. Poesía: 1915-1956, 2d ed. Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1964.
- Peterkiewicz, Jerzy. The Other Side of Silence: The Poet at the Limits of Language. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Piggott, Stuart. The Druids. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968.
- Poe, Edgar Allen. Eureka: A Prose Poem. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1848.
- _____. The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allen Poe with Selections from His Critical Writings. 2 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

- _____. Poems of Edgar Allen Poe. Edited by Dwight MacDonald. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971.
- Praz, Mario. Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery. 2d rev. ed. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1964.
- Pratt, William. The Imagist Poem. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1963.
- Quasha, George. Somapoetics: Book One. Fremont, Mich.: The Sumac Press, 1973.
- Quevedo y Villegas, Francisco de. Obras completas. 2 vols. Madrid: Aguilar, 1960.
- Raymond, Marcel. De Baudelaire au surréalisme. Paris: Correa, 1933.
- Reeve, Franklin D. "Between Image and Idea: The Poetry of Blok." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1958.
- Richard, Jean-Pierre. L'univers imaginaire de Mallarmé. Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1961.
- Rimbaud, Arthur. Œuvres complètes. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1963.
- Rodman, Selden. Tongues of Fallen Angels: Conversations with Jorge Luis Borges, Robert Frost, Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Neruda, Stanley Kunitz, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Octavio Paz, Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg, Vinícius de Moraes, João Cabral de Melo Neto, Derek Walcott. New York: New Directions, 1974.
- de Rougemont, Denis. Love in the Western World. 2d rev. ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1956.
- Saint-John Perse. See "Leger, Alexis."
- Saurat, Denis. Literature and Occult Tradition: Studies in Philosophical Poetry. New York: The Dial Press, 1930.
- Séjourné, Laurette. Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico. New York: The Vanguard Press, 1957.
- Schmalenbach, Werner. Kurt Schwitters. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1967.
- Scholem, G. G. La Kabbale et sa symbolique. Paris: Payot, 1966.
- Schwitters, Kurt. Elementary; Die Blume Anna (Die neue Anna Blume: Eine Gedicht-sammlung aus den Jahren 1918-1922). Berlin: Der Sturm, 1922.

- Seligman, Kurt. Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion. New York: Pantheon Books, 1971.
- Selz, Jean. Odilon Redon. Translated by Eileen B. Hennessy. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1971.
- Senior, John. The Way Down and Out: The Occult in Symbolist Literature. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959.
- Sewell, Elizabeth. Paul Valéry: The Mind in the Mirror. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
- _____. The Orphic Voice: Poetry and Natural History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.
- De Sola, Graciela. Proyecciones del surrealismo en la literatura argentina. Buenos Aires: Ed. Culturales Argentinas, 1967.
- Spicer, Jack. The Collected Books of Jack Spicer. Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1975.
- Stevens, Wallace. The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951.
- _____. The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954.
- Sulzer, Johann Georg. Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste. 4 vols. Leipzig: Neue vermehrte zweite Auflage, 1792.
- Steiner, George. Language and Silence: Essays on Language Literature, and the Inhuman. New York: Atheneum, 1967.
- Tablada, José Juan. Obras I - Poesía. Edited and introduced by Hector Valdés. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Estudios Literarios, 1971.
- Taller (literary review). Mexico: 1937-193 .
- Thibaudet, Albert. La poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1926.
- de Torre, Guillermo. ¿Qué es el superrealismo? Buenos Aires: Columba, 1955.
- Torres Bodet, Jaime. Margarita de niebla. Mexico: Editorial Cultura, 1927.
- _____. Obra poética. 2 vols. México: Editorial Porrúa, 1967.

- Trakl, Georg. Dichtungen und Briefe. Introduction by W. Killy and H. Szklenar. Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1970.
- _____. Poems. Translated by Lucia Getsi. Athens, Ohio: Mundus Artium Press, 1973.
- Trobridge, George. Swedenborg: Life and Teaching. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1938.
- Tzara, Tristan. L'homme approximatif. Paris: Éditions Fourcade, 1931.
- _____. L'homme approximatif. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1968.
- _____. Tristan Tzara. Edited by René Lacôte and George Haldas. Paris: Éditions Pierre Seghers, 1966.
- _____. "Approximate Man" and Other Writings. Translated and introduced by Mary Ann Caws. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973.
- Valéry, Paul. Œuvres. 2 vols. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1960.
- Vallejo, César. Poemas humanos. Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1961.
- Valle Inclán, Ramón del. La lámpara maravillosa: ejercicios espirituales. Madrid: Sociedad General Española de Librería, 1916.
- _____. Obras escogidas. Madrid: Aguilar, 1967.
- Vasconcelos, José. Pitágoras: una teoría del ritmo. La Habana: Imprenta "El Siglo XX," 1916. 3d ed. Mexico: Editorial Cultura, 1921.
- _____. El monismo estético: ensayos. Mexico: Murguía, 1918.
- _____. Estudios indostánicos. Mexico: Ediciones México Moderno, 1920. 3d ed. Madrid: n.p., 1923. 3d ed. Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1938.
- _____. La raza cósmica: misión de la raza iberoamericana; notas de un viaje a la América del Sur. Barcelona: n.p., 1925.
- _____. Tratado de metafísica. Mexico: México Joven, 1929.
- _____. Estética. Mexico: n.p., 1935. 2d ed. Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1936. 3d ed. Mexico: n.p., 1945.
- _____. Historia del pensamiento filosófico. Mexico: Universidad Nacional de México, 1937.
- _____. El realismo científico. México: Centro de estudios filosóficos de la Facultad de filosofía y letras, 1943.

- _____. Lógica orgánica. México: El Colegio Nacional, 1945.
- _____. Filosofía estética. Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1952.
- _____. Obras completas. Vols. 3, 4. Mexico: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, S.A., 1961.
- Viatte, August. Les Sources occultes du romantisme: illuminisme, theosophie, 1770-1820. Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1928.
- _____. Victor Hugo et les illuminés de son temps. Montreal: Les Éditions de l'abre, 1942.
- Villaurrutia, Xavier. Obras. 2d ed. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966.
- Vriesen, Gustav and Imdahl, Max. Robert Delaunay: Light and Color. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1967.
- Walker, D. P. Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella. London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1958.
- White, John, editor. The Highest State of Consciousness. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., Anchor Books, 1972.
- Williams, Thomas. Mallarmé and the Language of Mysticism. Athens, Georgia: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1970.
- Williams, William Carlos. Collected Earlier Poems. New York: New Directions, 1951.
- _____. Collected Later Poems. New York: New Directions, 1951.
- _____. Paterson. New York: n.d., 1946.
- _____. Selected Essays. New York: Random House, 1954.
- _____. Pictures from Brueghel. New York: New Directions, 1962.
- _____. Paterson. New York: New Directions, 1963.
- Wilson, Colin. The Occult. New York: Random House, Inc., 1971.
- Wordsworth, William. Selected Poems and Prefaces. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965.
- Xirau, Ramón. Poesía Iberoamericana Contemporánea. Mexico: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1972.

294
Yates, Frances A. Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. New York: Vintage Books, 1969.

_____. The Rosicrucian Enlightenment. London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1975.

Yeats, William Butler. The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats, definitive edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956.

_____. A Vision. New York: Macmillan, 1969.

IV. Oriental

Akiyama, Terukazu. Japanese Painting. Geneva: Éditions d'Art Albert Skira, 1961.

Avalon, Arthur. See "Woodroffe, Sir John."

Archer, W. G. The Loves of Krishna in Indian Painting and Poetry. New York: Grove Press, 1966.

Bashō. See Matsuo, Bashō.

Bhagavad Gita. Translated by Juan Mascaro. Baltimore: Penguin Classics, n.d.

Bharati, Agehananda. The Tantric Tradition. London: Rider & Co., 1965.

Bhattacharya, Deben, translator. Songs of the Bards of Bengal. New York: Grove Press, 1969.

_____, translator. Love Songs of Chandidās: The Rebel Poet-Priest of Bengal. New York: Grove Press, 1970.

_____, translator. Love Songs of Vidyāpati. New York: Grove Press, 1970.

Blofeld, John. The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1970.

Blyth, R. H. Haiku. 4 vols. Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1949-1952.

_____. A History of Haiku. 2 vols. Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1963-1965.

_____. Senryu: Japanese Satirical Verses. 2d ed. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971.

Brower, Gary. Haiku in Western Languages. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1972.

- Brower, Robert H. and Miner, Earl. Japanese Court Poetry. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961.
- Bynner, Witter, translator. The Jade Mountain. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929.
- The Cambridge History of India. Ed. E. J. Rapson. 6 vols. Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1968.
- Chang, Chung Yuan. Original Teachings of Ch'an Buddhism. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.
- Chiang, Yee. The Chinese Eye: An Interpretation of Chinese Painting. 3d ed. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1971.
- Conze, Edward. The Prajñāpāramitā Literature. The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1960.
- Conze, Edward, et al., ed. Buddhist Texts through the Ages. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.
- Cowell, E. B. et al., ed. Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969.
- Creel, H. G. Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-Tung. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Daniélou, Alain. L'Érotisme divinisé. Paris: Éditions Buchet-Chastel, 1962.
- Dasgupta, Shashi Bhusan. An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1950.
- _____. Obscure Religious Cults. 2d rev. ed. Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962.
- Dasgupta, Surendranath. Indian Idealism. 2d ed. London: Cambridge University Press, 1962.
- De, Sushil Kumar. Treatment of Love in Sanscrit Literature. Calcutta: S. K. Das, 1929.
- Dumoulin, Heinrich, S. J. A History of Zen Buddhism. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.
- Eliade, Mircea. Yoga: Immortality and Freedom. 2d ed. Translated by Willard Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Evans-Wentz, W. Y. Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines. 2d ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- _____. The Tibetan Book of the Dead. New York: Causeway Books, 1973.

Fenollosa, Ernest. The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry.
 Edited by Ezra Pound. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1968.

Fitzsimmons, Thomas. Japanese Poetry Now. New York: Schocken Books,
 1972.

The Golden Lotus (Chin P'ing Mei). Translated by Clement Egerton.
 4 vols. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1939.

Govinda, Lama. Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism. London: Rider & Co.,
 1959.

Guenther, Herbert V. sGam.po.pa: The Jewel Ornament of Liberation.
 London: Rider & Co., 1959.

_____. The Life and Teaching of Naropa. Oxford: Clarendon
 Press, 1963.

_____. Yuganaddha: The Tantric View of Life, 2d ed. Varanasi:
 Chowkamba Sanscrit Series, 1964.

Guenther, Herbert V. and Trungpa, Chögyam. The Dawn of Tantra.
 Berkeley, California: Shambala Publications, Inc., 1975.

Hackin, J., ed. Asiatic Mythology. Translated by F. M. Atkinson.
 New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., n.d.

Henderson, Harold. A Haiku Anthology. Garden City, N.Y.: Double-
 day & Company, 1958.

I Ching or Book of Changes. Edited and translated by Richard Wil-
 helm. English translation C. F. Baynes. 3d ed. Princeton:
 Princeton University Press, 1967.

I Ching: The Book of Change. Translated and edited by John Blofeld.
 New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1968.

Ingalls, Daniel H. An Anthology of Sanscrit Court Poetry: Vidyakara's
 Subhasitaratnakosa. Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
 1969.

Keene, Donald. Japanese Literature. New York: Grove Press, 1955.

Keene, Donald, ed. Anthology of Japanese Literature. Harmondsworth,
 England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968.

Lao Tzu. The Way of Life. R. B. Blakeny. New York: The New American
 Library, 1955.

Lattimore, David. "Discovering Cathay." Parnassus: Poetry in Review,
 Spring/Summer 1973, pp. 5-9.

- Liu, Wu-chi and Yucheng Lo, Irving, ed. Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975.
- Makoto, Ueda. Zeami, Bashō, Yeats, Pound: A Study in Japanese and English Poetics. The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1965.
- Maspero, Henri. Le taoïsme et les religions chinoises. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971.
- Matsuo, Bashō. The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1966.
- _____. Monkey's Raincoat. Translated by Maeda Cana. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973.
- Mookerjee, Ajit. Tantra Art. Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1970.
- _____. Tantra Asana: A Way to Self-Realization. Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1971.
- Payne, Robert, ed. The White Pony. London: Theodore Brun Limited, 1949.
- Ramanan, K. Venkata. Nāgārjuna's Philosophy as Presented in the Mahā-Prajñāpāramitā-Sāstra. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1966.
- Rawson, Philip. Erotic Art of the East. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1968.
- Reps, Paul, ed. Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., n.d.
- Rexroth, Kenneth. One Hundred Poems from the Japanese. New York: New Directions, 1964.
- _____. One Hundred Poems from the Chinese. New York: New Directions, 1965.
- _____. Love and the Turning Year: One Hundred More Poems from the Chinese. New York: New Directions, 1970.
- Ross, Nancy Wilson. Three Ways of Asian Wisdom: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zen and Their Significance for the West. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966.
- Sarkar, Anil Kumar. Changing Phases of Buddhist Thought: A Study in the Background of East-West Philosophy. Patna, India: Bharati Bhawan, 1968.

- Shinkichi, Takahashi. Afterimages: Zen Poems. Translated with an introduction by Lucien Stryk and Takashi Ikemoto. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972.
- Singer, Milton, ed. Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966.
- Snellgrove, David. The Hevajra Tantra. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Snellgrove, David and Richardson, Hugh. A Cultural History of Tibet. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968.
- Spratt, P. Hindu Culture and Personality: A Psycho-Analytic Study. Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966.
- Stcherbatsky, F. Buddhist Logic. 2 vols. New York: Dover Publications, 1962.
- Stryk, Lucien and Takashi, Ikemoto, ed. Zen: Poems, Prayers, Sermons, Anecdotes, Interviews. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism. New York: Schocken Books, 1963.
- _____. On Indian Mahayana Buddhism. Edited by Edward Conze. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro et al. Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.
- The Thirteen Principal Upanishads. Edited and translated by Robert E. Hume. 2d ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1931.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. The Theory and Practice of the Mandala. Translated by A. H. Brodrick. New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1970.
- Van den Heuvel, Cor, ed. The Haiku Anthology: English Language Haiku by Contemporary American and Canadian Poets. Garden City, New York: Doubleday/Anchor, 1974.
- Waley, Arthur. Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1939.
- _____. Translations from the Chinese. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941.
- _____. The Real Tripitaka. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1952.

Wang, Wei. Hiding the Universe. Translated by Wai-lim Yip. New York: Grossman Publishers, Inc., 1972.

Weber, Max. The Religion of India. Translated by H. H. Gerth and Don Martindale. New York: The Free Press, 1958.

_____. The Religion of China. Translated by Hans H. Gereth. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968.

Woodroffe, Sir John. Principles of Tantra. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1914.

_____. La puissance du serpent. Lyon, France: Éditions Paul Derain, 1959.

_____. The Great Liberation (Mahanirvana Tantra). Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1963.

_____. Hymns to the Goddess. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1964.

_____. Kularnava Tantra. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1965.

_____. Sakti and Sakta. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1965.

_____. The World as Power. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1966..

_____. The Garland of Letters. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1969.

_____. Introduction to Tantra Shastra. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1969.

Yasuda, Kenneth. The Japanese Haiku. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc., 1957.

Zimmer, Heinrich. Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization. New York: Pantheon Books, 1946.