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Performing criticism: Reading as bricolage

Lavazzi, Thomas Gene, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1994

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PERFORMING CRITICISM: READING AS BRICOLAGE

by

Thomas Lavazzi

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

1994

1994

Thomas Lavazzi

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

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15 April 1994

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Abstract

PERFORMING CRITICISM:
READING AS BRICOLAGE
by
Thomas Lavazzi

Adviser: Professor Gerhard Joseph

This dissertation provides a theoretical framework for performance as a mode literary/cultural interpretation, and presents a collection of pieces that demonstrates various degrees of critical performance. These pieces, ranging from relatively conventional essays to multimedia performances, evolve from close readings of works from a wide range of genres (including autobiography, travel narrative, prose fiction, and lyric poetry) and literary periods (from the late Middle ages in England to post WWII America). The present gathering includes a Middle English lyric, a 16th-century English series of travel/voyage narratives, a late 17th-century English novel, a 19th-century American journal/diary, a 20th- century American poetic sequence, and a 20th-century American collection of lyric poems and an accompanying journal.

The dissertation starts from the premise that Texts (large T) are elusive Others that we try to reinscribe, define, interpret, offer for display in hermeneutical zoos (text, small t), but which we can never finally contain, control, or fully know; one way to further textualize this dilemma (there is no way out of Text) is to devise a method of interpretation that becomes itself a self-reflexive, multivoiced performance; to spotlight criticism as a staged act. To adapt Dilthey's formulation, which considers any work of art in its "wholeness" as metacommentary, the whole set of interrelations *is* the interpretation. This includes readers' and editors' voices, the social-economic conditions and places of performance, the various versions of a work, the discourses operating within the work, the pulsion forces pulsing through it (at a premorphemic and microphonic level, beneath--or within--its social/ cultural/literary imaging), and, finally, the interpreter's bricolage performance--his heteroglossic improvisations based on these various discourses and on his sense of the total "event" or "happening" of the text. It is this complexly interactive network of relationships that the performative critical text attempts to present. It figures its subject as a Grail of voices.

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In Search of The Critical Grail

Well, let him ride, but where shall he go?

Parzival

This dissertation provides a theoretical framework for the phenomenon of performative criticism, and presents a collection of essays that demonstrates various degrees of critical performance through close readings of works from a wide range of genres (including autobiography, travel narrative, prose fiction, and lyric poetry) and literary periods (from the late Middle ages in England to post WWII America). What I'm offering in this volume are readings of a Middle English lyric, a 16th-century English series of travel/voyage narratives, a late 17th-century English novel, a 19th-century American journal/diary, a 20th- century American poetic sequence, and a 20th-century American collection of lyric poems and an accompanying journal. Poststructuralist literary theory, current ethnographic theory, performance theory, theoretical physics, Zen Buddhism, and trends in modern and contemporary poetics all contribute to the methodos practiced in this book. Yet the approach is not historical, nor am I interested in charting influences; it is the paying of a particular kind of attention, a dialogic stance and the ensuing performance that bring these various works together.

I am trying to hear the voices in these texts, voices that echo a cultural and literary unconscious, enacting a heteroglossia or plurilogue that is the texts and that challenges assumptions of authorial univocality; I want to reorchestrate these voices and feature them in an interpretative event. (And my own voice? To say "my own" is to disown. It is all that occurs here.) In addition to refiguring texts as multivoiced performances, I am interested in examining the way language evades, in an elemental way, conceptual captivity (that is, at a premorphemic and microphonic level, beneath--or within--its social/ cultural/literary imaging). I am interested, that is, in investigating the text as the only possible site of the Grail.

As examples of performative criticism the essays in this book put themselves at risk in order to set their subjects free; they risk being dismissed as inconclusive, parasitically self-indulgent--extravagant. If my writing style lacks "critical distance," it is because my words exist in the world opened by

theoretical physics and postmodern ethnography. In theoretical physics, particles exist as particles per se--i.e., as isolable identities given names and places in propositional sentences--for the convenience of scientific discourse about them. Conventional linguistic structures, by requiring sub-atomic particles (as signs) to occupy subject or object positions (whether we call them "particles," "wave packets," or "processes"), force them to temporarily adapt a discrete identity that they do without--in fact, that they can only do without--in their own world (it might be more accurate, for example, to transform "particle" into a verbal, but then, *what* particles? particles particle?).

Current ethnographic theory also recognizes the interventionist role of the observer. The presence of the ethnographer, her/his interactions with his "subjects," are marks on the landscape and body of the other, so to speak (that is, fieldwork is acknowledged as a mediated, rather than an "objective," procedure). So cultural others served up in anthropological studies are often specular misrecognitions of pre-textualized Others--subjects viewed through Western shades, whose representations confirm or put in question/on trial our own ideological positions; similarly, these "particles" that are really processes (but even this label is misleading, since it implies a chronological movement) are the misrepresented of the subatomic world. In this sense, too, explicated, conceptualized, critically produced "texts" are the misrepresented of the subauthorial world. Our portrait of the other, that is, must include a blank, an impenetrable shadow, a degree of unrepresentability or inaccessibility that eludes the most sophisticated techniques of reconnaissance and surveillance. The disinterested, authoritative posture is itself a rhetorical-ideological maneuver balancing on the head of an oxymoron--the objectively framed text. Such critical activity is unconsciously subjective, masquerading as "objectivity."

How can we characterize this interpretative venture, this praxis called "performative criticism," and distinguish it from more conventional or familiar hermeneutical practice?

At the discourse level, performative criticism registers a subauthorial world of

shifting positionality; a semiotically discontinuous realm of thetic opposition and confluence (for Julia Kristeva, the "thetic" = any positional, i.e. articulated, moment). Beneath this level, performative criticism traces a world of "pulsion forces" (Kristeva)--a world of "musicality" heard under, over, and through words, disrupting from within the smooth, logical flow of sense (which Gilles Deleuze figures as a body without organs). Musicality (for Kristeva) is an unarticulating force that fractures the illusion of coherent, authorial self-presence supported by syntactic/semantic units, and redistributes language particles in unexpected, unintended patterns. As a particle in quantum mechanics coheres as a particle when looked for and talked about, so a "text" is a unified, explainable, bounded whole when read from (framed or contextualized within) a certain point of view. To be handled as a bibliographic and critical quantity (as a work with author, title, place of publication, publisher, date, and decidable meaning), it must be assumed to have (at least the outlines of) definition and closure. But for the uninhibited, unindentured mind at play in the text, for the Text that is the "infinite play of the word" (as Barthes describes it), there are no arche and telos, no teleological narratives. Performative criticism looks for linguistic multivalence (within) and defers to a potentially endless interpretability (without/around).

Rather than beginning with the assumption of a univocal, intended text (one whose textual activity is regulated and approved by the author) that can be rendered fully cognizant within the parameters of a particular interpretative schema, performative criticism takes the stance that all analytical systems are ideologically motivated framing apparatuses--even its own readings are only partial readings. From the point of view of performative criticism, "texts" are not entities, but temporary condensations (of discourses and semic energy) alive within an unbounded field of semiotic and subsemiotic activity. This study asserts the incommensurability of such texts with their institutionally mediated versions. It recognizes, that is, a potentially unpoliticizable text (or one that resists cooptation from any one point of view);

a text that, though it can be appropriated, can never be fully conceived (of). To comprehend such dispersed texts, criticism must remain mobile and restless, in a state of constant readiness; it must become the act of positionality itself. Performative criticism does not seek to supplant traditional exegesis as the more "true," authoritative, or "objective" method, but to acknowledge its own (and others') constructionism, to displace unconscious (hence axiomatic) subjectivity with a conscious, or functional, subjectivity. Performative critics see their images as if in a house of mirrors--a reflection of a reflection, whichever way they turn, knowing the glass can be smudged.

Just as there is an Other (majuscule O) that eludes anthropological cognizance, so there is an Ur-Text (majuscule T) or virtual Text that we can glimpse, but never grasp (as William James says of being). There are many (interpretatively generated) versions of a work, but only one, ongoing, only secondarily accessible ur-Text. Though we can never immerse ourselves within ur-Text and "see" it from the "inside" (which would be to lose consciousness, to enter a trancelike or deeply meditative state); though we can never capture, contain, or effectively detain the flow of ur-Text, we can detect it. We can trace it at the subdiscourse level as it resonates through and around text (small t) in homophones, puns, metonymic clusterings, cross-textual doublings, sound associations, etc. (this is the "third language" Barthes speaks of, which "releases the prisoners, scatters the signifieds"); at the rhetorical level, we perceive it in echoes and patternings of various ideologically motivated discourses and counterdiscourses that can be heard through and that constitute the authorial voice. To comprehend--or reenact--ur-Text is to release text into a field of shifting discourse positionality, a self-annihilating and self-dispersing Textuality that melts down hermeneutical shields; we see and hear a text as if for the first time, as its repressed Other breaks through, as text is disturbed by ur-Text. It is we, the readers, the writers of performative criticism who must release the suppressed voices, the counter discourses, the disruptions and ugliness--blemishes and aharmonic eruptions--that are the

actual beautiful face of the Other. It is we who have beaten the voices down, and now we must allow ourselves--our authoritative, truth-claiming selves--to be beaten down, to allow the reemergence of an Otherness not located in (or just in) the text per se, but between our reading activity and its texture; actually there is the one Texture that includes us both, text(s) and reader, language and unconscious; there is no subject-object division at the subauthorial level. As in the world of high-energy physics, figured through S-matrices, there are no distinct "particles," just "processes," so at the pre-thetic level of textual analysis the Text sounds in reader and reader in the text, and there are no readers and texts, but a flow of energy, inarticulate, producing the need for articulation, which spins the shell of a word around its absence; an endless unarrestable (or only tentatively so) flow coalescing now as the semiotic complex of voices and discourses known as the reader--which you would call yourself, I would call myself--and now as the matrix of discourses and rhetorical positions known as a "text." It is an otherness always everywhere present, flowing through author, text, you, me--all readers. As I concentrate on Text (ur-Text), whatever I can consciously say about it, short of a glossalaliac babble, will always only be partial, even as I push myself to the realization that I always "say more than I know" (Lacan). The Text, as a gathering of discourses/voices resonant with surplus meanings and interpretive contexts (or reading encounters); as wild, semic flow glimpsed in aporias within as well as breaches between voices, can never be grasped, will always outrun our claims. Text, or ur-Text = open discourse formation X endless semic drift.

Criticism that recognizes such a Text (or such a relation between text and Text) must also question and transform itself. Criticism becomes an *act*, a practice, a praxis. Interpretation = ritual performance. It incribes a challenge to (if not the temporary abandonment of) the hermeneutical ego; attempts an unself-conscious giving over to that which it "criticizes"; proposes a withdrawal into the wilderness that is T murmuring through text and return to an always-on-the-alert academic platform that acknowledges the affect of T

on text.[1] Proof of the critic's involvement with the work at hand; evidence that she/he has intimately experienced its rhythms and tortions, its structuring forces, should be apparent not just in *what* is said, but in the style and mode of presentation. A work of criticism that performs its knowledge allows the reader to reexperience the joy and angst of the critic's coming to knowledge, to reenact the intercourse between reader and text.

Performative criticism, then, does not mean simply hermeneutic self-reflexiveness or reader self-assertiveness, but the critic hearing his voice in dialogue with other critics' voices, and with the discourse provinces brought into play by the text under scrutiny. Rather than defensively trying to silence, subordinate, dominate, and generally colonize those other voices/discourse territories, performative critics must be ready to give way to them, to put their own voices in jeopardy, to risk losing themselves in the polyvoiced uprising that is the Text wrested from authorial control (both the author of the text and the authorizers of the text). Hence, by restaging the interpretative drama around a Brechtian "alienation-effect," which puts our own commentary in quotes, so to speak, by placing it in dialogue with other voices/discourses, we put our position as textual police on trial/under erasure. In an extreme manifestation, this means that the critical text becomes a heteroglossic, dialogic performance: it attends to intertextual plottings and doublings (whether or not an author "intended" them). It practices digression and indirection, hermeneutical indiscretion; it becomes a conduit for the conflict and/or chorus of voices; it invites reader/listener participation and reenactment. Critical writing becomes the creation of an associative collage of found or documentary material--including quotes from various sources (as

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[1] Another way to express the relationship between Text and text is $t_f(T)$: t function of T, where T is the domain, the set of all possible discourses (including counterdiscourses, both authorial and extra-authorial), semiotic, and subsemiotic activity--a process of endless semiosis (Barthes term)--out of which authored texts are generated as tentative resistances.

the Whitman collage in chapter 3); it becomes an improvisatory space for discourse impersonations spinning off a base text (whether a Poe short story, a contemporary poem, or an 18th-century novel), as well as for moments of personal lyricism, confession, and discursive commentary. I am interested, that is, not in writing about texts, but in writing through them (as John Cage writes through The Cantos or Thoreau's notebooks). I want to play along with a text, rather than reduce its play; to feel for the soft spots along a line of discourse, or listen for the hum of the dialogic--a host text's urge toward performance--and consume the text by mimetically reinscribing its energies/desires. The interpretative act (with its cast of thousands) must be practiced to the point of exhaustion. An "interpretation," from this perspective, is a multi-voiced trace of (or script for) a dramatic encounter among reader, text, and author; the scene of criticism becomes, to borrow Allan Kaprow's term, a "happening."

In this sense, all performative writing is a liminoid phenomenon (as Victor Turner terms it in From Ritual to Theatre). As authors, we must act as Melville's Confidence Man, circulating among a matrix or nexus of masks and voices, no one of which is the "real," "true," "authentic," "original" voice. The Real is a function of *différance*: the unpredictable, unstable, continually shifting and altering; the open and uncaptureable, paradigmatic displacement as well as syntagmatic deferral. Print offers an illusion of permanence and closed definition that is challenged by many postmodern texts (and some pre-modern ones--as, for just one example, Tristram Shandy).

Figured ethno-pathologically, criticism stages itself on the site of the other (on a body of language). At first, a "primary" text becomes a host upon which the interpretive text feeds, but a symbiotic transmogrification soon takes place, a mutual infestation, and both become something other in the exchange. In fact, criticism can be said to exist only in this dynamic--and by no means "objective"--interrelation. But while the self-preserving critical text strengthens itself axiomatically on a hierarchic relationship between "self" and

"other"--a sort of methodological vaccine--both of which are always already constructed/fictional/functional forms, the performative critical text acts as a pathogenic carrier or agent that weakens the defenses of text against Text, self against not-self. It is not concerned with improving academic appetites, for which a healthy, specular text (in which the interpreter finds what he/she wants) is the best stimulant. The function of performative criticism is to inject a dis-ease into ideologically generated, procedural, semiotically stabilized textual productions in order to effect a transformation. This anti-immunological operation may necessitate juxtaposing variant readings of texts so that claim meets counter-claim, demonstrating how any thetic position is tentative and subject to change, and requires opening the text to contamination by a microsemiosis from within.[2] An important function of performative criticism, then, is to open a space that can accommodate explorative anti-surgery (i.e., a surgery concerned not with mending or extracting, but with increasing complications).

To sum up: Since Texts (large T) are elusive Others that we try to reinscribe, define, interpret, but which we can never finally contain, control, or fully know, one way to confront, to textualize this dilemma is to devise a method of interpretation that becomes itself a self-reflexive multivoiced performance. To adapt Dilthey's formulation, which considers any work of art in its "wholeness" as metacommentary, the whole set of interrelations *is* the interpretation. This includes readers' and editors' voices, the social-economic conditions and places of performance, the various versions of a work, the discourses operating within the work, the pulsion forces pulsing through it,

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[2] as explained in note 1 above, t is affected by T. The critical text (c) in turn is influenced or distorted by contact with the complex function $t_f(T)$. T, then, is the driving force behind all textual functions--those that are authored and those that escape authorial control--whether generated in opposition to or in celebration of it. Expressing this relationship as an equation: the performative critical text (P) = $c_f[t(T)]$.

and, finally, the interpreter's bricolage performance--his heteroglossic improvisations based on these various discourses and on his sense of the total "event" or "happening" of the text.[3] It is this complexly interactive network of relationships that the performative critical text attempts to present. It figures its subject as a Grail of voices.

This means that the critics cease to claim to comprehend and completely explain a text and allow themselves (now and again) to wander at large--"go native"--within and around it; to reinscribe this experience is to sacrifice logical structure and/or clearly defined or unidirectional focus to open their own texts--and themselves--to the possibility of irreducible plenitude; it is to reposition themselves rhetorically as participants, and be agile enough to shift between the positions of observer and participant. To achieve this, critics must step back and become spectators of their own scriptive maneuvers. To break out of the specular appropriation of Text/Other, however partially, critics must not only lose their way/places in texts, but also see (catch) themselves in the act of seeing--enact a way of seeing. Though this does not guarantee that they will see something else (or Other), it enables them to let go, prepares them for the "real work" (Gary Snyder's phrase) of self-deconstruction by creating an opening (a mind space) for affective, mutually transformative interactions (what Richard Schechner calls "efficacy rituals").

As poststructuralist ethnographers and/or literary critics, we can learn from the Jewish Midrashic and Zen tiesho traditions: we can gain most satisfaction not from a delimiting self-validation, but from disintegrative euphoria, by opening ourselves and our texts to as much as possible of what there is to be discovered in the life of the Other, of the Text (including its life

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[3] Since performative criticism considers a wide range of literary, extra-literary, and extra-verbal relationships, including the structures operating within a work, the antistructures riddling through it, and the social-political-economic frame of which it is an element, it can also function as a form of cultural criticism.

as, in Jerome McGann's words, a "social text"). We must initiate the critical act with an attitude of mind-opening self doubt, an awareness that we never have it *all*, a potentially productive sense of inadequacy. Are we ready to acknowledge our involvement with the text/other, our willingness to offer "partial" readings of the Other, to lose ourselves in the text and live with the loss, to let it always go beyond us (as the found material in a Pound collage)?

Performing Criticism Means Bricolage Practice

Since the mid 50s, when poets here and abroad began to popularize public readings for a general (that is, nonelite) audience in nontraditional spaces (bars and coffee houses) and began experimenting with multi-media presentation of their works (i.e., reading with musical accompaniment), and especially since the 60s and 70s with the advent in America of ethnopoetics, there has been an emphasis on text as performance (Rothenberg's researches into and translations of Native American oral poetries, for example, in controversial anthologies like Shaking the Pumpkin). While the avant-garde of American poetics in the post WWII era has been concerned with performing texts, postmodern American and European anthropological, literary, and performance theorists have concentrated on experimentation with textual performance (performative writing). This is not to say that these are mutually exclusive camps. Certainly many of Rothenberg's and Allan Ginsberg's texts (and those of many members of the Black Mountain School, most notably Charles Olson and Paul Blackburn), as well as the work of performance poets like Jackson Mac Low and Armand Schwerner, hold their own as textual performances. Groups like the Language Poets also work in both territories. Performance art collaboratives like the Critical Art Ensemble, whose multi-media productions juxtapose current social-political-cultural theory with popular imagery, further blur the distinctions. From the other side, a theorist like Lacan, many of whose "texts" originate in lectures, can be seen both as

theoretician and performer. Richard Schechner and Richard Foreman are both performance theorists and performers; though Schechner does not perform his theoretical texts, Foreman does, and the experience of either a Schechner or a Foreman production is, in a limited sense, an ontological experience. It could be argued that Artaud's "theory," only partially available in his texts, can be grasped only in an Artaudian production. Susan Howe is a critic as well as a poet who does perform her criticism and whose texts are performative.

However, for the most part, critics and theorists do not present their work performatively, and concentrate on textual or writerly performance. Gloria Anzaldua, Norman O. Brown, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida (in *Glas*, *Spurs*, *Limited Inc.*, and *The Post Card*),Roland Barthes, Georges Bataille, James Clifford, Barbara Babcock, and bell hooks immediately come to mind as writers whose work blends lyric, abstract, academic, philosophic, autobiographical, and documentary forms of writing and plays on these various types of writing (such as Clifford's miming of a postcard format in the disruptive center of the *Predicament of Culture*)--that is, as writers who *write* performatively. Opening such aporias or fissures in scholarly, academic writing creates fields of free play (at rhetorical and prediscourse levels) within authoritative discourses and makes it difficult to contain the flow of Text within a single sign system.

Performing criticism, in writerly and/or somatic formats, means putting our(scriptive)selves in a field where borders are always subject to change and never exclusively or clearly defined; where local strategies (if not the "rules" of play) are situational, generated by bricolage activity. In an interview with Burton Hatlen, Carl Rakosi describes late poet Robert Duncan's eye disorder: while talking to his interlocutor, he would fix him with one eye while the other wandered freely. As critics and readers, we must be imaginatively strabismic, fixing on textual structures, however temporary, while also wandering freely around, through, between, and behind various textual positions, following word sounds, associations, puns, resemblances, dissemblances, divergences;

exploring uncharted territory and following cross-textual leads and clues that may lead nowhere, if hermeneutical closure is the goal, or that may detect breaches, or brisures, opening into Text. With the text flat open on the desk, the blocks of print are undeniable, self-present facts; the page is silent and white, selfless, a prop and background, the virgin mother to these babes of articulation absorbing light. Yet, as we turn the page, it becomes translucent, as the text on the other side bleeds through: There is the Other present in the one, the not I in the I, the shadow within; there is no more recto vs verso, as they "vecto" into each other (Legends, a collaborative book by several of the language poets, plays on this effect by printing the "image" of a poem--front and back of a typescript--recto and verso on a single leaf)...should we ignore such textual phenomena? Turn the page quickly don't look get on with it--the "productive" reading, that is, we have a product to put out here, our attainment of understanding, consumption of knowledge, don't look *now*.... We seek some *thing*--resolution, goal, end to effort; realized structure dissolving into a reality-effect; a moment of achieved being, a "home"; an evocation of Truth produced by the diligent pursuit (if we are reader/followers) or angst-ridden erection (if we are "writers") of syntactic and semantic neighborhoods. Yet, in the zealousness of our quest, we may overlook (overread) residual phenomena that open onto the infinite play of Text. Like the narrators in Robbe-Grillet's The Erasers and Poe's "The Man in the Crowd," we cruise the impenetrable surface of the (hermeneutical) narrative, never any closer to finding what we seek *because* we seek it, while this wandering, uncharted flow, this potentially endless crosstextual, intertextual, and un-author-ized circulation of language and imagery happening at once all around us is always already our (anti)destination. Such digressive, wasteful activity, such exegetical detritus excreted in the act of interpretative closure is productive gratuitousness.

Essentially, performing criticism means attentive, self-reflexive practice; a working with texts, rather than pre-scriptive or automatic coding of textual

activity. As Hartman has stated (*Criticism in the Wilderness*), criticism is literary praxis. The terror of academic surveillance--defining, labeling, regulating, engraving identity, keeping an eye on the Text as a potentially disruptive Other, or training its voice into propositional language--must be confronted on its own terrain: not in the abstract realm of theoretical discourse alone, but in the reading of works. As Hartman suggests, we must be on the offensive, must seek out and destroy any "purity" in language that amputates, reduces, or strangles the resonant cry, the "barbaric yawp," of Text. That works like Derrida's *Glas* and much postmodern poetry--for example concrete poetry and language poetry--are visually and phonically disruptive locates the front line of assault on the sensual, experiential, and intrasemiotic level. This is not just a discursive issue. What we must do, then, armed with this postmodern arsenal of joyful explosives, of stunning jouissance, is sabotage authored texts (in the past and present), not to destroy them but to open them laughingly/lovingly to the jouiplossssance always already within them, to carnivalize them, to expose them to the infinite play that they as language always are, to break down authored self-resistance and ego dissimulations, to run the tongue of interpretation along the erogenous zones of discourses, and so release the text as if within a haze of nitrous oxide into a climax of voices; our mission, as performers of criticism, is not to foreclose, but, with sensitive foreplay, to tease open, to bring the grail within sight when one least expects it.

We can say, then, that there is a Grail, that it has always been there where Parzival left it--in a state of mind and contour of experience. Parzival, like a wandering hermeneut, obsessed with finding the meaning of the Grail, must, paradoxically, give up his narrative quest--cease following the tracks in the story and lose track of the story--in order for the narrative to reach its goal: dis-covering the Grail; the oppositional rhythms of the Text must yet remain active beyond the frame of the epic if the quest is to be meaning-full.

Similarly, to disinterpret is to disenchant critical stories told about texts, to break the spell of hermeneutic orthodoxy and to reenchant the critical enterprise within a vision of heteroglossia. This study presents a theory of critical performance, a justification of a writing practice, and a practice of that theory--an anti-narrative of what we do when we do interpreting; others may find a direct path more appealing, and so it may lead them to the grail. And yet we are all implicated by "search": all of us, as our paths parallel, intersect, contradict, are at once and interminably here, in these letters -- s e a a r c h r e a c h -- in the endless variations of this search that is the Grail. Text = Grail.

Overview

The presentations that follow vary from more or less conventional essays that are influenced in some way by the works they interpret (such as the reading of Whitman's *Specimen Days*, which, like Whitman's autobiographical work, is an extended prose meditation within the boundaries of a conventional form--in Whitman's case, the journal, in my case, the essay), to more formally experimental pieces (the essays on Schwerner, Behn, and Hakluyt), to fully scripted interpretative performances (such as the Whitman collage at the beginning of chapter 3 and the performance piece based on Charles Reznikoff's Testimony, chapter 8). Taken together, these essays present a spectrum of alternative forms of critical writing, ranging from fairly straightforward excessiveness that questions the host text, looking for performative cues--that loosens it up, finding moments that allow the critical text to play along with the host text (in the manner of jazz improvisation)--to writings in which discursive/nondiscursive, verbal/nonverbal boundaries implode into a "phono-picto-graphic" (Ulmer's term) language of performance (for example, in the Whitman collage, the typescript is cacographically overwritten with translucent colored markers). As Geoffrey Hartman says, extravagant writing calls for an equally extravagant response on the part of the critic; or Thoreau: "I fear chiefly lest my expression may not be *extra-vagant* enough."

However, these essays are not intended as demonstrations or examples of particular forms/formats that can be transplanted/grafted onto other works, but as bricolage practices prompting other reader/critics to do their own work, to come up with their own forms and techniques, inspired by the work at hand. Since, as discussed above, each text presents its own discourse and subdiscourse environment, to re-present this environment as fully as possible, to reenact--experience--it, we cannot apply a generic critical method and language but must keep our style open and versatile. My desire, then, is not to historicize or socialize texts (nor to avoid social-historical-economic contexts, where such references are productive), but to establish close contact with a handful of texts, "trying" them against the demands of poststructuralist theory--experiencing them within this context--opening them to a mise en scène in which reader/audience/critic and author/text participate, and offering these readings as records of alternative interpretative activities.

We can begin our quest for the Grail anywhere. Certainly we can begin in the Middle Ages. Chapter one is an extended meditation, via Bakhtin, on a Middle English lyric poem, "The Minstrel and His Wares." I offer the poem as a medieval counter-example to what "lyric" poetry has come to mean in the twentieth century. This poem gives us a specular glimpse of late Medieval society in transition from a feudal to capitalist economic base; therefore, the poem is an arena for contending voices, its shifting intentionality complicated by its social-cultural context. It remains today as the trace, irresolvably complex, of this self-reflexive and unstable period. My own essay attempts to reenact the anxiety and exhilaration of this moment by exploring these tensions to the point of exhaustion. The essay is obsessed with the play of images, and this is echoed by the chant-like repetition of the poem through the essay.

Avoiding a chronological path and following a more associative one, chapter two leaps to post WWII America, juxtaposing an in-depth discussion

of Carl Rakosi's poetry and prose with the previous analysis of the late 15th-century carol. The main concern here, as in the previous chapter, is with the dialogic dynamic of Rakosi's work, whose structure is seen as a function of shifting, sometimes conflicting, discourse positions. Benjamin's concept of "aura" (Iluminations) and a prevailing theory in modern physics--that of an observer-participatory universe--are also important to the essay. Rakosi is particularly concerned with the "human" in his work, with offering a touchable art. My own reimaginings of the aura surrounding personal objects, such as a silver ring given to me by a lover, as well as accounts of my involvement with Rakosi's poetry, merge with material from Rakosi's autobiographical Daybook and biographical information provided by Rakosi's readers. Here moments of first- and third-person narrative rub against interpretative discourse, which itself attempts to recognize the various voices pulsing through a poem or prose passage. Though the essays on Behn and Hakluyt (chapters four and five) also contain autobiographical interludes, or interruptions, this chapter contains the most directly personal of the essays. Later chapters on Schwerner and Whitman move intimately, like acts of love; they also speak urgently about personal encounters with the works, sometimes out of frustration, sometimes in the heat of celebrative passion, but not in the literal, diary-like manner of this essay. A hermeneutical chain letter, containing the poems commented on in the essay and a note requesting brief reader-responses to the poems, is currently circulating the US (and perhaps abroad); these responses are recorded in a continuously evolving appendix (435). (So this dissertation can never be equal to itself; can never be, at any moment, ALL).

Chapter three performs its act of love through intimate readings of several passages in Whitman's Specimen Days. Like chapter one, it is more a meditative consumption of his text then a detached critical evaluation of it. Zen Buddhist philosophy informs my reading of Whitman's text; Shunryu Suzuki's voice often resonates through Whitman's. The essay is also influenced by a Derridian and Lacanian notion of language play, freely following images

and word sounds through the text, and basing its analysis on surprising juxtapositions. While a conceptual knowledge arises, it does not develop from a linear or logical pattern. The interpretation moves by leaps and associations, by tracing metonymic hints, a broken strand of beads spun around a core of words. The essay is in love with metaphor, and the play of metaphor becomes a structuring device. Its themes emerge from a field of encounters. As in chapter two, recent theories about subatomic particle behavior also feed the thought of this essay. However, the interpretative performance is cued by Whitman's own authorial performance, as displayed in the text. In Specimen Days, Whitman presents himself as a body and mind in motion, as a performative seer who translates experience into language.

Chapter three opens with a performance collage, intended to reenact a textual experience: what reading a text means in a critical context. Whitman or any author as a textual phenomenon is not just his own words, but the words of others about him, including editorial emendations and commentary on texts, and textual ramifications of the discourses brought together in the field of his work. "Stirr'd Up Everywhere" is a multivoice performance piece inspired by Whitman's life in the text. Four discourse territories interact dialogically in the piece: scientific, political, academic, and autobiographical. The Collage incorporates material from botanical handbooks, Marx and Engel's accounts of the Civil War, critical and biographical studies of Whitman, and Whitman's correspondence and notebooks, as well as Specimen Days. My own improvisations based on these voices freely traverse these territories, often overwriting them, sometimes literally, with translucent markers. I inscribe myself in the piece, then, not as an "author," but as an arranger, an originator of play, a bricoleur rather, than as the creator of an "original" work.

Chapters four and five (really a single, long essay, divided into two sections according to an external system--the relative length of other chapters and overall "balance" or uniformity of the dissertation--i.e., according to an unstated code, an urge to conform) discuss the specular coding of Otherness--

geographical and psychological--in two texts: Richard Hakluyt's collection of travel/exploration narratives The Principle Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation, and Aphra Behn's proto-ethnographic novel Oroonoko, The Royal Slave. The essays question the possibility of knowing an Other in and of itself. To paraphrase Jane Tompkins, we see only what our ideological and cultural contexts allow us to see. Jack Beeching's introduction to the Penguin edition of Principle Navigations claims that Hakluyt presents "Arrays of plain fact," but the accounts of the Other are in fact fictionalizations, telling us more about the observer's interests, attitudes, ontological orientation, and psychological condition than about the native Other itself. In both Hakluyt's and Behn's texts, the boundary between "reality" and fiction blurs. What we get are more or less covert fictional portrayals, a range of reality effects in which Hakluyt's "documentary" collection and Behn's novel carry out, more or less consciously, the same project--an appropriation and exploitation of the territory and bodies of the Other to work out conflicts in the sense of self of the dominant culture, in this case, the English. The other, that is, becomes a mirror in this solipsistic drama, confirming certain aspects of Anglo identity, questioning or at least throwing into relief social, political, and ethical beliefs, serving as a source for displacement of tabooed obsessions, fears, and desires, which can be specularly acted out on the body and land of the Other. Works of "nonfiction," then, such as Hakluyt's collection, can be seen as serving an important function in an ideology that counterposes fact to fiction. In a dualistic, empirically based culture, we must believe in a reality outside all fiction and unalterable by it, but, as this chapter emphasizes, this belief is just that--a belief about a world of our own making, a truth claim, a factual fiction rather than an absolute Truth. From this perspective, Behn's novel may be more "real" than Hakluyt's narratives, since it more accurately represents what we do as thinking, language-bound beings.

In chapters four and five, as in the book as a whole, this analysis of how

we interpret others leads me to question my own interpretive activity. How much of the attention I compose in these pages is an answer to my own interests? and the fact that I'm composing an essay on certain issues implies that I must focus, tether my thoughts, work within certain bounds, overlook more than I look at, and what I see is already a product of what I want to see. I try to slip out of this, to elude my own authorial control by adapting an elusive or evasive style; I try to remain open and sensitive to aporias, not only in the works being discussed, but in the process of my own writing as well--accidents such as the wrong key touched on the keyboard, the activity of the cursor, my own rereading and revision. I play within and through my own essay, interrupting the discursive flow with quotes from newspapers and anthropological studies; creating mini-collages out of this material at points within the essay, as well as at the beginning and end of the essay. So is this still an "essay"? is this activity part of the essay, or can we see this--the essay and the destruction of the essay--as part of a larger genre, performative criticism? I stay self-reflexively aware of what is going on around the essay, just as I attend to what goes on around the author's words before me. So, rubbing against the dominant voice of the essay--the interpretive, critical voice--there are other, disruptive voices (including quotes from newspapers and modern anthropological texts), which shake or explode the ego-centered, evaluating voice. The work of poststructuralist anthropological, ethnographic, and race theorists such as Boon, Gates, Gilman, JanMohamed, Pratt, Tompkins, Turner, Clifford, and Minh-Ha are important voices in, and influences on, these chapters.

Chapter six discusses Armand Schwerner's ongoing poetic sequence The Tablets. Cued by the host text, the pair of essays comprising this chapter are self-consciously performative, often digressing, disrupting the discursive progress with "poem-commercials," and setting up self-consciously tentative interpretations based on imagistic and metonymic patterns subject to change at the turn of a page or even within or between lines. As in the other

chapters, an intensive though necessarily open-ended reading of the poem is carried out through a heteroglossic mixture of discursive, autobiographical, narrative, and poetic forms of writing; no single discourse is adequate to re-present, to reenact, the complex play of mind traced by the language of Schwerner's poems.

The first part of chapter six is given up to textual dynamics; I (re)present the poem as a linguistic performance. This essay explores the decentering, dialogic momentum of The Tablets, and the effects of this decentering attack on concepts of identity and sexuality. We see the sustained, unruly verbal play this produces, and the consequent interpretative reconnaissance this demands of Schwerner's readers. The verbal excess of this ongoing poem--there are to date twenty-seven tablets--is a necessary function of this psycho-social-linguistic dynamic. The second part of the chapter considers the poem in multimedia performance contexts--the poem *in* performance. It demonstrates how performance is a further elaboration, a further "textualization," of formal tensions inherent in the printed text, even if it is sometimes used to defuse these tensions to create a more "lyric" listening experience. From this perspective, Schwerner's performances are in dialogue with his written work, and not simply presentations of it. I am concerned, in this section, not only with the continuum from language performance to performing texts, but also with Schwerner's interaction with his audience during performance, which includes impromptu alterations of the text, and the multi-media aspects of his reading, including the relationship among music, voice, and gesture. I am not interested so much in emphasizing the distinction between "oral" text and "written" text as in demonstrating how Schwerner's work, in performance, translates into mise en scène (in Artaud's sense in The Theater and its double).

Chapter seven is a pilot project for experimental textual editing; focusing on one tablet (the "design-tablet"), it collates both textual (printed and manuscript) and performance versions of Schwerner's poem to demonstrate,

among other things, how notions of closure are deconstructed via performance and how the different reading environments shape the "text" we actually hear. The essay also explores the groundwork of textual theory on bibliographical significance of performance texts--Jerome McGann's "social text" theory, for example, and Donald Reiman's concept of "versioning." Cued by Schwerner's performance of the "design-tablet," my annotations of the poem follow an eclectic, rather than a logical or linear, path.

Taken together, then, chapters six and seven should be interesting from the perspectives of literary theory and textual bibliography as well as performance studies. These two chapters not only place Schwerner's work in context with that of other performance-oriented poets, such as Jackson Mac Low, Michael McClure, Allen Ginsberg, Jerome Rothenberg, and multi-media collaboratives like the Critical Art Ensemble, but also align Schwerner's aesthetic with poststructuralist literary and performance theory.

Chapter eight, "Poetic Discourse v Legal Discourse: The Case of Charles Reznikoff," is a performative interpretation of Charles Reznikoff's Testimony: The United States 1890-1915. Reznikoff's two-volume book of poems is based on law cases summarized in the National Reporter System (NRS). The courtroom trial (including the "setting" of the courtroom) becomes a structuring metaphor for the fluxus-inspired performance piece whose mise en scene blends props and live action with video, slide projections, verbal collage, and hermeneutical discourse. Verbal discourses brought into play include the legal language of the National Reporter System (including adulterated quotes of witnesses), Reznikoff's poetic "refinement" of case summaries in the NRS, quotes from various works on legal discourse and critical legal studies, and my own commentary on the poems and the process of their creation. Just as Reznikoff "cuts up" his sources to create the poems in Testimony, I disrupt the lyric or narrative flow of Reznikoff's poems by putting them back into dialogue with their sources; throughout, the slides tell a story of parallel processes--Reznikoff's journey through the 1000s of pages of the NRS to arrive at a

relatively small group of poems reenacted and parodied by my own journey through his sources and drafts, retracing the processes that produced Testimony to arrive at expanded performances of often quite short poems. Work produces more work. Reznikoff's obsessive cutting and editing inspires my verbal excesses and slapstick buffoonery; it is low comedy vis a vis high critcism. Two issues I'm concerned with are (1) the impossibility of litigating the irrational: how Reznikoff reclaims--through the "sincerity" of an "objectivist" discourse-- the deconstructive potency of the criminal moment that the language and procedures of jurisprudence attempt to contain and control, defuse and repress; (2) how Reznikoff, as a poet working for a law book publisher, discovers his relation to/finds his way through the not-self (the thousands of pages of case histories) while I, as his reader/interpreter, comprehend this performatively, finding my relation to/way through the mass of material by and about him, retracing and partially reinventing his own path through the not-self. We are both bricoleurs constructing tentative worlds.

&

Not only by an extravagant style, to refer again to Hartman's phrase, but an answerable style, can we give the reader an experience of a text, and not just words about it. As critics, we can choose either to respond creatively to texts, or keep our distance from them. A creative response does not mean only losing oneself (temporarily) in a text, or only becoming self-reflexively aware of the ideologies, theories, and expectations one brings to a text, but in being able to "shape shift"--like the Hindu goddess Dolma who exists in 21 forms; being able to constantly shift positions, now playing the authoritative critic, now the intimately involved reader, now the investigative, scholarly editor, but never resting in any one position or claiming to have possession, or total knowledge, of the text. We must also be ready (as the Whitman collage demonstrates) to write performance--works that have their fullest effect in live, multimedia presentation. This is especially true when the work our "criticism"

is attempting to comprehend is itself performative (as is the case with Schwerner's poetry). In the game of performative criticism, there can be no hermeneutic closure. Reader movement through a text rules out static reflection.

IT SAYS TO MAKE SURE THE WHEEL SPINS FREELY BEFORE INFLATING.

later that same...

OK. BUT LET'S READ A BIT OF THIS? THE SHOW'S ABOUT TO...

"The Minstrel and His Wares": the Middle English Lyric via Bakhtin

We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote,
ƿe fowle weyis for to fle.
We bern abowtyn non cattes skynnys,
puris, perlis, syluer pynnis,
smale wympeles for ladyis chynnys;
damsele, bey sum ware of me.
I haue a pocket forƿe nonys,
ƿerine ben tweyne precyous stonys;
damsele, haddeȝe asayid hem onys,
ȝe xuldƿe raƿere gon with me.
I haue a ielyf of godes sonde,
withoutyn fyt it can stonde;
it can smytyn & haȝt non honde;
ryd ȝourself quat it may be.
I haue a powder for to selle,
quat it is can I not telle--
it makit maydenys wombys to swelle;
ƿerof I haue a quantyte.

In this essay, I demonstrate how this ribald carol (R #7; LH #81),[1] filtered through the lens of Bakhtinian dialogic analysis combined with deconstructionism and feminism, can be read as a multivoiced, intertextual carnivalization of late medieval culture and society. The poem gives us a specular glimpse of late medieval society in transition from a feudal to a capitalist economic base. Because of this, it is an arena for contending voices, its shifting intentionality complicated by its social-cultural context; it remains today as the trace, irresolvably complex, of this self-reflexive and unstable

[1] R = Secular Lyrics of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, ed. Robbins; LH = Middle English Lyrics, ed. Luria and Hoffman.

period. While challenging established modes of consuming medieval texts, such a rereading, or reevaluation, of the Middle English poem also positions it as a counter example of what "lyric" poetry has come to mean in the 20th century.

A brief discussion of the origin, authorship, social context, and performance context of "The Minstrel and His Wares" and of Middle English lyrics in general will provide an introductory backdrop for our analysis of the poem.

The Problem of Authorship in Medieval Poetry

The uncertain provenance of the "The Minstrel and His Wares," and its primarily oral dissemination, suggest multiple authorship. "The Minstrel and his Wares" is part of a mid-fourteenth--mid-fifteenth century minstrel collection (Sloane 2358; Richard Leighton Greene, in The Early English Carols, notes a reference in the manuscript to a storm that threatened the destruction of a Franciscan church in 1362, though Brown and Robbins suggest the later date for the collection) (R xxvi). It is a small, portable volume--6" x 4 1/2"--meant to be easily carried by a minstrel who "got his living by singing from place to place" (R xxiv). Also, as the reference to the Franciscan church suggests, the poem in its present form may have been transcribed and amended by a Franciscan; the order persistently tried to reappropriate secular lyrics for religious purposes--to "Godlify" them, as Arthur Moore puts it (the poem's refrain implies monastic meddling, as we shall see later). The wit and formal sophistication of the poem, however, (as we shall also see) suggest that it may in fact have been written by a court poet imitating the style, subject matter, and attitudes of a low style carol--from this perspective, the poem comes full circle in a kind of ideological round dance and acts as a self parody. Finally, there is no telling how many oral versions of the carol may have preceded the written form. Low style lyrics were often memorized, rather than written out, and oral transmission is one of the least stable, most vulnerable

and mutable means of dissemination.

Pinning down the origin and authorship of "The Minstrel and his Wares" is complicated by the fact that poetry, in the Middle Ages, was not commonly viewed as a means of presenting and preserving a particular poet's personality and point of view. We can consider Middle English lyrics in a larger context as included in commonplace books (though there is no clear indication that "Wares" was included in one). Commonplace books were often written in several hands and included practical and medical advice, place names, chronicles of the city (London), and names of important personages as well as poetry of various types--ribald songs and romances as well as practical, moral, and religious verses (R xxviii). "Books" were part of life, and participation and involvement with life affected the intention of the writings contained within them. As Stephen Manning notes, paraphrasing D. W. Robertson (A Preface to Chaucer), "the medieval poet was not so much interested in his own moods or emotions as in a reality outside himself" (266-67). The modern image of the lyric poet, isolated from society, alone in his room, wrestling with language to express his personal, inner voice, is not a scene of poetic composition the Middle English poet would recognize. Moore's definition of the "minstrel-author" gives a more accurate picture of the concept of authorship in England in the thirteenth--fifteenth centuries:

> Since the opinions of the minstrel-author harmonize rather perfectly with those for whom he performs, his personality counts for little; his attitudes are more communal than individual. The popular poet is rarely more than the shaping agent through which the mass mind expresses its inclinations. . . . The personal utterance is muffled (89-90).

Most poems of this period were, in fact, anonymous. The scene of writing was inseparable from the scene of life. Poetry was part of a cultural whole, interwoven with its social context. As Bakhtin claims, speaking of art in

general, in all ages, "the exraartistic social milieu, affecting art from outside, finds direct, intrinsic response within it" (Volosinov 95).

From this perspective, it's worth noting how "The Minstrel and His Wares" reflects its cultural context prosodically. The carol form is composed of quatrains (rhyming, in the case of "Wares," aaab, cccb, dddb, eeeb) and a two line burden phonically tied to the quatrain through rhyme and/or rhythm (in "Wares," the refrain keeps time with the quatrain and the second line echoes the b rhyme). The quatrain, a common stanza for nonaristocratic songs, was used in high style lyrics primarily for verses of practical intent (R l): parodically, the "advice" provided by "Wares" is bawdily practical. The quatrain structure (in this case there are four stanzas of four lines each) echoes the poem's rhythm; the four-beat, dipodic line is felt as a primitive undertow through the more sophisticated, fifteenth century melody, pulling us back to the submerged life pulse that anchored the heathen, Old English epic. Even more pertinent is the carol form's link to the material world via the quatrain. Bakhtin points out that in fifteenth-century Paris, food merchants would walk the streets crying out their wares: "each food had its own four-line cry, offering and praising it" (Rabelais 182). The four line cry in praise of a food item may also be a contributing source to the catalogue form popular in Middle English as well as Elizabethan and Tudor lyrics (R lv)--cataloguing of virtues or of a female's anatomy, for example; in "Wares" (as we shall see) this structural device becomes what Moore aptly calls a "catalogue of metaphors" (36). The main point to bear in mind, however, is the quatrain's rootedness in life; people actually heard them, mixed with the sounds and rhythms of daily life, part of the polysymy of the world. Poetry, in the Middle Ages, was not merely words on a page, meant to be contemplated in a study, but a "loud word spoken in the open" (Bakhtin, Rabelais 182).

There are three important points to bear in mind, then, as we continue our discussion. First, the poem has no precise origin. Neither the time of its composition nor its authorship are certain. It is likely, in fact, as with many

Middle English lyrics, that the poem as we have it was collectively composed, altered with each new voicing and inscription and bearing the traces of many hands and mouths. This leads to the second point. Because of this uncertainty of authorship, it is probably best to consider the "poet" of "Wares" not as a single, clearly defined voice whose intentions underlie the poem; the minstrel/speaker is not an ego-centered persona expressing a particular point of view, but a mixture of voices and world views. Hence the intention of the poem is ambiguous--partly to entertain, partly to parodize its social milieu, partly to moralize--the intention, that is, not of a single author, but of a multiplicity of authors. Third, just as its rhythm rises out of the materiality of life, the poem was meant to be performed at public gatherings, rather than appreciated in private; it was part of an event--a fair or feast--and was experienced in its moments of enactment; its words were not text-bound, but live words, part of the texture of lived experience.

Poems in Performance

The medieval world presented in "Wares" is a carnivalized one, a world turned head over heels (Bakhtin compares the movement of Rabelais' work to acrobatic cartwheels); it is a world deconstructed and reshuffled, but not reconstructed or remolded in any conclusive way. Appropriately, the context in which a carol was performed was a festive one, much different from the modern "reading" in which the poet stands and reads his work to a seated and silent audience, separated from them not only physically (a table or podium forms an actual barrier) but also ideologically--the "Poet" as somehow mysteriously above, beyond, other than or at any rate outside the society (the audience) he addresses. Medieval, low style lyric poets breached social boundaries, but did not fall outside society (though they were often wanderers through a relatively unfixed geographic and ideological terrain); through festivals, the "serious" medieval world incorporated its own transgression

(interestingly, Bakhtin points out that during Paschal days, a priest was given license to tell ribald stories from the pulpit). During festivals, the poet-performer's voice, gestures, the form and content of his poem, and his "listeners" (to use Bakhtin's term) were all immersed in the holiday medium.

Peter Dronke describes in detail the festive medium in which both courtly (high style) and low style lyrics were typically performed:

> In the fascinating Provencal romance Flamenca (lines 583-731), Lord Archambaut, when the King of France brings him Flamenca, his bride, holds a feast to end all feasts, in which the full spectrum of medieval entertainment is displayed. 'After eating, the guests washed their hands once more, but remained in their places and had wine, as was the custom. Then the tablecloths were removed, cushions and fans were brought, and the jongleurs arose, each longing to be heard. Then you could hear chords of many a different tone echoing. Whoever could perform a new tune on the viol, a new canzone or desort or lai, came forward with the greatest eagerness. One played the lay of Chevrefeuil on the viol, another the lay of Tintagel [two songs from the Tristan cycle], one sang the lay of the perfect lovers, another the lay composed by Yvain.'
>
> Next come instrumentalists, playing on a wide range of string and wind instruments. They are followed by (or perhaps provide background music for) a marionettist, a knife-juggler, tumblers and acrobats. Those who wished could then hear stories of kings, marquises and counts of old. . . . Next there are all the themes of Arthurian romance; and finally stories and songs seem to come pell mell--the star of Merlin, the Assassins, Charlemagne's conquest of Germany, 'the whole story of Clovis and Pepin', Lord Lucifer's fall from glory, two chansons de geste, a song by the troubadour Marcabru, and lastly the tale of Daedalus and Icarus. Many of these were going on at the same time in different parts of the hall. Then the host, Archambaut, calls for dancing, and two hundred jongleurs form a string orchestra to play the dance-tunes. Such, at least in ideal, was the range of entertainment expected of medieval performers in the best circles. By this I do not mean these were exclusive types of entertainment--there is no single item here that could not equally have been performed at a fair or on a public holiday. But in less refined circles, or on a less grand occasion, the performers' repertoire would have been still wider--the songs, for instance,

> would include a range of fabiaux, satires, ribald jests, ballads, dialogues of witty repartee and mock-abuse, drinking songs--all that is customarily, through rather one-sidedly, understood to be 'jongleuresque'. (254-55)[2]

Within such a heterogenous, uninhibited, festive context of performance, ranging from slapstick entertainment to recitation of religious allegory, "Wares" was quite happily at home. Its language, imagery, and riddle-like structure seduce us, draw us into its carnival atmosphere, giving us a taste of what the world it thrived in must have been like. Moreover, multi-voiced lyrics such as "Wares" were given a freshness and vividness through live presentation. As Paul Valery would say four centuries later, "poetry is a law that lives in the mouth." It is a law also of communality, of shared experience. No matter how traditional the poem is prosodically and thematically, when embodied in living voice--not a personal but a culturally refractive voice--harmonizing, in spirit, with the occasion of its performance, it is experienced freshly, immediately, at once publically and intimately.

The Middle English Lyric and Society

The Middle English lyric attempts to express "the breadth of society" (Moore 28). A notable feature of fifteenth-century society is its mobility. The medieval feudal hierarchy was breaking down as the bourgeois class was gaining power--wealth and political power were not exclusively in the hands of the nobility. Late medieval society, on the verge of the Renaissance, was a society in transformation (or "transition," as Moore terms it) in both spirit and world views. Moore describes the rising merchant class as "shrewd" and

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[2] Examples of feasting and plentitude occur within earlier medieval works, too, such as Parzival, though there they are inscribed not so much as imaginative reenactments of the bodily but as symbols in the service of a Christian ideology of chivalry.

"vigorous" ; this "burgeoning middle class" was more interested in "morality, law, and order" than in the abstract ideals of "courtly love lyrics" (R liv). Along with its concern for the practical application of Christian moral standards, which it shared with the church, the growing middle class was gaining a foothold in material reality, in the thingness of the world and in the manipulation and production of that world. Institution of a capitalist based economy (one based on commodities and monetary exchange) tended to recontextualize Christian values such as charity, benevolence, temperance (indifference to worldly gain), and chastity, putting them on a contractual basis--"good deeds" could be redeemed, so to speak, for a higher, spiritual life, a state of grace and salvation.

Philosophically, Bakhtin describes this shift in world view--in full force in the Renaissance--as a shift from a vertical to a horizontal logos, in which the material world, especially the human body, became the basis of ideology:

> All things in the universe, from heavenly bodies to elements, had left their former place in their hierarchy and moved to the single horizontal plane of the world of becoming, where they began to seek a new place and to achieve new formations. The center around which these perturbations took place was precisely the human body, uniting all the varied patterns of the universe (Rabelais 365)

Such a value-leveling hypostatization and "naturalization" of ontology--this somatization of ideology--informs "Wares." Moreover, the poem's imagistic emphasis on the body (especially the sexual, generative organs, what Bakhtin calls the "lower stratum"), its thematic focus on sexuality and the metaphoric transformation of material reality, and its formal concerns for rhythm, word sounds, and the arrangement and interrelationships of words (both as signs and sounds)--the physicality of language and form--not only "decrown" conventional morality and medieval notions of a separative hierarchy of values, but also trope bourgeois values, especially a belief in the entitative facticity of

the world: commodities must certainly exist for there to be an economy based on them--and a stable system of exchange values. Nothing is "sacred" in "Wares." In the popular lyric of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we experience what Bakhtin calls the "world's gay matter," which was "unofficial in tone (laughter) and in contents (lower stratum)" (Rabelais 195).

Through its parodic intent, its carol form; its largely non-Latnized, colloquial diction; its "comically abusive language" (as Raymond Oliver phrases it), its rootedness in the materiality of life and language, and its challenging of beliefs about both material reality and art, the low style Middle English lyric "The Minstrel and his Wares" parodies the more readerly, high style, decorum-conscious Vers de Société typical of the Aureate Collections of the fifteenth century (collections of verse based on courtly and/or devotional themes that extensively deployed Latinized diction). It parodies, however, by including, in Rabelaisian (and Derridean) spirit, elements of the language and imagery, hence the concomitant world views, of that which it parodies. Poetry in the Middle Ages was in constant dialogue, then, with both its own history and conventions and its social milieu.[3]

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[3] Though "Wares, " like all medieval poetry, depends on formal and thematic conventions, the poet is able to melt down these conventions and recycle them to serve his parodic intent. A medieval audience would acknowledge a poet's originality in his manipulation of cliches of form and content, in the "novelty" of his rearrangement of them; the jeu, for example, was a song form valued, as the name suggests, for its playfulness, its wit and formal cleverness (Manning 279). A subtle example of the jeu--or jouissance--in "Wares" is its parodic cooptation of the Latinate diction of learned, aureate poetry. Though "Wares" has none of the common Latin rhyme suffixes (-ure, -ite, -oun, -aunce, -esse, -ment, -ence), the poem's final quatrain closes on the "yte" of "quantyte"; also, a Latin-rooted word occurs in the first line of the poem, though it is a negative--"non"--announcing, at the outset, its nonLatinized--ie, noncourtly--and playful--nonstraightforward--approach. The poem puts Latin in the position of negation of meaning (or supporting a negation--"abowtyn non"), rather than authoritative definition. Finally, the words are primarily of one or two syllables, effecting a directness and bluntness of rhythm (along with the four-stress line) that floods

We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote,
ȝe fowle weyis for to fle.

"The Minstrel and His Wares"

Commenting on Rabelais' work, Bakhtin postulates the "merry, abundant" and "bodily" quality of his imagery as a means of carnivalizing, of laughing at, the "serious medieval world with its intimidating and intimidated ideology" (Rabelais 226). "Wares" laughs at (1) the very basis of meaning--stable signifier-signified relationships (in the Saussurean sense) and an axiomatic bond between signified and referent; (2) the pragmatic, dehumanizing, object-oriented commercial interests of a capitalist economy based on the belief in a solid, empirically certifiable world of clearly differentiated commodities; (3) high-style, formal verse, including (a) religious verse, especially the Christian themes of immaculate conception and grace, and (b) the themes, forms, and imagery of courtly poetry such as the pastourelle, the imagery of the "cult of the Beautiful Woman" (out of reach and inviolable; loyal and submissive), and the theme of unrequited love. None of these themes, images, and ideologies are reconciled; the poem's continuity is in its discontinuity. Whether exhilarating crowds at a folk festival or taunting a courtly society to laugh at its own carnivalized mirror image, which doubles back on and alters the society's conception of itself (the dédoublement, as Derrida terms it, of self-laughter--a spontaneous self-deconstruction), it exists as an internally dynamic, playful, irresolute, multivalent construct.

We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote...
damsele, bey sum ware of me.

"Wares" is like a nightmarish, axiological shooting gallery in which the

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over Latin-rooted, polysyllabic words like "quantyte," while playing off an occasional octosyllabic setting (a French import).

targets return fire. The skirmish is fought by a plurality of voices, which are either explicit, or internally polemicized and parodied by shifts in diction, or unconsciously persuasive--embedded in the poem's formal (rhythmic, imagistic, and structural) texture, influencing its intentionality and world view. Some of the voices are (1) the booming and boasting of the Old English, ribald, heathen bard, resounding uncannily in the four-beat rhythm as if breaking forth from the earthen walls of a grave; (2) the voice of the Old French troubadours, traversing the rhyme and stanza structure; (3) the voice of a virile, aggressive, merchant class--the masculine voice of goods, products, money, sexual dominance, civil authority, and subordination--and the carnivalesque parodying of this voice in the imagery, rhythms, and language of the poem, the very means used to evoke it; (4) the voice of morality (both of the politically powerful merchant class and the church), direct and frontal, heard clearly in the refrain (this is a formidably authoritative voice that resists the poem's deconstructive bombardment); (5) the voice of the courtly lyric, surfacing in words and phrases but also hovering over the entire poem, which parodically doubles its imagery and chivalrous ideology; (6) the voice of the religious lyric, heard in certain phrases but also present as a "hidden polemic" (Bakhtin's phrase) enacted by the poem's imagery (in its presentation of woman, for example, which counters the passive ideal offered up in many devotional lyrics, and in its profanation of Christian symbols such as the crucifixion); (7) the internally persuasive female voice that subliminally influences the apparently controlling male voice, deauthorizing it. All of these voices pass uncensored through the poet/performer, who is more medium than author, in the modern sense. There is no originary voice. The poem is multi-voiced, authorless, and timeless. It lives in its moments of dynamic interaction with its listeners/audience and its social milieu, renewed and, in a sense, rewritten with each successive performance.

We bern abowtyn non cattes skynnys,

puris, perlis, syluer pynnis,
smale wympeles for ladyis chynnys;

damsele, bey sum...

* * * * *

The poem accepts language as a continual, orgiastic interplay of signifiers, an "endless metaphoricity" (Derrida's phrase). Each extension of the central metaphoric substitution--dry good for sex organ--each new vehicle is sexualized, consumed by the sexual organ; this process is the tenor; the meaning of the metaphor is its transforming sexuality. All the items named and discretely separated by commas in line two, representatives of the merchant's world--"puris, perlis, syluer pynnis"--have their doubles in the genitalia; a purse becomes a "poket," which, according to the Middle English Dictionary, can mean both a sack "containing medicaments for external application" (the "Ielyf" and "powder" later in the poem) and the scrotum, the testicles containing "tweyne precyous stonys"; there is, perhaps, a further play on "poket" as "hunting net"--the sexual organ as a means of ensnaring a prey. The pearls in line two become the "precious stones," the testes in line six that produce the powder/sperm in line 13 that a "damsele" may richly spread on her naked body. The silver pin of line two transforms into a fantastically, threateningly exaggerated (engorged?), negatively anthropomorphized ("withoutyn" feet and hands) disembodied penis in the third quatrain.

Through such sexualizing metaphoricity, the poem deconstructively affirms the presence of what it semantically denies (the minstrel/merchants claim not to carry with them any of the items listed), but affirms it as an extraliteral presence--and intraliterary, since language itself creates (or enacts) a sense of presence, rather than referring/deferring to a preexisting, matter-of-fact reality "out there"; representation itself becomes a means of production. Not only do we see--imagine--the items listed in the first quatrain even as they

are syntactically erased, but the names are de-signified, in terms of their real-world referents, whose grasp, in the carnival world of the poem, they temporally elude; desubstantialized, signs shadow and continually defer desire not through a process of external referentiality (which the poem short-circuits), but by reconducting desire through language--the infinite play of signifiers. Torn from their literal context by an act of denial (negation of their literal value), the freed signs circulate and pass through a series of transformations in a game of substitutions, an "endless" vibrant " metaphoricity." This is not to say that the poem "denies" the gesture of external reference, but, as the play of signification (above) suggests, exposes it as one type of manoeuver in a linguistic game, discrediting it as an agent of authoritative control.

puris, perlis, syluer pynnis,

What follows the speaker's denial is an exaggerated, carnivalized assault on bourgeois "law and order." The poem's refrain can suggest both fleeing from sin--i.e., avoidance of evil--and fleeing from evil done. The poet is, in this second sense, a law breaker; he breaks the laws of empirical reality (of the literal thingness of the world), of the logical relationships among sign-signified-referent, and (as will be discussed in more detail later) of commercial exchange--in the poem, commodities are exchanged for language which is given up to desire. Cash flow is displaced by "semic" flow (Barthes' term)--influx of language and imagery, collusions but also collisions and repellings of connotations--the life flow of the poem like the flow of blood or seminal fluid.

damsele, bey sum ware of me.

In the carnivalized, disruptive world of the poem, language becomes slippery, fluid, upsetting, sexually errant. Every word is split in multiple directions; the poem continually crosses itself out as it erases literal meaning and even its previous metaphorical meanings, which nevertheless remain as ghosts or palimpsests. Meanings are discontinuous, suspended over divergent

paths, can't be locked down of finalized. Definition remains open, processual. The safety and security--the restraining power--of the caesuras in line two is rendered impotent as the poem metonymically breaches respectful distances between words, words and referents, language and the life forces it traces (and poet and listener, as we shall see).

The sexual slipperiness of the language is felt by the voice in the rhymes, which create unlikely bedfellows--cat skins, silver pins, lady's chins--and in the elision between certain words--the phonic slide between "asayid hem" that obliterates the differentiating space between the words, sacrificing the sense-guarding grapheme-"h"-in the sound fusion. Phonically and imagistically, the poem tends toward non-separation, just barely begun by the non-itemization (the names of things evoking their absence) of the first two lines. As rests or moments of stasis/resistance, to borrow Julia Kristeva's terminology, words undergo their own identity-shattering self-negation, as the uncontainable flow of sound, connotation, and image (what Kristeva refers to as "chora" or "semiotic" flow, similar to Barthes' "seme/"semic" flow) dialogize signifier-signified relationships, exposing the instability of a word's positionality.

We bern abowtyn non... *withoutyn fyt it can stonde*

Bakhtin notes that in the carnivalized world of Rabelais' work, the penis can detach itself and lead an independent life (Rabelais 316-17). The central image in "Wares" is the fabulously enlarged phallus, disembodied yet potent. Castration, as a metaphor for the acts of both reading and writing, is liberation. Words and images, slashed from definitive contexts, metonymically sport with transgressive, boundary breaking, dangerous intent. Poetic castration, or decontextualization, forces us to see words and images in new, unforseen contexts, creating a festive disorder, or disarray; it emboldens the poem's readers to make mind-freeing associations and note unusual or uncanny resemblances; it imaginatively lubricates us, pries open and stretches our world views. This, Bakhtin claims, is the effect of the "Mardi Gras atmosphere

of music, dance, revel, and dismemberment" in Rabelais' novels (Rabelais 223-24), and it is the effect of "Wares," understood both as literature and as performance in a holiday setting (a performance that, as we shall see, demands a response). *it can smytyn...*

The poem's bawdiness, its carnivalesque cartwheelings of language and image, loosens its formal tightness. The poem falls out of its form into the uncertain world of sexuality, disorder, and laughter. The poem can't contain itself; its rhythms and metonymic shiftiness demoralize its conductive prosody, tease it out of itself, a semiotic spilling over its own meanings (in Kristeva's sense of a disruptive flow of chora), over into the social-sexual world of carnival. It is desire breaking the bounds of form.

& haȝt non honde

* * * * *

As suggested above, "The Minstrel and His Wares" tropes and revitalizes a commercial economy based on the depersonalized exchange of goods by transforming it into (or revealing it as) a sexual economy. The minstrel/speaker denies that he has the items named at the beginning of the poem, yet asks his listener/customer to "bey sum ware of me," teasing his audience to conceive of consumer relations in an extra-ordinary way. *abowtyn non* The merchant/minstrel's "wares," produced from "raw" materials extracted from the nonhierarchical world of nature, (re)fabricated and reassigned a place on a scale of values in the world of commodities and consumerism, are re-naturalized, sexualized, flung back into contact with the rude, crude, primal, value-leveling earth forces of life and generation, *pynnis... skynnys* just as the more sophisticated, Frenchified prosody of the poem is swept over by the surf beat of the ancient dipodic. The entire poem is a linguistic masquerade of the sexual act. The literal, commercial economy of exchange, in which transactions are based on a systemized hierarchy of values; the economic base of bourgeoisie society is turned topsy-turvy,

reinscribed as an act of sexual displacement, as the head disappears and the genitalia whip through the *ladyis chynnys* place of the heart. In the commercial world, silver pins may be worth more than cat skins or powder, but in the sexual, fluxional economy of the poem, they are equivalent.

Exchange relationships are troped *stonys* in another way in "Wares." *haddeȝe asayid hem onys*

The poem's language play is motivated by very real exchange values: the *non*
poet's "jeux," the cleverness of his poem, may be cashed in for sexual *ware*
intimacy. Just as, in the commercial world, a free-floating monetary
pynnis unit can metonymically *smytyn* transform, in various quantities, into quite different objects (the dollar can turn into
wombys
anything from chicken wire to chickens, and vice versa), so in "Wares" words become uninhibitedly circulating, transmutable units of exchange
honde and communication in an erotic *fote* game. In this way, the body of language that constitutes the poem is economically reified,
selle
returned to the world of material exchanges: the imaginative object (it is <u>not</u> a cat's skin), an act of language, is offered in exchange for the act of sex.
fle Sex and sex play become more important than buying and selling dry goods to sustain *quat it is* life.

ȝe xuldȝe repere gon with me.

The successful completion of the transaction is, however, by no means certain; the speaker may not get what he wants; there is an ineradicable element of ambivalence and risk. The poem ends ambiguously; the speaker's success is not assured. The swelling womb implies success, but it is a projected, a wished-for swelling rather than an actual one (the shift, in the last quatrain, from the particular "damsele" addressed at the poem's outset to women--"maydenys"--in general would seem to support this interpretation of

the image). If we follow through with this interpretation, then the poet is left with an unreleased "quantyte" of a potent product; however, this, too, remains ambiguous, since the image of warm, fluid sperm is deconstructed by the influx of its stated other--the cool, dry good--powder. Nevertheless, the paratactic force of the swelling womb and the quantity of sperm brought together in the closing quatrain, buttressed by the earlier, unforgettable image of a huge and powerful phallus, suggest that the damsel/listener will be overpowered by the sheer force of the speaker's desire, as will the reader in general by the poetic force of the language; the speaker/poem has at his command an irresistible sexual energy. ("Has at his command," however, may be a misleading way to describe the implicit male speaker's function in the poem; as we shall see, from another perspective the speaker can be conceived of as the agent, rather than producer or owner/controller of this power.)

And yet there is the ambiguity of the closing refrain. Does she flee or doesn't she? The fact that she should flee attests to the speaker's/poem's power, yet if she does flee, then that power is called into question, checked and subjugated by a stronger, moralizing force, and the speaker is left high and dry . . . and without having made a sale. And what about the teasingly subtle undertone of impotency that laces through the poem--is the poem an exaggerated wish fulfillment of an impotent singer? Is it a court poet's clever way of laughing at the presumed sexual prowess and potency of wandering minstrels and/or the rising, economically virile bourgeoisie (a pun that the "sardonic, vulgar intruder in the social scheme," as Moore puts it, may themselves have appreciated) (95), or is it a Franciscan's sly attempt at stifling a reader/hearer's lusts? . . . yet, the primal, four-beat, mead-hall rhythm drums through the refrain, as it does through the entire poem, like the rhythm of a sustained coitus, shaking up the final, moralizing image . . . *I haue a powder for to...* flee!

When dealing with the other, there is always a risk, an unknowable

Ierof I haue a

quantity. The social-sexual world is not the cut and dry world of goods and commerce. The worth of language, from this perspective, is not established once and for all; its value is measured by its effectiveness *We ben chapmen* as communication, by its ability to elicit the desired response. So the

ȝe fowle weyis for to fle.

poem returns to a world in which values and exchange relationships are not preset or guaranteed, but are continually in flux, determined dialogically.

lyȝt of fote.

Overall, the poem exerts a value-leveling energy on the system upon which it builds its imagery. Verbal/sense bonds are shattered, distinctions and definitions melted down and confused; dry powder, hard stones, lifeless skins, and pouches are declassified, much as commercial economy distorts and rearranges the "natural" world according to its own, arbitrary system of values and classifications; in the poem, however, the items are not redefined or recategorized, but reinfused with sexual energy--the absent life force--whirled around the vortex of a sexual core. Sexual energy is valuable, desirable, "buyable"; it is sexual energy that is reified by the destablizing, transformative flow of word and image. The artificial commercial world is deconstructed, but not reformed (as the poem's refrain would want); it is not usurped by another, calcifying suprastructure; rather, the poem attempts to give the world back to itself.

* * * * *

In addition to dehierarchizing the commercial world and denaturalizing static notions of a fixed reality, "The Minstrel and His Wares" collapses the logocentric scaffolding of Christian mythology, and with it the trappings of high style, religious and courtly lyrics (which now lie limpid over the ideoloscape, or drift, aimlessly, in the breeze).

Despite the moralizing force of the refrain, the poem remains

unrepentant. It will not be reduced and converted. It resists redemption. "I haue a powder for to selle, / ... It makit maydenys wombys to swelle." In the fourth quatrain, a parodic allusion to the immaculate conception is cleverly highlighted by the use of "mayden" rather than "damsele"--the former term reserved specifically for virgins. Through the garment of language, the poet caresses the "maydenys" body; he penetrates to the core of her sexual being with the aid, it would seem, of an alchemical powder that magically impregnates her. Yet the imagery is physical--not metaphysical; it is sexually explosive, suggesting both penetration and external coitus--the ejaculation of an enormous phallus that coats her body, engulfs it in a powder-like sperm. Though, as noted above, the metonymic collision of connotations here creates an ambiguity; powder/sperm: both a wet, virile, life-generating substance--the seminal fluid breaking forth, overwhelming the other as the transformative, semic/semiotic flow of language reaches its climax--and, literally, dry, sterile powder. The substance is neither powder or sperm: neither both/and nor either/or: it "means" neither, but is the slide between them--as Derrida puts it, "the and/or between and /or." This in-betweenness is the source, the generation of power and energy, which is not in definition and rest, but in irrepressible, irreducible, ungovernable, and unpredictable motion. Friction. Heat. A sudden, almost miraculous conception. "It makit maydenys wombys to swelle." *...for to fle.*

The third stanza is not an annunciation. Were this a morally triumphant poem in the conventional, Christian sense, Christ would perhaps stand there, as the embodiment of the trinity and symbol of grace, forgiveness, and redemption. The trinity is present, but transformed: Man and Christ come together in the image of the phallus, which becomes a Lacanian transcendental signifier--unrealistically, overwhelmingly large, a figure at once of sexual and divine authority (or divine authority sexualized). On the one hand, the penis figures an unpredictable, amoral, deauthorizing authority--the illimitable, uncodified authority of generative, sexual force, irreducible, as

Freud would discover centuries later, to a clearly defined logos. On the other hand, it is a carnivalized type of Christ. The phallus stands alone, disembodied, castrated; handicapped--it has no hands or feet--yet potent, as Christ, on his cross, hands and feet immobilized, was yet able to "smytyn" mankind with the power of his words--had they forgotten the power of language (they know not what they do) not have cut out his tongue? The Word spread, making man self-consciously aware of his sinful folly even as he was forgiven.

I haue a ielyf of godes sonde,
withoutyn fyt if can stonde;
it can smytyn & haȝt non honde;

Christ's image rises--like the bourgeoisie or the censoring image of a monastic belfry--evoked by the miraculously arisen phallus as well as the moral sense of the refrain, hovers briefly as a sort of after image or shadow, deepening and complicating the phallic thrust, then dissolves into the fluxional field and sexual energy of the poem and is renewed by it. No longer merely the emblem of abstract moral virtue, it contributes its sublimating power to the generative force which is containable in no single image but swallows all into itself. A living and liveable divinity. From this perspective, a proudly kept catalogue of virtues would, ironically, secure a judgement against us; it is involvement with the life force, rather than abstinence, which redeems us.

ryd ȝourself quat it may be.

A more obvious instance of the carnivalization of a Christian theme occurs in lines eleven and twelve. The rhyme juxtaposes God's gift with the erect man-phallus ("godes sonde...can stonde"). God has graced man, in this sense, not with moral rectitude but with an erection--potency. This is a "natural" grace, available to all, deeply motivational and bodily rather than intellectual or attained through contemplation. "Godes sonde," a phrase that

would be quite happy and at home in a religious lyric, is here internally polemicized: the sacred is profaned and the profane sanctified; the categorical separation of physical and spiritual, soul and body is transgressed and the states are conflated, and all through a formally simple, paratactic interchange.

God's gift is ambiguous in another way. The phallus is God's gift in its limp/meek and firm/aggressive states. Within three lines, an image connoting weakness, malleableness, submissiveness, and formlessness ("I haue a ielyf of godes sonde") suddenly transforms into its opposite--towering, arrogant strength and assertiveness ("it can stonde; / it can smytyn"). The suddenness and the exaggerated extent of the change attest to the unpredictability of the forces involved. Unlike moral uprightness, there is no fooling ourselves about sexual arousal--it is or it isn't; we can't always be sure when it will be, or for how long, or if it will be there when we need it. Erections come and go; they are not permanent (thank God!). But this opens the dialogized logos to question, too: Is the ideal of living permanently in a state of Christian grace "natural"? Must lapses be sins that torment the conscience? (Guilt is to the spirit as ice water to an erection.) Isn't denial of the body counter-productive? Rebirth, in "Wares," is earthy as well as mythical. Nature is an eternal becoming, propelled by the forces of generation, but it requires willing (game) men and women. The nonlogocentric, equivocal phallus, now erect and now flaccid, deflates a rigid concept of morality.

I haue a pocket...

Two other terms which occur frequently in religious and high court lyrics--"perlis" and "precyous stonys"--are internally dialogized and

puris *syluer pynnis*

parodied. In "Wares," both terms are brought together as substitutes for the testes. Metonymically, however, they lead us back to poems like the "Pearl" (1400)-- "Oh maskless perl in perles pure, who formed ye your fair figure?"-- and forward to phrases like "precious pearl withouten any peer" and "pearl

peerless" (circa 1475). "Pearl" was also an epithet for Christ or the Virgin Mary. In "Wares," of course, this pure, elevated, unearthly sense of "pearl" (as well as the object's significance on a bourgeois scale of values) is deconstructed and dropped back to the lower stratum--pearls originate, after all, in the salty mouths of oysters, and are more fitting, perhaps, as symbols of the gonads than of Christ. Use of high *ꝑerine ben tweyne precyous stonys;* style phrasing, here, undercuts the connotations of preciousness, which are "decrowned" and exposed as productions of religious and capitalist economies, and gives the image an earthy vitality. This is dirt in the mouth of the court poet.

ꝑerof I haue a quantyte.

Like the themes, attitudes, and language of religious lyrics and courtly love lyrics, particular forms are also given a strapping in "Wares." The implied situation of the poem masques and mocks the pastourelle. Though a springtime setting is not specifically described, a general sense of rebirth, festive recreation, and fertility parodies the temperate setting in which a knight and lady might meet by chance and exchange pleasantries--always respecting, of course, a certain chivalric distance and decorum, a moral space. Though in "Wares" the apparently moralizing refrain (which we will discuss in more detail shortly) comes between the quatrains, between offer and act, it is also the escape route through which the "chapmen" flee; the poem offers moral "advice," but also shows its readers/hearers how to trope the morals, how to get around them. The space of the refrain, rather than formally reenacting a chivalric reserve, becomes an absence in the wake of a collusion, a consummation. As has been emphasized, the moral of abstinence (withholding of oneself from the pleasures of the text as well as love)--separation, distance--becomes immoral in the poem's revisionist ethical stance.

The poem is concrete, direct, and visceral. The lack of abstract language and high-flying sentiment, as well as the poem's embodiment of high-style phraseology (noted above), not only brings the "amour cortois" within human

reach, but makes a cool, detached, objective encounter with the poem almost impossible.[4] High-style eloquence, finesse, and abstraction are given a beating both by the frank bawdiness of the imagery and the linguistic effrontery of "Wares."

We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote...

* * * * *

I haue a pocket for ȝe nonys...

The poem spars with its readers/hearers as well as poetic conventions.

I haue a ielyf of godes sonde...

The rude force of "The Minstrel and His Wares"--the speaker's mode of direct

I haue a powder for to selle...

address and his demand for a physical (rather than intellectual) response to

damsele, bey sum ware of me.

his words (he tells the "damsele" to buy something from him, to sample his wares, and more...); the jack-in-the-box-like springing up of the oversized (oversexed?) phallus in the third quatrain--collapses distances

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[4] Compare the earth-rootedness and physical dynamism of "Wares," for example, to this disembodied, verbally emasculated, high-style Chanson d'amour by Machaut (fr. Le Remede de Fortune, in Oeuvres, II, 72; quoted and translated in Moore 127-28):

Car vraie Amour en cuer d'amant figure
Tres dous Espoir et gracieus Penser:
Espoirs attrait Joie et bonne Aventure;
Dour Pensers fait Plaisence en cuer entrer;
Si ne doit plus demander
Cils qui a bonne Esperence,
Dous Penser, Joie et Plaisence,
Car qui plus requiert, je di
Qu'Amours l'a guerpi.

Trans. For true Love in the heart of the lover fashions
Very sweet Hope and gracious Thought:
Hope attracts Joy and good Adventure;
Sweet Though causes Delight in the heart to enter;
So he should demand no more
This one who has good Hope,
Sweet Thought, Joy and Delight,
For who requires more, I say
That Love has abandoned him.

between the speaker and his object. In general, the poem refuses to sit above, or back from, its readers/listeners. Image and language leap out at us, shock us and/or amuse us, evoking a spontaneous, physical response--laughter.

The poem can "smytyn" us in several ways. The virulent, unruly penis, whose grotesqueness strikes out at its readers/listeners, tropes its status as text-bound image. A pin, according to the Middle English Dictionary, can be an unobtrusive piece of jewelry, but it can also signify something for pricking or stabbing. These senses condense in the third quatrain as the penis becomes a weapon that can "smytyn & hath non honde." In the carnivalized world of the poem, however, the weapon does not kill, but produces new life; what it does shoot down is aloofness, both of poetic style and content and reader objectivity. The poem's language, like its imagery, is confrontational. The sharp, biting consonance--cattes skynnys, pynnis, pocket, Quat, quantyte etc.--pricks our ears; the long vowel sounds---womb, stone; godes sonde--of orifice and genital absorb the consonantal buffetings much as the hearer takes in the poem first physically, through the ear, and then imaginatively. Distance collapses between performer and audience as

gon

with me.

between the speaker and his implied listener. Moral margins between speaker and desired object are eliminated, and the poem's content and imagery--the lower stratum--are, at least on one level, within easy emotional, intellectual, and imaginative reach of its audience. The poem acts quickly, incisively; within fifteen lines, so fast it could make her head swim, the "damsele" is, miraculously, pregnant, through contact with apparently inanimate merchandise--nice, pretty, decorative things--a laugh, as we have seen, at immaculate conception. The damsel, however, is a stand-in for each of the poem's listeners. We enter the poem with her, or, more accurately, are physically and imaginatively assaulted-- penetrated by it--along with her. Our contact with the poem is intimate, bodily, frontal; we are struck (dumb?) by

word sounds and grotesque imagery, brought so joltingly close that the phallus appears gigantic, a grotesque counterpart of the Swiftian breast.

damsele, bey

The poem's imagery and language is violent: it wants to violate our sense of safe separateness from it and desublimate its desires trough direct physical action. Aesthetic experience is not a passive encounter with a further emblem of authoritarian unity and control, but a dynamic exchange; the reader/hearer participates in the creative act. The poem shuttles like a surreal montage of quickly shifting, transformative, cinematic close-ups, tripping up (if not battering) the reader/hearer's (especially a modern reader/hearer's) aesthetic expectations.

The poem's riddling structure and use of direct address, for example, demand the reader/listener's active participation. The poem attempts to seduce its readers/hearers, to carnivalize the uninitiated, both men and *ryd* }*ourself quat it may be*

women: "mayden," in the fourth quatrain, can refer not only to a young, virginal woman, but also a man who abstains from sex--i.e., who withholds himself from the poem's game--or who is sexually inexperienced (is this Chaucer speaking? in the "Clerk's Tale," the clerk is also referred to as a "maid" who has remained silent during most of the journey, but who submits, when his time comes, to the inn keeper/lord of misrule's request that he participate in the poem's game). The poem is not satisfied with detached appreciation--it is a call to action. In the third quatrain, the speaker wants his listener--both the local addressee and, by extension, all of the poem's hearers--to guess what he has. Whether we guess correctly or incorrectly, if we respond at all we are game, and the poem is at least partially successful. Of course, there's always the chance that we won't want to play, that we'll remain soberly outside the poem's carnivalesque sphere of influence, though it does all it can to draw us in.

Which brings us again (caught in the poem's carousel of signifiers) to the

refrain, the voice of conventional morality that the poem pitches itself against. Unlike other voices in the poem, it is a detached voice, set off by periods though tied into the main body/voicings of the poem through rhyme. Yet it sits there, a solid block, an "authoritative voice" (Bakhtin's phrase) not as easily

We bern abowtyn non

parodied as other voices in the poem (the courtly "godes sonde," for example). It returns regularly, inevitably, born on and phonically sustained by the four-beat, heathen rhythm that simultaneously pounds against it like waves

tweyne precyous stonys

against the thick hull of a ship. But the block stays its course, forcing its way through the poem. We can almost see the hand of a Franciscan, earnestly trying to "save" the ribald song, to moralize it by beating back at its lusty drive with the insistent warnings of the refrain, attempting to use the very heart beat of the lyric--its measure and burden--to impress the moral message. Does he succeed? The refrain remains ambiguous. The "chapmen" are "lyte of fote" as the poem is light of foot. They can flee possible assault and thievery, but also flee from the sexually assaulted and robbed. The poem simultaneously attracts and repulses its readers/hearers. The damsel/listener is both invited to enter into the poem's field of play and warned away by its refrain. In the first quatrain, the listener/damsel's curiosity is aroused, along with her powers of reasoning, as she is confronted with an apparent contradiction (this merchant bothers with no wares but the essential ones), but after four lines the spell is broken by the dispiriting refrain --"what can it mean?" the listener might wonder. In quatrains two and three, her appetites are aroused and her imagination and intellect brought into play as the speaker describes quite specifically, though still clothed and hidden in figurative language, what it is he has for sale, emphasizing its great worth, its delectability, its size, and its power. "Asayid" resonates on all these levels: a test of worth or character, the ability to observe or reason, and to taste. *it makit maydenys wombys to swelle* And again, following on the heels of each quatrain, the

sobering refrain, producing a moment of self-consciousness, of uncertainty.

This oscillation between moments of self-consciousness (and conscienceness) and immersion in the poem's game may seem to weaken its seductive power. In the third quatrain, however, if the damsel/listener has not yet caught on, the poem rudely springs its joke on her. The imagery takes a violent turn. She is struck, molested (symbolically but also literally, by the poem's language), robbed (of her virginity?), as the reader in general is molested, torn from his position as virgin spectator, initiated into the carnival world: "it can smytyn & haȝh non honde." It's as if the speaker has lost patience with the indecisiveness dramatized in the first two stanzas, or as if the poem has lost patience with its own rhetorical cleverness; it "smytyns" us with its imagery and then asks, ironically (tinged with sarcasm), if we can guess "quat it may be." Dialogically, in this quatrain the poem attempts to overpower the chilling, inhibiting effect of its refrain.

The refrain returns, of course, methodically, coolly, unperturbed, unscathed. But despite the burden's single-minded, determined, driving morality, the poem impregnates and swells its readers' imaginations--like the "maydenys wombys"--with its grotesque world. *ryd ȝourself quat it may be.* The tension between the refrain and the quatrains enact the central, unresolved dilemma of the poem. As the poem closes in on us, the refrain yanks us out of its seductive grip, sends us fleeing to an implied point of physical, as well as emotional and moral, "safety," where we may be left alone, untouched by the poem's radiance, to reflect upon its meaning. The refrain attempts to protect us, to break the force of the poem's centrifugal suction by repeatedly damming it (damning it?), pulling it up short at key moments, like check points in territory under surveillance. "Bey sum ware of me. . . asayid hem"--try me, taste me-- and be "gon with me. . . ." Guess "quat it may be": After each call for the listener's response, after each demand for the listener to participate in the game, the stifling conscience of the refrain wedges itself in. The essential choice is to embrace the world of carnival, an uncertain,

changeable, fluid world that is closely tied to the essential rhythms of life and nature--death, rebirth, and becoming (transformation and renewal)--or to resist these forces and flee to the world of "law and order," chastity, and blithe.

ȝe xuldȝe reȝere gon with me.

In the arena of the poem, then, who wins? The voice of abstinence, restraint, and withdrawal, or the unruly, carnivalized drive of the life force?[5] Resistance and submission. Withdrawal and return. Death and rebirth. Self-consciousness and loss of self, of individuality, into the universal process of becoming. Universal rhythms. Semiotic rhythms. The poem's dialogue

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[5] There are numerous images of restraint in "Wares": The "wympele," a confining headdress which was wrapped around a woman's head and secured under the chin; the pocket containing stones; the stored quantity of sperm that closes stanza four; the emasculating refrain that encloses the poem (if it is sung before the first verse, as Brown and Robbins suggest) (xxxvii). Yet the confining imagery is undone by the poem's equivocalness and restless metonymic movement. The clustering of cats' skins, purses, and headwear in quatrain one and the pocket in quatrain two is richly suggestive. The first nonpresent item mentioned (i.e., present only as a signifier)--"cattes skynnys"--sets the deconstructive, carnivalesque tone *ȝerof I haue a quantyte* of the poem. It is the skin of an animal, sans the animalness, the life force that once animated it, but which the sexualizing energy of the poem will "magically" return to it--the dead brought to life. The cat's skin commonly sold by merchants in the Middle Ages was that of a European wild cat, hence cats and cats' skins came to signify the spiritual wilderness--devil, or something diabolic; "cattes tail" referred to a prostitute. All these senses are turned loose in "Wares." Is the "damsele" a "mayden," a prostitute, an equally witty participant in the "Jeux," or some combination of these? The poem is both playful and "sinful," and the cat's skin may be an appropriate emblem for the mischievous minstrel. The phrase "turn the cat in the pan" meant to turn things upside down, topsy turvy, an intention the poem immediately begins to act out by denying its own images. As "poket" displaces "puris" in the second quatrain, it metaphorically transforms into the skin of the male genital, the animalistic, most cat-like (wild) part of man. Retroactively, the metonymy alters our image of the headdress. Proximally close and visually similar to skins and puris (the latter an enclosure with an opening, like a hood, and the former, something that can enclose), if one is wrapped around the "ladyis" head so are the others. What evolves is a grotesque image--the lady's face peers primly out from the scrotum that ensnares it (we remember that alternate definitions of "poket" are the scrotum, a division of a sack tied off with a rope or otherwise constricted, and a hunting net--all of which are visually similar).

extends beyond both text-bound space and the space and duration of its immediate performance. Bakhtin (on Rabelais' imagery): "The limits between the body and the world are erased, leading to the fusion of the one with the other and with surrounding objects" (310). In "Wares," we may expand "body" to include the body of the poem, and extend the sense of "world" four dimensionally to include past, present, and future contexts of the poem's enactment.

So, again, who wins? There is no thematic or dramatic resolution. There is no unifying tone of voice: there are irreducible tones of voices--eager, witty, volatile, afraid. There is no winner. The poem's dialogue remains open, multivalent, undecided.

> *I must have been about eight. I was on this carousel at the amusement park. The attendant wouldn't stop it; as we spun around, he kept coming around, collecting tickets. My tickets! one by one, disappearing... Finally, I jumped*
>
> *We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote*
>
> * * * * *
>
> *withoutyn fyt*
>
> *it can smytyn & haȝt non honde*

From the point of view of contemporary materialist feminism, however, vis a vis the antifeminism figured in the poem, the "damsele" has more of a say then it at first seems. The apparently passive presentation of the feminine can be deconstructed through Bakhtin's notions of carnival, hidden polemics, parodic double/multiple voicings, and Volosinov's concept of the pre-scriptive function of the listener. Since the poem includes its own listener, the voice (or "character") of the female addressee quotes--that is, dialogizes--her role as *quat it is can I not telle* s t r a i g h t (wo)man--the butt of the (male) minstrel/speaker's ribald banter--within her larger, more invasive, subtextual role as "author" or "director"--prescriptor--of play. She predetermines the antifeminist discourse from within--she is, as it were, the puppeteer, tangling the speaker in a self-parodying position. It is really the male speaker who has "no choice" in the poem, even though the inscribed female listener seems, on a first reading, to be a static prop. (The

image vocabulary of the "feminine" is limited, however, to what the prevalent, male-centered world view makes available; her voice remains in translation--a phallocentric edition.)

syluer pynnis

As we have seen, in the metaphoric structure of the poem, commercial relations--contracts and exchanges of goods--are displaced by sexual ones, which also displace the ritualistic formalities of courtship--such as platonic meetings and gift giving--often figured in courtly love lyrics. The metaphoric recoil sparks an insight--social-sexual interrelationships function, essentially, like commercial ones. In a consumer relationship, power resides with the buyer. The seller can persuasively offer his/her goods, and can hand out samples, but can't force one to buy them, i.e., to give something in exchange. In the metaphorical context of the poem, the damsel, as shopper, may freely choose to "buy" or reject the offered goods--or to refuse his/hers and buy elsewhere. Even though she may accept a free sample, may taste his wares (quatrain 2), she may ultimately refuse to contract for the goods. She may also choose to sell, or to invest--withhold--her goods, awaiting a "harder" market.

While this subtle sense of the woman as manipulator, like the carnivalesque beating of her with the phallus, retains a flavor of the "antifeminism" Moore notes in many lyrics of the period, it also acknowledges the significance, albeit in masculine terms, of the feminine in the world--economically, biologically, and historically (without continuity of the species, there can be no history; woman is, literally, what gives shape to wo/mankind). The image of the woman implied here polemicizes the idealized concept of women depicted in religious lyrics of the period. In "Of Women Cometh this Worldes Weal" (R, Religious Lyrics, #110, 174), for example, woman is imaged as loyal, nurturing, loving, and praiseworthy; she quietly endures man's constant victimization of her and is comparable, in her reticent suffering, to the virgin Mary. The addressee in "Wares" is, by comparison, a "modern" woman. She is potentially open to the world (if she is game) rather than closed off to all but one; she is capable of succumbing to passions without

public condemnation, though the refrain attempts to inflict upon her the self-condemnation of conscience. She is able to stand up to the discourses that assault her, without being a stand in (substitution, displacement) for the phallus. She is a woman of the world.

quat it is

From a poststructuralist perspective, this partial reconstruction (or at *haue a... swelle*
least refiguring) of the feminine suggests that the female addressee is not simply a manipulator of an available product. The poem, as we have seen, is a body of language offered in exchange for sexual intimacy, the reification of the poem's desire. In the true spirit of a materialist feminist, the "damsele" adroitly shifts positions. As, by turns, both seller--of herself, her consent to involvement and participation, her love--and buyer--of the poem's jeux, of which she is the addressee, the inscribed destination of its desire--she outmaneuvers the masculine voice of the poem and gains control of the poem's production. *selle* Or, to deploy a martial metaphor, she is empowered by the poem's aggressiveness; like an experienced Tai Chi master, she turns opposing energies into positive, defensive force, which functions in turn as a counter offensive strategy. *honde*

Though the (presumably) male poet controls the master words, *sonde* structures the poem for maximum effect, and attempts to manipulate the listener through his "jeux," *nonys/onys* the whole performance is essentially predetermined by (his concept of and assumptions about) the listener. "Ryd" is interesting from this perspective. To advise, to read, and to guess. Reading is performative. The reader/listener enters into the poem's discourse, participates in a larger, social game. The words are selected, the poem is shaped with the listener in mind. In a subliminal way, the female addressee determines the discourse from the inside. She has penetrated the poet(s) and given a certain impetus to the poem's conception, influencing its birth before its present voicing, and before it imagistically impregnates

telle / swelle her.

Though the poem is located, logocentrically, within a masculine world view, the assumption of male-dominant authorship is troped by the poem's fundamental desire to please and be accepted. According to Bakhtin, the "listener...intrinsically determines a work's structure" as well as its "selection of words" (Volosinov 113). The poet(s) chooses images that will appeal and attract--pearls, purses, silver pins--or impress--the largeness of the phallus, his virility; he chooses phrases that heighten the worth of his wares--"godes sonde," "precyous stonys"; he structures the poem as a game, a riddle, a seduction--all of these choices are made, more or less consciously (and sometimes selfconsciously) with his audience in mind--not just a woman but womankind (as we have seen, the final quatrain addresses not a particular, implicitly present damsel/listener, but woman in general). And yet it is always the "woman in mind," a specular verification of the male gaze that disenfranchises feminine ownership per se-- *damsele, bey* the feminine presence as it might inscribe itself outside this gaze.

damsele, bey sum ware of me.
I haue a pocket for þe nonys,
þerine ben tweyne precyous stonys;
damsele, hadde ȝe asayid hem onys,
ȝe xuldþe rapere gon with me.

Reading/listening and writing, then, are self-reflexive. Writers locate themselves in a text that is simultaneously located in (concepts of) the other; readers encounter themselves--a version, an image, a double of themselves--in the writing, are embedded in it from the start. Writers' and readers' consciousnesses interpenetrate, interanimate each other; partitions between them and their respective sexes are brought down, just as, imagistically, items of female accoutrement, rather than decorating or concealing, are transformed

into images of both male and female genitalia: the male "pocket" translates into the female purse/womb, and pearls become testes. The result is not an unproblematically authoritative, masculine presentation, but a hybrid of male and female imagery--a unsettled linguistic androgyny, rather than a dominance of one type of language and image over the other.[6]

We bern abowtyn non cattes skynnys,
puris, perlis, syluer pynnis,
smale wympeles for ladyis chynnys

* * * * *

The author, claims Bakhtin, "orients his work toward him [his listener]" (113-14). In a general sense, the listener may not be only an individual, but "the bearer of value judgements of the social group consciousness [the author] belongs to" (114). The process of composition, of selecting terms and metaphors, according to Bakhtin, "involves the translation of oneself into the other, the common code"; metaphor "regroups values" (116) common to the author's class. An "author's" poem, then, is transpersonal. In the twentieth-century lyric, larger claims about life and the world are often centered in

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[6] This destabilizing sexual ambiguity, as well as the large scale importance of the feminine in life, is supported prosodically. The first three lines of each quatrain have feminine line endings, a falling off into the unutterableness, unknowableness of the blank page, the margins of the poem and of the text, the surrounding world. The last line of each quatrain and the refrain have masculine line endings, which act like phonic stoppers, appropriate to their conflicting assertiveness--the former (the final line of each quatrain) either asserting the speaker's confidence and pride in his "wealth" and power, or demanding participation (the speaker doesn't ask, but tells the listener to buy, to guess); the latter (the refrain lines) warning away--warning us that the minstrel/merchants are as quick on their feet as off them, with their footless cocks. But the point is that the poem is evenly matched with both types of line endings, effecting not a metrically neutering equivalence, but a sustained sexual dialogue or tension.

personal experience, evolving from the arche of a private voice. The anonymous author(s) of "The Minstrel and His Wares," however--himself already admittedly not a unitary "self," in the modern sense, but a composite of other voices and world views--does not compose from within his personality, but from within a without--a social/historical, cultural texture. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the poem is locked within its cultural context; it all depends on the scope of the operative ideologies. What is at stake is not just an individual speaker's satisfaction, but primal, generative energy; the world of birth, death, generation, and becoming, the "people's immortality," as Bakhtin puts it (Dialogic Imagination 256). What is at stake is an ontology, the world view infusing much of the poem's imagery, the myth (or "chronotope")--the "common code"--of "generative time" (Dialogic Imagination 207). It is not so much the intellectual comprehension of this, but the spirit, the willingness to wholeheartedly engage in "generative time" that the carnivalesque laughter of "Wares" hopes to awaken in the addressed listener and through her, the world at large. It is also this very world view that enables the poem to leap the boundaries of its own social/historical context.

As we have seen, at the same time as "Wares" frees words from their referents, from a purely literal context, the rhythm, language, imagery, and voicing (performance) of the poem seem to alchemically transform the printed page into animate life--the poem, as an act of language, asserts itself as a literal presence. Yet it is a presence that is transspatial and transtemporal, existing both in the here and now and eternally. Etymologically, of course, the poem exists in a liminal state, *quat it is can not I telle* still carrying some of its old runic sighs as well as Germanic, French, and Latin elements. More significantly, however, the unnameable, irreducible, irresistible urgency of the sexual drive of the poem that is felt in the repeated rhymes as well as the continuous, unifying pulse of the dipodic line is a rhythm that seems to preexist *withoutyn fyt it can stonde* a particular performance and/or inscription of the poem and to continue indefinitely beyond it; it is a primal

rhythm germane to the world, which springs to life with each reperformance of the poem, and of which the poem is merely one manifestation. The poem is, in this sense, a perennial life form. Brought into living presence via voice, the poem detemporalizes itself, lifts performer and listener into the eternal time pulsing beneath individual people and events. The poem's language and imagery are distinctly, aggressively present, the powerful rise of the phallus like the rise of the bourgeoisie, but they also limn eternal forces, giving them a particular contour and color, the distinctive features of an era and a people.

it makit maydenys wombys to swelle

"The Minstrel and His Wares," in its carnival spirit, is optimistically, energetically future oriented. It resists closure, evades resolution. Through its metaphorical substitutions and formal playfulness, it continually defers a completion of desire. Hence desire becomes impersonal, or transpersonal--a desire for continuity, for continued impregnation of its successive readers/hearers, the four-beat line pulsing in an indefinitely sustained coitus (though the refrain tries to force a coitus interruptus). Continuity, however, is not assured: it is dependent, so to speak, on market trends--the tastes, needs, restrictions, and ideological orientation of the social milieu current at the time of performance--and on the reader/listener's willingness to be affected by the power of the language. The effectiveness of the performance depends on the other.

hadde ȝe asayid hem onys, ȝe xuld ȝe repere gon with me.

Though the reader/listener's being game for the poem indicates her/his complicity in the poem's carnival world view, "The Minstrel and His Wares" complicates idyllic notions of "generative" or "folkloric time" with a sophistication born of an awareness of everyday social realities. The ribald carol is not a naive assertion of mythic, generative time, of carnival world free of all social restrictions and tensions--an unrealizable utopia. The meeting in the fifteenth century mind of bourgeoisie, materialistic, empirical shrewdness; Christian morality, and the myths and imagery of the pastourelle and the

courtly love lyric vis a vis a proto-feminist reinscription of woman, is a ludic, parodic confrontation--a festive meeting that creates the peculiar, complex, uncanny, sublime, and awesome medieval world view, superficially uncomplicated but essentially ambivalent.

We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote, *We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote,*
Ȝe fowle weyis for to fle.

We bern abowtyn non cattes skynnys,
puris, perlis, syluer pynnis,
smale wympeles for ladyis chynnys;
damsele, bey sum ware of me.

Ȝe fowle weyis for to fle.
We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote, *We ben chapmen lyȝt of fote,*

"Quantyte," a word fraught with ambiguity and self-contradictions, is an appropriate note on which to rest the minstrel's riddle, and this discussion of it. "Quantyte" can mean (1) an amount of money (the wealth of sperm in a purse), (2) the main part of a body (the phallus is the poem's imagistic quantity), (3) magnitude of love and magnitude of wrong doing (the carnival and "evil" of the poem), (4) an amount of writing in a book (the poem's quantity, the wealth of imagery like the wealth of sperm), (5) length (the variable length of a phallus; the duration of a particular performance of the poem, which, whether sung in rounds or by a single singer, could be extended indefinitely; the potentially infinite number of revoicings of the poem through time--its historical length), (6) an amount said regarding a subject at a given point (a quantity of words out of a continuous, unfinished dialogue; the poem's speech is never exhausted...
juggling small, bright "fruits" while riding a unicycle on a translucent "globe"...

2

The World, The Other, The Text: Dialogic Method in Rakosi's Poetry And Prose

The theatre of transference. The Golden Bough: A Cingolese devil-dancer, wearing the mask of a diabolic power, gesticulating and contorting before his patient/spectator, seduces the disease out of the patient's body and into his own; he then feigns death and is carried on a bier into the wilderness, where he is mysteriously brought back to life, disposes of the disease, and returns to the community (Frazer 628). The patient's disruptive other is evoked, drawn out, and takes on its own being, objectified in the wild gestures of the shaman, alive in him. Audience and performer interpenetrate--intuitively, bodily, at the level of psycho-biological drives. The space opened by the ritual performance becomes the psycho-sexual stage for an intimate exchange. The spectator enters into the performance, transfers his repressed other to the performer and the performer, aware of his audience, for whom the performance is enacted, feels his presence in him. Through a masquerade, both performer and audience unmask, expose the impersonal forces within them, forces that only temporarily inhabit the bodies of particular men, animals, plants, and objects, though they must always be embodied--they cannot be known and manipulated in the abstract. But the "evil," the unknown, is never conquered, never once and for all brought to light, captured in form and name, distanced, expelled. It is simply transferred--to articles of clothing, utensils, branches, rocks, an item cast into the wilderness, other bodies... the theatre of transference keeps the other in circulation (shamans often touch patients with natural objects--leaves, stones, herbs--to tease/force out the disruptive spirits). (This is the drama set in Freud's office, as he presses his hand on the neurotic Dora's forehead, the physical pressure helping to release the psychological one.) Reifying the abstract, passing it on. Merleau-Ponty on the phenomenology of perception: "my body can assume segments derived from the body of another, just as my substance passes into them; man is mirror for man. The mirror itself is the instrument of a universal magic that changes... myself into another, and another into myself" (168), and "All flesh, and even that of the world, radiates beyond itself" (186).

And the third person in this ritual? Myself, the reader/reinscriber, looking on, reinventing the dance, imaginatively reliving the rite through Frazer's words. The performance is a mirror. The text is a mirror: Barthes: the text speaks "according to the reader's interest" (151) and he may find himself alive within it. The body gesturing and speaking before us, the crystallization of words into an aesthetic object (a poem)--"the hard / inevitable quartz / figure of will / and language" as Rakosi expresses it in "Shore Line" (Collected Poems 227)[1]--make this kind of thinking happen. We will always be "primitive" in this way. The photon-like bombardment of phoneme, grapheme, taxeme--language is a reflection that can jar subjectivity, an uncanny voice vibrating out of the impact.

* * * * * * * * * *

A chain letter. A link to a community beyond the private circle of acquaintances. Though perhaps sent by a friend, a communication that quickly makes its way to an unknown other. Copies, copies of copies till the print begins to disintegrate. Origin untraceable. The distorted print is the image of the message's multifarious receptions, the trace of its transmission, the words barely able to hold their shapes after so much human and technological intervention. "You must circulate this letter." The promise of reward if the chain is continued--"Joe Elliot received $450,000"--but bad luck, even death, if broken--"General Welch lost his life six days after he received the letter. He failed to circulate the quote." The penalty for disinvolvement is death--banishment from the living, human community. Life is sustained only through transference, through experience of the letter, attention to the demands of its language. "It must leave your hands within ninety hours after

[1] The following abbreviations will be used: *Collected Poems = CP, Collected Prose = P*

you receive it." You, the reader, must act. I now bring parts of the letter into the context of this essay--is the chain continued? I alter it; the current discourse frames it in a particular way, but it will always exist in other senses, "further textualizations" (George Quasha's phrase), than the one in which I make it meaningful now. Whatever action is taken-- refusal (throwing the letter away), or acceptance (sending it on)--the words have power. Life and death. The poem as chain letter. I read a book and pass it on; or take one from a shelf in a store or library, read a poem, then replace the book, not knowing who the next reader will be, but knowing there will be one. Transference. Rakosi's poetry and prose radiating in direct lines of experience from the author to his readers; a different, a new reading at each point. Words belonging to and including the world. "Do not keep this letter."

The shaman's dance, the chain letter--discontinuous textual experiences, linked by the metonymy of a reader response, are reconstituted as a third text in the space of this essay, the current act of inscription. This is the essential energy and urgency of Rakosi's poetry and prose: words reified, interacting dialogically. Self and other--human and nonhuman, texts and world--brought together in the space of his text, enact a dynamic dialogue that reawakens our humanness, gut to soul. His words ask us to respond to the world, including the world of language and literature: His poetry and prose reinvest objects in the world with their "aura" (Benjamin's term) of human use, compel us to join with the author in his shakedown of literary conventions and aesthetic ideologies, don't allow us to take anything for granted. Both writing and reading become moments of human experience. Rakosi is not concerned with creating artifacts to be placed out of reach on a shelf of the intellect, where they may shine undisturbed. He wants his art to be handled, smudged by the world, just as he handles other texts in his own work. He is suspicious of any poetic that, as Goffman puts it, prevents the "audience from looking at the performer" (69).

> There is no necessary connection among Rakosi, Bakhtin, Benjamin, Merleau-Ponty, Frazer. These occur within a reading field, or field of inquiry, that could easily be constituted otherwise. What's that, at the center, or is it the horizon? Zoom in: a bricoleur's shell game. Zoom out: the field is in a shell. The shell in a shell. Rakosi: under all or none.

Rakosi crosses poetry and prose, interweaves the medieval lyric, mythical imagery, soaring rhetoric, and tall tales with a down-to-earth setting that includes idiomatic speech, political slogans, advertising jargon, slang, and graffiti. Though the juxtaposed voices and world views in his poetry and prose often boil down to a binary opposition rather than a plurilogue--Rakosi and Rakosi's values in polemic with a reduced, generalized, hybridized other that moves in under various banners (the intellect, the abstract, the pretentious, the dishonest), all sharing a formalizing consciousness and detachment from (if not outright disdain for) the world of lived experience--though Rakosi's work does not have the scope of The Cantos, it has a touchability that the latter often lacks. Rakosi doesn't wipe off the fingerprints. Through all his changing of hats and shifting of positions, we always know where his heart is--in the world, in the human.

Rakosi's dialogic, processual poetic opens his work to charges of imperfection and looseness because he opens it up as a field of contestation, as the scene of a carnival jousting among voices and world views. His is a "comic logopoetic," as Burton Hatlen terms it ("Carl Rakosi" 131). By entering into dialogue with other texts and the world, by humanizing poetic as well as hermeneutic discourse, he collapses hierarchies that separate art from the world and social intercourse; breaches categories between poet, critic, and reader; deauthorizes an art-for-art's-sake formalism both as a poetic program

and interpretative method.

The world of Rakosi's poetry and prose is a man-sized one. "Shall we say the gods," the speaker politely suggests in "Origins" (CP 453), a parody of Pound's "The Return," "with lights behind us" (their illumination does not help much in the present --surely we'll stumble if we depend on it) "have broken wind / in a changing system?" The shift in diction marks an alteration in world view (linguistic change is the trace of social change, Julia Kristeva tells us) (105). The phrases and images butt against each other, a verbal slapstick that jeers the sublime resonance of Pound's poem; both the light and aura (aroma?) of "the gods" are shattered. Yes, we can now get behind the gods (at least we know they have behinds; but perhaps we should not get down wind of them), and by breaking wind they have also dispelled an idealized atmosphere of the sublime: "Send us again, O gods," requests the speaker in high rhetoric, "peppers and poppyseed"--a triviality in sound and image. The language and imagery in the poem, broken into humanly manipulable pieces, spar with each other, challenging the seamless and aloof purity of the classical imagery. The present is not diminished, but enlarged by the fall of the gods; they have become small but by doing so have regained the world and time, regenerated; they have become human, laughable, alive in a vital present. Rakosi's poem reclaims them for the world.

(This space reserved for your comments and suggestions)

* * * * * * * * * *

What's hidden? What does the reader not see in the finished text? How can we detect struggles with other texts, strong precursors with oppressive styles, poetics, or points of view? These are some of the issues Rakosi confronts in his writing. He treats poetry as a man-ufactured object and exposes its productive processes by recontextualizing it in a field of other texts and socio-cultural processes; poetry is not an autonomous, sacrosanct entity, but a reified facet of a psycho-social whole. When we are inside a poem, we see what it sees--the way it wants us to see; it is difficult to also see around it. But that is the task of the sensitive, aware reader. Rakosi spatializes and temporalizes other texts, subjects them to experiential duration in a linguistic field; his words, and the words of others ingested by his, become vulnerable, receivable. From this perspective, Rakosi's writing is a "dialogos," to apply Quasha's label: it preserves the act of "immediate engagement with the text" (463). In short, Rakosi's poetry is an articulate experience of other texts/poems, an objectification and retextualization of language (as Quasha says, "text generates further text") (463).

In a fictional, life-of-the-artist autobiography, "My Experiences in Parnassus" (P 57-60), Rakosi exposes the underlying forces and motivations that produce a poem. He raps at a highly wrought, formalist poetic and finds it hollow--not that craft is unimportant, but craft for its own sake is a waste of his and his readers' time. A waste of lines. Rakosi also challenges the naive notion of poetry as a natural, unself-conscious outpouring of authentic, original voice; too many other concerns--literary and extra-literary--enter into the making of the poem. One important lesson the speaker of the prose piece learns about the "art of writing" is that, as Goffman puts it (speaking of performances), "often the real secret behind the mystery [of the voice, the image] is that there really is no mystery; the real problem is to prevent the audience from learning this too" (70).

"My Experiences in Parnassus" presents these aesthetic issues through a parodic doubling, a ghosted counter voicing--Rakosi behind the arras

manipulating the puppets: we know that the Machiavellian persona narrating the process of his becoming a "famous poet" stands for everything Rakosi opposes:

> if poetry was expected to be a performance, the lyric impulse was not necessary... sincerity also was not necessary. It was, after all, only a show.... For the first time, I was free from these burdens, free to turn my whole attention to the art of writing (59).

Turning away from sincerity to "the art of writing" places the source of art outside the artist's own feelings and experience; art becomes parasitic, self-generating. The first sentence of "My Experiences in Parnassus" boldly, bluntly sets out a position that we cannot not respond to: "I first started writing when I discovered its extraordinary opportunities for concealment." We are trained to think of art as expression, truth, authentic voice, etc.; our own reactions provide the counterforce that sets the parody in motion. As the opening sentence twists against itself--pulls the rug out from under the expectations aroused by its predicate ("I first started writing when I discovered..." Truth , The World, Myself, The Other?)--it redefines Art as a masquerade, an evasion of experience rather than a process of self-discovery or an honest confrontation with the world. This is the dynamic of Rakosi's poetry and prose, repelling us in order to seduce us; provoking us, compelling us to respond to the text's "thetic" positions (Kristeva's term for a text's stated stances). The work unites us in laughter, and in a recognition of the truth beneath the laughter.

[chain letter response]

"My Experiences in Parnassus" is more than simple irony. The meaning of the text is the opposition, the parodic interaction of alternate logos--Rakosi's

"comic logopoetic." One stance is stated, but exaggerated; the exaggeration traces the breakthrough of a counter voice, the articulated position's negative, which is actually positive (art is "concealment": a flat-out, unqualified, yet unconcealing admission; the outrageousness of the speaker's statement is its matter-of-factness, its "honesty," which proves its opposite--sincerity--to be the more sane and desirable value). The oppositional rhythm of Rakosi's writing is a primal, disruptive force whose tremors can be felt all through his work.

"My Experiences in Parnassus" comically doubles Rakosi's own aesthetic values. The speaker sketches his initiation into the world of poetry and his climb to success within four pages--a lot of territory to cover in a short space? That's the point: The process is clean, quick, and painless--mechanized. Once the speaker catches on to what he must do--allow his imagination free reign to "astonish other poets"--and all that he doesn't have to bother with--sincerity, experience in the world, the "lyric impulse"--he can carry out his plans for becoming a "major poet" without hindrance. Irresponsibility towards all readers except other poets, game playing, obscurity, indifference to the world; the technique of clustering purposeless, disconnected, "mysterious" images whose "alluring presence" is "sui generis" (a pretense that is exacerbated by serving them up in a depersonalized voice --"No, the voice was not one that his wife and children would ever recognize as his. Whose then was it? And to whom was it speaking?") (58): These are the "lessons" the speaker learns.

Perhaps I look at the poem too long.
In the margins and the spaces between lines are the scrawls that become this essay.
The book itself falling apart. The binding taped.
This comment written 9/93 long after having revised the essay for publication.
Cracks, fissures. Widening. Look out.

In "My Experiences in Parnassus," the speaker has chosen a path of least resistance to success and attained the sheen of a "major poet" through "the art of writing"--both empty labels. He is a commercial for a poet. For the character in "When He Sat Down to His Desk" (CP 225) the process is still a struggle. The poem is imaged as a conflictual field, a jockeying of various voices/values for control of the work; the process is a trial by influence, a mental/emotional gauntlet of preconceptions--accumulated poetic ideals and conventions--that the poet must fight through to get at "the real work" (Gary Snyder's phrase).

When he sat down to his desk
in the morning
there was a voice
weeping
from the personal
which could not bear its frailty
and longed for alleviation
in some lovely figure or perception.

Sometimes it spoke
as if it knew it was going to be published;
"I will never sacrifice man for art."

It needed no one
and was neither modest nor superior,
just sure and straight.
When he heard it, he knew he had a good thing
and wrote it down,
at first plain
and then as high character,

as if he were discovering his nature.

But the commitment had already been made
to honesty and clarity.
Why then did he have to go through
all that strangeness?

The act of writing is thus made conscious of itself, of its posturing/positioning. The poem is the scene of the struggle of several voices for page space. It begins quietly, contemplatively: The subordinate clause, the prepositional phrase, then the predicate that has been held in suspense--all fall gently, gracefully, non-disruptively into place in the first three lines, plenty of thought/breath pause between each syntactic unit--an almost self-conscious attention to arrangement. The poet, removed from the flux of the world, is concentrated within himself, and we expect, perhaps, the immanent sounding of a timeless being concealed within, the bringing forward of the poet's soul onto the page, drawing us into a pure lyric expression, an experience of the life of the spirit, a personal voice but also the voice of essential being... but such expectations are immediately thwarted; such a state of mind would seem to be at odds with the intentional artistry of these opening lines, and we soon realize that it is just the lyric tone of the poem that produces this feeling, a trick of language; moreover, the voice about to speak, anticipated in the feeling of the opening lines, is passing through the overvoice of the poem--that is, the lyric voice we are waiting for is being presented to us; something else, or someone else, some other voice, lies behind it. So at the outset there is an overlapping of voices, an insecurity that inhibits our assuming a simple, pure, sign-wave like expression--there is, rather, wave-length interference. This is the larger situation that Rakosi's poem enacts.

This first (or, rather, second) voice that comes "from the personal" desires "alleviation / in some lovely figure or perception," confusing what is

close and immediate, perhaps closest to the poet's inner being, with a produced object, something "artistic." The "hidden polemic" here (Bakhtin's phrase) is with an ideal conception of art; whether or not the poem's anti-hero poet consciously names or envisions the trustees of this ideal, a possible audience influences the creation of the poem before it hits the page, even if the "audience" is only an abstract belief, an uninflected ideology hovering somewhere in the back of the poet's mind. Bakhtin: "This listener [audience] may be only the bearer of the value judgments of the social group to which the 'conscious' person belongs" (Volosinov 114). And this listener, these values, make themselves heard "in the poet's voice, in the basic tone and intonations of that voice--whether the poet himself intends this or not" (Volosinov 114). The other, then--the potential reader--is "internally persuasive" (Bakhtin's phrase), and to the poet's disadvantage, here, since his own language divides him within himself, puts up a screen between his natural inclinations, his "poetic impulse," and his imago as a writer.

But the fact that the poet/persona can't rest in any one voice/position attests to the vital, disruptive force of this impulse that keeps him moving through the layers of oppressive, delusive aesthetic stances, pushes him on to something else, something always deferred, coming in the end only to a question--"Why... did he have to go through / all that strangeness"--stated with the same poise and grace, through the same careful spacing of syntactic units that yielded a sense of syntactic/semantic surety in the opening lines, though rhetorically the final lines offer no security, no answers, no rest; conventional grammar is a placebo, offering no real alleviation from the poem's dis-ease. The point is that the movement itself between stances is the pulse of the poem, the trace of its authenticity.

[chain letter response]

The next voice that enters (after the yearning for a "lovely figure") is a

similarly self-conscious one that "spoke / as if it knew it was going to be published." This voice inspires the poet to lofty, aphoristic moral sentiments: "'I will never sacrifice man for art'." A noble sentiment, but that's just the problem. Its rhetoricalness deconstructs its meaning, already indicating the sacrifice of what it claims to avoid; the statement springs not from a concern for man, but from a concern for making high-minded, "relevant" statements that will make both poem and poet look good in print. And again, this is not the poet's own voice (whatever that might be) but a quoted voice, the voice of an ideology, a generally held assumption about the purpose of poetry. Our reception of the line is complicated by the fact that the principle it mouths is, from Rakosi's point of view, a valid one (does this expose a possible self-deception in his own stance?). The problem is the context in which the statement is heard. It is presented to us abstractly; it does not denote an actual process at work in the poem. In fact, if the poem performed as the statement claims, the statement world not need to be made. Instead, the statement shows up here as a quoted stance, the image of a non-operative principle, while the poem itself, at least on the thetic level (the level of the articulated image and statement), provides an experience of the opposite meaning--a self-centered concern for crafting admirable art, a social/aesthetic positioning in an ideological context. Abstracted from the reality it denotes, the quote lacks weight; its real value, which can only be an experience of its meaning, is displaced by sound value--the portentous sound of its own rhetoric.

The poet's various stances have no solid base in experience, yet the force of his rhetoric, the conviction of his style--"It [the voice] needed no one"--persuades him to adopt their embedded values. Because they lack a firm grounding in experiential truth, however, the poetic stances easily contradict themselves, without the poet's necessarily catching the slip. "I will never sacrifice man for art," but, in the next line, "It needed no one." Now this voice that can do without man (without, it would seem, even a particular speaker to embody it) comes "sure and straight," which sounds honest enough (though the

previous line describes it as non-committal, like a clever politician--"neither modest nor superior"), but as the poet latches on to this voice--not so much because it is authentic, but because it is the right one for poetry ("When he heard it, he knew he had a good thing") -- and writes "at first plain / and then as high character," the careful spacing apart of each half of the compound adverbial phrase, which emphasizes the rhetoric's self-confident structuring of the chronological sequence of events, is undercut by the shiftiness of a voice that has no inner stability, no consistency at all. This polysemous (Polyphonic?) voice in the poem that is really many voices, constantly changing and exchanging roles, shuttling back and forth between "lovely" figures and "straight" talk, sententiousness and nobility of character, leaves us, like this sentence, where? All are equally poses, equivalent, also, in their lack of substance. And then the closing question:

But the commitment had already been made
to honesty and clarity.
Why then did he have to go through
all that strangeness?

(The arrangement of the last two lines, doubling that of the opening lines, suggests that the original stance and voice is no less strange.) The final question compels us to consider what has unfolded sequentially from an altered perspective, folding the poem back on itself and recreasing it, so that the lines open in us in other directions--directions that bear the imprint of the original creases. Is the poem simply a tissue of invading, culturally produced (and productive) voices? (As the speaker in "My Experiences in Parnassus" asks: "to whom is it speaking?") Perhaps the closing question--the process of rereading and reconsideration (the questioning) it encourages--is the poem; perhaps the quest for an original voice is itself misleading, a wrong path through the maze; perhaps the "real" voice is the maze itself. Refolded, the poem unfolds itself

as a question, rather than a revelation. The final stanza of the poem suggests the danger of commitment to any framing concept, even an apparently honest one, without experience of what that concept entails (or, to put it in the terms of Zen Buddhism, "all concepts are misconceptions"). This is the experience that the poem enacts--the danger of a lack of experience, of a firm grounding, when putting pen to paper. The "poetic impulse" can never realize itself, never "know" itself, but endlessly circulates beneath and between various socio-cultural-aesthetic positions--passing through, moving on, briefly subsumed by the voices of various ideologies, but living in none of them.

(Your comments)

The closing stanza makes us think--what does "honesty and clarity" really mean? The poem began in what appeared to be a straightforward, honest and clear manner, but that's just it--it was a "manner," a false moment, false to the experience the poet was actually having; he should have attended to the poem's drift, its oppositional pulse, rather than its thetic moments of rest. The title of the poem draws attention to itself through a semantic displacement in the final prepositional phrase; what would normally pass unnoticed as a common expression goes slightly askew. The reader's response to the title--the feeling that something is out of phase--is an experience of the poet's self-consciousness about who (he thinks) he is and what he's up to: He should sit down not "to his desk," but "to write"; not to the props, but the process. Of course, the process is exactly what we do get in Rakosi's poem, and it's why the poet must be seen in the third person, from outside the stances he assumes. In fact, as in "My Experiences in Parnassus," the honesty of the

poem lies in the dishonesty, the self-delusion, the posturing and positionality it enacts. The poem's "Honesty and clarity" lies in the masquerade it illuminates, a confused layering of prescriptive selves. As Rakosi says in "Day Book": "I have the uneasy feeling that we have been conned by ingenious stylists" (P 21). The poem images several voices without locking itself into any of them. Or, to borrow Kristeva's phrase, it puts the self, and the thetic positions assumed by the self, "in process/on trial." The poem "is a practice assuming all positivity in order to negativize it and thereby make visible the process underlying it" (Kristeva 233; by "positivity" she means particular stances or positions taken by a text).

Rakosi's text is a "textual practice" engaged in the "negativizing of narcissism" (Kristeva's phrases)--in the deconstruction of poetry deployed to justify or reaffirm an ideologically centered identity. As a practice, Rakosi's text enacts its ethical stance. "The ethical cannot be stated," states Kristeva, "instead it is practiced to the point of loss" (234). Poems/texts do this when they "pluralize, pulverize" thetic positions, or "develop them to the point of laughter" (Kristeva 233).[2]

This is the effect of "When He Sat Down to His Desk" and one of the essential vectors of Rakosi's dialogic method. The poem toys with the reader's expectations, but the closing question puts him in the speaker's position, draws him into the dialogue, asks him not to respond with a simple answer but to go back into the poem and experience its tensions, articulate the confusions and contradictions, undergo the same kind of bemused inquiry that the speaker is undergoing and that the character in the poem is undergoing

[2]Kristeva sees this as a continual process of destruction and renewal: the persistent irruption of psycho-sexual drives, "semiotic motility," cutting through thetic positionality to create new stances that are in turn challenged. I am reminded of Rakosi's summary of literary history in "Day Book" as a continual struggle between the romantic and the real: "But the plain, honest product palls in time and does not satisfy the heart. So a new generation of rebels rediscovers the romantic," but "it, too in time loses credibility. And so it goes" *P* 45-46).

perhaps without questioning or even realizing it--and the questioning, the awareness of the positionality, makes all
the difference. Merleau-Ponty, speaking of primitive cave painting, notes a similar relationship between the viewer and the figure leaping across the wall: The painted image asks us to "see according to it, or with it," rather than "see it" (164). Rakosi's poetry makes a similar demand of its readers. Author and reader enter the poetic process--they practice--together; the upshot? We "interpret" poetry in a new way. We think with and through the poem, rather than about it. We humanize it; the meaning of the poem is our experience of it.

Rakosi's poetry is both provocative and transformative. The oppositional rhythm of the poetry, the interactions of stylizations and thetic positions, and its dialogic momentum are simultaneously aesthetic and ethical; the poetry is socially viable, reaching out to and including its readers within its processual drive, and ultimately affecting the way we look at the world and other texts. The chain letter, the shaman's dance...

* * * * * * * * * *

"Yes" (CP 388), a parody of "The Red Wheelbarrow," carries a dialogic depth charge. "Yes"--the poem as the answer to a question. "Yes" to the question of influences--is Williams with us now? in what way? "Yes" to a question asked before the poem began, a question we didn't hear, one more response in the endless dialogue out of which the poem assembles itself and back into which it tumbles. The poem begins with the language of its precursor--"so much / depends // upon"--but makes it rock, rhythmically, off center: the first line is cut short and "upon" falls to the second stanza. Immediately, the poem begins to carnivalize the world view and state of mind imported with the language into the new context. This cutting up of the parodied poem's lines is at once an acknowledgement and a violation of its artifact-like status, a position which the imagery of the poem also calls into

question. In his rewriting of Williams, Rakosi takes him off the farm and into the board room:

So much
depends

upon the
instant

wrist
watch

on the
executive

a thyroid
pill

a clean
bowel

The rhythm of Rakosi's poem tangles with the phonic echo of Williams's poem in the reader's imagination, and for the cadence of the latter poem (which remains in our heads), we're left hanging.

"Yes" walks around Williams's poem, looking to the left and the right of the poem's focused attention, taking in the surroundings... we see the executive concerned with his bowels and the time of his next business meeting; we see him glancing at us across his estate with its symmetrical display of sculpture as he hurries to his limousine. He sums us up as we look through the high fence at his grounds, but Rakosi's clear eye takes him into account, too; takes

the measure of the whole situation and notes the scale of the artifacts in relation to it. Williams self-financed his writing, but only by working within the system that falls outside the margins of his poem (even though we might say that the larger, social/economic context is subtly there, in the wheelbarrow momentarily at rest, the poem's moment of vision is concerned with the formalization of the objects observed; its sympathies lie in the direction of the imaginative appropriation of the real). "Rain / water " in William's poem (already tuned to Western prosody, the poem depending for its effects as much upon its trochees and iambs, its craft, as the objects imaged), filtered through the poet's aestheticizing imagination/world view, glazes the observed (which, being temporarily out of use, is available to the poet's sensitizing gaze) and creates the artifact. By parodically turning Williams's poem on its head, Rakosi's poem also turns the wheelbarrow right-side up and shows it empty; Phonically, a similar gesture is enacted by "bowel," which assonantally and consonantally inverts "wheelbarrow," blowing its undulant accentuals through the alliterative ass of "Yes."

This is Olson through Joseph Riddel (Riddel speaking): "Methodos": the "cutting edge"; it "disrupts... the law that makes us follow the path, and returns us to the act of cutting the path." A writer must use the elements of poetry (for Olson, the syllable and line especially, but also the image) to reenact a moment of "original research" that cuts through the "history of accumulated texts" (356).

"Methodos"? "Yes." Rakosi's poem brings Williams's text, imagistically and rhythmically, into confrontation with contemporary social/economic reality. "Yes" to life. The clipped rhythms are in syncopation with the music of Williams's poem--the steady, measured pace of detached contemplation; the music of "Yes" is the rhythm of clock time and business. The interplay of long and short vowel sounds and of consonance and assonance in William's poem is parodied by the word sounds in Rakosi's poem: the sharp consonance of "instant // wrist watch... executive..pill"; the assonance blowing out of "bowel,"

carnivalizing the sustained vowel sounds of "The Red Wheelbarrow." "Yes" is an act of "original research" that not only cuts through William's text, but cuts it up. "Methodos" = "Document" (Olson's term): "The poem as 'document' throws together... old texts," Riddel theorizes, paraphrasing Olson in Human Universe, "mapping them, so as to 're-enact' their making"; these poems "do not absorb texts but take movement, a kind of spacing, from them. Documents decenter the lyrical voice.... But the poet's performance (method) also decenters documents" through the "juxtaposition of documents" within a poem or cross-textually (Riddel 357).

[chain letter response]

Keeping one eye to the subject/object, the poem, and another to what lies beyond it--the world of other objects, of other texts, and the human world, not only the world of social/economic realities, but the world of the spirit, the soul of man--this is the tension that ironizes not only the parodies but all Rakosi's poetry. In an interview, Rakosi recalls Robert Duncan's eyes: whenever Duncan spoke to him, one eye would fix him while the other wandered freely. Duncan, Rakosi claims, was able to keep the "mysticism" of his writing "within the realm of experience" (Hatlen, "Interview" 109). This sense of multiple awareness comes through in a pair of juxtaposed poems from "Eight Songs and Meditations (1971-1975)." Here, two separate, self-contained poems, "Meditation" and "Drinking Song" (CP 485, 486), placed back-to-back, enact a cross-textual dialogue. Imagistic "motion leaks" (Kenner's phrase) from one poem into the other (Kenner, in his discussion of Fenollosa's theories, is speaking of syntactic motion, but imagery and logos can behave in a similar way); just as "no sentence completes a thought" (Kenner 157), so, too, no poem is complete within itself, but is always in context--with other texts, with the world: Zukofsky: "A poem. Also the materials which are outside (?).... A poem. The context based on a world... The desire for inclusiveness" (Prepositions 15).

In Duncan's head, the eyes are separated by the shell of bone, but what they see is brought together somewhere in the back of the mind and a dialogic awareness grows; here, the book is the agent of fusion, of a Zen-like non-separation.

From "Meditation":

> Shake off temporal things then
> the way a bird shakes off the night dew.
> Dart like a swallow
> from the raging ocean
>
> of daily events
> and pursue the lord
> in the intimate company
> of souls flowing
> into His virtue.

and from "Drinking Song":

> Drink, my friend, and pass the beaker
> so I may unburden myself
> and if you see me going under
> revive me with your minstrelsy.

No longer simply juxtaposed, the poems transfuse each other. The self-contained spirit of contemplation is disrupted by the slapstick, earth-centeredness and comradeship of being human--"going under" rather then soaring up to "pursue the Lord," yet rising again (a rebirth? renewal?) on ribaldry, human fellowship and song; spiritual regeneration is the revival of

consciousness (literally) through the celebrative human voice. In "Meditation," the mind follows nature, but it also runs counter to nature, darts away from, or beyond it. Again I hear Olson: "Stay in the human universe," and the companion poem, "Song," drops us again there. Here and throughout the CP, the dialogue is not closed: there is not a reconciliation, but the continuous rhythm of the reader's altering perspectives as he moves within and between poems, reopening thetic moments to other thetic moments. Rakosi's poetry enacts not a static, but a processual truth that --Zukofsky again--keeps "time with existence."

I like Zukofsky's analogy of the bubble:

> One speaks of sincerity as of that ability necessary for existence if one is a writer. Naturally, the bubble does not know what a more actual body brushing past it may do to it, and in a minute it is not even a bubble ("Program: 'Objectivists'" 283)

An ideology, a framing view, a thetic stance, a language: we must live and perceive through them, while being aware of their frailness, their imminent dissolution and transmutation into what/by what they come up against. Or, put in terms of literary theory, there are no autotelic texts: "the 'autotelic' resolves all incongruities and limits the play of antitheses it opens up, in order to display its telic power" (Riddel 345). Images, in "Meditation" and "Drinking Song," set free from the block of print, interpenetrate in the reader's imagination as he holds them both in mind; we can actually see one poem through the other as we hold the page to light. Textual space becomes interactive space, dialogic space:

[chain letter response]

> The praxis of the moving image puts in question the idea of the unified or autotelic text, or the thought of poetic closure. It also resists the possibility of a text commanded by any one of its elements: a controlling theme, a privileged point of view, authorial intentionality, image cluster, or central symbol (Riddel 345).

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Rakosi does not want to sacrifice the sense of a "man saying something" for poetic structure. This is one of the essential features of his dialogic method; it helps keep the poetry open, moving--a lived experience--and prevents it from coagulating into an admired object. In "Fiddling A Round" (383), for example, Rakosi responds humanly, naturally, and with a sense of humor to his own imaginative creations. The title's word play brings two contexts together: a festive gathering--fiddling a round, as for a folk dance (not "violining"--one "plays upon" a violin in concert before an unruffled audience... now Stephane Grappelli--there's violining!) and game playing, idle activity, wasting time. The jovial interplay of the overlaid phrases (like layered transparencies in celluloid animation) and their entourage of social/cultural associations set the tone of the poem. In the form of a comic apostrophe to Rakosi's imagination--"Go, imagination, / doodle, / run amuck"--the poem traces a sideline, the "waste" that falls to the side of the poetic process, while the poet is self-consciously "fiddling / desperately for a theme" (the melodramatic "desperately" collides, in sound and connotation, with the light hearted "fiddling"--pure slapstick). Rather than presenting us the finished product, the poem he was "desperately" searching for, the speaker re-presents a moment in the process itself, but an off set--off-center--moment; something by-the-way that many of us would stuff into a folder and forget--the scraps and shavings of the "perfected" work. Allowing himself to digress from his purposeful search

for a meaningful theme, the speaker lets the digression displace the "real" poem he perhaps never made. He lets the imagination play itself out, follows it around (a round) to see what it can do--and perhaps this is more relevant than any "theme" he could have consciously hit upon. Thus, the poem on the page not only dialogizes the "serious" poem whose theme he perhaps never found (or found while not looking), but carnivalizes the process of making the serious poem. His positioning, here, has freed him from the thematic demands and formal requirements for constructing Poetry and has allowed him to dance familiarly with his own imagination--to respond humanly, unabashedly, uninhibited by prescriptive (i.e., previously scripted) aesthetic goals and values.

The poem is a collage of images spun off the word "fiddling." The poem's structure is a doodle, a parody of image making. Rakosi interrupts the collaging structure, however--itself a viable modernist technique--with evaluations of the images produced. The images, objectified, enter the poem as a quoted voice, an other, placing the speaker in a dialogic relationship with his own imagination. The poem's imagery rapidly, parodically somersaults through a number of literary positions: some specific stances include parodies of other poems ("'there's an existence of fiddles / perched like birds on a high / power line"'--think of Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird": "I was of three minds, / Like a tree / in which there are three blackbirds."), simple word play ("'a fortuity of fiddling"'), the use of nature imagery ("'isn't the grasshopper's fiddle akimbo?"'), melodramatic existentialism ("'awake to viols / but condemned to fiddle"'), whimsical scientizing ("'Einstein's infinite / fiddle"'), socially conscious historical allusiveness ("'The country fiddles / while the emotion burns..."'), and ethno-imagism ("'But where are the fiddles of Israel?"')--in short, the poem is a carnivalized catalogue not only of poetic maneuvers, but also of some of the themes the speaker might be "desperately" searching for--themes that, in other contexts, Rakosi takes seriously. In "Day Book," for example, Rakosi theorizes, with a straight face: "Where there is

utter seriousness in poetry, there is mass; and where the subject is the grave nature of the human condition, there is density" (P 32).

Rakosi applauds some of the imaginative gestures-"Bravo!"--comically criticizes others (on the grasshopper--"That could put me into stitches / if it had a thread"), mocks some in the manner of their own exaggerated import ("ah, the human condition!"), still others he converses familiarly with ("'the poor beggar doesn't have a fiddle / to his obvious.' // Who does?"), and another he salutes ("I'll drink to that"). In the poem's last three lines, the speaker turns against his own self-conscious poeticizing in an image that is at once solemn and comic: "And where are the scribblings / of yesteryear?" ("yesteryear" is just the right word--archaic, out of common usage); they are "fiddled away! fiddled away!" Affected by the poetic process his "doodling" initiated, he out-maneuvers his own counter-voice (the voice that has been responding, more or less lightheartedly, to the imagination's gestures, but which now displaces the quoted voice); in these last few lines, he twists the poem's movement counterclockwise, managing to image the "serious" theme he has found without looking.

In "Fiddling A Round," poetry and the poetic process become humanly available, a dialogue; lines literally respond to each other, enacting a dynamic series of exchanges between self and other (the other of language, of the imagination), and between a freely imaginative voice and an evaluative voice; Rakosi steps back from himself, his imaginative/creative self, and becomes the reader of his own writing, in order to clearly see and enact a closer relationship with the other in language. While the poem does not intend to be virtuoso fiddling, it can be delightfully heterogenous. It demystifies the poetic process: anyone can participate in its fundamental, experientially based rhythm of thrust and counter-thrust, assertion and response.

A reading at MOMA. Gary Snyder and Chinese poets. Anne Waldman is there; Armand Schwerner, Allen Ginsberg...many others. Armand introduces

me to Michael Heller who asks me to do a piece on Rakosi for the upcoming anthology Carl Rakosi: Man and Poet, which he is editing. I had heard Rakosi read some of his aphoristic pieces at a conference at LSU, but at the time wasn't impressed. At Michael's invitation, however, I begin to improvise around the poems, develop a makeshift theoretical framework within which the poems come out smelling like a (cut) rose?

At the seat of Rakosi's "methodos" is what Kristeva terms "drive irruption": an oppositional, disruptive psycho-sexual force that energizes the poems. This force is their life pulse, and it compels us to enter into their flux. One of the main catalysts of this oppositional energy, a subliminal barrier it repeatedly pounds against, is that overpowering precursor--perhaps even more overwhelming than Eliot and Stevens--Ezra Pound. The power of Pound is attested to not only by the obvious parodies--"Origin" and the "Americana" series (the latter a response, perhaps, to the "American Cantos")--but also by the persistence and amplitude of the drive itself. Rakosi's version of Pound's poetic stance and personality stands for everything the former despises; when questioned in interview about Pound's influence, Rakosi's immediate response is revulsion, tempered only by his praise of Pound's critical writing, which is "an absolute foundation stone of contemporary American writing"; but "in his own work," Rakosi asserts, "he's been disastrous as a model, totally disastrous to younger writers." Rakosi believes that the "epic tone" of The Cantos is pretentious and unfounded:

> What was this based on, after all? On man's experiences? Certainly not.... On his view of the nature of man? Ridiculous! In Pound's view he is a boob or a crook or something equally bad.... Why then an epic tone? Because of Pound's own personal need for supremacy, grandiosity.... It's not honest. He pretends that his material is epic when it is only a device to achieve grandiosity

> at the expense of the reader. All that pretense and double-dealing are nauseating to me. And irrelevant.... modern human nature is not epic. It's just human, and anything else is just playing games.

Furthermore, according to Rakosi, Pound is elitist and contemptuous of his readers, "all the boobs who don't understand his references." The voice of The Cantos, the "final image that comes through" is more a caricature than an actual human presence:

> a master of language and cadence, but the man who is speaking, the person, is preposterously grandiose. And a terrible example to others, who have a hard enough time keeping their own streak of grandiosity under control so as to be able to have an authentic encounter with a subject. ("'Objectivist' poet" 180-82)

We can read, in these comments, the flip side of Rakosi's own human and aesthetic values. Everything is there--deception, aloofness and detachment from humanity, idle game playing, grandiose posturing, art for art's sake, misrecognition of the actual human condition, and lack of respect for the object/other. Rakosi's negative reaction is an extreme, highly charged one, equal to the positivized power of the precursor. I say "positivized" and Rakosi's "version" because his reading of Pound is openly controversial, a reductive misprisioning that is nevertheless necessary and generative. Rakosi's disposal of the thetic in his poetry is also a demolition of his precursors.

(you)

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The silver ring: clean, geometric lines; stoneless; a step-back design, mounting in triangular terraces; nicked and tarnished--world wear; light, but with a real weight at the top. An object in the world, a simple, inanimate "thing," it has voices. Silver ore, hidden mines singing in the dark--mineral nonhuman and human other; the voice of a lover, giving, and another receiving. (Benjamin: "Not that they [things] come alive in him [the possessor]; it is he who lives in them") (67). The ring creates a space--or, rather, the words that are the ring, here, now, for us--open a space where human and nonhuman, known and unknown other meet. Memories. Her face--serious, anticipating, excited; the place: the dark wood table in a bar/cafe in Athens, Georgia; the sun bright in the window behind her, the burgundy quite still in the glasses as I loosen the string gathering the neck of the wine-dark cloth pouch into folds...

* * * * *

The king cake--Gateau des rois. Light, flaky, butter-rich pastry, lightly glazed, a plastic baby Jesus hidden in the marzipan filling. This cake bought at Croissant d'Or, New Orleans, Friday, June 23. The third one destined to be shared with my father and mother on a morning or evening in St. Louis. The first time, my father bit down on the plastic effigy; the second time, my mother found the doll. And now, taking the first slice of the third cake--it's there, I see it even before I eat.... Traditionally, the finder of the infant must host the next king cake party. The charm, discovered orally, is placed by hand in another cake, which becomes the center of another gathering. A carnivalized cycle of transference; a bodily dissemination of divinity through a series of

human festivals opened on Twelfth Night and closed on Mardi Gras, the drunken wilderness. Then Ash Wednesday. Long processions into abstinence; black crosses on foreheads; vomiting. The cycle of cakes--a space of festivity opened within the solemn progression of Catholic ritual; the Christian myth grounded, humanized. A space opened to the unknown, the unpredictable. As Bakhtin says, "the merry, abundant, and victorious bodily element" of medieval festivals were, like the verbal feasts of Rabelais' writing, a way of laughing at the "serious medieval world...with all its intimidating and intimidated ideology" (Rabelais 226). The image of Christ's body, buried in the sweet food of feast, discovered by the teeth and tongue--a nativity or resurrection; a carnivalization of the solemn rite of the Eucharist, of the transubstantiation. The priest holding the chalice and wafer up toward the elevated figure of suffering...I reach for a slice of cake...on the glazed surface, incised lines pinwheel out from the center, like sweet fireworks...where is the baby? Is he not in Bethlehem? Has he been lost (misplaced / displaced)? Oh, there he is....A game, but, like most carnivalizations of a reigning ideology or sacred theme, a jeux with a serious undertow. The cake cut up into an even or odd number of slices, like an edible roulette wheel; no one knows where the lips will press the divine figure--slice 1, 3, 6, 7, 8? even or odd? Christian numerology turned topsy-turvy. A game of chance. The stakes are laughable--a piece of cake, a party, a mock spreading of the "Word"--but psychologically, the effect is profound--the loosening of a hold, a freeing from the "serious" world of a controlling ideology (in the Middle Ages, on Paschal days, Bakhtin tells us, priests were allowed to tell ribald stories from the pulpit).

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As the process of Rakosi's poetry implies, to encounter the object (an object in the world, another poem, or another poet's poetics and world view) is to enter into a relationship with it, to alter it. An object, alone, out of

emotional/intuitive reach, has no integrity in Rakosi's objectivism.

> I mean to penetrate the particular
> the way an owl waits
> for a kangaroo rat
> (from "I Mean to Penetrate the Particular" CP 204)

To attend to the world is not to leave it intact, but to interpenetrate with it, transform it, the way the owl biologically transforms his prey. Rakosi responds instinctively to the world--exactly the opposite of his view of Pound's attention to reality--yet this is not the whole story. One of the marks of "sincerity" in a poem, as Zukofsky defines it, is a "preoccupation with the accuracy of detail" ("Program: 'Objectvists'" 280). The second and equally important half of the compound adverbial clause, which completes the answer to the predicate's implied question, "how do we 'penetrate the particular'?" constitutes the second stanza of the poem quoted above:

> and the photomicrograph
> beholds
> the hairy pappus
> of a dandelion.

There has to be a coupling of emotion/instinct and meticulous observation: "What is it in a person," Rakosi muses in interview,

> that doesn't let him be until he has transformed an experience, certain feelings and observations that are related to each other and suddenly strike him as important subject matter? ("'Objectivist' Poets" 183).

"What is it" that won't "let him be"? What primal longing to reunite self and other, to penetrate beneath the repressive order of the Symbolic? It's a need that leads to the objectification of language and image; a desire to speak/react to the other (not-self, world, language): "I'll drink to that"... "Aw Sheeit!" ("Fiddling A Round" and "The Review," 383 and 378). That's the key--the emotion, the desire, the gut response that must come first, the way the owl's waiting, warily but also hungrily, comes first in the poem. The basic need for nourishment that compels the bird of prey also compels the poet. The dandelion, a common plant of the world, must be seized before it can be observed or reconstrued through the "photomicrograph" of language to reveal its surprisingly intricate and lively structure. The penultimate stanza of "Shore Line" clearly lays out the order of things before plunging into a final eidetic mystery:

> This is the raw data.
> A mystery translates it
> into feeling and perception;
> then imagination; (227)

then language. We see the process at work in Rakosi's comments on Pound and all through his writing.

There is no passive reception. To perceive the world, to take the world in through the eye, mind, and heart is to change it, to humanize it, "recovering the aura," as Heller puts it, echoing Benjamin (39). Foucault: "What is essential is that thought... should be both knowledge and a modification of what it knows.... Whatever it touches it immediately causes to move" (327). And Barthes: "I intersect, I articulate, I release" (11). And what I release is no longer what it was. "My, how you've changed..."

And we arrive at a fundamental theory of quantum physics. As Heisenberg's uncertainty principle has demonstrated, the act of observation

alters the observed: "We cannot know... the present in all its details" (Heisenberg as quoted in Gribbin 157).[2] Gribbin sums it up simply--"we see what we want." There may be, then, several "alternative realities" that we don't see. The effect of Rakosi's writing is to make us aware of our reproductive relationship to reality. There is nothing natural or axiomatic in the relationship of language to reality, in a particular manner of rendering experience or in a poetic style; "is the mystery really out there or in my own nature?" queries Rakosi in "Day Book" (P 21). It is our belief in the rightness and appropriateness of our terms, in the inseparable bond between our seeing and saying that appears as the "will" in language, giving it the appearance of a hard, quartz-like, natural inevitability. Rakosi again in "Day Book":

> The indefatigable dreaming of absolutes is in the mainstream of human nature... and their form in poetry corresponds to what is already dimly a form in the poet's mind and nature.... No wonder a poem on a page looks independent and absolute. It is. (P 39)

Our belief is a product of both the medium through which we observe and

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[2] The experimental proof of this is complex. According to Gribbin

> Heisenberg...used the idea of observing an electron to prove his point. We can only see things by looking at them, which involves bouncing photons of light off them into our eyes....because an electron is so small we have to use electromagnetic energy with a short wavelength in order to see it (with the aid of experimental apparatus) at all. Such gamma radiation is very energetic, and any photon of gamma radiation that bounces off an electron and can be detected by our experimental apparatus will drastically change the position and momentum of the electron--if the electron is in an atom, the very act of observing it with a gamma ray microscope may knock it out of the atom altogether. (156-57)

articulate experience and the world views embodied in it. We speak ourselves and the world into being, so to speak. "What is given in experience and what renders experience possible"--that is, language--"correspond to one another in an endless oscillation" (Foucault 336).

[chain letter response]

Here, then, is the whole, troublesome stanza from "Shore Line," which couldn't have been clear to me until this moment:

> This is the raw data.
> A mystery translates it
> into feeling and perception;
> then imagination;
> finally the hard
> inevitable quartz
> figure of will
> and language.

The last phrase (phase) of the process is problematic. There is mystery, translation, feeling, and perception; then, rubbing up against these, the "hard / inevitable quartz / figure," the will of language: cast in a natural metaphor, yet artificial, intentional--a "figure of...." The problem is in the deceptive, unquestionable naturalness of the image and the language, and of what they say. It isn't "natural" at all. It's all produced--our figures of speech, our articulated thoughts--all of it. But what's to be done?

Rakosi is aware of the dilemma--of the necessity of experiencing in and through language, and yet of the probable though unquantifiable difference between language and the reality it traces:

> Why should the experience in a poem be secondary to the writing? It looks wrong.
>
> But if it were not, how could the act of writing be a full experience?
>
> Aye, there's the rub!
>
> ("Day Book," P 36)

And, in "Observations":

> The beauty of a tree is perceived before any idea of it occurs. Once it has, however, it seems as if the perception was the result of what is thought about it. (P 73)

But perhaps awareness is what we need most to have; it's awareness of the relationships among language, self, and reality that makes movement around and through language possible. It's this sort of awareness that the dialogized image in "Shore Line" (quoted above) makes possible. Rakosi's poetry does not "collapse wave fields" (Gribbin), but produces a pattern of interfering waves; the poems sustain a questioning, processual, experiential momentum that keeps our awareness of "alternate realities" open. Rakosi's poetry is the most subtle of sensors--grounded in reality, tuned to the imagination and spirit, uninhibitedly responsive to the other (human others, the world, other texts; the not-self--non-ego self--within the self), his poetry dilates on waves of probability.

In "Objectivist Lamp" (CP 380), a single image generates a complex pattern of interfering waves. All energy is conveyed through particles--a basic tenet of quantum mechanics. In modern and postmodern poetic theory, too (a la Pound, the Objectivists, Olson, Kenner, Riddel, and Altieri, among others) words pass energy through themselves on to the reader. Olson: "the sentence as first act of nature, as lightning, as passage of force from subject to object,

quick... from me to you, the VERB, between two nouns" ("Projective Verse" 153). The poem as transformer. Riddel, interpreting Pound's theory of the Vortex: Nature is "a field of irreducible energies, of conflicting forces," but poems themselves, their "images are not natural.... They present their own play of energies" (344). To make poetry an energetic construct that translates nature's energy into language, we must build from "the smallest particle of all, the syllable," up:

> every element in an open poem (the syllable, the line, as well as the image, the sound, the sense) must be taken up as participants in the kinetic of the poem, just as solidly as we are accustomed to take what we call the objects of reality (Olson, "Projective Verse" 149, 152).

The poem is a dynamic construct, its energies generated by the "relationship between words"; I like Buckminster Fuller's compressed definition--forms are "energy events" (Kenner 168, 161). The poem is a presentation, a performance (the medium is the "mode of presentation," as Henry Sayre says [170]), rather than an elaboration of theme: George Oppen: "I do believe in a form in which there is a sense... of the relation of the speed, of alterations and momentum of the poem.... The meaning of a poem is in the cadences and the shape of the lines and the pulse of the thought which is given by those lines" ("Objectivist' Poets" 167). In "Objectivist Lamp," what the language denies creates the negatively charged field that keeps the poem spinning:

goddess,
ivory carved
Japanese
lady,
hands crossed

over breast,
holding
on her head
electric bulbs
and batik
lamp shade.

Each word and phrase of the poem has a solidness, an integrity; each stands out on its own without interference, claiming its own space on the page. Imagistically, though, the poem begins to twist against its nominative self-presence as soon as we realize that a would-be precious art object is really a kitsch mockery of exotic fetishism. The reader's imagination brings another image of artifact-idolizing into play here, too: the rhetorically inflated description of a cameo dangling from a woman's neck in "Amulet" (256)--"You are ideal / o figurette / and cool as camphor." ("Cool" both literally and as a sign of its abstractness, its non-humanness; It's the lady's throat that is sacred in the poem, not the object: "Bless the white throat.")

In "Objectivist Lamp," the torsion begins in the third line, when we drop from a "goddess" (small "g") to a "Japanese / lady" (upper case "J" for an adjective designating a country, a people). From here on, we're on ambivalent ground. In the fifth line, the poem twists in yet another direction, gaining an inward torque that challenges the sense of aesthetic absoluteness Rakosi distrusts. Beneath the crossed hands, within the hollow breast where we leave the stated imagery behind--for a moment we are free falling, on our own--there is no human pulse, but a force moving at incredible speed... then Rakosi is there with us. The ninth line hints his awareness--"electric": undetected from the serene, solid-seeming surface, streaming electrons. Though the poem's imagery tries to hold us on the surface, it also allows itself to be shattered; the reader's imaginative awareness and sensitivity to the indirection of certain words and details that turn against themselves enable her/him to penetrate to

the heart of the poem--the human heart displaced by the flow of electricity. It is this ghosted reality that interferes with the surface of the poem; destabilizes the secure look and feel of language and image, the confident and careful spacing; problematizes the poem's imagist stance... and now, as the poem spins within us, our human pulse beating through the steady flow of electrons, we see the spacing from an altered perspective.

Though I've seen--and even owned--
such kitsch, I can't lay my hands
on this textualized, image/thought
version; this is the "object,"
unpossessed, traveling through us.
That which I find myself
contemplating.

Gribbin often refers to the "strangeness" of the world of quantum physics, where we can't be sure that what we're seeing is not other than what we're seeing; this is also the strangeness of the dialogic world of Rakosi's poetry, where as soon as we see something one way, it turns, like an Escher print, into something else. "Yes," the spatial arrangement of the poem on the page seems to give each word an independent, almost fetishistic quality, but it also breaks up the image, atomizes it. What happens in all those white spaces? what leaks through? what is there to see where there is nothing to see? Can this be a stable object that mocks itself and whose laughter the poem echoes, fragmenting it down the page, occurring itself syntactically as a fragment, the laughter reverberating through the poem's bones? Can the poem be a stable object? Beneath the image's surface pastiche of high modernist mytho/orientalism, energy rushes at the speed of lightning. The surface texture of the language and its thetic position resist the flow of actual energy conveyed beneath the semblance it describes; they masque solidity and

tangibility. But by passing through the poem at certain points--certain words, certain images, its blank spaces--we touch the energy coursing anonymously through the hollow core of the object it holds in view, an energy we convey back, breaking through the shell of poetic representation; by reading the poem aloud, we reintegrate it into human biology. The "hands crossed" is also the crossing of the seen and unseen, or the "thought" and "unthought" (Foucault's terms). The printed words themselves, however, and the visible solidity of image, would deny this interference, this disruptive energy conveyed by the unnamed, the unseen--the hidden metal wire, the reader in the poem. This is the tension of the poem: the ghosted reality, the alternative reality, the "probability waves" vs. the seen and tangible reality, wave fields collapsing around the object the language holds in focus (or, the object re-presented in the field of language). The poem is a resistance, a "knot," as Kenner describes it, referring to Buckminster Fuller's depiction of interlacing energy paths, a "self-interfering" pattern that inhibits the infinite expansion of energy at the speed of light (153). But as a knot, it defines itself through self-defiance. "Objectivist Lamp" is a carnivalization at the heart of Objectivism, especially of Zukofsky's notion of "rested totality"--a flawless, perfectly balanced and resolved structure of forces suspended in the ongoing dynamic of mind and nature.

What we don't see. Billions of photons, 1,000 per cubic centimeter bombarding the eye each second. But we can imagine it. And though we may only know the world as transformed through our interactions with it, imagination and spirit can detect the otherness in every recognition; the unthought, the hidden impacting its mystery into every known quantity. And so the poem verging on human disintegration and abstraction, and the quantum reality that is not us, pass through us and become humanized.

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"The Status Quo, 1925" (CP 279) is an early poem with a clean, dialogic torque that later poems, such as "Manhattan, 1975" (placed back-to-back with "Status Quo" in the CP) develop more ambitiously. The vehicle of this earlier poem's opening, organic metaphor evokes a free-floating, lyric sentiment completely out of touch with its tenor:

> It is good to be here.
> This city is a shell forced open
> and the foreign matter
> shining sea-forced pearl.

The closing lines of the poem deconstruct its opening voice and positionality through a non-metaphoric naming of the "owners," the actual controllers of the forces of production that create the manufactured object; the anapestic monotony and static, end stopped lines dull the iambic lilt of the poem's opening music:

> for the city belongs to its creditors,
> chairmen of boards dining at the Club,
> the city belongs to its newspapers
> and its lawyers.

As in the opening section of "The City (1925)" (CP 273), the speech force of the initial metaphor is temporarily lost in the middle stanza of the three stanza poem--a nominal, static list of the ingredients (raw materials and manufactured objects) that make up the city:

> Out of sand and petroleum oil,
> domestic sulphite, Old Paper,
> Newsroll Contract, short wool,

kip, Ohio & Pa. fleeces,
fine up-river rubber,
tank plates, wire nails,
China wood oil, mason's lime,
pine roofers, spruce lath

In contrast to the tidal shift of the poem's fourth line, the spacing here is rigidly left justified, thick and columnar. Any inter/cross-linear momentum achieved through assonance and consonance--"out of sand... petroleum oil / domestic sulphite," "Contract, short wool," "Old Paper... Ohio & Pa," etc.--is stunned, like a line of falling cattle, by the numerous caesuras and end stops. Words standing alone, unshaped by a human voice,[3] like objects laid indifferently out, lack cohesive power; they do not make into anything.

Yet making things out of other things and the separation of self from its activities, its work in the world, are central dilemmas in the poem. A Marxian voice in the first line of the middle stanza--"But the people who made this city"--is subsumed by the naming of the materials of production; the city's producers, the labor force, is displaced by its tasks, while the owners of the means of production are cut off from the actual processes of production. In a mass-production context, the worker may have little interest in how he actually does what he does, or in what happens to the product after it (or that portion of its production he is responsible for) leaves his hands, not only because he often has little say in how it is produced, but also because he is assigned a specific task in an overall process that is, essentially, alien to him; the factory owner or CEO, on the other hand, may have little intimate experience of the labor situation and the human components of the process of

[3] The list device evokes the generalized "voice" of an ancient and ongoing technique, confined to no particular period or genre, though circumscribed within an ideology of representation.

production. The result, in both cases, could be detachment of the self from its own functions; desensitized alienation.

[chain letter response]

Like the yielding of rhetorical flow and control--the sense of a voice saying something--in stanza one to the monotonous, dehumanized, assembly-line rhythm of its middle section, the poem's structure also reenacts a poetic self-divisionism; the poem seems to distrust itself as a poem, to be aware of its status as a manufactured object. The poem is composed of two sentences. The opening metaphor is set apart in its own stanza/sentence (happily for it). The second sentence, linking up the imagery of the next two stanzas, conflicts rhetorically and imagistically with the first. The static, dry listing of materials in stanza two stifles the fluid image of the first stanza. Water, in the second stanza, we can imagine, has practical rather than poetic value--mixed with lime to make cement and used to transport goods, not to cast poetic figures. At the beginning of the third stanza, however, the sentence recovers the human-voiced force of the opening lines, but only to undercut its renewed momentum--or resolve it into funereal solemnness--with what is imaged:

> the people who made it all,
> weep, rising from their base
> like a single stone figure
> with head bowed

A human, imaginatively active, poeticizing voice is restored to the language; objects are drawn together, charged with feeling, but only to deliver us, as the lines cut back toward the solid margin, into an image of petrified humanity (weeping, but the tear must be frozen in stone). The makers--laborers--are made into a stereotypical image of suffering humanity, just as nature, the "raw

data," is made into a metaphor in the opening stanza. The image of the workers, sculpted and confined into a manageable figure, dialogizes high art allusionism--superhuman Renaissance sculptures of heroic, individualistic man ("people today are not heroic")--and exposes the productiveness of art and image making, including the "understanding" of the city from a particular public view, or exhibit, of it (for example, via the newspapers to whom the city belongs).

The image also refocuses us away from the object--the statue imaged, its own status as image--and on to the broader, social-aesthetic context, in which the owners of the art work are only superficially other than those imaged in it. The sculpted vision, tailored to this audience of owners, is "democratic," but romanticized, "weeping and "rising" in an undifferentiated--essentially uncomprehended--mass. The owners of the city, the sponsors of art are, then, deeply embedded in the image though they are not described by it: it is their vision, reflected back to them, their distance from the depicted human condition that gives the image its stereotypical feel. They determine the image in another way, also: they are the force that has bowed the city's head--suppressed the sources of its vitality, its people. And this is where the image becomes problematic: though verging on a cliche (is this a result of Rakosi's close involvement with Marxist ideology early in his career, the polemic getting the better of the poem, or an intentional, parodic reinscription of the other's world view?), the oppression and self-division it figures are very real. The image articulates a struggle between ideals and realities. On the one hand, we are encouraged to "rise up," to struggle beyond our means (buy on credit?), and on the other hand, weighed down by practicalities (the Marxian-tinted social realism contrasts sharply with Whitman's exuberant evocations of democracy). Formally, this rigidly delimited image of man's social function, in which his life feels heavy--its circumstances absolute, its scope confined, as if bounded by stone walls, and its desires endlessly deferred--presses against the openness, vitality, and transformativeness imaged at the poem's beginning.

[chain letter response]

Like the "ivory carved" lamp in "Objectivist Lamp," the "stone figure" in "Status Quo" seems inherently self-contradictory and inconsistent (or is it just made to seem that way?), simultaneously realistic and unrealistic. Yet the inconsistencies it inscribes, and the confusion we experience in reading through (and into) it--in "seeing with it... rather than seeing it"--are a reenactment of valid social problems (including class struggles). And there's the "rub." Its self-deluding effect is its realness and (with a syntactic transposition and a substitution) its realness is a self-deluding effect.

Artistic production is the central concern of a passage from "Day Book" (P 14-15). According to Edward Said, criticism is both an experience and a reopening of the text, of the processes that the finished product closes over. The critic/reader cuts through the "textuality of texts" by rediscovering and revoicing "those voices dominated, displaced, or silenced" by the ideological appropriation of texts--i.e. their institutionalization. By reopening the text, the reader/critic initiates a new set of operations for the evaluation of art; by reprocessing (and reprocessualizing) the text, he creates the "processes of the present" through which a work may be re-known and relived (188). In a self-reflexive passage in "Day Book," Rakosi subjects his own poetry to "further textualization" by citing it within a discursive prose format; he leads the reader between, behind, and to either side of the lines of a particular poem to view the processes of its production; he recontextualizes the poem within the body of its sources and motivations. Rakosi's reopening of his own work challenges an aesthetic ideology that separates product from process, poetry from prose, art as artifact from the personal, social, and worldly circumstances of its creation. Rakosi's reprocessing and repositioning of the poem makes us see the poem not as an independent, self-sufficient art object, but as a freshet springing from the ongoing flux of a life whose needs, desires, and conflicts feed it, though often masked by the poem itself.

Our initial impression of the poem which opens the passage is its imagistic simplicity and apparently unself-conscious, if not ingenuous, insight into nature's persistence and power of renewal. The poetic moment is sparked by an interaction between man and nature--a simple, ordinary event that becomes epiphanous without being left behind (as it is in "Meditation")--and the language of its presentation seems to preserve the naturalness of the encounter and the instinctiveness of the response:

"How quickly the dandelions
come up
after a rain.

I picked them
all
only yesterday."

The poem also expresses faith in the "is-ness," or "thusness" of nature ("nyorai" in Japanese--a name for Buddha). Though the speaker can alter or act upon it, it will always do what it does, follow its own laws as it has before this particular observer came onto the scene and will continue to do long after he departs. Hence nature comes to symbolize a belief in history, in continuity, and in an underlying stability and productive (and reproductive) order. And what does this say about language? (Since this is a "poem," we may always ask that question.) Perhaps that the field of language, too, will never be exhausted so long as it stays in contact with the world.

But Rakosi quotes himself. We are made aware of the outside of the poem even as we lose ourselves within it. The poem is an element (in Olson's sense) in a larger discourse. The quotes make us hear another voice, a surrounding aura, a voice holding the poem like a leaf in the wind. The poem has been objectified. And what will be done with it? Will it be explained,

criticized, carnivalized, contextualized, autobiographically centered? Is Rakosi going to discuss the process of composition? We suspect it will be dialogized in some way, but we don't know just how. Why the quotes? We are unsure, perhaps suspicious... and Rakosi is already achieving his effect; as soon as we take note of the quotes, we are no longer under the poem's spell, where the previous paragraph's prose held us. Rakosi continues his move away from mystification. In an unlyrical, matter-of-fact voice, he immediately grounds the poem in its literal circumstances: "These dandelions came from my front lawn." What follows is a three paragraph narrative of the poem's production, with its own, built-in dramatic curve.

The body of the poem seems to have been composed rather quickly; the process can be described in a single sentence: "I stood in disbelief, staring at them [the dandelions] dully and saying to myself the ordinary home-owner words of the poem." (What? no rewriting, no struggles, no desperate searches for a theme? Certainly not what we would expect for such a sublime and precious object as the Poem. "Dully" staring? Are the aesthetic values I recovered a few paragraphs ago dull? "hmm."[4]) But now what? The actual composition of the words, which would seem to be the main thing, has already been dispensed with, while the narrative has only just begun. The remainder of the passage traces the process of attributing significance to the poem. The language of the poem is "ordinary," the words of "no interest in themselves"; the small gathering of words becomes a poem only in the light of certain values. This is the process explored in the passage--the quest for value; the poem quotes ideology, a set of beliefs. One of which is the realization of the commonness of the human situation the poem describes, "something fundamental and permanent," an experience that is repeated by all men through all time. This thought gives the poem "an enhanced significance

[4] "The Poem" (*CP* 185): "comes in / like an ocean / low / into my head // and goes out / as a small model / into the world, / smelling / like a rose, / hmm?"

which began to excite me. It began to feel like a poem. I hung on." And the ethical/existential drama continues.

[chain letter response]

If we listen to the language, we begin to hear other influences, the authorizing voices of other poets, other texts; authorial identity becomes ambivalent, and ownership of the text (the bounded landscape of identity, if not real estate) is called into question:

> The next thing I remember was the realization that this was exactly the kind of thing Williams would have noticed and reported. This made the experience possibly interesting enough for a poem, and I already had the only title it could possibly have, "A Reminder of William Carlos Williams."

Yet, "there was not enough there."

He has contacted the voice of experience--a voice in the very structure of the language, a faith in the naturalness of linguistic sequentiality, in the way words are put together in logical syntactical arrangements to clearly present what must be an equally inevitable and fundamental truth about the world; he has acknowledged the voice of a precursor, a voice in the direct, unpretentious style of the language, a voice unafraid to state a simple sentiment in a few words (and resonating in that voice are still other voices--haiku, the work of Fenollosa, Pound's imagism, Whitman's prose--waves of voices, all merging and transforming, passing through each other in perhaps indecipherable ways at this depth). But Rakosi isn't satisfied; another presence must make itself felt, its voice heard.

"I hung on. Time dragged. It began to look as if there was no way to

connect with what was missing. But my subconscious" (and there, quietly present, is one of the loudest voices of the twentieth century--Freud and psychoanalysis; yet this is not what he is looking for, and he continues:) "which had been guiding me, would not let go and traced the final connection" (enter the voice of science, of investigation and inquiry--uniting with the "subconscious," tracing connections; yet this is not it either). Like the owl, consciousness waits, and discovers its prey:

> it was that this way of looking at things had become an American mode. And so I called it an Americana. With that the poem looked as if it had range and a solid base.

And so he arrives at the metavoice which brings all the other voices together--the voices of nature and experience, of the precursor, of psychoanalysis, and of science--gives them a wholeness and purpose, a telos, their final value: the social voice (the Human) makes itself heard. The title for a whole series suggests itself, and he has it: the image of a country, the voice of a people, a point of view, a mind set. The poem is the quote of a world view.

Foucault comments that in the altering world view at the close of the Classical age and the dawn of the modern period (the nineteenth century), the attitude toward language changed; no longer merely a form of representation (or, as he puts it, a means of "representing representation"--listing, as in "The City (1925)," is perhaps the simplest expression of this attitude), it "forms the locus of tradition, of the unspoken habits of thought, of what lies hidden in a people's mind" (297). "A Reminder of William Carlos Williams"'s way of looking is the way a people really look, an "American mode." It sees according to us. A whole people looks with Rakosi in the moment he stands, unalone, staring at his garden. Heller: The Objectivist poem is an "arena for discourse and participation" (103). The poem is a confluence of "internally persuasive" (Bakhtin's phrase) voices and world views, rather than an influx of cross

currents (though the conflicts are buzzing around the page; remember Rakosi's take on Pound). But by being embedded in a prose discourse, the poem becomes aware of itself as poetry in a way that a poem like "Domination of Wallace Stevens" (also a product of internally persuasive voices) is not. The poem is not a static, self-sufficient object, an object on its own, a fine sentiment between the covers of a book. It is an object in use. In us, as we are in it. The poem is "Ourselves writing" (Barthes). All of us are the producers.

Now it all ties in. The regeneration; the optimistic spirit of the people, rising again and again despite the circumstances and events that bow their heads (We hear Whitman again, the Whitman that couldn't get through the "Status Quo"; we hear him not as a counter melody but in the poem's major chord); the poet standing before the world--the "ordinary" world, that closest to him--attempting to perceive clearly, "without affectation" (Rakosi, "Objectivist' Poets" 188), as if he were present at the "fission of being" (Merleau-Ponty 186) and could desire nothing more than "just to record the fact"--no elaborate conceits or highly tuned figures of speech, just sheer real "joy in the fact that one confronts a thing so large, that one is part of it" (Oppen, "Objectivist" Poets" 172); the "ordinary home-owner words of the poem." All of it.

And this is the real value of the passage, of both the prose and the poem buoyed on the prose; this is its "aura," its feel of human use and presence. The prose is demonstrative; it shows us how the poem's underlying ideologies are actualized in real, perceptual contexts, and how the ideologies are both the fulcrum of the process of the poem's production and embedded in its own language (the voices of both science and the unconscious can be sensed in the "finished" poem/product's groundwork of experience and observation and in the breath of intuition that sweeps over the facts, slips through explanations, eludes exegesis, and enlivens the poem). As Zukofsky says, the poem is also "a desire" to be "one with, a context" (Prepositions 15).

In the passage's final moment, they all come together, all the voices, and

blow the poem apart. Not so dull, after all.

In her discussion of Dickinson's rebellious poetics, Susan Howe theorizes that "a lyric poet reads a past that is a huge imagination of one form." If one of the drives behind Dickinson's poetry is "her soul's deepest necessity to flee such forced sterility" (106)--a hermeneutics that would flatten her poetry out in the presses of prescriptive form--then it is the same impulse we feel pushing up through Rakosi's poetry--an urge much older than the language that conveys it. Like Dickinson, Rakosi wants to "[break] apart dead mental linkages, and allow new such linkages to form" (Hatlen, "Carl Rakosi" 131); he fears that we may become lost to ourselves and the world, and the world to us, if, like the governess in James's Turn of the Screw, we continue to walk in a "world of [our] invention" (44). To get us out from under the spell of style, to denaturalize the "lyric" voice, to detoxify the reader is the objective of "Manhattan, 1975" (CP 280-85). The poem is a lively example of Rakosi's "methodos"--and the jouissance it produces--in action.

In the first half of the poem, the speaker dabbles, dilettante-like, in various lyric styles, including Shakespearean romantic comedy, Medieval pastourelle, and the aubade; he concludes with a story-telling style--a burlesque narrative involving a parrot named Gus, a street hustler, and a spectator--followed by the public, speech-making voice of a South Carolina senator's quoted quip. Rakosi the parodist's voice often pokes through from behind the curtain to mock or otherwise comment on the poetic intertextualizing. Sometimes he speaks through the voice he's parodying, sometimes through a separate voice. By objectifying the various poetic styles and treating them as staged events, he shatters the lyric mirror, or at least exposes its frame. The rhythm is a relentless putting "in process/on trial" (Kristeva's phrase) of poetic positionality. Rakosi's carnivalization of the lyric in "Manhattan, 1975" re-sounds the outburst of laughter Foucault experienced on reading a passage of Borges (though the resonance of Rakosi's poem may not register as high on the Richter scale as that which Foucault attributes to

Borges's work): a "laughter that shattered... all the familiar landmarks of my thought--our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography" (xv) (considered in the context of Rakosi's poem, for "our age" I would substitute "our literary tradition").

Puck the spell caster (who is introduced a few lines later) brings in the first act. In the opening lines we can hear Rakosi's laughter through the arras of rhetoric as he burlesques classical allusion/illusion making:

> If you have a hymen,
>
> it will not be for long,
>
> for the first day
>
> of summer is here (CP 280)

The tendency of lyric to idealize and generalize is parodied three lines later in a revoicing of the Aubade: "suddenly here and there / small white buds / of an obscure genus spring up." The taxonomic phrase cracks the lyric shell and out pops the orchestrator, Puck--"up bounds Puck, / my spirit". The "spirit" is described as both "uncontained" and confined "within its chest-walls / (a paradox)." The mock-speculation on the nature of the soul/spirit and the speaker's parenthetical commentary digress from the opening movement of the poem--a comically ingenuous, non-intellectual appreciation of the earth, rebirth, and sensuality (though thinking about oneself--the state of one's romantic or sex life--in relation to nature is common in Medieval lyrics). But the speaker returns to the opening stance in the next, banally stylized, pseudo-mythological image, as Puck

> ... sends out a valentine
>
> of air
>
> showing an arrow
>
> transfixing a heart.

Rakosi further carnivalizes the fin de siecle valentine in the next four lines:

> and under it,
>
> Ne Plus Ultra,
>
> signed Dodo.
>
> P.S. Nuts to reason.

Latinate diction was common in high style *amour courtois* of the Middle Ages; the Latin phrase here is desanctified and dismantled, but also renewed, by its context--a kitsch valentine, which it is inscribed beneath. Phonically and graphemically, the phrase is deconstructed by the transmigration and distortion of the "U"--a long sound in "Plus" (in the Latin pronunciation), long and capital in "Ultra," stunted and knocked about by consonants in "Nuts"--and this is what it comes to, a slang dismissal. The revoicing of a language detached from contemporary human thought and experience, a "dead" language--"not a man talking" (Rakosi, "'Objectivist' Poets" 185)--is framed, so to speak, by the crepe paper (or something equally light weight, in terms of its emotional appeal) valentine. The kitsch valentine is the burlesque stand-in for a highly refined, high-brow Classicism. Finally, the sound and rhythm of the signature--"Dodo"--spills over to "Dada," evoking the postscript that signals an awareness of the irrational processes at work in the poem's development by the end of its first movement, and in America and Europe toward the close of the first act of the twentieth century.

This first movement of the poem--a single long sentence, ending with "Dodo," and followed up by the preemptory postscript--nets in a number of voices and stylistic devices: the voice of science (taxonomy); the techniques of visual-art allusionism and an Eliot-like collaging of voices (the last three lines quoted); stylistic parodies of the Medieval, high style lyric and of Shakespearean romantic comedy; metaphysical meditations on the condition of the soul; and decorative versifying. The first sentence, however, does not so

much mar the lyric in its various manifestations as transform it, break it open and make it viable in the present--give it a presence of mind--by objectifying it, putting it "in process/on trial," rather than taking its music and world view(s) for granted. Our experience of Rakosi's poem is an experience of recovery, of reprocessing formalized or out-moded poetic styles and devices to make them approachable and humanly usable--a sort of eco-poetry that doesn't permanently dispose of past forms, but recycles them. As we shall see more clearly in succeeding images, Rakosi puts book-stiffened lyric modes back into circulation by recontextualizing them within a contemporary social reality (whose voice can already be heard in the first two lines of the poem), where they may sink or swim.

[chain letter response]

Scientific, sobering language, which makes us aware of the gentle spell of lyric, is also deployed in the opening image of the poem's second sentence:

> Who's that in the light
> cotton dress,
> leaning out of her window,
> smiling
> as if she had heard
> the earth
> in one silly
> piercing note of bliss
> somewhere
> in the high frequency
> range
> of a dog whistle

As in the first sentence, syntax is deployed against itself, to clash with its opening stance. Rhetorically, in less disturbed poetry, we might expect the "as if" to introduce a simile in keeping with the mood of the initial rendering of experience. Here, however, the torsion of language and imagery turn the prosodic device topsy-turvy; the scientific reality imaged embarrasses the rhetorical posturing of its figuration, a self-consciousness that feeds back on the initial image as well. What may at first have seemed like a more or less natural, though somehow poetic envisioning (and revisioning) of a literal scene--a woman looking out her window--now appears for what it "really" is: romanticized image making, a metaphor or quote, so to speak, for poetic theatricality (parodically reinscribing the balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet). Visually, the lines split and shift, as if they were inscribed over a fault; the dog whistle and its inaudible note become, as we speak them, the audible signs of the tremor, a pressure graphed, also, by the arrangement of words on page space, though the opening image would prefer not to register it. The quake is far-reaching, a shift in language tracing an upheaval in poetic perspectives.

A few lines later, the speaker switches voices (and devices) again, laminating the scene with biblical allusions:

> Playful she looked
>
> and waited
>
> for her unknown
>
> lover
>
> to lead him
>
> through the eye
>
> of a needle

The speaker's language, sensing through the eye of the figure, is parenthetically inspired to inflated rhetorical places (like airy valentines), where it discovers the next allusion and closes the sentence on a digression:

(O be secret,
and protect us
in the voice
of Ruth
"Whither thou goest,
I will go").

The quote leads us simultaneously back into the scene--the woman waiting to possibly elope with her tardy lover (Romeo would never be so lax)--and out of the poetic moment into the process of constructing it. The imagery follows its own self-generating path, and the voice keeps pace--"'Wither thou goest, / I will go'." "Il migliore fabricatore" speaks through his own fabrication, alerting us to its pretentiousness. The speaker then drops all masks and comments directly on the overburdened sentence: "All this in a smile." A simple, five word sentence that, like the postscript slitting open the poem's first sentence, rhythmically, rhetorically, and semantically undercuts all the fabricating that has preceded it.

We may wonder, at this point, what all this has to do with Manhattan. And that's the point--it doesn't; or, the language and imagery have spun so far away from the reality on which they are based that it is almost beyond recovery. Perhaps it all strays, like the errant lover, from some genuine impressions of spring in the city--animal life stirring in the parks, leaves budding on the trees, a woman forcing open her apartment window for the first time in months and chancing a sniff, etc.--but, except for the dog whistle--our inaudible link to the absent, underlying experience--the finished product (i.e., the poem to this point) is foreign to what our own experience tells us spring in the city is like. "It looks wrong."

[chain letter response]

But Rakosi intercepts our thoughts. He comments on the out-of-touch effect of the poem so far in the voice of the out-of-touch style: "Whichever / it comes not / down to earth," the speaker criticizes, responding to our own deliberations as well as the apparent lack of necessity behind the poem's imagery.

(you)

Though in the next sentence the speaker grounds us in city imagery--"in short sleeves, / collars open, / like in the old days"--as the language suggests, he is still not free of influences; while remaining in the poem, in the world of language, we will always, to some extent, be in a textualized city: "I among them / (impossible to keep Whitman out of this)," the speaker acknowledges several lines later. This third movement of the poem, headed up by a reclamation of a Medieval spring song--"Yay, sumer is i-cumin in, / lhude sing city"--proceeds as a collage of quotes, stylized utterances, and Whitmanesque apostrophes. The high flying lyric voice--"Great anonymous city... I pass into you, / progenitor"--is check-marked (and held in check) by "sincere" description commencing the poem's fourth movement (the second half of the poem):

At the old Armory wall
on 14th street
a circle of open space
on the sidewalk.

And so we come "down to earth."

In the second half of the poem, Rakosi drops the multi-voiced mode for a more

or less single-voiced, elliptically eidetic, narrative meditation centered around a street hustler and his fortune-telling parrot (the description of the scene is followed by a punch line, the sort of burlesque bit that might be told between skits at a YMHA cake and coffee performance on a Sunday evening--too late for Stevens). But before slipping into this mode, he brings the third, rather obscure movement--which meshes vaguely bio-sexual-erotic, autobiographical, and urban imagery--to a close by collaging in a woman's voice, which asks: "'What language does he speak?'" Our question, too, at this point. Surfacing mysteriously here, the quote is an important player in the game. It not only stands in for a reader response, but throws the preceding rhetorical shiftiness and stylized banter into relief, drawing us out of the cloud of language and preparing us for the drop to street level that initiates the poem's fourth movement; the quote puts us in the appropriate state of mind for the shift in tone and technique that follows. The quote does not so much bridge the two halves of the poem as interrupt and recollect the process up to that point before moving on, like one of those white plastic bars we slap down on the rubber belt at the check-out counter; it alerts the checker to stop the thing rolling after she rings up all the frozen gourmet dinners granola and natural ice cream and gets to the beer pizza and dog food. We know we're dealing with different types of products, and that there has been something added to them--even if only a style of packaging--no matter how "natural" they are, and we can sense the differences in the linguistic items, but the line emphasizes or underlines the facts of the situation, brings them clearly to our attention.

(you)

[chain letter response]

(The line is also the reader's bar. We're sitting on one side while on the other, the poet gives us the usual, except that this time he plays with the proportions or drops in an olive or red herring or something else that doesn't belong there and suddenly "Hey, what is this stuff, anyway?," so now we're aware again of what we're drinking and maybe we order something else next time.)

The line works in still another way to expose the manipulative, pretentious game-playing of the high-modernist poetry production workshop, and in so doing, deconstructs even its own impressively complex aesthetic function (at least I've tried, through my own critical game playing, to make it seem impressive).

"'What language does he speak?'" The question resonates back through the poem (and also--though this is what we don't yet see, what's being hidden--looks ahead. But without knowing the source of the quote, popping up out of context as it does, we are encouraged to run with it... "'Whither thou goest...'"). "Yes," what language does the speaker speak? Through all the masks and voices, what is the "real" voice (since there undoubtedly must be one), the one we are to trust? All this is so unfamiliar, unnatural. How fortuitous for the poet to happen on such a rich, suggestive quote at this point in the poem, a comment that second-guesses our actual reading experience. But we soon discover how self-conscious its placement is. What we overlook--what I, wearing my critic's hat, have not wanted to look for beneath all my structural analysis--is the actual source of the quote, which has been withheld. It's as if speaker and reader have had their heads in aesthetic (anaesthetic?) clouds and suddenly heard this voice... a sublime voice rising out of the unconscious, from the well spring of all this "stream of conscious" collaging? No! We are fooled. It is not a disembodied voice, but a voice from the body of what we've been neglecting--the experience of the city itself.

In Rakosi's description of the street scene, both parrot and hustler are cast from the same mold of melodramatized Brechtian social realism: the

parrot's eyes

so self-possessed
and indifferent

.....

... looked wise
in the light
but from the sinister side,
cynical

and

The Hustler
cast in sandstone,
lips straight,
a graven line,
countenance anonymous.
That hard look!

Towards the end of the scene, we meet the woman's voice again, this time in its literal, ingenuous context, which deflates the preceding dramatic buildup:

"Want the parrot
to tell your fortune?"
Then the woman:
"What language
does he speak in?"

The quote has, all along, been a matter-of-fact question--not a symbolic commentary--addressed to a particular listener in a concrete social situation; it has been masquerading as a formal poetic device. The veil is removed. It is we who have been disembodied, our thoughts drifting, along with the speaker's, in their own fields (though not unself-consciously, as we might wish to believe; the movement of the poem so far has been a strategy of moves and counter moves, not a spontaneous out-flowing from the unconscious). Thus, as in "Fiddling A Round," the poem calls into question the collage technique on which its effects have depended. Here, as in all of Rakosi's poetry, the quoted bit of speech establishes human contact, keeps him from wandering too far or too long down abstract aesthetic paths, just as the dialogic method in general mobilizes an intimate relationship between Rakosi and his subject--other texts, ideologies, human experiences--giving his subject presence and living value, while preventing him from being swallowed by it--lost within it. As influences on the genesis of the poem, fragments of human speech, these voices from the world are as important as other texts.

(you)

[chain letter response]

(you)

Another question transposes the woman's question in the reader's mind: who, then, is the real parrot and hustler in the poem? Is the poet both parrot--mimicker, disconnected from his own words--and hustler--calculating linguistic

conniver and manipulator, a showman manufacturing effects? Then the "punch line" to "what language?" that provides the answer:

> "Sanscrit,"
> shot back,
> straight face,
> not batting
> an eye,
> the look unrelenting,

(And who is parrot and who is hustler in this description? is the parrot speaking, or the man? A momentary confusion.)

> "French, Italian, Pig Latin,
> any language you like, lady."
> A crowd had gathered,
> laughing.

The poet reveals himself, but again through a mask. Any language, any style you--the reader, audience, critic--would like. You tell me, I'll make it. I aim to please (remember the speaker in "My Experiences in Parnassus" who discovered that poetry's "purpose was to put on a performance and that the performance was an end in itself") (P 59). Or better, you invent it yourself as you go along; I'll throw out some enticing ambiguities, some elliptical statements and suggestive imagery, bring a few voices and contexts into play--have fun! And the crowd, laughing, is us, the readers, brought in on the joke; united in laughter. Contact made. Communion established. Illusion dispelled. Objective achieved.

The poem plays through me, or I play through it, gathering in and arranging

(au)illusions, a dialogic funhouse, an interpretative scenario...

"Manhattan, 1975" puts itself "in process/on trial," deploying a dialogic methodos to question its own methods as well as the motivations and concerns of all poetry-making. The poem is one of Rakosi's most ambitious polemics against the high-modernist tradition and the institutionalized processes of poetic production.

* * * * * * * * * *

To what extent has my essay reinvented Rakosi's poetry? Rakosi conducted by me through Kristeva, Bakhtin, and Foucault (among others)? Rakosi or Rakazzi?

> No matter, the fact remains that once a poem is written, it can be anything only in the mind of a reader. His psychology, therefore, can never be dismissed" ("Day Book," P 43).

And this:

> There's no living with you
> when you pass yourself off as an interpreter.
> For whom is this game played?
>
> Are you less entitled to imagination
> than the poet?
>
> Django on a borrowed string,
> I'll vote for that!

("Letter to the Critic," CP 218)

Me too! An open letter--to me, to you--inviting us to cohabit, to collaborate, to live with the poem--this poem and all the poems yet to be experienced or reexperienced--to dance to a music we partly compose... "I'll drink to that"... a Black Label. What's yours?

I'm stroking my arm with a pen, now, having just finished reading through the essay again. Out my window: bluejays resting on the chainlink fence, starlings flitting through the diamonds; my father's rock garden. St. Louis. Late summer, '93. A sound like falling leaves. I'm trying to reach you...

A wild rabbit nibbles ivy.

"Stirr'd Up Everywhere" is a multivoice performance piece inspired by Whitman's autobiography, Specimen Days. The collage is intended to reenact a postmodern textual experience (what reading a text means in a poststructuralist critical, academic environment). Whitman--or any author--is not just the words on the page that we ascribe to him, but also the words of others about him (including the more or less hidden, or behind-the-scenes editorial voices that emend, comment on, and in a sense collaborate with the author, producing an "authorized" version of a text for reader consumption). Four discourse territories interact dialogically in the piece: scientific, political, academic, and autobiographical. The docu-collage incorporates material from botanical handbooks, Marx and Engels treatise on the American Civil War, critical and biographical studies of Whitman, and Whitman's correspondence and notebooks as well as Specimen Days. My own improvisations, based on these voices, freely traverse these territories, often overwriting them (literally, with water-color markers); I inscribe myself in the piece, then, not so much as an "author," but as an arranger/orchestrator, an originator of play or bricoleur.

The collage, which has been presented in New York at SKEP Performance Gallery, Space 2B, and the Whitman Bicentennial Celebration (CUNY), is ideally performed by 5-6 readers/actors. To highlight the visual and mock-pedagogical aspects of the piece, pages of the typescript are projected on a screen or wall as they are read. Actors can memorize parts of the poem, read it from hand-held scripts, and read it across the bodies of other actors as they place themselves before the beam of the projector (at one point the image is "reduced" to a simulacrum of a standard-sized manuscript page and projected on the chest of the actor playing Whitman). The projector is the only stable (i.e., non-mobile) light source. Each actor/reader wears three clip-on lights. One of these lights illuminates the script, while the other two highlight parts of the actors' bodies; they can direct and redirect these lights, which are attached to flexible shafts, according to their own interpretations of the voices they are presenting (this has a Noh-like effect, keeping both actors and

audience aware that what's taking place is a drama of representations, if not symbols, and not of "real-life" or life-like characters). The surrounding darkness and the fragmenting effect of the lights give an eerie, suprahuman and, at the same time, uncannily intimate quality to the piece.

The piece opens as a "lecturer" wheels in Whitman (his "specimen") on an office chair; simultaneously, a photo-image of Whitman rolls in on the opaque projector (or fades in, if slide projectors are used). During the performance, Whitman wheels himself about on his chair, or is wheeled about by the other readers. Sometimes, he is compelled to jump up and guide or push the actors about, trying to "teach" them how to read or see or feel the work (i.e., the collage); at such moments, he becomes a strong physical as well as verbal presence. He attends especially to the lecturer (a young, theoretically oriented, though at first somewhat too professional literary idealist). At one point, the projection beam is turned off and lines from Whitman's work are chanted in the dark (though the actors can turn their personal lights on and off). During this scene, the actor reading Whitman interacts with the audience, talking to them about himself, his relationship to his role, what he intends to do, and asks them for their opinions and suggestions, some of which he may incorporate in his own way; other actors may follow Whitman's lead and direct themselves to the audience at this or any other point during the rest of the show (which adapts the format of a typical jazz performance, spacing out the melody to allow solos by each performer). At the end of the piece, Whitman is "put" back into his chair by the voices of Marx and the critics, becoming a specimen again. His lights are turned off and he is wheeled off stage. The lecturer, however, is left behind, hopefully transformed by his involvement with the collage, to carry a more ambiguous, more personal message into the academic world.

Stirr'd Up Everywhere

[an offstage groan, which could perhaps be the sound of the piece of audio-visual equipment the lecturer has just moved]

Wha...? People!

This is the 100th anniversary of Walt Whitman's death. We celebrate his death, because...

my birth...

?

I mean...

the birth of his work away from himself

well...and this is Walt Whitman...He died on March 26, 1892, but on July 2nd, in '92...

1882

sorry...on July 2nd 1882 he began to reinscribe the notes and diary entries, not necessarily in chronological order...

Run? Bull Run!...

that eventually became the autobiographical work known as Specssss...

{drum--rattle}

{a spell is cast over the lecturer's slide projector}

S S S S P S S s s P s s s s P s s s s s . . . *i m e n*

Days...?...SSSSpsssssspsssssspsss

/year in red ink\

skips and jumps...Down in the Woods, July 2d, 1882. Incongruous huddle... diary-jottings, war-memoranda, Nature-notes --If I do it at all I must... /in blue pencil\

yes, that's how it begins...now... [lecturer's inspects the projected image--the text marked by a wild and colorful graffiti]

nowwww {pitch--low}

/~~"sending" in~~ ? \

ommmmm {slight vibrato} aaaaaummmm aaaaaummmm {drum--when Johnny
aaaa... um...
comes marching...} aaaaummmm {drum--hurrah, hurrah}
Johnny, come...

This is a work in progress

"Autummmmn Side-Bits"

Many of his aesthetic gestures are familiar ones (Helen Vendler) : *the articulation of an individual speaking self, a visual and verbal curiosity, a belief in a possible correspondence between nature and voice, repeated allusions to past poetry, and a taste for both simplicity and grandeur*
Hummmmm

human fragments

but it is the way Whitman combined them...
{drum-side clip}
NOT A DISSOLUTION, BUT A REORGANIZATION *That's Marx*

dissolve propositional thought into fugitive gleams, hints of sound*...I'm not sure...*

well, for instance...
shriek of a mule at night

full Under an old black oak, glossy and green--envelop'd in warmth and *voiced,*
lyric light of noonday sun swarms of flitting insects--harsh cawing of *rise & fall* crows...Battle of Bull Run, July, 1861. ...swarming wagons...men
swarming insects and... the civil
recoiling back, pouring over the Long Bridge
war in a gnat!
re ee treat

PEOPLE'S WARS

dust, grime and smoke, in layers sweated in, follow'd by other layers, again sweated in, absorb'd by those excited souls-- *transmogrification...* their clothes all saturated with the clay-powder filling the air--stirr'd up everywhere...

(three dead men lying,)

contention!

GREAT DISGRACE OF BULL RUN...EARLIER ERROR OF ENLISTING
VOLUNTEERS. each with a blanket spread over him--
...SENSELESS TO ALLOW A STRONG POSITION, ON DIFFICULT TERRAIN
AND IN POSSESSION OF A FOE LITTLE INFERIOR IN NUMBERS, TO BE
ATTACKED BY RAW RECRUITS return'd... front
front drop down any where deep front
front sleep profound LINE

in both sensual and social terms, though these soon give way to metaphysical questions

* * * {drum-slow pulse}

Like This?:
My walk out around the camp, the fires burning--groups around--the merry song--the sitting *flitting?* forms--the playing light on the *cracked* faces--
like the Fall of the House of...

PANIC WHICH TOOK POSSESSION OF THE UNION ARMY... con-
SURPRISE NO ONE WHO WAS IN SOME DEGREE FAMILIAR... firmed

(I lift one blanket and look at the young man's face, calm and yellow,--'tis strange?)

becoming...?

EXERTED A PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON... *Glicksberg?*

they would tell stories--one would tell a story of a dead man sitting on the top rail of a fence--he had been shot there at sundown, mortally wounded, clung with desperate nerves, and was found sitting there, dead, staring with fixed eyes in the morning-- *wonderful!*

stories...eyes...creative...

A NATIONAL CRISIS, A LIVING EPIC, A CREATIVE FORCE...

definitely Glicksberg

swarms of dirt-covered return'd...

With few exceptions the vascular plants grow rooted in...

I don't recognize...

hurry up something

INFLUENCE ON HIS WORK CAN, THEREFORE, HARDLY BE...

"hurry up something for their"...?

what? soil, plant life?

That it is of prime importance to the human race is, of course...

baffling decon-
struction via crypto-
graphic overcoding. Who,
Ehh?...what's this...Semaphore? **or what, was the recipient?**

the codes: the marks in the text..."If luce or ereor"?

ummmmmm **if loose**
or
Is this what de Certeau meant by "la perrugue" (page 25?): the ***error***
worker's own work disguised as work for the employer--language, in this case...

Pay attention!

EYE! **con**

I...? race ***e****ra****s****e*

hurry up something for their grub!

recognized by the thoughtful man, and that a "love for the soil" is deeply ingrained in us clothes all saturated **is also conceded.**
Gibbs, Darnley, the botanist!

Then you say:
"eating the green corn--grated through tin pans with rough holes
that's reality!
pierced in them--"

(Young man: I think this face of yours the face of...)

/in red ink\
~~reed~~

through the corporeal lineaments, the spiritual...

my dead Christ

"the eclectic self is seeking types," here, "or emblems"*...I'm getting lost in this."*

* * * {drum--rapid}

Follow me:

sassafras **catalpas** beeches *black-walnut* holly-willow-hornbeam **mountain-ash** **birches** aspen hickory pine-pine *black-walnut!* **mou ma**
should we reconsider this text?

mani **maa** ni manimanimanimani **maa miii ma aaa ma mii**

at the foot of tree, immediately in front, a heap of feet, legs, *like*
arms, and human fragments, 1 **contested** *he*
sees it!

split of the son into two *?*

{drum--side clip}

1 GLICKSBERG...HAS CHALLENGED THE AUTHENTICITY

cut, bloody, black and blue, swelled and sickening
pierced Christ blue
IT IS STRIKING THAT SIX DAYS AFTER THE BATTLE AMPUTATED LIMBS WERE BEING LEFT...
is it?

The walk along the Rappahannock in front, *the mansion* a pleasant shore *converted to a hospital* See *not ten yards from* the houses *the front door, the heaps* --some with their chimneys thrown down--the hospitals--the man with his mouth blown out *nondualistic* the balloon... *the pleasant shore* **now put out the...**

LOSE IN STYLISTIC DISTINCTION, CONTINUITY, AND LITERARY SKILL...GAIN IN VIVIDNESS, CONCISION, CONCRETENESS, AND *and?* **Grier, Glicks...?**

why did Monday, Dec. 22--forenoon very pleasant, Sun shining, a partial *this* haze--Saw the balloon up--a great huge, slow moving thing, with *fascinate?*

TEXT FR. GLICKSBERG

these too will
a curious look to me, as it crawled up, and slanted down again, as if it were...
rise
alive. /image in
9,600 WOUNDED... THAT'S 9 6 0 0 reddish-

yellow
unt'her'd

I sit in solitude absorbing, enjoying it all... un...thered, hered, whered tethered?

9 THE PRESENT STRUGGLE... *no, ALL*
exhibit A

rich coloring, yellows of all hues, pale and dark green, shades from lightest to richest red all set in and toned down by the prevailing brown of the earth and gray of the sky.

BETWEEN TWO SOCIAL SYSTEMS *between earth and...*

the fenced enclosure in the midst of the woods, 8
for butchering the beef, the just quartered cattle, in huge
pieces lying around *"the metamorphosis of the text effected by the wandering eyes of..."* --the men *gather'd around the fire, "the reader"* the play of light
on the
cracked *faces* with rolled up sleeves and stained arms

the tender mother and the fierce mother, the invocation of comradeship,
got the
the narcissistic turn to the body, the eerie gestures toward solitude
rhythm right
and silence

Whitman as Vendler? for parallelism, see above

see here

~~/in pencil on slip~~:\
Nineteenth Century

hummm. So winter <u>is</u> coming at the end of and I yet in my sickness
the end of

WITHDRAWN FROM THE SPHERE OF DIPLOMATIC AND PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSIONS

I sit here amid all these fair sights and vital influences, and abandon myself to <u>that</u> thought, with its wandering trains...

CAUSE OF WHICH...NOT CLARIFIED (*Marx*)

a fiction or series of fictions... (*Whitman*) 0

AN INCREDIBLE STRAIN ON THE MEDICAL CORPS (*Grier?*)

an old black oak a century

I still think we should reconsider... Too Late

"***It's not until Whitman merges with the father that the types can merge,***" *who says...?*

* * * {drum--slow--Johnny comes}

This is later...remember? exhibit B
1885: "I am in my little house I told you about, not far from the river. Health pretty fair the last four months, & would be so still, except for an increasing prostration of the whole muscular system"

THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY AND THE SYSTEM OF FREE LABOR.
O ummm...yes

--almost a falling sickness, as at times
I cannot keep my legs.

A CASUAL VISITOR, RATHER THAN AS THE ACTIVE PARTICIPANT HE LATER CLAIMED...

--was out this afternoon in the wheel chair, the sun half-out in starts...Warren ...downstairs practicing his fiddle...

CAN ONLY BE ENDED BY THE VICTORY OF ONE SYSTEM OR THE OTHER

...ebb *edd* ing ebbing--
fairly buoyant spirits--rare egg & tea & bread
for breakfast--good bowel action--

...am floating along carried by the momentum of things I suppose
great huge, slow moving
--stupidly may be a strong word but it suggests if not describes my cond'n these times...

AT THE DECISIVE MOMENT, THE CAUSE OF WHICH
BULL
bread, swiftly cut in stout chunks

CAN ONLY BE ENDED

cold...& sunny?

.....not so bad as you might suppose...right arm giving out....

NOT A DISSOLUTION, BUT...
impotency of the individual
before a socio-politico-economic crisis?
A winged bovine? Perhaps an apocalyptic (or castration) fantasy

"the lecturer must scream on page...?

...& they say am better...[(**stop**)

mustard plaster on my side stinging...must... [] (*stop?*)

Had a good currying two hours ago--Supper of rice and mutton...[[] (*ssst...*)

can no longer live peacefully side by...][][[

representation of dissolution as a viable poetic conclusion

stop stew side **nonauthorial cluster as exhibit C**

must get off this line...

WHAT IS HERE SET DOWN IN BLACK AND WHITE *Glicks, or...* **Mmmmmarrr**

IS, THEREFORE, NOTHING BUT

aesthetic images and rhetorical gestures of dispersion!

Unable [**able**] to write much **stop** $4 enc'd **stop** y'r good friend [**good letter**] good letter rec'd [**sent**] [Camd'n, 3/17/92]

--God bless you--

WW
ORIGINALLY FORGED
ON THE ANVIL OF PAIN

Death /red ink\ ~~nothing~~
is here.

12/26/62

Don't know quite how to do this... we'll help you.

"***The aesthetic life--by contrast to the metaphysical life or the ethical life--gives full measure to the contradictions of the many moods of life. It is for this reason that the aesthetic moment presents itself to Whitman as a process of dissolution, not as one of architectonics,***" *she says...not as one of architectonics* she says *not as one of architectonics* she says *but a process of* diss...

where's the rhythm can you sing it?

* * * {drum--slow pulse}

The first shudder has long passed over, *Letter to Emerson, 1/17/63* and I must say I find deep things, unreckoned by current print or speech.

24 FROM STABS AND GUN-SHOT WOUNDS, 82 FROM FALLING OFF BUILDINGS, OR DOWN LADDERS; 22 FROM BURNS AND SCALDS

The Hospital...

RUN

Ward G bed 12 amp of left leg no. 5 ward C some ginger for diarrhea

ummm

mottled by much light and shade...distant scream of a flock...
the hospital!

some jelly to ward B ward C bed 34 fract thigh sandy comp--good sport

he was

I desire and intend to write a little book out of this phase of America, her masculine young manhood, its conduct under most trying of and highest of all exigency, which she, as by lifting a corner in a curtain, has vouchsafed me to see America,

LARYNGITIS--FEVER--DEBILITY--DIARRHEA
already brought to Hospital in her fair youth...

he wasn't!

DOCTOR THINKS HE IS SHAMMING *bed 13 ward G amp left leg--tooth brush*

laryngitis, fever, debility...

ground strew'd with debris...Timber creek, as I slowly pace
E R A S E *slowly*
so I can walk **contrast shudder ginger**
its banks, has ebb'd low... *with you* **scream write America shamming debris**

But more, a new world here I find as I would show--a world full of its separate action, play, suggestiveness--
FEVER, 233; RHEUMATISM, 205; REMITTENT FEVER, 125
BIRD
surely a medium world,

ward 6 bed 52 apples a book horehound candy sweet plug tobacco

advanced between our well-known practiced one of body and of mind,
DELIRIUM TREMENS, 79; TYPHOID, 95; BRONCHITIS, 62; PHTHISIS...
and this:

angelic lady floating up in the air,
over his bed,
reaching down
to him
a glass of liquor

look it's

THIS CONCLUSION IS DESCRIPTIVE, NOT PROPOSITIONAL

bed 53 a stick of liquorice bed 51 a little note paper bed 25 give him rice pudding another day lemon the best way...

and one there may-be somewhere on beyond, we dream of, of the soul.
(that's "L")
turbulent swell of the late equinoctial..pensive cadence

"***selfhood dissolves into air, foam, eddies, windows, grass...***"

no it's...
got it...hand signals!

b...u...l...l...b...i...r...d

...well, "bull" runs through the text--that is, Bull Run--and both "bull" and "bird" **run, bull** **animal mating**

can be deciphered throughout the text, so it's a kind of animating force...

aaahhhhhhgggrrrrrraaawwwww

{first appearance of Bull Bird}

BULL BIRD

* * * {drum--Morse Code}

/p.3; 2 blank except for a crude drawing which looks like a clenched fist with pointing finger\ *E. F. Grier*

Everyone moving about freely

A large-square-shaped room but without any angular appearance, 2

all the light coming 3 down from ovehead,

a room full of...

Barthes' "third language"!

cheerful color

Gorilla Text! {"botanical," "critical," and "editorial"
voices throw off disguises, run through audience distributing pamphlets}

some...reading, others writing

(through large panels of glass, forty or fifty of them.)4

a good deal of a golden hue, profusely ornamented

Don't Resist This Text!

~~2 inserted: "-a room" above "ance," in "appearance,"~~
~~3 deleted: "in" ; inserted above: "down"~~
~~4 subsequent entries on this page in black pencil.~~ *the lecturer must...*
~~5 inserted above "conver" in "conversation"~~ {grabs projector, flashes
~~6 inserted: "muffled, yet sharp" above "sound...of".~~ images around}
perhaps ~~should precede "sound"~~
~~7 inserted above "the...walls"~~
~~8 inserted above "gray"~~

subdued 5 conversation going on every where---

the call for one

--the lower 7 walls of the room light 8
the sound 6 muffled, yet sharp
of the clapping hands,

little imps of pages

gray, relieved with figures of a deeper hue--

this is a work in progress... I absorption

* * * {drum--nailing down}

(scratch this page)

energy exchange!

(+) gather'd improvis'd absorb'd dispers'd (-)

jamm'd circl'd blacken'd strew'd

My chair!

unloos'd undream'd abandon'd revers'd

(-) spatter'd streak'd ebb'd dash'd (+)

Bull Horns!

dispers'd energy troops regather

momentum

WHITE WORKING CLASS WOULD GRADUALLY BE FORCED

collide alte(r(e))structure disperse

EAGLES

high-holes

bluebirds yellow birds

hen-hawks tits

tits it's

blackbirds *ravens*

eating **green corn**

white-bellied

reed birds **woodpeckers**

Green Bird

SANDPIPER

killdeer ring dove flicker

This is Whitman...

* * * {drum--woodpeckers, bird calls}

SSSSPsssspsssspsssssspsssssspsssssspssssss

nature "is, yet says nothing"

I used a xerox copy of the Library of America edition of Specimen Days; *when I finished with it,*

s a y

what?
there were places where you could barely read the text through the markings...marginal notes?...
with coffee?...not blood you?
the pages stained...I often took them outside...that's me in the old wooden chair; you can hear
all I hear is yours?
surf running up on the bulkhead, the sound of my silent reading. The house I forgot to mention. frame! it's on wheels!
will you answer?
White stucco, big "L"-shaped yard with hydrangeas, the chair, phone ringing upstairs, chain-link
careful that's me!
fence, 5' drop to the beach...that's me sitting...not quite sure why I include this, what I'm looking
aren't you? I am.
for...when I'm reading, I forget about all that...

padme pad me hum hum me flower mayweed hum-tongue
horehound pale manna mercury-millet
mock ear hobblebush paspalum hum-all
monkspa mugmud panic merry-bells

{drum--side clip}

if you insist
Scrophulariaceae, Figwort Family. the piece of board, *what*
hastily inscribed with the name--not in Latin--placed on *does it*
the breast, to be ready **Opposite or alternate leaves.** *look*
Sepals 4-5, Petals usually 5, rarely 4, united at least at *like?*
base, usually tubular, often unequal it is (partial haze).
Stamens with fertile anthers 2-5, arising from corolla;
sterile stamen (s) padme hum **sometimes present.** beds 23
& 24 wants some horehound candy! **Fruit dry (capsule),**
several-many-seeded, rarely 1-4-seeded. *beautiful!*

Try it this way: He comes toward me through mulleins, his hands going up right alongside them, blooming verbs--L O V E S--and the other?... but the head cocked back in the dust, the lower jaw blown away... his head sunk back in the pillow, the jaw slack, unable to close around articulation....but the eyes--still bull's eyes

Large, placid mulleins, as summer advances, velvety in texture, of a light greenish-drab color, growing everywhere in the fields *dry roads and trodden...dust...swarms* --at first earth's big rosettes in their broad-leav'd low cluster-plants, eight, ten, twenty leaves to a plant--plentiful on the fallow twenty-acre lot *improvis'd tables of rough planks...hurry up something* ...leaves as broad as my hand, and the lower ones twice as long--so fresh and dewy in the morning--stalks now four or five, even seven or eight feet high.... *couple of slices of beef, and some crackers...commenced cooking the mess in a frying pan* (... another man was waiting with similar articles to have the use of the frying

pan) I've grown to a fondness for it. Every object has its lesson,

/image in yellow-green

enclosing the suggestion of everything else-- brown, deep blue

and lately I sometimes think all is concentrated sparks of light\

for me in these hardy, yellow-flower'd weeds, As I come down the lane early in the morning, I pause before their soft wool-like fleece and stem and broad leaves, glittering with countless diamonds. Annually for three summers now, they and I have silently return'd together; at such long intervals I stand or sit among them, musing--and woven with the rest, of so many hours and moods of partial rehabilitation--of my sane or sick spirit, here as near at peace as it can be.

Emerson died, aged 79--
that's what the image refers to

/~~in red, with lines around in red ink:~~

death of Emerson 9

~~also black ink:~~\

where is he now?

9 THE FACT THAT WHITMAN COULD WRITE THIS DOWN TWICE, AND UNDERLINE IT WITH SUCH A HEAVY MARK IS CERTAINLY SIGNIFICANT

7 talks in a whisper...would like some

* * *

{drum--improvise}

AAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna

Out of the cradle endlessly

AAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna

the musical shuttle

SSSSPSSSSSPSSSSSSPSSSSSPSSSSSssss

over the sterile sands and the fields beyond as if they were alive

from the fitful risings and fallings I heard

AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna

AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna
beginning notes the thousand responses
aaaaummmmmmmmAH aaaaummmmmmmAH
myriad thence-aroused words
AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna
My point here was to have everyone talk about their involvement with
AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna
of the bird that chanted to me!
SSSSPSSSSSPSSSSSSPSSSSSPSSSSSssss
a flock twittering, rising, or overhead passing
the piece. There's a need to talk about oneself, what one's doing, to define,
AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna
even though you know it can only be ended...
AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna
hurriedly
UM! SSSSPSSSSSPSSSSS
I tried doing this impromptu, but then jotted some notes on the script.
UM! SSSSPSSSSSPSSSSS
I, chanter of pains and joys taking all hints swiftly leaping beyond
AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha UM!
Someone is reading from elsewhere in the text; we won't perform that (unless
AAAAAAAAAAAA o A ha manna
peering, absorbing, translating
UM! SSSSPSSSSSPSSSSS
we already have). I don't know what the other is doing. I won't ask you.
UM! SSSSPSSSSSPSSSSS
The worst thing was the fucking traffic trying to get out here.
that chanted to me!

* * *

FOLLOWING TEXT FROM GLICKSBERG, 7?.

Thanks, my dear friend, for the Magazine & Article...--sitting alone by my open window in part sunshine part shadow--it is unequal **united, at least, at base** *--but there are parts in it.*

Verbascum, Mullein slight boards, rudely inscribed with the names boxing
Leaves densely white-wooly *I pause before their soft* **above as well** gloves!
as beneath; inflorescence dense cylindric, usually unbranched; flowers sessile or nearly so. Buddha is
green corn--grated

Leaves glabrous or sparsely hairy above; inflorescence wider or looser, usually branched; pedicels of flowers distinct suggestion of everything else **though sometimes short.**
flying shit

Ahhh...then
voyaging done--...timbers may (or may not) hold

Corolla yellow or white

...little huts of green boughs, pine or what not--doesn't matter--impromptu shelter....10

birches aspen hickory

10 "SHEBANGS": ACCORDING TO DA, WW WAS THE FIRST TO USE THE WORD IN PRINT pine pine pine

read by fits and starts--fragments: read in moods: no sequence, no order, no nothing

damn right!

...OPPOSITION TO THE SLAVEHOLDING OLIGARCHY...

a bunch of loose leaves...tore out from some broken or cheap edition

ATTACKED BY RAW RECRUITS

blotch'd here and there with more than one blood stain, hurriedly written

an open air formation--singly, or in clusters--wild and free and somewhat acrid-

"It is as if beasts spoke"--Emerson...

this beautiful bright forenoon...

> **Moth-Mullein: Pedicels 1-1.5 cm long, twice as long as fruit; flowers scattered, distant...** *see?*

the resolution comes, this day, this hour...

fell in love with him just from reading his...

NOoooWWwwwwwwoooommmmmmmmmmOOOOOOMMmmmmmm
(pitch

--high voltage hum)

Tom *poetry* Tom *Tom?* here are some scraps and MS.... gather'd from the heap--where? *at the foot of tree, immediately in front* right--will they do?

SSSSSPssssssPssssspssssspssssPSSssssss

prepare... by the following self-teaching exercises. Abstract yourself from this book: realize where you are at present located, the point you stand that is now to you the centre of all. Look up overhead, think of... (one drum click)

OOOOOoooommmmmmmmmmmm (pitch--high)

/one word in red
black blue yellow green ink\
~~accepted~~

(drum--rattle)

SSSSSSSSPSSSSSSSPssssssssssssssssssssssSSSSpeccccccimen *Days...get it?* New York, Library of America, 1982, 689-926!

(second and final appearance of Bull Bird)

Zen and the Art of Writing in *Walt Whitman's* Specimen Days

* * * BEGINNING TONES--SOUNDS * * *

"Om mani padme hum." Seed syllables, all sounds, the sounding of undifferentiated being, voicings of the inarticulable; "om" is an Ur tone, the physical shaping of the mouth and vibration of the vocal chords to the measure of primal energy. Also a mind tone. A Zen Buddhist in zazen, silent or chanting, his whole body a tuning fork pulsing with "big mind," "vast mind," as Shunryu Suzuki says: his "mind pervading his body" (Suzuki 41): "When we do zazen, the quality of our calm, steady, serene sitting is the quality of the immense activity of being itself" (Suzuki 105).

"Om mani padme hum." "Mani padme"--"jewel in the lotus." The non sense syllables surround a crystalline center, a solid clarity. The line of the chant itself is encircled, like the circling of the throat and mouth around breath, by its own infinite repetition. Each new voicing is also all its previous and future voicings, actually present and enveloped by the mind as well. And so the chant ebbs back into memory and imagination--a continual influx, inhaling of breath and sound into mind and efflux of mind back again through breath, back out, in the words of the chant, the words on the page. Emerson: "Around every circle another can be drawn" and Suzuki: "When we practice zazen our mind always follows our breathing. When we inhale, the air comes into the inner world. When we exhale, the air goes out to the outer world. The inner world is limitless, and the outer world is also limitless . . . . actually, there is just one whole world. In this limitless world, our throat is like a swinging door" (29). ...no beginning or end, no arche or telos, just duration, cadence, like the movement of nature, the revolution of days and seasons, a profound monotony--a "superb monotony," as Whitman says in Specimen Days.[1] A chant is the ebb and flow of the ocean, the flow of land in the

[1] The following abbreviations will occur: Specimen Days = SD; Camden Conversations = CC.

prairies (circa 1880), the continuous sweep of sky . . . .

Chanting "om mani padme hum, om mani padme hum, om mani padme hum . . ." is similar to the reading-effect of Specimen Days. Chanted long enough, we forget about "meaning", the words and our own, and become the body of the chant, the occurrence of a sustained rhythm and energy, the pulse of allness. "When your mind is pure and calm enough to follow this movement [your breathing], there is nothing: no 'I,' no world, no mind nor body; just a swinging door" (Suzuki 29).

In Zen, according to Richard Baker, "beginner's mind" is empty, accepting; it "sees things as they are" (Suzuki 14). It is a mind of openness and clarity--nondualistic, all inclusive, "ready for anything," as Suzuki says: "The goal of practice is always to keep our beginner's mind" (21). Beginner's mind is similar to the imagination as Stevens defines it, having the power to "perceive the normal in the abnormal, the opposite of chaos in chaos" (153). Whitman's Specimen Days is not simply autobiography, but writing practice, his learning to "see" through contradiction and difference to primal forces in nature and the self. The language and imagery of Specimen Days is Whitman's heuristic in action--the ongoing task of perceiving essentially, of reforming language to celebrate "universal mind," as Stevens calls it, to "penetrate to basic images, basic emotions, and so to compose a fundamental poetry even older than the ancient world" (145).

The keys to Whitman's practice are a linguistic polysemousness (characterized by deployment of a semantically motile repetition and metonymy) and a performative mode of perception (observation influenced by somatic movement--"acting out" as Regis Durand phrases it), both of which create writing effects that challenge the reader's ways of seeing and reading.[2]

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[2] Repetition is a hallmark of Whitman's practice. Touchstone words and images are repeated over and over in Specimen Days, to the point of monotony, giving the reader the effect of an "eternal return" (Mercia Eliade's term), a continuous effort to push farther and farther back to the "deepest sources of life," as Whitman says

If we watch and listen to the words in Specimen Days, follow them around as sounds and marks, they undo fixed signifier-signified relationships, lead us into surprising identities. Specimen Days is Whitman's anti-quest, his search beyond telos and logos for expansive "is-ness," "tathagata"--a Sanskrit name for Buddha meaning "'he who has followed the path, who has returned from suchness, or is suchness, thusness, is-ness, emptiness, the fully completed one'" (Suzuki 13).

* * * WORDS, IMAGES * * *

> When you walk along the brook you will hear the water running. The sound is continuous, but you must be able to stop it if you want to stop it (Suzuki 112).

Specimen Days appears, at first, to be a framed narrative--

> Down in the Woods, July 2d, 1882.--If I do it at all I must delay no longer. Incongruous and full of skips and jumps as is that huddle of diary-jottings, war-memoranda of 1862-'65, Nature-notes of 1877-'81, with Western and Canadian observations afterwards . . . the resolution and indeed mandate comes to me this day, this hour . . . (SD 689)--

except that the book winds to a close two months prior to its opening (the last dated entry is May 31, 1882). However, since three undated entries close the book, it is uncertain on what date it ends. The temporal jostling is a unifying pattern in Specimen Days, the text only intermittently following a linear, chronological order. Though all the entries are named, several lack dates; in some, days lapse between sentences, and unspecified periods of time are often

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in Camden Conversations--"back, back, till there is no farther point to retire to" (135). A few samples: abstract nominatives and modifiers--motion, vast, immense, common, superb, mass, density, monotonous; verbals--turbulence, convulsion, whirl, hurry, circle, absorb, filter, swarm, dazzle; elemental images--sky, sun, clarity, seas, plains; birds, trees; the sounds of all these; silence, solitude.

lost between entries. We spin free of narrative and chronometric time as we ricochet about the text on the smooth surface of a repeated word, phoneme sound, or image. We can never be sure where the next entry will take us. Whitman does not want us to depend on a ready-made, spatial-temporal framework, but on ourselves reading. He fractures the narrative not simply to confuse us, but to expose the processual, aleatoric nature of writing and reading. We are returned to the "frame," the scene of writing, several times, but in various times and places. The broken and scattered structure functions as a mirror of consciousness: "How few of life's days and hours," Whitman comments in "A Happy Hour's Command," the book's first entry, "(and they not by relative value of proportion, but by chance) are ever noted." Whitman's "impromptu jottings"--the notebooks of which Specimen Days is the rereading and rewriting--are peppered through his life. Nature and experience force up like blades of grass through and between his words, threading continuities through the discontinuous. Specimen Days breaks the automated relationship between reader and writer. Reading the book is like tacking a sailing ship (following a zigzag course across the wind): We must concentrate on the movements of the language itself, apply mental pressure to the text if we want to get anywhere, to keep up with the flow of energies and experiences it annotates. Suzuki: "As long as you have some fixed idea or are caught by some habitual way of doing things, you cannot appreciate things in their true sense." You cannot "appreciate the feeling of your work" (112). To appreciate Specimen Days, we must syncopate our reading rhythm (sail shift rather than metronome), allow the analytical mind to swing freely (word = hinge, brisure), listen to ourselves reading until we forget ourselves in the reading.

Caught by the first word of an entry's title, I leap forward in the book--backward in time--to "Opening of the Secession War," April 13, 1861. After several pages of relatively stable autobiography--Whitman's descriptions of childhood homes, accounts of his activities while living near the Paumanok, memories of the tasks and pleasures of youth--this entry is an opening in more

ways than one.

The attack on Fort Sumter, at the outbreak of the Civil War, sent tremors, through language, up the Atlantic seaboard to New York. Whitman recollects:

> I had been to the opera in Fourteenth street that night, and after the performance was walking down Broadway toward twelve o'clock, on my way to Brooklyn, when I heard in the distance the loud cries of the newsboys who came presently tearing and yelling up the street, rushing from side to side even more furiously than usual. I bought an extra and cross'd to the Metropolitan hotel (Niblo's) where the great lamps were still brightly blazing, and, with a crowd of others, who gather'd impromptu, read the news, which was evidently authentic. For the benefit of some who had no papers, one of us read the telegram aloud, while all listen'd silently and attentively. No remark was made by any of the crowd, which had increas'd to thirty or forty, but all stood a minute or two, I remember, before they dispers'd. I can almost see them there now, under the lamps at midnight again.

Words, the "news," charged by a catastrophic event, gain a power to disrupt, shock, and render speechless. They grip their hearers/readers, unleash corresponding forces in them. The newsboys, for example, come "tearing and yelling up the street, rushing from side to side even more furiously than usual," reenacting the shock and confusion of war. The whole scene reverberates under the influence of the cataclysmic forces infusing and sustained by the language: The street lamp was "brightly blazing" as a "crowd" of strangers "gather'd impromptu" under it, drawn magnetically together, and gradually "increas'd" in mass as "one of us read the telegram aloud." Whitman's action--the performance of his observation and his linguistic reenactment of the event--mirrors the gathering roundness he witnesses. The setting of the central event, introduced midway in the entry--under the "great lamps" at midnight--is repeated at the end: "I can almost see them there now, under the lamps at midnight again." The roundness of the form is the roundness of repetition, like a repeated chant, suggesting the continued, vivid recurrence of the scene in Whitman's memory and imagination.

The reader of the telegram is anonymous, and probably no "author," but the words he reads have the power to shock his hearers into silence--"all listen'd silently and attentively." Caught by surprise, their defenses down, none of their learned responses suffice. They could make "no remark" after hearing the news and "dispers'd" as simply as they had gathered, naturally as the infinite gathering and redispersal of atoms, cohering temporarily into discrete molecular forms. In Whitman's description of the scene, human, individual identity is deconstructed as it is articulated. Though the men may be unacquainted, we see them acting collectively, en masse, animated by the same forces that animate their surroundings. The language of the passage lifts us out of particularity and pierces through it to something more essential. We can feel it in the pulse beat of the verbals throbbing through the passage: "tearing . . . yelling . . . rushing . . . furiously . . . blazing . . . gather'd . . . listen'd . . . increas'd . . . dispers'd." The language is catalytic, producing a moment of "spontaneous communitas," to borrow Victor Turner's phrase, "a flash of lucid mutual understanding," a moment of "intersubjective communication" (Turner 48).

The affective value of eidetic language is not in its representational or descriptive function, but, as Suzuki says of Buddha's words, in its capacity to bring us into contact with the "ultimate fact" of reality, the essence of being "in each moment," which is not a reality of stable identities, but that which, unnameable, is always at once all of its names (inscriptions, bodies, utterances) and none of them. Every word is an "impulse on the air," as Poe puts it in "The Power of Words"; In Specimen Days, the shock waves encoded by certain words reverberate throughout the text, recurring in quite different contexts, and resonate also within the memory and imagination of the reader whenever the words crop up, influencing his response to a particular passage.

Riding two pages and three months ahead on the metonymy of "crowds" and the general tenor of "Opening of the Secession War," I pause at the "Battle of Bull Run, July, 1861." The defeat of the national forces yields a

disillusioning, deromanticizing image of war. But the disillusionment is, as the word suggests, fundamentally affirmative--a clearing away of illusions. The retreat is not ceremonious and noble, but dehumanized and disorderly--"swarming wagons" and men "recoiling back, pouring over the Long Bridge" as they march back to Washington. By stepping back, as it were, to grasp the whole scene, Whitman's description more deeply penetrates to the essential forces and motions, the torsions and randomness, underlying the event; he sees it not only as a retreat, but also as a natural phenomenon, neutralizing the concepts of victory and defeat. Though the soldiers are "humiliated," their retreat is charged with potency. The men have been transmogrified by the destructive force of war, which is also the disruptive power of nature underlying the apparently stable forms and norms of life. They are part man, part earth: "the dust, grime and smoke, in layers sweated in, follow'd by other layers, again sweated in, absorb'd by those excited souls--their clothes all saturated with the clay-powder filling the air--stirr'd up everywhere on the dry roads and trodden fields by the regiments." The earth touches everything. Boundaries between earth and air, human and other, animate and inanimate dissolve as all are whirled together in the "swarming," "pouring" energy of the moment. Here, as in other passages in the book, the fusion is grammatically speeded up by the intermittent abbreviation of the past tense--"revers'd," "absorb'd," "jamm'd"--as if there were little time to worry about temporal distinctions and letters that don't contribute directly to the motion-sound of the words and the energies they map. The words remain inflectionally free, barely signifying the past and vividly alive in the present reading. The language doesn't so much describe as evoke an atmosphere, a momentary state of being during which the universal bleeds through the particular.

Existential upheavals are reenacted by semiotic ones; experience and language are mutually transformative. The polysemousness of Whitman's language does not allow words to be weighed, measured, categorized, and assigned permanent values. Let's follow "swarms." In the "Battle Of Bull Run," wagons are "swarming" in retreat. Four years later, at the close of the

war, Whitman describes the returning, victorious national forces "swarming like bees everywhere." The same motion, the same energy manifests itself in surrender or victory, and in something that has nothing to do with either, though it is the same intelligence, neither noble nor ignoble, but simply the being of disarray. As the images superimpose--swarms of soldiers, swarms of bees, swarms of wagons--identities merge and all dissolve into the essential force that the word traces. "Swarms" pops up again in "Bumble-Bees," an undated entry presumably recalling events in the early summer of 1876 or '77 (the year of the preceding dated entry): "May-month--month of swarming, singing, mating birds--the bumble-bee month--month of the flowering lilac--(and then my own birth-month)" (783). The birds swarm like the bees, the soldiers, and the wagons; all--animate and inanimate alike--metonymically dancing and swirling under the same influence. Impressions, memories of the Civil War reemerge, complicating the mood of a scene that would seem, at first sight, to have little to do with it. The language won't let us forget. Even if we can't remember specific scenes or situations in which a word previously occurred, we can't help feeling the ambiguity, sensing a certain undertow in the emotional residue carried over from the word's previous associations. The point is not to create tension, but to defuse it through the linguistic diffusion of terms over a wide territory. Energy is neither good nor bad--it just is. The "o" of month is the roundness of the gathering under the street lamps at the outbreak of war; it is the "o" of "monotone," of "om", the endless repetition and circling of sounds, images, feelings, and memories, crossing and melding in the mind. Repeated metonymies and word sounds are the bass beat, the "pulsion force" (Julia Kristeva'a phrase) of language that breaks contextual confines, speeds us back and forth through the text, through various times and places, with the rapidity of imagination and memory. Pound: "All ages are contemporaneous in the mind."

"Swarms," like "Crowds," maps the irresistible, democratizing force of sheer mass, or quantity (a force embodied, for Whitman, in features of the

American landscape such as the Western prairies). Releasing "swarms" and diving back into the thick of the war (December 12, 1862), I find "Down at the Front" (712) a good point of reentry into the text to observe the continuing deconstructive metonymy of "crowds." In Falmouth, Virginia, on the grounds of a Rappahannock River mansion temporarily converted into a hospital, graves of dead soldiers are marked by "broken boards, stuck in the dirt," countering less democratic images of death--there are no marble monuments to the dead here. Whitman also notes "a heap of amputated feet, legs, arms, hands, &C." in front of the house. The directness and matter-of-factness of his language presents a frank image of the rude aftermath of identity shattering forces; we see fragments of bodies (like fragments of language), monstrously yet unmelodramatically thrown together, rather than discrete, complete human beings. And all "within ten yards" of the mansion--a measure of the distance separating an idealized, pastoral, unambivalent vision of America, still snug under post-revolutionary quilts, from the blatantly visible, disconcerting realities of the 1860s (shaking out the quilts, we see it for what it has always been--a patchwork!). The elegantly dressed high society "crowds" of another time and place, invoked through the medium of Whitman's language, rub against the sick and wounded "crowded upstairs," where the ballroom usually is. The soldiers sport no decorous uniforms, but their "old clothes, unclean and bloody." "Crowds" metonymically joins the two images in motley juxtaposition, the former whispering like a palimpsest beneath the other. The result is not a metaphor, or a contradiction and condemnation of one image by the other; the imagination does not swing from thesis to antithesis, but oscillates between the two images, which the reader is finally able to hold simultaneously, equally--democratically--in mind in a broadened state of awareness. Such oscillatory phenomena attest to the slipperiness of language. Definitions and meanings become tentative, or evolutionary, liable at any moment to undo or transform themselves on their own terms--as unstable as the phenomena they trace. As Jacques Lacan would observe a century later,

"we are forced, then, to accept . . . an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier" (154). The text does not exist as a chronologically developed and completed whole that may be unfolded linearly; it exists in the ongoing plurality and simultaneity of its meanings and images, limited only by the reader's capacity for interpretative indirection--his ability to read adirectionally (or in several directions at once), to see what is not before him in what is, and to sense "surplus" meanings (Derrida's term) beyond and within the immediate context.

"Crowds" drops out of sight for the next few entries but resurfaces in "Patent-Office Hospital" (February 23, presumably the same year.) (The metonymic flux of Specimen Days allows several points of entry; my desire is simply to select a few words that interest me, accompany them briefly in their flights to see what they'll do, and to present a bit of the action.):

> A few weeks ago the vast area of the second story of that noblest of Washington buildings was crowded close with rows of sick, badly wounded and dying soldiers. . . . Two of the immense apartments are fill'd with high and ponderous glass cases, crowded with models in miniature of every kind of utensil, machine, or invention, it ever enter'd into the mind of man to conceive (717).

The glass is a false partition between the soldiers and the models of inventions. The soldiers slip behind the glass on the invisible stream of a metonymy, on a shared sense of density and quantity. Perhaps they see their reflections in, as if behind, the glass. Death and destruction are two of the inventions that have "enter'd into the mind of man to conceive." It is impossible to separate the American ideal of ingenuity from the machinery of war. Perhaps there are models of deadly inventions in the cases; the soldiers are not models. The wounded and dying in the patent office are multiplied by all the other wounded and dying crowded into makeshift infirmaries in the war zones; the dazed crowd gathered under the street lamp to hear the first words of war reassembles here, weighing on the reader's conscience. The high-society

ballroom crowds from the Rappahannock mansion are "invited"--they must try to waltz among the rows of the sick and dying; put behind glass, they must attempt to speak proudly of the representations of middle-class industriousness among the wounded and dying who are there also, and whose ghost-like and ghastly images are reflected in the glass. All crowds, however, are constituents of the same mass. Sobered, the dancers bear witness. Brick mansions are as fragile as glass cases--neither can protect or shut out. The reader bears witness with the crowds. Language won't let us put anything by; nothing is lost in the text; everything returns, in the text as in life. Again, the metonymic alchemy of Whitman's language creates marbled images (liquified marble) that he lets stand, as they are, without comment. He makes no attempt to justify, explain away, or moralize the play of imagination. Do we fault him for this? "In the face of criticism . . . there is no better reply than silence" (CC 59).

According to contemporary poet and Zennist Armand Schwerner, 13th century Soto Zen master Dogen Zenji worked, through his writings, to "establish the non-self-being of any theoretically separable 'thing'" ("Armand Schwerner" 83). Whitman's linguistic experiments affect his subject matter in a similar way. In "Patent-Office Hospital," in addition to deploying the metonymy of "crowded," the thingness of glass is further undone by telescoping "glass cases" into the "glassy eye" of a dying soldier described near the end of the entry. On the one hand, glass preserves, protects, and displays symbols of the "American dream" of a strong, stable, prosperous society based on solid, empirical values of scientific progress, commercial growth, and industrial expansion. On the other hand, glass carries the sign of death; glass becomes "glassy" by association, less a clarity than a gloss, a concealing ideality. Like the glass cases and the contents displayed in them, the "American dream" is unable to reveal its dependence on oppression, inequality, and death (the cotton gin, slavery, and civil war; factories and child labor; later, mass production and mass murder--the UAW riots in the 1930s, etc.). To admit the

relationship would be to deconstruct the ideal, devalue it through confrontation with that which opposes it but which is, nevertheless, part of it. This is, of course, precisely and indirectly what Whitman's language and imagery does, denaturalizing not only the notion of a secure social order based on technology and production, but the logocentric underpinnings of all social structures and systems of thought. Whitman's language reveals the forces of non-separation that undo oppositions between the "theoretically separable" thingness of human and other, animate and inanimate, ideal and real. Ironically, some of the "products" of war in Specimen Days are dead soldiers, unusable houses, and a toppling, or at least destabilizing, of the ideals it intends to preserve and protect--"is American 'democracy' working?" Whitman's imagery repeatedly, indirectly, seems to ask.

Stepping a day and a sentence ahead to the next entry, "The White House by Moonlight" (February 24), we encounter a restlessly polysemous image:

> The white portico--the palace-like, tall, round columns, spotless as snow--the walls also--the tender and soft moonlight, flooding the pale marble, and making peculiar faint languishing shades, not shadows--everywhere a soft transparent hazy, thin, blue moon-lace, hanging in the air --the brilliant and extra-plentiful clusters of gas, on and around the facade, columns, portico, &c.--everything so white, so marbly pure and dazzling yet soft--the White House of future poems, and of dreams and dramas, there in the soft and copious moon--the gorgeous front, in the trees, under the lustrous flooding moon, full of reality, full of illusion--the forms of the trees, leafless, silent, in trunk and myriad-angles of branches, under the stars and sky--the White House of the land, and of beauty and night--sentries at the gates, and by the portico, silent, pacing there in blue overcoats--stopping you not at all, but eyeing you with sharp eyes, whichever way you move (718).

The description of "the President's house" and the title of the entry, juxtaposed against the previous entry, offset any sentimentally patriotic romanticizing the image might suggest to a less attentive reader. The White House is beautiful,

but not in a typical, superficial, or uncomplicated way. Syntactically, the dashes loosen, break up the sentence and serve as conduits for a confluence of normally separable substantives. Speeded up by the abbreviated sentence structure, moonlight, clusters of gas, marble facade, silent men, and silent trees rush together in a flood of imagery corresponding to the "dethingifying" (Schwerner's term) light of the "lustrous flooding moon" that bathes all, illuminating a scene simultaneously "full of reality, full of illusion." The sparking collusion of opposites--things and concepts--is exhilarating; the single, drawn out sentence that describes the White House gains momentum as it drives on, resists closure, increases in appetite, constantly going back over its territory to take in more detail, ingest more and more of the surroundings. "Sexuality is rhetoric," Shoshana Felman deduces, examining the play of language in Henry James' Turn of the Screw, "since it essentially consists of ambiguity: it is the coexistence of dynamically antagonistic meanings. . . . is the division and divisiveness of meaning . . . is meaning as division, meaning as conflict" (112). Despite its marble columns, the White House is diluted as a self-confident symbol of freedom, equality, law, and order; of stability and permanence. Like the inventions behind glass in the patent office, the White House fails to respond adequately as a symbol to current social circumstances: the atavistic metaphor "palace-like" suggests monarchy rather than democracy (is our democracy working?). Whitman's language weakens ideological supports by exposing a dissemblance. The image becomes malleable, "everything so white, so marbly pure . . . yet soft," soluble rather than hard and inviolable. Whitman's linguistic reevaluation of the White House attempts to break down its apparently solid, irrevocable thingness, not to emasculate it as a symbol, but to revitalize it by opening it to the ever-fresh, kinetic, unifying forces of nature; he democratizes the White House with its Europeanized, neoclassical architectural style by bringing it into word-for-word contact with its surroundings. As Whitman tampers with our language and image systems, he tampers with our modes of thought. He decreates the old, confining modes

of expression, with their concepts, symbols, and rhetorical structures, in order to recreate an open, profoundly aware, less codified and hard edged consciousness--Zen "big mind." In Zen, as Schwerner says (quoting Zenji), "'all concepts are misconceptions'" (personal interview, Oct. 1988). As readers, we must perform as the sentries, stopping nothing, but carefully watching every move, "whichever way [the sentences] move."

weakening ideological facades exposing a dissemblance
rushing men trees lustrous flooding
moonlight marble facade
silence

Tampering with our modes of thought also means breaking the flow of our reading habits.

Whitman's devaluation and disruption of the conventional modes of reading and writing, and his disrespect for authoritativeness of the printed text are fundamental to his aesthetic stance. Our practice in seeing freshly and essentially must begin with our reading. By breaking our reading habits, we break our habitual modes of seeing and conceiving, hence our way of reconstructing our world in writing --that is, our textualization of experience. In the first entry of Specimen Days, Whitman warns the reader that the text will not follow a logical, conventional narrative pattern, but attempt to preserve the flux of experience as it affects us while we are in the midst of it. "The luxury of riant grass and blowing breeze" of that July day in 1882 seemed to command him to "go home, untie the bundle, reel out diary-scraps and memoranda, just as they are, large or small, one after another, into print-pages." His own reading habits are influenced by the same forces that affect his writing: he reads "wholly without plan . . . by fits and starts--fragments: read in moods: no sequence, no order, no nothing" (CC 155). His reading process followed "no system at all," observes Richard Bucke, Whitman's

biographer:

> If he sat in the library an hour, he would have half a dozen volumes about him, on the table, on the chairs and on the floor. He seemed to read a few pages here and a few there, and pass from place to place, from volume to volume, doubtless pursuing some clue or thread of his own (quoted in Arnes 29).

By reading in "fits and starts," according to "moods," and by writing in "the gush, the throb, the flood, of the moment" (CC 207), Whitman fractures the presumed integrity of the text; he denaturalizes the expected, carefully planned marshalling of perception, the dramatization of emotion, and the self-conscious staging of events in the Hawthornian (and, to some extent Melvillian) guise of natural phenomena.

Literature is valuable in so far as it puts us in rapport with energies circulating through nature and the unconscious. Whitman even recommends the rereading of his own book under natural conditions. In "The Lesson of a Tree," he instructs the reader: "Go and sit in a grove or woods, with one or more of those voiceless companions [trees], and read the foregoing, and think" (790). The point is not nature v text, but the marginalization of the text as self-sufficient entity. Whitman tropes the notion of printed text as content and context with the bordering white space as absence. In Specimen Days, the margins of the text, the off-page space of the world becomes the source text, while the printed text becomes the marginal notations that lead one back off the page into experience. The printed text becomes an intertext with nature. The effect is to "launch the reader into his own imaginative experience" (Birdsall 120); if we do not follow the lead of the language, we cannot fully comprehend the writing.

"A book frees the reader, enables him to turn his interest from the text to the unwritten," claims Aarnes, interpreting Thoreau's remarks on books and reading (28). Like Thoreau in Walden, Whitman does not impart knowledge or provide "truth," but encourages the reader to find it on his own. In "The American Scholar," according to Poirier, Emerson advises us not to seek truth

in our reading, "but rather those creative acts by which the works were produced, the performative movements" (57). Perhaps instructed himself by Emerson's 1838 essay, the only form of "instruction" Whitman gives his readers is to do their own practice, not only by reading his book but by forgetting about it--scrapping it in for firsthand experience:

> First of all prepare for study by the following self-teaching exercises. Abstract yourself from this book: realize where you are at present located, the point you stand that is now to you the centre of all. Look up overhead, think of space stretching out, think of all the unnumbered orbs wheeling safely there, invisible to us by day, some visible by night (Notes and Fragments; quoted in Aarnes 31).

The heuristic of Specimen Days is to practice seeing, independently, without rhetorical, logical, or conceptual nets; to prepare our minds to receive--what? What no one can tell us. What happens. What is. The practice of Specimen Days is to attain "mindfulness," Zen "readiness of mind." Meditating on the vastness of space is a way of exercising our minds, stretching out our perception, learning that what is present also covers an absence. There is something invisible, both a concrete something not seen when something else intervenes, or when another object is in focus, and a spiritual something, an essence; and only some of what's visible is ever visible at all. No matter how much we see, we know, we will never perceive/conceive it all. Such "exercises" don't merely prepare us for a suspension of textual and teleological closure, but for the recognition that there is no closure, that perception and understanding are a "continual sound" (Oppen's phrase)--sonorously, naturally endless.

movement *myriad angles branching*

silence

or a murmur

* * * WORDS, IMAGES, LETTERS... SEEING, ACTING * * *

Performative perception--decentered, open & alert, "ready" & mobile--supported by a loose & agile compositional format (or, better, a performative mode of perception of which an inscriptional methodos based on metonymy is the practice) is the key to navigating through Specimen Days.

In "Seeing Niagara to Advantage" (877), Whitman displaces the ideal view of the falls with its evanescent reality. He doesn't stop to admire the falls, but views them while in motion: "We were very slowly crossing the Suspension bridge--not a full stop anywhere." His eyes flow with the rhythm of his body, drifting from the falls, the soundless, temporary center of the image, to the centerless, silent sky. Though Whitman doesn't want us to focus on one thing at the expense of whatever else is happening, he does want us to observe. He refuses to separate the falls from their surroundings, the "bronze cedars" and "immense materiality" of sky. The "main attraction" is the entire field of vision ("and not a barleycorn less," as he says in "Song of Myself"). By adjusting his sight to the actual perspective, he gives us a corrected image of the real--not the typical, idealized, roaring falls. He wants us to stay with things and to move with them, flow with them. The language and the movement are simple, but they are a revelatory simplicity. The longer we look and the better we keep pace with events, the more we see. The view of the falls as a whole is not a static picture, but an active, smooth, continuous, centerless, moment of perception--an experience. The performative observation is tempered and guided by the physical and associative relationships among objects in the scene itself--including the observer's shifting point of view--rather than by any self-consciously artistic intent. Whitman admits the transitoriness of the observation, which is fundamental to its experiential nature--this view of the falls occurred on June 4, 1880, during a five-minute walk across a suspension bridge. How, then, can the falls ever mean less than

the totality of its viewings? Life is a continuous, unending chain of mutual exchanges between self and other--performative, transitive, impermanent--like the sky--(and Whitman is a sky man) immense, material, at once everywhere and nowhere, absorbing all identity, but itself having no identity. Nature is a perpetual theme in variation.

night shadows passing over the white portico
soft moonlight

Whitman's performative observations are actions in an experiential field; they are the practice of an enriching self-dilution, a means of emptying the self through an unself-conscious filling of the self with what it encounters. Suzuki: "When you do something, you should burn yourself completely, like a good bonfire, leaving no trace of yourself" (62). As autobiography, rather than tracing the development of individual personality, Specimen Days traces its disintegration. Remembering his childhood along the Paumanok, Whitman recovers a self whose identity begins at the margins of the ego. What we see is the evolution of a mobile, homeostatic being: "I spent intervals, many years, all seasons, sometimes riding, sometimes boating, but generally afoot (I was always a great walker,) absorbing fields, shores, marine incidents, characters, the baymen, farmers, pilots. . . ." ("Paumanok, and My Life on It as Child and Young Man," 698). Whitman himself is a vehicle of motion, a natural phenomenon. His eye scans a scene, his body traverses landscapes, and in several entries he physically interacts with nature. In "Mulleins and Mulleins" (805), he places his hand over (or under) the weed, measuring the human against the other (the leaves are "as broad as my hand," he says). In "Spring Overtures-Recreations," he sports with nature, "exercising arms, chest, my whole body, by a tough oak sapling"; The intimate contact is revitalizing: "I can feel its young sap and virtue welling up out of the ground and tingling through me from crown to toe, like health's wine." The mind, peregrinating

with the body and eye, conveys self out of self. Words and actions in Specimen Days serve as touchstones and stepping off points for imaginative immersion in the real: "As I write, the whole experience comes back to me after the lapse of forty and more years--the soothing rustle of the waves, and the saline smell. . ." (698). As the words find their way back to experiences, the "I" can forget itself; the scene takes over. Writing of "Capes Eternity and Trinity," Whitman states "I write while I am before them face to face" (882). Writing is confrontational. In a note appended to the first entry of the book ("A Happy Hour's Command"), Whitman describes the notes from which he composed Specimen Days as "impromptu jottings in pencil to refresh my memory . . . some scratched down" from overheard stories and some "blotch'd here and there with more than one blood-stain, hurriedly written . . ." (689). The origins of the book are in life, in the thick of events, not the library. The language is marred by the reality it transcribes; it is the field record of an observer/participator actively involved in, and diminished as an author by, the scenes recorded. The lack of "finish" and the wrenched syntax of the book are a linguistic re-presentation of the scene of writing. We must write "in the gush, the throb, the flood, of the moment . . . no prepared picture" can match the "thing itself." "You want to catch its first spirit--to tally its birth. By writing at the instant the very heart-beat of life is caught" (CC 208). Whitman's language attempts to convey the primal spontaneity of the moment of inscription at the point of impact between words and reality.

Recitation is one way of troping the confinements of print-bound language. Reading out loud returns words to their origins. Voice lifts language off the page, gives it back to nature--words become sounds lost among other sounds. If language is essentially a lived experience, then live performance is its most genuine expression. As a youth, Whitman would "race up an down the hard sand" on the then "long, bare, unfrequented shore" of Coney Island and "declaim Homer or Shakespeare to the surf and sea-gulls by the hour" (698). In a later entry ("Omnibus Jaunts and Drivers"), Whitman

recalls riding down Broadway "declaiming some stormy passage from Julius Caesar or Richard, (you could roar as loudly as you chose in that heavy, dense, uninterrupted street-bass.)" (703). He tests the classics by the bare, hard, value-leveling frankness of nature. Given their concrete values as human voice and sound, Shakespeare's words are no more or less powerful than the voices and sounds of the life and the reality surrounding them, into which they fade. Reality is the bass note, the fundamental rhythm; the text slides over and through it as one of so many riffs. Whitman becomes a go-between, a performative crossing and point of dispersal at the boundaries of art and life. Texts are brought out of the library, filtered through memory, imagination, and voice, and fed back into the stream of experience. Whitman's revoicings of library-bound, canonized, "literary" texts democratizes them, de-authorizes them, and reinvests language with the "aura" of "human use," as Michael Heller says of the Objectivist poets (applying Walter Benjamin's terminology).

virtue
welling up out of the ground
swarms

In Specimen Days, Whitman redirects language into the world from which it seems to have flown. Whitman's "flight to the real," as Regis Durand puts it (171), is a return flight, an affirmative flight to, rather than flight from, an "indefinable something." In true pioneer spirit, Whitman is an adventurer, a prospector trying to recover the "blood and muscle" of language (Whitman's phrases), the rich human and natural veins of speech lost beneath the fool's gold of rhetoric and the knowledge-horn of plenty's spilling out of cliches and ready-made world views like hollow wax fruit.

As Durand points out, the eidetic quality of Whitman's language does not suggest a failure of communication: "It is a gesture addressed to the other from whom an interpretation is demanded" (171). By pointing to rather than

pointing out, the text strengthens the bonds between reader and writer, and subverts reductivist readings. The pointing to, like the "acting-out" (Durand) in Specimen Days "is not as a unifying concept to which it can be reduced, but rather as a necessary aporia. The indeterminacy or play introduced by the performative mode is analogous to--and perhaps of the nature of--that of desire" (172). One of the effects of Whitman's method of performative perception (his somatic "acting-out") and the semic fluidity of his language is to bring the reader's imagination into play (and his body, too, if he follows Whitman's lead), making the text an interactive network, an ever-active point of energy exchange between readers and author. The text becomes an open field of play, the reader and writer brought face to face with the same, silent force (of "nature," of language) which "is, yet says nothing," as Whitman says in "Lesson of a Tree" (790).

absorbing
marine incidents
hurriedly written

The title of a brief entry, "A Hint of Wild Nature," suggests the polysemous, nonpropositional quality of nature--or, more accurately, its linguistic reinscription--that, in its imagistic re-presentation on the page, becomes a cipher of itself, requiring our interaction, our tracing of its leads, if it is to "mean" at all. Whitman's description of a flock of wild geese he observes while crossing the Delaware yields a sense of the "untold pointed at," as he describes the Milky Way in an earlier entry (SD 825). He sees them "right overhead, not very high up, ranged in V-shape, in relief against the noon clouds of light smoke-color" (875). He notes having "queer thoughts" while watching them, their "rapid flight . . . flashing" to him."a hint of the whole spread of Nature." The eye tracks their rapid motion through the "spacious, airy realm"; a flash of insight doesn't close around an answer, but opens the

mind further to ponder the "never-visited recesses of sea, sky, shore," not to discover some secret meaning, but simply to consider them in themselves. Nature acts like--or as--the drift of homophones through Whitman's text, but doesn't explain. The geese "then disappear in the distance," and Whitman's words follow his sight, ending the entry into blank page space and a lapse of time--one month slips through the crack between the end of this entry and the beginning of the next.

the gush, the throb, the flood

Whitman's language is presentational, rather than representational, right down to the letter. The "V-shape" of the flock of geese, a natural formation, repeats itself in the "v"s of "never-visited." The migration of the letters recovers, reverifies, and reanimates the relationship of language to nature, while reinscribing nature as a play of graphemes. The "V"s become holes in the words through which geese and sky enter, breaking the formation of letters and scattering definition. Like an ancient, cuneiform language, the letters transform into ideograms, images of nature. The "V" is also an arrow--upside down on the page, horizontal in the sky. The passage becomes directionally confusing and linguistically unstable. "V"s are simultaneously letters and a flight formation; the definitive, logical, linear progression of letters on the page is "stirr'd up" (a favorite phrase of Whitman's in Specimen Days) by the live, three dimensional, endlessly fading flight of birds into depthless space. The letters remain on the page while the thing it traces, which leaves its memory in the shape of a letter, gradually disappears. The "V" is also victory--the triumph of experience over calcifying linguistic conventions. Commenting on his methods of arriving (like geese flying) at moments of insight in his writing, Whitman claims that he has "caught much on the fly: things as they come and go--on the spur of the moment. I have never [see them flying?] forced my mind" (CC 113). The puzzling

correspondences between language and nature, the "queer thoughts" that resist statement, and the mysterious collusion of language, image, and natural phenomenon is the irreducible meaning of the entry, and of the book as a whole. Nature points only to itself, its vast expanses of "sea, sky, shore." In Zen, "according to Dogen-zenji, every existence is a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. Each existence [including linguistic existence] is another expression of the quality of being itself" (Suzuki 104). As readers we must take the "plunge," like so many of Henry James' characters, into the possibilities of Whitman's prose; if we follow the leads of the "V," exploring its interactions with nature, its oscillation between letter and image, we discover, like the governess in James' Turn of the Screw, "depths, depths! The more I go over it, the more I see in it."

In "A Hint of Wild Nature," the eye performs like a trickster to coax the immediate audience, the "I" out of itself; but the writing effect of Specimen Days is most compelling when a more fully somatic moment of performative perception is re-presented through a polysemous writing style and reenacted through our reading (and rereading) of the text. Language, "nature," author, and readers meet on-or through--the page, which functions as a vector field, tracing or graphing an energy nexus. Interpenetrations of word and image, along with the narrative discontinuities of Specimen Days, encourage such an adirectional, indirect reading--or pattern reading--of the book (Roland Barthes: the "writerly [i.e., deconstructed] text is reversible"). To paraphrase Baudrillard (as quoted in Durand), the surface flux of language deflects the normal, or logical, path of discourse (173). The text becomes the site of--or script for--a reading experience (that is, to adapt Pound's definition of the image, an intellectual, emotional, and physical complex in an instant of time). The page--the language on the page--becomes a hinge, or opening, for the passage of the reader through the text.

Following the "V" back through Specimen Days, we light on "Manhattan from the Bay." In this passage, as in several of the entries, the pulsion at the

surface of language seduces us to follow the play of word and image that displaces, resists, or simply vexes our concerns for logical order and narrative consistency. The extent to which Whitman's language succeeds with us depends on the degree of our own irresoluteness, our willingness to relinquish willfulness and give ourselves over to the "infinite play of the world" the text presents (Barthes 5). When Whitman leaves solid land for a "sail in the wide bay", the "rough, tossing ride" jostles his perspective, yielding a "free sight" in the "full sun." The multifarious phenomena he observes only temporarily cohere as "V-shaped Manhattan." Writing under the influences of wind, weather, and motion, buoyed on the fluid element of nature, Whitman perceives his surroundings with Zen "smooth, natural, flexible mind" (Suzuki 110). Once Whitman ships out, the language of the passage, too, falls under the influence, and performs in the spirit of his experience. Most of the passage consists of a single, cumulative sentence, describing ships he sees on the bay, the bridges, the distant city, and the landscapes of Manhattan and New Jersey--not in an orderly manner, but tossed and run together as Whitman's eyes bounce and shift on the deck of the wave-tossed ferry. Syntactically, dashes simultaneously set off and set elements inside each other, enacting an interpenetration that is repeated imagistically. The "grand obelisk-like towers of the bridge" are "throwing free graceful interlinking loops high across the tumbled tumultuous current below." The steady, abstract, monumental, clean sweep of the bridge is countered by the unruly currents and by its own description. Its grand loops are "thrown," picking up some of the impulsiveness of the water. Also, the "graceful loops," like the flight formation of geese in the previous passage, are mimicked, inverted, in the "U"s of the "tumbled tumultuous current," like a linguistic shadow cast on water. Again, the referent only seems to precede the language, the shape and thrust of the bridge evoking the "U" words, as the language displaces the referent. Language becomes rebus-like; conventional distinctions among words and objects are subverted. The assonance of the phrase merges the shape of the

bridge with the sound and force of the water; the image of the bridge appears upside down, reflected in the words as in water--as if the words were the water, carnivalizing the hierarchic distinction among referent, signified, and signifier; such "dethingifying" image play may also suggest an inherent "desire" in the nature of objects to return to a primal state of unity, the energies that shape the bridge drawing it back into the fluid, undifferentiated element it strives to tower separately and arrogantly above. Ommmm.

Nothing is perfectly clear, absolutely, individually itself in the passage. Everything is in motion and the qualities of one thing feed into those of another; individual identity disintegrates as it is asserted. The gracefulness of the bridge reemerges farther along in the sentence in the "careening things of grace and wonder," the "schooner yachts." But before naming them as yachts, Whitman describes them as "swift-darting fish-birds" with "fierce, pure, hawk-like beauty and motion." Withholding the name throws us (as the bridge is thrown) temporarily off balance--are they birds, fish, or boats? Or, since they share an essential energy, all in one, a Buddhist manyness in oneness? Grammatically, Whitman's strategy of deconstructive non-separation is carried through even in the hyphenated modifiers and noun phrases (as it is throughout Specimen Days--"sea-gull," "cedar-tree," and "bumble-bees" are examples). The hyphen makes the adjective part of the noun or the verbal, as the case may be. In the noun phrase "fish-birds", the quality of the thing becomes part of the thing itself, rather than a descriptive isolation of separable aspects of the thing. The nominative takes in its modifiers. The hyphenated modifiers partially offset syntactic entropy caused by piling up separate, commaed-off adjectives before a noun. In the case of "swift-darting," the adjective becomes part of the participial action, rather than a halting adverbial analysis of it. In "hawk-like," the hawk is its likeness, and so the "beauty" is not like a hawk, but hawking. Whitman won't let even the simplest syntactical units stand pat.

The decentering drive of the language in "Manhattan from the Bay"

dethingifies the things described, explodes single, self-limiting identity as it implodes the imagery, releasing things into the essential energies and forces they share with each other, whether animate or inanimate--in fact, such categories cease to be operative. "Every object has its lesson, enclosing the suggestion of everything else" ("Mulleins and Mulleins," SD 805). To respond adequately to Whitman's language, we must be prepared to follow his lead and "enter experience unarmed"; we must be ready to shatter "the form of [our] own mind set" (Heller speaking of Oppen 103) and achieve a Zen-like oneness with our surroundings, and the drift of our minds.

Whitman's linguistic "studies," sketches, of life are as pliant and resilient as a body in nature. The language bends, like a young sapling; the syntax and the perception it embodies bend to the limits of the sayable. The long sentence in "Manhattan from the Bay" reshuffles, collides objects, collapsing conventions of perspective, spatial orientation, and the integrity of the object. The entire sentence is frontal, like a cubist painting, and breathlessly tries to keep up with the intense activity of experience, sacrificing clear, orderly syntax along the way. Given the nature of modern perceptions of time and motion, as they begin to show through in Whitman's writing, language must be transformed --even transmogrified--if it is to communicate at all: "The sentence as first act of nature, as lightning, as passage of force from subject to object, quick . . . from me to you, the VERB, between two nouns" (Olson 153). Whitman's metasentence is self-deconstructive and self-revisionary, containing its own contradictions: "the broad water-spread everywhere crowded--no, not crowded, but thick as stars in the sky." Like a Rauschenberg collage, the typical passage in Specimen Days does not go for "finish," but exposes its own process of formation, transmuting itself and shifting directions as its imagery decategorizes and alters what we perceive as "reality," alerting the reader to alter his own method of reading. Whitman does not intend to confuse the reader, but to communicate straightforwardly with him: the "nature" of reality, not as entitative self-presence but as

impartial force, is as much a matter of language as physical objects: both are manifestations of the same force, the same creation that, like the Tibetan goddess Dolma, exists in multiple forms. The whole project of defining--establishing stable, untroubled, unruffled, permanent inscriptions--is rendered suspect. Whitman "explores reality with a creative effort," as Michael Heller says of George Oppen's poetry (93). Speaking of the Objectivists in general, Heller notes their emphasis on the "clear physical eye . . . an eye desirous of seeing what is" (11); Whitman's clear spiritual eye sees disintegratively to what is," which is by no means easy to say. Whitman's linguistic performance here is a reenactment, a re-presentation, of the "show" he experiences. What Felman says of the governess in Turn of the Screw can also be claimed for Whitman: he "interprets experience while undergoing it" (124).

In Objectivist poetry such as Carl Rakosi's, metonymy sometimes takes over a poem; the author becomes an arranger of signs and the poem a statement of objects ("upright capstan, / small eagles . . . . / is the port of N.Y. . . . / gilders, stampers, pen-makers, goldbeaters / . . . the bronze doors of the Guaranty Trust, / . . . A technical display." From "The City (1925)," The Collected Poems of Carl Rakosi, 273). The metonymic clustering in the poem is a recreation of "an entire structure of reality" (Heller 44). Similarly, in "Manhattan from the Bay," the "I" writing becomes lost "amid" the flow of language and experience--the experience of language--only regaining itself toward the end of the entry as the long, rambling sentence comes to a pause. In a final, less wild, reorienting sentence-strophe, Whitman reminds us that the revelatory vision takes place at a particular point in space and time, the whole scene shifting at a moment's notice: "as I see it, under a miracle of limpid sky, delicious light of heaven above, and June haze on the surface below." The "I," however, fades immediately back into the eidetic language that cadences--rather than closes--the entry, the passage coming to rest on an expansive image that leads us, like the sea birds of the previous entry, back into the infiniteness of possibility, the blankness of the page, the rewritings

only we can write. To really feel it, experience it, we should have it whole, should read it out loud, our breaths struggling to keep pace:

> From my point of view, as I write amid the soft breeze, with a sea-temperature, surely nothing on earth of its kind can go beyond this show. To the left the North river with its far vista--nearer, three or four war-ships, anchor'd peacefully--the Jersey side, the banks of Weehawken, the Palisades, and the gradually receding blue, lost in the distance--to the right the East river--the mast-hemm'd shores--the grand obelisk-like towers of the bridge, one on either side, in haze, yet plainly defin'd, giant brothers twain, throwing free graceful interlinking loops high across the tumbled tumultuous current below--(the tide is just changing to its ebb)--the broad water-spread everywhere crowded--no, not crowded, but thick as stars in the sky--with all sorts and sizes of sail and steam vessels, plying ferry-boats, arriving and departing coasters, great ocean Dons, iron-black, modern, magnificent in size and power, fill'd with their incalculable value of human life and precious merchandise--with here and there, above all, those daring, careening things of grace and wonder, those white and shaded swift-darting fish-birds, (I wonder if shore or sea elsewhere can outvie them,) ever with their slanting spars, and fierce, pure, hawk-like beauty and motion--first-class New York sloop or schooner yachts, sailing, this fine day, the free sea in good wind. And rising out of the midst, tall-topt ship-hemm'd, modern, American, yet strangely oriental, V-shaped Manhattan, with its compact mass, its spires, its cloud-touching edifices group'd at the centre--the green of the trees, and all the white, brown and gray of the architecture well blended, as I see it, under a miracle of limpid sky, delicious light of heaven above, and June haze on the surface below (822-23).

"So the point is to be ready for observing things, and to be ready for thinking. This is called emptiness of your mind" (Suzuki 115). Knowledge, in Specimen Days, is "not teleological, but process-ional" (Paul Bove 160; speaking of "There Was a Child Went Forth"). And for the reader, to understand Specimen Days--to interpret it--is to undergo the text's tortions, to perform it.

* * * * * * * * * *

"V"

the temporary shelter in which we gather
the wedge, insertion,
the track

"The trouble mostly is that writers become writers and cease to be men: writers reflect writers, writers again reflect writers, until the man is worn thin--worn through" (CC 207). Whitman doesn't want writers to forget their functions as human actors. Writer, text, and language are in a symbiotic relationship; if one loses contact with reality, the others will soon follow. The only way to keep writing fresh is to reintegrate it with lived experience. As Specimen Days continually demonstrates, the source of the "new" and the experimental in literature is not in the study, but in what lies before us--in the ancient presentness of seas, forests, skies, prairies, and in those mass gatherings of human life--cities. And not these perceived as entities--or ends--in themselves, but as temporary manifestations of impartial forces--like images on the page of the universe. The performative aesthetic of Specimen Days complicates the text's stance toward reality--the performance of the language is a reenactment of the writer's performative perception, and the writer himself is an actor/character in his own writing. A writer must "throw identity . . . *onto* his pages," Whitman states (CC 205)--not egocentric ruminations but evidence of a self-involved, acting in the world. The interpenetration of text, self, and the world occurs on several fronts. The text must remain open and interpretable on several levels--linguistic, imagistic, symbolic, structural, and intentional--to bear witness to its own truth. The eidetic stance is just one rhetorical position among many.

True revolution is a "revolution of consciousness," claims contemporary poet and Zennist Gary Snyder, which is fought by reforming "the key images, myths, archetypes" of Western culture "so that life won't seem worth living unless one is on the transforming energy's side" (101). Objective A: language.

Whitman's textual practice, his manner of seeing essentially, altered 19th-century ways of looking at and thinking about the world by keeping knowledge as fresh, active, and processual as perception itself. In post WWII America, Charles Olson registers the after shock of Whitman's revolt in his influential essay "Projective Verse." Poetry, Olson claims, consists of physically manipulable elements: syllable, line, image, sound, sense--all participate equally--non-hierarchically--in the kinetic of the poem. For Whitman, too, as we saw in "Manhattan by the Bay," knowledge is in motion on the page (and in us, as poet Louis Zukofsky would say), not in any single point of view or belief about the relationship of language to reality, and it is motion, finally, that weds thought and matter:

> Every molecule of matter in the whole universe is swinging to and fro; every particle of ether which fills space is in jelly-like vibration. . . . Every human sense is the result of motion; every perception, every thought is but motion of the molecules of the brain translated by that incomprehensible thing we call mind. The process of growth, of existence, of decay, whether in worlds, or in the minutest organisms, are but motion" (SD 921).

"O" is the sounding of continuous motion, of "V" (ov) of ongoingness, the circling monotone of a universal rhythm. Through his deconstructive repetitions of words and images, Whitman "melts down" the "arbitrary associations" of words "for his purpose," as Wordsworth describes the process, 67 years before the first dated entry of Whitman's book (quoted in Poirier 43). Whitman unfreezes language, allows words to create their own associations within the text, keeping them perpetually fluid. Language remains open, in service of a free, "smooth," "soft thinking" state of Zen (^) "mindfulness" (Suzuki's terms) with which he displaces categorical, differential modes of thought. The "quality of being," Suzuki says, "is nothing but its speedy activity" (105).

In his discussion of the preface to the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass, Bove states that Whitman "uses the language of Western telos-oriented

structures to go beyond the idea that the pursuit of a knowable end is a totally adequate mode of life" (166). In Specimen Days, Whitman tropes positivism's fetishistic interest in facticity and eidetic language by turning it against its typical philosophical presuppositions. Whitman is not interested in asserting the self-substantiality of the factual and the visible, in using reality to explain and justify our world and our actions to ourselves, or in expounding principles about the nature of reality. He is concerned, rather, with disinterpreting the world along its old seams, deconstructively penetrating to a "core unity," as he terms it in "Carlyle from American Points of View" (896), a lengthy, philosophical entry near the end of the text (the philosophy comes late--Whitman does not want us to appreciate Specimen Days in the abstract, but to experience the text's torsions). He seeks a unity that pre-exists and resists permanent conception, that can only be spoken of as a "universal vagueness." Whitman's idea of unity can't be sealed in a discursive concept or delimited by a particular religious, political, or scientific point of view. It can be perceived only in motion, in the elusive essence of material phenomena and in its textual tracking through a language and imagery that must "almost successfully resist intelligence," as Wallace Stevens has said. Whitman's "specimen days" are valuable as experiential samplings that fragment and atomize logocentricity, rather than serving as proofs of a metaphysical theorem. For Whitman as for William James, the "real" is not what has been named, categorized, and analyzed for us, but something that we can only catch in action, on the wing: "We may glimpse it, but we never grasp it; what we grasp is always some substitute for it which previous human thinking has peptonized and cooked for our consumption" (quoted in Poirier 48). The speed of thought must equal the speed of perception.

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Clearly, then, Whitman's deconstructive strategies are not mere stylistic

maneuvers. As he says in Camden Conversations, the "style is to have no style" (59). Kenosis is the essence of Whitman's style--the shedding of conventional narrative technique, of sentimental distortions of reality, of overstuffed rhetoric, and of technique for technique's sake. One of Whitman's main complaints about "nineteenth century verse lovers" is their penchant for "abstract, technical beauty," which he takes as evidence of a "tendency of poetic culture to morbidity . . . the sickliness of all technical thought or refinement in itself." Technical refinement for its own sake produces "abnormal beauty" because it is cut off from reality, like the severed, decaying limb of a tree--decadent; or like a heavily lacquered wood--we can no longer trace the grain. Technical dallying displaces "first hand" experience of "democratic concretes . . . the body, the earth and sea, sex and the like" (874). Whitman's attack on style is an indirection, a consequence of his search for the"indefinable something" (CC 185) that much literature evades or overlooks. In Specimen Days, Whitman keeps his own technical apparatus to a minimum, carrying into the text only the gear necessary "for simply getting through: after that I would not give a twist of my chair for all the rest" (CC 113). Whitman eliminates unnecessary technical baggage to enable the creative act to keep pace with perception and thought. This maneuver allows him to recover an unnameable, multivalent something in his writing through patient, attentive listening and watching--"I listen and wait" says the speaker in "Song of Myself"; his waiting, however, does not consist of passive, objective observation, but performative perception. His style is "no style" because it is somatic--a style that exists in pulse, breath, and motion; a syntax and structure that moves, words meant to be voiced; imagery that evolves from the eye in motion and the body in action (In several entries in Specimen Days, Whitman describes himself interacting with the environment: exercising himself against a young sapling, for example, or reciting verse to the seas and streets, or rereading works of literature by a pond or under a tree--"eventually trying it all by nature," as he says in "Final Confessions--Literary Tests") (925). This

is a legacy Whitman leaves to the Objectivists in the 1930s and the early postmodernists. Olson in "Projective Verse" (1950): "breath allows all the speech-force of language back in. . . . Which brings us up, immediately, bang, against tenses, in fact against syntax, in fact against grammar generally, that is, as we have inherited it " (152) and "is it not the PLAY of a mind we are after. . . . is it not, suddenly, slow things, similes, say, adjectives, or such, that we are bored by? . . . any slackness takes off attention. . . . observation . . . must be so juxtaposed, apposed, set in, that it does not, for an instant, sap the going energy. . . ." (151-52). Style confines, cramps, and codifies perception; "no style" creates openness, open mind, Zen "mindfulness"--an ever "readiness of mind." "No style" gives Whitman's prose the pliancy to sprint after a "reality 'independent' of human thinking," as William James defines it, "a thing very hard to find," recognizable as "what is just entering into experience, and yet to be named," or as an "aboriginal presence in experience, before any belief about the presence had arisen, before any human conception had been applied" (quoted in Poirier 48).

* * * THE SELF AND RASA * * *

the sky above Niagara
a flock of geese

One consequence of a metonymic reading procedure, in which reading must act out--interact with--the text, is to trick ourselves out of ourselves, or out of producing a work that resembles "us," as complete, rationalized identities. At one point in Specimen Days, Whitman notes how the "landscape loses itself in the sky." Following nature's lead, loss of self is one of the key performative gestures of the book ("I merge myself in the perfect day," Whitman says elsewhere in the text). "When we forget ourselves, we actually are the true activity of the big existence, or reality itself. . . . The purpose of

our practice is to be aware of this fact" (Suzuki 79). In Specimen Days, the "I" writing often asserts itself initially in a subordinate clause, then as an element in a main clause (as either subject or some form of object) whose function is to transcribe the immediate surroundings --"As I sit a moment writing this by the bank, I see . . ."; "As I write, 5-1/2 P.M., here by the creek, nothing can exceed the quiet splendor and freshness around me"; "As I write this, two or three weeks later, I am sitting near the brook under a tulip tree, 70 feet high, thick with the fresh verdure of its young maturity . . . ."; "As I write, the whole experience comes back to me. . . ." (795, 786, 785, 698). The "I" is subordinate to, and affected by, its surroundings. In his poetry, Whitman presents the self as "an originless thing" (Bove 158); in Specimen Days, too, Whitman conceives of the self as the world, always in the process of definition, not the ego.

> As I walk'd slowly over the grass, the sun shone out enough to show the shadow moving with me. Somehow I seem'd to get identity with each and every thing around me, in its condition. Nature was naked, and I was also (807).

In this passage the "I," the man, the solid body with a distinct identity and appearance metonymically dissipates into his shadow, as it moves across the grass, emptying himself into the neuter of his recognizable body. The image is mind opening. Seeing his shadow spread out over all the individual blades of grass, deepening their color, Whitman gets free of himself and imaginatively blends with everything his gaze absorbs and his shadow touches. His nakedness--he had been bathing, rinsing himself in the "crystal running waters," purifying himself--is a preparatory ritual to the loss of self; it creates a state of no-mind mind--"I was too joyous to speculate." Yet, looking back on the experience,

> I might have thought somehow in this vein: Perhaps the inner never lost rapport we hold with earth, light, air, trees, &c., is not to be realized through eyes and mind only, but through the whole corporeal body, which I will not have blinded or bandaged any

more than the eyes (807).

Ideas are after thoughts of experience. Understanding is first of all somatic, processual, and interactive. We must be ready to give up all preconceptions, including concepts of ourselves, our self-images, before the otherness of nature. We must strip off our adaptive, merely public presentations of self as we strip off clothes. The "I" "embodying all," including the "stellar concave spreading overhead" ("Hours for the Soul," SD 825), is not an "I" in the conventional sense--signifying a particular man, designated by a particular name, living at a particular address and having his own routine of job and habits and relationships with specifically named and identifiable others. Whitman's "I" is an expanded, exploded, not-"I" "I," a self-composed of all selves. Throughout Specimen Days, the individual "I" is obliterated in the moment of its articulation. Sometimes, a single sentence oscillates between self-assertion and self loss: "Out of the sane, silent, beauteous miracles that envelope and fuse me--trees, water, grass, sunlight, and early frost--the one I am looking at most to-day is the sky" ("The Sky--Days and Nights--Happiness" 793). The subject-verb-object logic of this sentence contradicts itself. The I is both fused with nature and, in its I-am-myself-looking-at-the-other mode, separate from it. It then becomes lost for a duration in the eidetic language of the passage, which describes the qualities of sky. "Experience is absorption" (Bove 162). By constantly calling attention to the participatory acts of the "I"--whether observing nature and/or bodily interacting with it--and then submerging the "I" into the objects perceived or interacted with, Whitman demonstrates the tentativeness of the boundaries, both physical and conceptual, separating self and other. "You must be true to your own way until at last you actually come to the point where you see it is necessary to forget all about yourself" (Suzuki 43). The language in Specimen Days traces Whitman's path toward self-transcendence (or perforation); the entries are, in this sense, spiritual exercises, making his "way" accessible to the committed reader.

The loss of self in Whitman, however, is not a cause of fear, as it often is in Poe. Jaishree Odin describes Poe's use of horror, in tales such as "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Ms. Found in a Bottle," and "A Descent into the Maelstrom," as a reading effect intended to recreate, in the reader, the terror of self-annihilation and the "nothingness of death" (303). Some characters, such as the narrators of "Usher" and "Maelstrom," are able to transcend their fears, achieving a state of equilibrium in which they accept death and the loss of self, and, in the case of the narrator of the latter tale, even become curious about death. Other characters, according to Odin, like Roderick Usher and the narrator's brother in "Maelstrom," succumb to the terror of self-extinction, lose their presence of mind, or sanity, and become fatal victims of their own fears.

In Indian Rasa poetics, santa is the spiritual equivalent of sanity. Santa, as Odin points out, is the stage of self-transcendence, or unity with Brahma. Whitman values sanity both as physical health and as santa in Specimen Days. It is often associated with sunlight, wind, water--the influences of nature, which are physically, psychologically, and spiritually nourishing. In Zen, too, water and clarity are the symbols of a pure--self-transcendent or self-forgetful--mind: "the essence of your mind is pure; it is just like clear water with a few waves" (Suzuki 35). Images of the clarity of water ("crystal running water") and of the heavens ("so clear, it show'd the stars"; "Venus . . . so clear, it seems as if it told something") abound in Specimen Days. The Objectivist poets, according to Heller, saw the "clear physical eye" as an antidote to guilt, "personal fear," and egocentricity (11). In Oppen's "Of Being Numerous," for example, the speaker desires to return us to an elemental state of awareness where eternal values reside:

Or see thru water
Clearly the pebbles
Of the beach
Thru the water, flowing

From the ripple, clear
As ever they have been
(Collected Poems 167)

Though the state of sane transcendence exists in Poe's tales, Poe emphasizes the self-conscious terror of self-extinction, figured as the fear of death. In Specimen Days, a sane state of mind is more or less immediately available through sensitive attention to one's surroundings. Self-annihilation is a cause for celebration, not fear.

But this is not to suggest a naive "Oneness" with nature. As we have seen, for Whitman in Specimen Days, nature = language and language = nature; sensitive attention is linguistic practice. In the Rasa theory of literature, according to Odin, the reader/hearer loses his identity in a moment of self-forgetfulness and merges with the situation imagined in the writing. Experience of the work of art becomes "'the self-experience of the self, free from all limitations'" (Odin 301; quoting K. C. Pandey in Comparative Aesthetics). At the point of self-transcendence, the reader actually experiences himself, transmuted, in terms of the other; it is an out-of-ego experience, a sane schizophrenia. Language functions like a swinging door (a brisure, hinge) between self presence and loss of self. Reading, then, is a self-liberating process, not an occasion for anxiety or tension. Such a state of santa, of nonanxious self-dispersal, is what the language of Specimen Days continually leads us to. We may attain it especially in the long sentences with their interpenetrative punctuation, which suspend identity in a vibrant state of liminality. We repeat the experiences through Whitman's eyes, feel the dislocations Whitman must have felt. But always, in Whitman's prose, the experience is breathlessly robust and wholeheartedly acceptive.

Poirier, commenting on Wallace Stevens' "The Death of a Soldier," notes the poem's "refusal of grief; it refuses to grieve for a dead soldier and, more significantly, it refuses to grieve for our lost selves" (217). Similarly, in

Specimen Days, there is a lack of anxiety or fear of death and the loss of self; no dwelling morbidly or morosely on loss, but, rather, an avid acceptance of all life has to offer--"I am a great contender for the world as it is--the ill along with the good"; death is even a convivial occasion--"death is like being invited out to a good dinner" (CC 127, 65). War, too, is not "so horrible" when "busy in the midst of its barbarism" (CC 191). It's only when we stand back from experience, when we consider the cold water far beneath us before we plunge, that we feel fear. Keeping involved, active, in the "midst" of events, maneuvering among the forces and circumstances of life, we are not afraid--we are too busy in them, doing them, a part of them. It's action--the "intense kinetic value" (Bove's phrase) of both experience and language--that saves us from ourselves, keeps us sane, brings us back under the sway of universal rhythms--the movements of "misty nebulae . . . whirling around in great spirals" and "the processes of growth, of existence, of decay," which "are but motion" (SD 920). The way to santa is through unself-conscious participation--both in art and life.

shadows moving with me
inner, never lost rapport
the whole corporeal body

Ebb and flow, death and life, withdrawal and return--this is the water, not the abstract meaning of the water. It is a knowledge not to be either delayed or hurried because it is not at the service of human will: "the universe has its own ends to subserve" (CC 126). Whitman's prose, like his poetry, attempts to take the full measure of being; in writing as in life, he advises us "to keep fluid, to let the influences posses you" (CC 96). Such a poetics can have no truck with finish, polish, or "style," in the conventional sense; Whitman's program is an enormous, endless task in which words can never be more than echoings in the vastness of "big mind," more "flashings" in the "vast

phenomenal world." Words that attempt to describe the whole, the unifying forces of the universe--vast, mass, monotonous, immense, motion, etc.--are subsumed by the imageless images they evoke, lost in their own abstractness. All particular expressions of the "true nature" (Suzuki's phrase) of existence flow out of and back into this wondrous vagueness, calm in its turbulence, its unsettledness, as "evening light on the sea" (Whitman's metaphor for Emerson's death). To become attached to any particular person, place, emotion, or concept is to leave the flow and become static--the true death. Motion and readiness are all. And an "imperturbable mind."

> When you become attached to a temporal expression of your true nature, it is necessary to talk about Buddhism, or else you will think the temporal expression is it. But this particular expression of it is not it. And yet at the same time it <u>is</u> it! For a while this is it; for the smallest particle of time, this is it. But it is not always so: the very next instant it is not so, thus this is not it (Suzuki 79).

* * * EMERSON IS NOT DEAD * * *

absorb
ing
the inner never lost
as I walk slow
ly over

the shadow with me

"I like salient men--the men of elements--oxygenated men"; "the indefinable attractiveness of some men: we cannot describe it any more than we are attracted by a tree, a field, a boat, a road--only we know that it is and that is all" (CC 186, 185). "Tree," "field," "boat," "road": peel back the bark of these nouns and we see their essences--growth, mass (the cumulative energies

of a field or prairie), fluid motion, ongoingness. The nominative is the active; man is motion. The prelude to Whitman's "long and blessed evening with Emerson," In "A Visit, at the Last, to R. W. Emerson," is a description of the scene of writing: "Am writing this under the shade of some old hickories and elms." Writing under the influence of nature, his thought-perceptions cooled and deepened by the shade of the trees, Whitman notes his surroundings, including a "cricket shrilly chirping," "a boat with two figures noiselessly gliding along," and "the sky and the peacefulness expanding in all directions." Whitman's "visit" to Emerson has already begun; we are seeing him, though he has not yet appeared, in person, on the page. The sights and sounds along the Concord River are the natural extension of Emerson's spirit (or vice-versa--it's hard to say which comes first). When Whitman visits Emerson's home that evening, it is generically "fill'd with people." Whitman, however, takes "hardly any part in the conversation"; instead, he takes advantage of a fortuitous seating arrangement and silently communes with Emerson's physical being: "I could just look squarely at E., which I did a good part of the two hours." Whitman comprehends Emerson as a natural phenomenon, an object of nature, equivalent to the sky, the trees, the anonymous figures drifting down river and the other "fresh and charming faces" gathered at his house that evening. Emerson, too, once he had settled in his chair, "though a listener and apparently an alert one [Whitman perceives it in the attitude of Emerson's body], remain'd silent through the whole talk and discussion." His silence is communicative. The peacefulness and expansiveness of the natural environment, which "fill and soothe" Whitman, are in Emerson's eyes--in "the well- known expression of sweetness, and the old clear-peering aspect" and within the walls of his house--its "roominess, and plain elegance and fullness, signifying democratic ease." Emerson means by his being, as much as by his works. "Democratic," in the sense of equality, is a key word, here. The "shrill chirping" Whitman noted earlier does not disrupt the peacefulness of the scene--it is a natural part of it. For Whitman, peacefulness is a harmony that

includes dissonance--the complete, unrestrictive absorption of all that surrounds him at the time. Dissonance in nature mirrors disturbances in the mind--"mind waves" (Suzuki's phrase) that we can attempt to repress or include in a larger awareness. Whitman's way, like that of Zen, is to acknowledge all that there is; anything less results in partial seeing and bracketed awareness--Zen "small mind": "Actually water always has waves. Waves are the practice of the water. To speak of waves apart from water of water apart from waves is a delusion" (35).

Emerson sits quietly like a bush or Zen monk; his silent sitting is the meaning, the spirit, of the surroundings that he simultaneously lives in and embodies. "When we do zazen, the quality of our calm, steady, serene sitting is the quality of the immense activity of being itself" (Suzuki 105). Whitman's visit to Emerson is a zazen session. We see them both sitting in relaxed, but intense and alert attentiveness, in harmony with their surroundings and each other, intimately communing without exchanging a word.

In "By Emerson's Grave," Whitman remembers Emerson as "all- loving, all-inclosing, and sane and clear as the sun" (922). Emerson is not dead. Whitman's imagery, here and in the previous passage, recovers Emerson, brings him back into the world. Emerson is here now, too--do you see him? Sunlight touches my shoulder as I type, warming it; bathes the plant in the window, engendering growth. It is not Emerson's personal identity that Whitman celebrates, but the essences that merge in him--"conscience, simplicity, culture"; his clarity and alertness. Emerson's death, "with its play of calm and fitness, like evening light on the sea" is a continuance of his life. The forces that briefly conjoined to compose him flow onward still. Emerson is not dead.

* * * FINAL TONES--COLORS * * *

If we wish to find a roshi today, we can go to any number of Zen centers;

we can read Shunryu Suzuki's text, Daisetz Suzuki's work, Chogyam Trungpa's books, and the works of many others; and we can turn, as Whitman turns, to nature. Nature is Whitman's roshi. "The masters keep on coming and coming," Whitman reflects, "nature . . . is prodigal, exhaustless" (CC 117). He may have picked up bits of Eastern (though not necessarily Zen) thought directly through his reading: translations of the Bhagavad Gita were available by the early 1850s; he refers to Eastern texts several times in Specimen Days--he mentions one "Buddhistic" entry in his "common-place book," quotes from an "old Hindu poem," and mentions the Vedas in connection with Hegel. He may have encountered Indian ideas indirectly through Thoreau and Emerson ("Brahma" was composed in 1857) and perhaps in the stylistic effects of Longfellow. It matters little, for by the 1850s he had found the "way" on his own. As Malcolm Cowley notes in his introduction to the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass: "It also seems possible, however, that he reinvented [Indian ideas] for himself, after an experience similar to the one for which the Sanskrit word is samadhi, or absorption" (xii). "Nature as creator . . . experience perfecting activity of existence," Louis Zukofsky claims in 1967, echoing Whitman's own aesthetic program (Prepositions: The Collected Critical Essays of Louis Zukofsky. London: Rapp and Carroll, 1967. 15). What experience perfects is activity, ongoingness--more work, as William James would say, not telos or final product.

> At vacancy with Nature,
> Acceptive and at ease,
> Distilling the present hour,
> Whatever, wherever it is,
> And over the past, oblivion.

The voice and mind pace patiently through these lines, each line carefully, almost monotonously end stopped, like an archipelago of thought surrounded

by the immensity of nature; the tone is calm, alert; the spirit buoyed and sustained by the self-annihilating current of the thought. It is this giving oneself completely over to the not-self, allowing one's will to be imposed by "the nature of things," taking the "world as it is" rather than imposing his own on it (CC 127); being able to "take what comes--death or life--half life, half death--everything" without anxiety (CC 64); this being able to release the past without regret, to live fully in each moment, "distilling" the essence out of the "present hour"; being able to relinquish the self, wholeheartedly--"the great thing for one to do when he is used up, is to go out to nature--throw yourself in her arms--submit to her destinies" (CC 116): This is the quintessential lesson to be gleaned from Whitman's practice. The printed page is the trace of an imaginative, somatic absorption of nature into the self and the self into nature--nature in its most comprehensive sense as the real. The art of writing is the art of self-forgetfulness and of unconditioned, performative perception.

In Specimen Days, Whitman decenters the responsibility for the creative act. Rather than the "I" thinking about things, "things become the channel of thought," as he says in the preface to the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass. "The centerless nature of Whitman's art," as Paul Bove describes it, is, for Whitman as for Nietzsche, an affirmative rather than a nihilistic poetics. Bove quotes Derrida on Nietzsche: "This affirmation then determines the noncenter otherwise than as loss of the center. And it plays without security" (157). In Specimen Days there is an oscillation between self-consciousness and loss of the self, as the "I" is spoken or recedes into its surroundings. Though Whitman necessarily returns to the "I" to demonstrate its active self-dispersal, the repetition of the "I" becomes merely another vibration in the overall om...monotone of the book. Its repeated voicing is simultaneously its annihilation, a sign of its consanguinity with the totality of linguistic and imagistic repetitions. Conventional, Cartesian, separatist views of subject and object--the "I" thinking as distinct from the thing thought about--are overturned in Specimen Days. Like the Objectivist poets of the 1930s,

Whitman seeks to break the boundaries of the ego. Unlike the Romantic poets before him and the Confessional poets of the next century, he does not desire to extend the ego by projecting his own emotions onto nature, but to expand the self beyond definition, to replace the "I" with its sound double, the eye, through immersion of the self in the other. Whitman desires to confront life with the impartiality of nature: "O to confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents, re- / buffs, as the trees and animals do" (Leaves of Grass). Concern for the self is displaced by a sentient objectivity, a feeling/seeing state that eludes emotional classification and can only be identified by abstract, all-inclusive terms such as "vacancy," "calm," "solitude," "absorbed."

The attitude, or mood, of a passage is often mixed ("Of all things, I am most lacking in what is called definiteness" CC 126), a textual analogue of natural polysemy. "Autumn Side-Bits" is a good example:

> "Under an old black oak, glossy and green, exhaling aroma--amid a grove the Albic druids might have chosen--envelop'd in the warmth and light of the noonday sun, and swarms of flitting insects--with the harsh cawing of many crows" (791).

Images of fertility and warmth are here interspersed with "harsh cawing." The tonal ambiguity is succinctly expressed by the resonant, metonymic doubling of "swarms," which, as we have seen, is simultaneously an image of vitality and fecundity (here, swarms of insects) and, in other contexts, the confusion resulting form the upheaval of war. Later in the passage, echoes of the Civil War's "convulsiveness" (the title of an 1865 entry) well up unexpectedly in the "turbulent swell" of a creek observed in 1876-'77, invalidating time's ability to contain and separate events. In any case, it is the same energy. And this is Whitman's point. He is careful not to name and categorize emotions, to tell us how we should feel or to imply one-to-one correspondences between specific emotions and specific natural phenomena. Partitioning the experience of nature into certain "moods" would be to falsify the inherent plurality of nature. Reducing nature to a catalogue of emotional (or moral) themes disengages us

from the mutable "is-ness" of the thing itself. This is also the lesson of the previous passage, "The Lesson of a Tree": "One lesson from affiliating a tree . . . is that same lesson of inherency, of what is, without the least regard to what the looker on (the critic) supposes or says, or whether he likes or dislikes"; and, earlier in the same entry--nature "is, yet says nothing" (790). Whitman's imagery effects a multiplicity of awareness, an atemporal continuity of thought and emotion through unobstructed, centerless perception of the real.

In the final paragraph of "Autumn Side-Bits" (dated October 4) another tone is mixed in. The colors of fall foliage are "all set in and toned down by the prevailing brown of the earth and gray of the sky. So, winter is coming; and I yet in my sickness" (792). The browns and grays, the signs of winter, remind him of his sickness; the self's history becomes an intertext with nature--just as Whitman's outdoor rereadings of works of literature become intertexts with nature. But by interweaving the autobiographical detail with the complex and varied imagery of the natural scene, he redistributes its emotional value. There is "rich coloring, yellows of all hues, pale and dark green, shades from lightest to richest red" as well as the "prevailing brown." The more we reread the last paragraph, the less clear it becomes just how he feels about his sickness; a number of attitudes seem possible, and Whitman instinctively sides with the irreducible: "I sit here amid all these fair sights and vital influences, and abandon myself to that thought, with its wandering trains of speculation" (792). This final comment does not dispel the ambiguity, but indefinitely suspends it. His psychological dislocation is an effect of his "mindfulness," his unintentional attention to his surroundings. The thought of his sickness becomes simply one more shade in an infinite interplay of hue and shade. The great poet "is the equalizer of his age and land," as Whitman says in the 1855 preface to Leaves of Grass. Suzuki: "According to Dogen-zenji, every existence is a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. Each existence is another expression of the quality of being itself" (104). Such psychological and spiritual democracy is the essence of Whitman's American-ness.

If the resulting "picture" in "Autumn Side-Bits" seems inconsistent, it's because nature itself resists the label; it is our concept of consistency that is the trouble. The passage itself is untroubled; the I/eye is not anxious about what it sees and Whitman refuses to frame out what might appear formally contradictory to a "critic" with a less realistic, holistic view of unity. The doubling of imagery in the passage attests to the unrestrainableness, the noncontradictoriness of nature. We create the contradictions by framing out what would "spoil" the picture, by imposing our own limiting concepts of symmetry, appropriateness, form, and beauty on that which is inherently indifferent to them. Such passages come close to the undefinable awe, the sheer impact of nature itself registered in the canvasses of Friedrich (though Whitman does not romanticize his relationship to nature).

In the moment that the "I" notes itself sitting "in solitude, absorbing, enjoying it all," as it does at the opening of "Autumn Side-Bits," it also marks its own dissolution. Whitman's spirit provides a tincture to the scene, but the forms, rhythms, and colors are nature's own--distinct and various, open, vast, mutable, undenying, selfless. In "Autumn Side-Bits" and in the structure of Specimen Days as a whole, nature holds the baton. Specimen Days is "truly an open air and mainly summer formation--singly, or in clusters--wild and free and somewhat acrid--indeed more like cedar-plums than you might guess at first glance" ("Cedar-Plums Like--Names" 884). The book wants to be as expansive, multivalent, multifarious, and fluxional as its precursor, which is why Whitman likes to write with "mammoth pens . . . I especially hate the little bits of pens . . . I don't seem to be able to do anything fullsized with them: they interfere with my ideas--break my spirit" (CC 76). In the final stanza of "Esthetique Du Mal," Stevens acknowledges the same master:

> As if the air, the mid-day air, was swarming
> With the metaphysical changes that occur,
> Merely in living as and where we live (326).

The metaphysics of being is in being itself.

The art of writing in Specimen Days is the art of self-forgetfulness and unconditioned, performative perception. In Specimen Days, Whitman does not write about nature; he does not reduce it to categorizable data and values, or compose it into stable, harmonious shapes. He catches it when and where he can, candidly, the polysemousness of the language, the syntactic disjunctions, and the open network of the text's structure filtering nature's rhythms and energies "by way of the poem itself to, all the way over to, the reader" (Olson 148). The transference must be enacted in as pure and unadulterated a voice as possible, its tones and modulations scored by nothing less than the "Immense activity of

swarms harsh cawing
an old, black oak
glossy and green

being."

From Map to Bible: Strategies of Othering in Richard Hakluyt's The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation *and Aphra Behn's* Oroonoko, the Royal Slave

I don't talk the right talk
I'm just being me
doing my own thing
I don't need a radio to know what songs
to sing....

Ruth Brown, Two Fisted Mamma

They are baptized

Action: A 1 1/2 year old, domestic male, who is litter trained, neutered, and good with children.

St. Louis Post Dispatch

unto

Imagine an anthropological discourse in which the Others classify their anthropologists in the same manner that We classify Them

Paul Stroller, Anthropological Quarterly

death

Imagine the imago entering a fun house, a roomful of distorting mirrors that promote a "deconstructive reflexivity" rather than an emulative one (Turner 105). This is the risk of encountering the other, a threat that must be reified and displaced, the negative image of the self consigned to the body/mind/territory of the racial/cultural/sexual other. What's frightening, what's disruptive, what's not "us" must be locateable, objectifiable. We must travel far from our own geographical space (or insert a distance within it) to "discover" the other we invent--the process of othering is a function of our own self-repression (i.e., repression of the not-(ego)self within us).

# # # # # # # # #

Maya Deren's surrealist-influenced film Meshes of an Afternoon, produced within the spatial-temporal site of illusions--the delusional center of mid-twentieth century America--Hollywood in the mid-forties and early fifties, era/factory of dreams and songs that still shimmers in the distance. In her film, a face is shattered like a mirror--the illusion of a three-dimensional body is dispelled, the face becomes a plane of film, a formal factor in a juxtaposition, the jetty of a symbol--within/beyond/through/behind it (no spatial term can be definitive) a seascape, temporally unmarked--a belief in nature as the embodiment of the eternal/ideal? and yet an image, an image within an image within a wavering, translucent fabric of illusions...

# # # # # # # # #

How it all begins:

> It was my hap to visit the chamber of Mr Richard Hakluyt my cousin, a gentleman of the Middle Temple...at a time when I found lying open upon his board certain books of Cosmography, with a universal Map: he seeing me somewhat curious in the view thereof, began to instruct my ignorance, by showing me the division of the earth into three parts after the old account: he pointed with his wand to all the known seas, gulfs, bays, straits, capes, rivers, empires, kingdom, dukedoms and territories of each part, with declaration also of their special commodities, and particular wants, which by the benefit of traffic and intercourse of merchants, are plentifully supplied. From the map he brought me to the Bible, and turning to the 107 Psalm, directed me to the 23 and 24 verses, where I read, that they that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy by the great waters, that they see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep, &c. (Hakluyt 31).

The wand points to, selects, identifies, instructs--from a distance. In the map the world falls already neatly into its grid of divisions and territories, its plane of English names; it becomes classifiable according to its commodities, resources, and lacks. But at the same time as it speaks its material value,

use, and needs, it becomes a transcendent reality; it is lifted out of itself into a religious mystery--a Christian mystery. And

> THIS WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A PROJECT TO PLANT A NETWORK OF SMALL ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING STATIONS ON THE PLANIT'S SURFACE...

all this worked on the world beforehand, before Hakluyt begins his own scholarly voyage, a voyage through words, or representations of representations, as Foucault says in The Order of Things; before Hakluyt's "discoveries" are chronologically ranked under the banner The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation....From Map to Bible, reality is prefabricated. Baudrillard, speaking of the simulated foundations of modern life, which is engendered "by models of a real without origin or reality--a "hyperreal"--further theorizes that

> The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it, Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory--precession of simulacra--it is the map that engenders the territory and... (166).

and this is how the other becomes always already colonized at the outset. Now it only remains for the world to support its pre-definition, to live its configuration as inviting plentitude need, and supplication. And the "&c" that semantically forestalls closure yet ideologically forecloses all possible disclosure of the other--this "&c" is all that follows that is foreseen or already known though not yet (not yet again) articulated, the unseen that is always already seen or foreseen and the unseen that will never be seen...the wand, the map, the language that recreates the world in its image...and now, with a touch of the wand...

TO CONSTRUCT OURSELVES
THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRIMITIVE CANNOT RE-
MAIN AN INNOCENT DRAMA.

MAPS * ATLASES
DECORATIVE
GRAPHICS
* Illustrated catalogue $15

# # # # # # # # #

The mirror *mirror* in the hall *on the wall*--the "real" mirror that returns the face, though reversed, I recognize as me...the face that assures my self presence. The mirror. An object rising out of the discourse of science, returning to me only what I have in good faith invested in, but which appears to be an objective reflection of myself; a mirror--"anything that

LOSS OF VOICE, LIKE THE LOSS OF VOICE DIFFERENTI-
ATION, IS AN INDEX OF DEEP-LYING OBJECTIVISM...

gives a true representation or description" (Webster's "New World" Dictionary); a trick of amalgam and glass. Objectification is the mirror's discourse, not a "natural" fact. The mirror constructed to confirm verisimilitude. The fun house mirror: I laugh at its distortions of my body (are they?), its unpredictable, mobile foreshortenings and elongations; it parodies the "objective" reflection of that other mirror that also silently sneers as it returns an image I misrecognize as the true, stable, real me--the simulation, as Baudrillard says of Disneyland, that makes everything else seem real--a reality alibi--though in fact the surroundings (Hollywood, Los Angeles, the illusion of space and

duration I call myself--my identity) are as unreal as the fantasm they enclose (the self is not a void, but the mock gravational center of a simulated centrifugal force that feels, in fact, real). I see myself in the mirror and the mirror confirms both that I see myself and the real existence of what I see. A visual effect to match a language effect: Fredric Jameson on Lacan: identity is the experience of a persistence of self through time, an experience created by language, insured by the syntax through which we speak ourselves into being (119). But the image that bans the question mark and compels belief is produced by the scientific discourse it metonymically stands in for, and that the mirror, as object, substantiates...the image trembles, comes apart, and behind it? No saving space of nature, but an empty space, a hollowing laughter...the imago is a simulation masking the "possibility of a nothing to see," as Irigaray says of the threat to the boy of seeing the girl's genitals (47).

IT WAS AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE WHERE
WEST AFRICAN SOLDIERS AND TAYLOR'S
CROSS-DRESSING REBELS, WHO ALSO WEAR
CARTOONISH HALLOWEEN MASKS IN AN
EFFORT TO RATTLE THEIR FOES, HELD AN
IMPROMPTU GET-TOGETHER

I digress to come closer, float out into this reflective pool of otherness, the specular realm of The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, *perplexities of the Imaginary in Surinam, Oroonoko, Aphra Behn...*

I have my notes, my outline--my charts and maps--but I lay them aside, follow another course...

# # # # # # # # #

In her penetrating analysis of nineteenth-century travel writing, Mary Louise Pratt reveals the deployment of a "multiplicity of ways of codifying the other," a "discursive polyphony" rather than the imposition of "single, fixed systems of difference" (141). In Hakluyt's and Behn's texts, too, several "language games," to borrow Lyotard's phrase, converge. Hakluyt treats the narratives in Principal Navigations, which span several centuries, as a real force in the world, one which cannot be completely controlled. The "torn and scattered limbs" of these narratives, he tells the reader in his preface to the second edition (1598) (34), can be brought together only in a "rough-hewn shape." As Foucault theorizes in The Order of Things, language, in the Renaissance, was not yet the abstract system of representation it was to become in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but a thing among other things in the world, interwoven with the fabric of reality. But in Oroonoko, crystallizing at the close of the seventeenth century, language is conceived of as the vehicle of a story that "shall come simply into the World, recommended by its own proper Merits" (129); Behn distinguishes between a language transparent to "Reality" and one that exists opaquely as a facade or applique ornament, a quantifiable and optional signing, an "Addition of Invention" comparable to external or interior details added on to the substantial structure of a building (as window volute or ceiling coffer). For Hakluyt, however, such distinctions have not yet been fully conceptualized. And though the text displaces the body, Hakluyt refigures the word as rooted in the world and the bodily. The vicarious and terrible pleasure that his metaphor uncannily reenacts, the fascination with dismemberment--the disintegration of a unified and orderly body in which the head reigns over the obedient members--is the figurative semblance of the violence of the unconscious against the integrative function of the ego, and the failure of the intellect to control the textual material. (Moreover, the metaphor is, perhaps, an unconscious testing of Renaissance notions of social-political order: James IV and I figures the king as a "father of children," and as bearing the same relationship to the populace

as the head does to the body: "But what state the body can be in if the head, for any infirmity that can fall to it, be cut off, I leave it to the reader's judgement") (Wootton 99).

# # # # # # # # #

The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation. A collection of travel/exploration narratives, some written originally in Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and English, others not previously extant as written texts, but transmitted orally to Hakluyt through personal interviews; translated, transcribed, reexplored, recomposed, and expanded by Hakluyt through two editions (1589-1600) to a million and a half words; in 1972, abridged and edited down by Jack Beeching from twelve volumes to the compact, 445-page Penguin edition, *Voyages and Discoveries.* I approach the narratives tentatively, with some dis-ease. What voices am I hearing? How distinguish the Medieval or Renaissance explorer from the sixteenth-century compiler/transcriber from the twentieth-century editor? What do we see/not see, hear/not hear through the sixteenth century, vernacular, modernized and regularized English re-presentation of other people and other places? What do we hear when the other speaks, his voice reencoded in English syntax or his vocabulary transliterated into English phonemes? How much of what we see/hear is Hakluyt's England or Hakluyt's England re-voiced and altered by a sympathetic modern editor? As Stephen Greenblatt theorizes in "Invisible Bullets" (summarizing Karen Kupperman's discussion of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts of American Indians), when the English image the other they employ "terms that closely replicate their own self-conception" (26-27). How much of what I notice and compose on the page is a specter of myself, an answer to my own interests (did Hamlet see the ghost of his father or the ghost of himself)? Can the other be known in and of itself, short of (impossibly) being/becoming the other? I begin in the place of the

question, in the space opened between the mark and a possible answer, in the uncertainty, the absence, the uncomprehended; the left-out, and the yet to be punched out by ellipsis...

SO TOO WE KNOW FAR LESS THAN WE WOULD
LIKE ABOUT THOSE IN THE WEST WHO ARE CONSUMING
THESE IMAGES OF THE GENERIC PRIMITIVE AND TO WHAT
EFFECT

# # # # # # # # #

(*I move the cursor back and forth, inserting and deleting, improvising on my own written script, misreading what I've previously written, revising, elaborating...the "critical study" now begins, though it never exists, is non-entitative...all is in quotation marks...*)

(*It begins now, with what was before the beginning, the first page of my hand written draft...*)

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

In evaluating and attempting to reclaim--to sell--Hakluyt's The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation to contemporary interests, Beeching claims in his propagandistic introduction that "because the method of Hakluyt's collection" is "accurate" and "free of dogma," the "information [Hakluyt] was the first to organize underpins a number of our contemporary academic disciplines" (Hakluyt 12). He also valorizes the English explorers themselves, outrageously and myopically characterizing these "shipmen breaking in upon more primitive, hitherto untouched societies for the purposes of trade" as having "a faculty of observing

and recording curious customs with the lack of prejudice which distinguishes the anthropologist, who is their historical legatee" (Hakluyt 12). Beeching may believe himself to be reiterating Hakluyt's own point of view, since, according to Beeching, "Hakluyt meant his documents to be useful" (11) and at the same time further a larger, nationalistic project: "He deliberately arranged his documents to throw light on recent national experience. Devoid of vanity and pedantry, he conceals this historical intention behind arrays of plain fact"; but by positioning himself in line with what he assumes to be the motivating intentionality behind Hakluyt's text, Beeching reinforces the work's limits, rather than opening it. Beeching's introduction is closure rather than disclosure. No matter how "true" Beeching's approach may be to his host author's intentions, by identifying with the text's dominant discourse and assigning it a teleological value, he oversees (or "underreads," to use Nancy Miller's term) the fissures produced by other, repressed discourses. The definitive booming of his voice silences the text's murmurs and presents it as a solid, consciously purposeful entity with which one *can* identify. Beeching wholeheartedly buys the truth claims of Hakluyt's text and assures, through his own authoritative sentencing, the possibility of an objective, empirical discourse.

We must now reinsert the diacritical marks *the marks that indict? and the bottom right key, shifted (?)* Are Hakluyt's descriptions really "arrays of plain fact," merely the graphic and phonemic transcriptions of a reality behind which something more, some other reifiable intention, can be hidden--A yet again, an addition of verisimilitudes? Or is the apparently neutral hosting discourse of "plain fact" always already produced by the observer\writer\speaker?--more specifically, by the world views, cultural values, and ideologies that constitute the subjectivity of the observer himself?[1]

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[1]In quantum physics, according to John Gribbin, "nothing is real" (i.e., certifiable as the ultimate reality)(2); extrapolating from Heisenberg--"observation changes the observed" (156); "we see

In fact, isn't "plain fact" itself a strategic simulation stemming from classical concepts of language in which, as Foucault tells us in The Order of Things, the signifier becomes transparent to the signified? is it not a concept woven from the same material as all ideology--language itself--but posited as an independent, entitative, self-evident touchstone whereby the latter (all *other* ideologies) may be tested--justified, supported, proven false; the "facts"--the ground of all consensus and dispute, that to which we must finally look, the place where all thought and sight come to rest. Objectivity, Baudrillard speculates, or literality, is the subtlest of mythologies: "it is a code of natural evidence which has the advantage" over codes such as the moral and aesthetic "of appearing rational, while the others seem like mere rationalizations of more or less 'ideological' purposes" (89). Did the "shipmen" observe and record with a "lack of prejudice" (would it have been possible for them to), or is the belief that one is simply observing and recording a self-deception that justifies encoding the other in psychologically and economically profitable ways? Beeching's labeling of non-Western societies as "primitive" and his comment that they have "curious customs" further suggest his Europocentric, elitist perspective. There is no trace of doubt in Beeching's stance: He embraces the colonizing function of the narratives; he is on board with Hakluyt, imaginatively and ideologically.

WHAT THE POSTMODERN WEST SEEMS TO WANT MOST FROM THE PRIMITIVE: A MODEL OF ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN WHICH PSYCHOLOGICAL INTEGRITY IS A BIRTHRIGHT, ROOTED IN ONE'S BODY AND SEXUALITY, AND IN WHICH A FULL RANGE OF AMBIVALENCES AND DOUBTS CAN BE CONFRONTED AND DEFUSED THROUGH THE CULTURE'S RITUALS, CUSTOMS, AND PLAY

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what we want" (161).

IN "INDIAN AFTER BODMER," MR. SCHOLDER APPROPRIATES ANOTHER 1840'S IMAGE—OF A DANCING WARRIOR IN ELABORATE FEATHER HEADDRESS BY KARL BODMER—IMBUING HIS 1970 VERSION WITH A SARCASTIC, EXUBERANT FEROCITY THAT POINTS UP BODMER'S SENSE OF STUDIED ACADEMIC ARTIFICE AND POSSIBLY HIS REPRESSED FEAR.

But what about those fissures and murmurs? As these narratives "record" customs they simultaneously register the English explorers'--or, by extension, their culture's--configurations of otherness. For the English imperialists of the Renaissance and after (through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and on into the twentieth),[2] the spectacle of the non-Anglo other (i.e., including European others, such as the Spanish) is specular and also spectral[3]--the other is a mirror and a ghost, the uncanny, distorted reemergence of a repressed self, a mirroring of the Imaginary that, in Lacanian thought, precedes the rule of the ego and the imposed unity of the imago, which, in collusion with the acquisition of language structure, covers/denies/displaces the disintegrative drives of the unconscious projected from a monadic self.

These ideologically, culturally, and subconsciously conditioned modes of perception that creak and stir in Hakluyt's collection become conventions of anthropological fiction as early as the mid-seventeenth century. It is possible to say, for example, that the hero of Aphra Behn's ambivalent novel, Oroonoko,

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[2]See especially Mary Louise Pratt's "Scratches on the Face of the Country" and Abdul R. JanMohamed's "The Economy of Manichean Allegory."

[3]JanMohamed traces the persistence of specular/Imaginary representations of the other into the twentieth century, in writers such as Conrad and Dinesen.

does not exist. He is an always already colonized figure--both his physical and mental space have been refigured by European influences even before the narrative begins. In the reader's first glimpse of him that the narrative allows, he is presented in terms of classical statuary; he is already redrawn along non-aboriginal lines, and what distinguishes him from the other, "typical" natives of Coramantien and Surinam, what the description valorizes are those features that de-culturize him, that make his own race and nationality an other in relation to him (and make him an other in relation to himself):

> His Nose was rising and *Roman*, instead of *African* and flat: His Mouth the finest shaped that could be seen; far from those great turn'd Lips, which are so natural to the rest of the Negroes. The whole Proportion and Air of his Face was so nobly ad exactly form'd, that bating his Colour, there could be nothing in Nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome (136).

A "rising nose" "instead of" a flat one; the refined shape of his lips "far from" those of the rest; handsome despite "his Colour": Imagistically, Oroonoko is not simply a hybridized figure, but a hierarchized, teleological one; one glimpsed in the act, so to speak, of becoming an "improved" version of himself. The physiognomic superiority of his features to those of the "rest of

THE COLOR LITHOGRAPHS OF INDIAN CHIEFS PUBLISHED BY MCKENNY & HALL IN THE 1840'S PAY HOMAGE TO (AND EUROPEANIZE) THEIR SUBJECTS

the Negroes" and to his own Africanness is a restaging, through an act of portraiture, of the relationship of the dominant, colonizing culture to those "primitive" peoples who lack so much, who are so "far from" the Anglo concepts of perfection, but who can be remolded with quite "agreeable" results. And

Oroonoko is the prototype of such remodeling. Though black, his "perfect Ebony" skin color is the perfect finish for other idealizing, physical qualities: He is "of a Shape the most exact that can be fancy'd." His teeth and eyes are a pure, cold white "like snow," creating a sharp contrast with his ebony color that further stresses his unreal--or "hyperreal" (Baudrillard's term)--status as a literary figure (an impression strengthened throughout the narrative by his superhuman strength in battle and extraordinary hunting skill).

Though placing a non-Western other in the key role of the novel would seem to offer decentering possibilities to conventional narrative structure and Anglocentric notions of the self and society, Behn's characterization of Oroonoko and the dramatic development of the story evade, or constantly defer, questions of otherness, as it catches its readers up in a spectacle of English questions played out on the mind, body, and geography of the other.

I HAVE SELECTED BUTTERICK 6397,
SIZED 6 TO 22. I LIKE THE WAY IT
BUTTONS AND ALSO THE VERSATILITY OF
THIS JACKET....
IT IS REALLY EASY TO MAKE
AND WITH IMAGINATION AND SOME
THOUGHT IN FABRIC SELECTION, IT COULD
BE A PERFECT MIX-AND-MATCH...

And his voice. "Oroonoko" designates a file of rhetorical positions. Behn focuses her readers on Oroonoko's difference from the generic black slaves in the novel, who are lumped together in a single, indistinct, easily manipulable mass. He is presented as superior to them due not only to his Anglo-oriented physical features, but also his appreciation of "gentlemen" in the European sense (men of wit and learning), his interest in scientific gadgets and maps, and, most significantly, his knowledge of the English language. In a scene late in the novel, Oroonoko (renamed Caesar), having been tricked and taken as a

slave by a wily captain (who used wit, feigned hospitality, and technical gadgetry as bait), attempts to incite his fellow slaves on Parham plantation (the plantation on Surinam where Caesar and his wife, Imoinda, are being held captive) to desertion:

> 'And why (said he) my dear Friends and Fellow-sufferers, should we be Slaves to an unknown People? Have they vanquished us nobly in Fight? Have they won us in Honourable Battle? And are we by the Chance of War become their slaves? This would not anger a noble Heart; this would not animate a Soldier's Soul: No, but we are bought and sold like Apes or Monkeys, to be the Sport of Women, Fools and Cowards; and the Support of Rogues and Renegades, that have abandoned their own Countries for Rapine, Murders, Theft and Villanies. Do you not hear every Day how they upbraid each other with Infamy of Life, below the wildest Salvages? And shall we render Obedience to such a degenerate Race, who have no one human Virtue left, to distinguish them from the vilest Creatures? Will you, I say, suffer the Lash from such Hands?' They all reply'd with one Accord, 'No, No, No; Caesar has spoke like a great Captain, like a great King' (191).

It is the power of English rhetoric that motivates the slaves to attempt an improbable escape from the plantation and pursue an impossible utopia (Oroonoko's plan is for them to travel toward the coast and "plant a new colony, and defend it with their valour"). But the same English logic and radical protestant ideology--concern for the rights of the individual, superiority of man over nature, the reversal of the hierarchies of justice (the implied virtue, nobility, and humanity of the common man as opposed to the whimsicality of a tyrannical authority)--voiced here in terms that challenge the dominant order, can also be used to maintain it. Byam, governor of the plantations on Surinam, deploys an equally powerful discourse, utilizing some of the same concepts--transmogrified into shrewd simulations of empathy, honor, justice, respect, and self-deference--to persuade Oroonoko to surrender; the pragmatic voice of white authority wins out:

> But he [Byam], more thirsting after Revenge of another Sort, than that of depriving him [Oroonoko] of Life, now made use of all his Art of Talking and Dissembling, and besought Caesar to yield himself upon Terms which he himself should propose, and should be sacredly assented to, and kept by him. He told him, It was not that he any longer fear'd him, or could believe the Force of two Men, and a young Heroine [Imoinda, Oroonoko's wife], could overthrow all them, and with all the Slaves now on their Side also; but it was the vast Esteem he had for his Person, the Desire he had to serve so gallant a Man, and to hinder himself from the Reproach hereafter, of having been the Occasion of the Death of a Prince, whose Valour and Magnanimity deserves the Empire of the World....'So that if you will be pleased continued he) to surrender yourself, all imaginable Respect shall be paid you; and your Self, your Wife and Child, if it be born here, shall depart free out of our Land' (195).

Interestingly, Byam's speech corrects the world that, from Oroonoko's point of view, has been turned topsy-turvy--grace and virtue are once again envisioned in the position of power. Yet both speeches, as occasions of public, political discourse, take strong positional stances; both are equally polemical and ideological moments of persuasive language--eulogy attempting to divert defiance--rather than objective considerations of circumstances (can it ever be otherwise?). What we get is, to borrow Bakhtin's term, the image of a language--more specifically, in this case, the two passages figure the dialogic confrontation of discourses within the same sign system. We get

> WHETHER THE
> PEOPLE FACING THE CAMERA ARE POOR,
> ANGRY BLACKS OR RICH YOUNG REPUBLI
> CANS, EVERYBODY TRIES TO CRAM AS
> MUCH RHETORIC AS POSSIBLE INTO THEIR
> 15 SECONDS OF CELLULOID.

a drama of the English language, and the values contained by it--the rhetoric of emancipation and social justice, spoken with passion and conviction, versus

the language of a machiavellian dominance and control, spoken with a feigned concern for the other--refracted through the narrative drama. Byam and Oroonoko are significant in terms of the roles they enact in this drama--they are its vehicles; their verbal exchanges become the testing ground of conflicting social-political configurations coherent within the sphere of Anglocentric ideology.[4] For example, the possibility of establishing a counter-cultural utopia politically independent of though inscribed within the territory controlled by the dominant culture comes up against shrewd diplomacy and pragmatics. From this perspective, Byam and Oroonoko are character effects, functions of a matrix of discourses in dramatic conflict.

It is this specular, allegorical effect that makes the story interesting to a seventeenth-century English reader, rather than any non-self-centered investigations into the social concerns and dramas of non-European societies. The cultural "reality" of the other--as much as that can be known by an outside "observer"--must persistently be bracketed by Behn's text if it is to exist as a text at all within the pre-ethnopoetic framework of seventeenth century fiction.

characters as rhet. constructs, or writings and rewritings from different perspectives. Perhaps a quote from a 17-18th c. letter/journal. Or make somethin' up. July 5, 1632. America. "At...there was (in view of divers witnesses) a great combat between a mouse and a snake; and, after a long fight, the mouse prevailed and killed the snake. The pastor of..., Mr. Wilson, a very sincere, holy man, hearing of it, gave this interpretation: That the snake

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[4] Stances which would be "truly" other, such as a matriarchal power structure, non-hierarchic communism, and spiritually based political organizations valorizing totemism, shamanism, ritual withdrawal and return, and various other liminal phenomena, never surface in the novel; though it can be argued that the concept of Divine Right stems from non-Western sources, its political value in England in the seventeenth century is functional (inasmuch as it preserves and justifies monarchy and a secular hierarchy), rather than mythological and cosmological, as it is for many non-Western cultures.

was the devil; the mouse was a poor contemptible people, which God had brought hither, which should overcome Satan here, and dispossess him..."

...and I says "she's from Detroit but sounds like a limey" and he says "whatzit matter--shes got heels and a skirt" and I says "yea 'n' she wears a hat...just she's got me wonderin' where she is" and he says "put your mouth wher hers is and you'll see sooon enough" and I says "you pickt the wrong tie. Anyway, my boy stays home..."

Even the world and life Oroonoko longs to return to is one already overinscribed, or narratized, by English nostalgia, wish-fulfillment, and political-economic interests. Life on Coramantien is characterized by sexual naivete and innocence; manly, hand-to-hand combat and "big game" hunting. It is a politically simple world, whose obvious evils are easy to identify and locate, characterized by obedience to a self-involved, lecherous ruler, who interferes with Oroonoko's and Imoinda's romance, but who otherwise seems to be basically harmless. Though the surface simplicity of this life is deeply disturbed by a polemical undercurrent that always threatens to erupt--the economic support of Coramantien culture is the dehumanizing slave trade that, as social practice, rips through Oroonoko's own professed values, and which he himself eventually experiences--life on Coramantien is, or manifestly appears to be, a combination of idealized feudal chivalry and fairy-tale aristocracy. It is imaged as a romanticized, medieval world of noble deeds and simple, straightforward needs; a world of love and war and evil kings--a world that has ever only existed as a textualized one. Even the sobering knock of the economic base against this fancifully embroidered superstructure is a fictionally coded reinscription (and perhaps questioning) of the M.O. of English imperialism.

The manners and morals of Coramantiens also mirror English concerns. Even without their clothes, the "ladies" of Oroonoko's homeland are demure

and shy and their "knights" respect them. This is Oroonoko's first meeting with Imoinda; he has come to offer her a tribute--in the amount of a hundred and fifty captured warriors--in honor of her father, who died in battle on his behalf:

> that lovely Modesty with which she receiv'd him, that Softness in her Look and Sighs, upon the melancholy Occasion of this Honour that was done by so great a Man as Oroonoko, and a Prince of whom she had heard such admirable Things; the bashfulness where with she receiv'd him, and the Sweetness of her Words and Behaviour while he stay'd, gain'd a perfect Conquest over his fierce Heart, and made him feel, the Victor could be subdu'd....He told her with his Eyes, that he was not insensible to her Charms; while Imoinda, who wish'd for nothing more than so glorious a Conquest, was pleas'd to believe, she understood that silent Language of new-born Love (137-38).

First, the passage dramatizes a Western, dualistic conception of male and female behavior, pitting masculine dominance and fearsome force against a tempering, feminine passivity. Second, the passage avoids description of Imoinda's anatomy and focuses on her behavior; though we have been told earlier that the inhabitants of Coramantien go about naked, she seems fully clothed: "Moral" value resides not in artificial restrictions, but in human natures. The language does not have to dwell on Imoinda's nakedness: It is as "natural" for men and women in Coramantien to see each other unclothed as it is for the English in England to see each other clothed, except that for Coramantiens, the natural really is "au naturel":

> They are extreme modest and bashful, very shy, and nice of being touched. And tho' they are all thus naked, if one lives for ever among'em, there it not to be seen an indecent Action (131).

The description of Oroonoko and Imoinda's first meeting, as well as the narrator's observations of the interpersonal relations of native Coramantien's in general, is a staging of English ethical questions, specifically natural

morality versus that imposed by law. The narrator puts the matter directly a few lines later:

> 'tis most evident and plain, that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive and virtuous Mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the World, than all the Inventions of Man: Religion would here but destroy that Tranquillity they possess by Ignorance; and Laws would but teach'em to know Offenses, of which now they have no Notion (131-32).

Is it true that the "primitive" other has no religion, no law? The narrator necessarily views their culture as less complex, so that they may unself-consciously embody an ethical ideal located in one term (the one presently valorized by the author) of a nature versus civilization dichotomy. Ethically, the other inhabits a space spun out of the Western intellect. Of course,

> IN A POSTMODERN WORLD IN WHICH "PRIMITIVES" WEAR CROSSES, CASSETTE HEADSETS, AND NECKLACES OF FLASH-BULBS, SHOULD NOT SUCH TALK OF THEIR STABILITY AND DETERMINATION VERSUS OUR FLUX AND THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE BE VIEWED AS ANACHRONISTIC?
>
> KEN WILSON, 32, EMERGED FROM THE JUNGLE OF COZUMEL ON THURSDAY. HE GOT LOST JULY 31 WHEN HE WANDERED OFF FROM A GROUP OF FRIENDS TOURING SOME MAYAN RUINS

as all such stories go, Oroonoko's "European" education (he speaks French and English) becomes a dangerous supplement, in some sense spoiling his "natural" innocence. To remain in a "pure" state, the primitive other must be untouched by (European) civilization; paradoxically, they are always already encoded

within it as soon as a Western gaze is turned on them. Merely to describe them in a state of natural "Tranquility" is already to inscribe them within an alien dialectic.

IDEAS OF THE PRIMITIVE
HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED AND MANIPULATED TO UPHOLD...

BRASILIA, BRAZIL -- FEDERAL PO-
LICE BEGAN A JUNGLE MANHUNT FRIDAY
FOR GOLD PROSPECTORS SUSPECTED OF
SLAUGHTERING ALMOST AN ENTIRE INDIAN
VILLAGE

If we step out of Behn's text for a moment, a strikingly contrasting depiction of the sexual habits of Africans, as "observed" by a Medieval Jewish traveler, shows how much point of view effects, if it does not dictate, our comprehension of what is seen (It is important to note that Benjamin of Tudela, the traveler, describes a general condition, rather than a specific scene, making it that much easier to encode an ideology of difference by avoiding details) :

> at Seba on the river Pishon...is a people...who, like animals, eat of the herbs that grow on the banks of the Nile and in the fields. They go about naked and have not the intelligence of ordinary men. They cohabit with their sisters and anyone they can find...And these are the Black slaves, the sons of Ham (Adler 68; quoted in Gilman 228).

What is "intelligence," what is "ordinary" in a non-European context? Should these "people" (do they not have a name? what do they call themselves?) not "go about naked"? Why not? We don't see a particular African culture, but an anonymous "people" performing the flip side of European values, or the dark side of a repressed, Western self. To echo Gribbin on the perplexities of

quantum physics: "We see what we want."

WHAT THE POSTMODERN WORLD SEEMS TO WANT MOST FROM THE PRIMITIVE...

The body and character of Oroonoko, then, become the site of a "hidden polemic," to borrow Bakhtin's phrase, a debate that stages itself on several fronts (though some of the issues remain undecideable): philosophical (reason versus passion as the basis of being), Christian Humanist (a testing of the Renaissance ideals of learning, decorum, balance--the "Achieving mind," as it was commonly known; the intellectually well turned out gentleman, a la Ben Johnson), ethical (the moral virtues of courtesy, respect for others, courage, endurance, and honesty), social/political (nobility by birth or acquired through learning and wealth versus natural inclinations toward nobility--what would become, by the eighteenth century, the "noble savage" stereotype), and economic (also an ethical concern--the questionable moral value of slavery, one of the mainstays of an imperialism and colonialism that, nevertheless, claims in part to be a "missionary" project).

CURRENTLY, ONLINE'S SYSTEM EMPLOYS A TELEPHONE WITH A SMALL DISPLAY SCREEN, WHICH IS OPERATED VERY MUCH LIKE AN A.T.M. TERMINAL AT A BANK. BUT BECAUSE THE PATENT COVERS NOT THE DEVICE, BUT THE ENTIRE TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS, THE PATENT POTENTIALLY APPLIES NOT ONLY TO HOME BANKING BUT ALSO TO PAY-PER-VIEW TELEVISION, HOME SHOPPING, INTERACTIVE TV GAMES, SECURITIES TRADING AND A HOST OF OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE THROUGH TELEPHONES, PERSONAL COMPUTERS OR OTHER TERMINALS.

At one point in the novel, for example, the institution of slavery is unexpectedly put "on trial\in question" (Kristeva's phrase) as we follow Oroonoko into slavery and experience its effects from the point of view of the enslaved. Oroonoko, the narrator tells us, "was more civiliz'd, according to the European Mode, than any other [of his countrymen] had been" (161); his needs, beliefs, and motivations are articulated in European terms--love, honesty, bravery, obedience, loyalty to his king despite the latter's self-indulgence and idiosyncratic abuse of power. Since Oroonoko's character is a Westernized construction, a simulation of European ideals and values, making it possible for us to identify with him, when he is lured into slavery by the machiavellian English captain ("a Man of a finer sort of Address and Conversation")(161), we find ourselves imaginatively and emotionally in his position, sharing the anxiety and humiliation of his enslavement. This sudden shift in reader positionality counters the distancing language and imagery in which the slave question is largely cast. This twist in point of view flips the reader head over heels as he experiences the negative, reverse mirroring--via this mirror image of a European gentleman, albeit in black face--the dark side of a cultural problematic the text otherwise avoids. "It may be easily guessed," claims the narrator, "in what Manner the Prince resented this Indignity, who may best be resembled to a Lion taken in a Toil" (162). Easily guessed indeed--he feels and reacts exactly as we might, if the situation were reversed (which it is, as a reading-effect). But this self-decentering effect is only momentary. The terminology and phraseology describing Oroonoko's confinement and his reaction to it--"easily guessed...best resembled to"--is distancing rhetoric, allowing the reader to remain detached from his vicarious experience of enslavement as he enacts it; the figures used, too (comparing Oroonoko to a lion), offset too close an identification, putting his struggle on other-than-human terms. The highly rhetorical, polemical (i.e., public) writing style ("resented this Indignity"), as well as the melodramatization of Oroonoko's reactions ("so he raged, so he struggled for Liberty, but all in vain), cushion the

full impact of the narrative's self-displacing judo flip.

"DISCOURSES THAT PORTRAY THE CULTURAL REALITIES OF OTHER PEOPLES WITHOUT PLACING THEIR OWN REALITY IN JEOPARDY"

The text further saves us (and especially its seventeenth-century readers) from a debilitating awareness of the consequences of slavery by canceling Oroonoko's Europeanization with an unforgivable barbarism toward the novel's end. His killing of his young, devoted, beautiful, and, what's worse, pregnant wife; his self-mutilation (which metonymically links him with the unbridgeable savagery of the Indians on Surinam), and his revengeful killing of the English who pursue him in his attempted escape, make it difficult for us to continue his membership in the Christian Humanist club (despite the implied cultural

MR. EPSTEIN RETURNS AS A SONOROUSLY MELANCHOLY BRUTUS, PLAYED AS A DIRECT ANCESTOR TO HAMLET, AND MALCOLM INGRAM SPLENDIDLY CONVEYS BOTH THE GLAMOUR AND FATUITY OF CAESAR.

sanction for the first two events). Despite the callousness and Machiavellian diplomacy of the English (especially the duplicitous Captain and Byam), we cannot feel that Oroonoko's revenge is completely "just," since it goes so thoroughly against the grain of our own--and of a Renaissance Englishman's--values: it exceeds the limits of what we can tolerate as legitimate redress for wrong doing. We reject him not only on moral grounds; our judgement is "naturalized" by a gut-level reaction to his deeds. However, we may still feel

deeply drawn to him even as we turn away: he repulses us because he uncannily dredges up repressed fears and desires. Against him, we must raise the shield of the ego. Just as the otherness of his own culture has been neglected or has remained unarticulated throughout the novel, Oroonoko is cast into an unattainable otherness toward the narrative's end, consigned to a space of difference that we cannot breach and still be who we are--a boundary we cannot cross, a space we cannot fully penetrate without the "Failure of a certain gaze" (Irigaray 54). He is what we must not know too well, what is tabooed.

# # # # # # # # #

Though, as we have seen, the difference of Oroonoko's features implies an unacknowledged misogyny, most of his "noble" qualities are the results of learning and instruction (acquired largely through the efforts of a French tutor), of attempts to culturally colonize the other, to cultivate and "civilize" him, which, as the end of the novel morbidly suggests, may be a foredoomed and even dangerous project. Following an essentialist path, the narrator inscribes a resemblance between Oroonoko's superb appearance and his character:

> Nor did the Perfections of his Mind come short of those of his Person; for his Discourse was admirable upon almost any Subject: and whoever had heard him speak, would have been convinced of their Errors, that all fine Wit is confined to the white Men, especially to those of Christendom (136).

Ironically, these "Perfections," the very qualities that make him the apogee of reformed otherness, are based not on the other's own cultural values, but on Western, Anglocentric models. The "Wit" is still in the possession of "Christendom" (though rhetorically the prologue denies it): to describe

Oroonoko is to return self-reflexively to a portrait of the well turned out English gentleman; though a shadowy reflection of it (black is still the negative of white), he returns to English society a transmogrified image of its own, idealized self-conception.

SIAMESE TWIN CLINGS TO TINY HOPE OF LIFE

IF BRAZIL
SHOWS ITSELF ABLE TO RESPOND VIGOROUSLY TO THIS
MASSACRE AND PROTECT YANOMAMI LIVES AND CULTURE,
IT CAN BRING SOME PRIDE TO ITS PRESENT.

Despite Oroonoko's grace, charm, and nobility of character, his ability to speak French and English, and the statue-like cut of his figure, he is a failed experiment in conversion, as the "tragic" end of the novel demonstrates ("tragic" in quotation marks because the novel is structured around Western dramatic convention). Behn's hero starts out from a place of perfection, at the height of his intellectual and physical prowess, and is reduced at the end of the novel to a ghost of himself, the "striking eyes" dulled to empty "eye-holes," the strength drained from his body and the "polished Jet" of his face transmogrified into a "death's-head black'd over" (206). After killing Imoinda to save her from the clutches of the white slaver-holders on the plantations of Surinam (knowing that his planned revenge against Byam would cost him his life), "he tore, he rav'd, he roar's like some Monster of the Wood, calling on the lov'd Name of Imoinda" (203). All his learning and articulateness dissolves in the moment of a brute howl. A failed experiment in colonialist hybridization, a 17th century Frankenstein spurned by his creator, he still pursues the culture that conceived him, even in--especially in--the moment of his annihilation. We cannot flee the effects of our own ideology.

A SULLEN YOUNG
DRUGGIE NAMED MAGGIE (BRIDGET
FONDA) IS TAKEN IN HAND BY A MYSTERI-
OUS AGENCY, TUTORED IN VIOLENCE BY
BOB (GABRIEL BYRNE) AND IN DECOROUS
BEHAVIOR BY AMANDA (ANNE BAN-
CROFT), AND THEN TURNED LOOSE TO KILL FOR
GOVERNMENTAL PURPOSES.

Perhaps the novel's method of closure is an earlier expression of what Gilman notes in nineteenth century images of the racial other as a fear of miscegenation: a displacement of one's own fears of "political impotence...the fear of loss of power, onto the world"--onto concerns for racial purity, and finally onto the body of the other. The racial other must be sexually controlled; black sexuality must be construed as repulsive to guard against possible species contamination and loss of (white, Eurocentric) identity. In "the late nineteenth-century vocabulary of sexuality," Gilman claims, miscegenation meant "the decline of the population" (256). At the novel's end, both Oroonoko and Imoinda are dead; as models of the racial other, we are left with no distinct, individuated, positive types of the caliber of Oroonoko (the lascivious king of Coramantien? the pederastic Onahal, one of the king's aged, former wives and a keeper of his Otan? Oroonoko's loyal, and somewhat clever, but otherwise non-descript friend, Aboan?). What, then, do we have? The "altogether Black-Slaves" and the subservient Surinamese--those groups that are manipulable and controllable and pose no threat to English dominance. Integration of the black must fail; the test of conversion, like the Spanish Inquisition, merely confirms the unbreachable difference of the other (think of epithets for

AUTO MAKERS OFTEN ALTER THE APPEARANCE OF TEST CARS TO
DISGUISE DESIGN FEATURES

Caliban in The Tempest: "slave," "savage," "hag-seed," "servant-monster," member of a "vile race"). In the case of Oroonoko, his cultural colonization--attempts to educate and "civilize" him--does not make him equal to the colonizer, but ultimately throws into relief and more clearly fixes his difference--a difference which, finally, must be eliminated through death, since it could not be erased through the civilizing process. Psychologically (and in terms of national security), annihilation of difference may be the safest answer.

But Behn's text also counterposes and tests such mutually exclusive, psychosocial dispensations. Surinam is a replanted territory, subdivided into plantations but also marking off and keeping at a safe distance socially subversive groups of marginalized Indians, who practice cannibalism and ritual self-mutilation. However, though their "barbarity," as it is described by the narrator, seals their irreconcilable difference from English social values and ideals, the relationship is not so clear cut, since their practice of self-dismemberment in order to prove their valor and courage metonymically seeps across psychosocial boundaries into Parham, where it is negatively reinscribed in the process of Oroonoko's execution. Recognition of the other, JanMohamed theorizes, is "narcissistic self-recognition," the other being "no more than a recipient of the negative elements of the self that the European projects onto him" (86-87). Oroonoko's execution seems to bear this out. The scene is a mirroring of Oroonoko's and the Surinamese Indian's self-mutilation and also parallels rituals of self-sacrifice cited by James Frazer in The Golden Bough, which were practiced by kings who fell ill or felt their powers waning, in order to preserve the potency of the kingship.

PEOPLE WHO GROW UP IN A UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE DOM-
INATED BY DAILY PRAGMA INTERROGATE THEIR
WORLD--WHAT THEY SEE AND HEAR--EVEN A TV COM-
MERCIAL--FOR HOW TO DRESS ACT SPEAK THINK RESPOND

GESTURE

By putting Oroonoko to death in a piecemeal manner, the English appropriate and utilize a ritual practice of the other, normally tabooed in dealings with themselves, and reinflict it on the body of the other, reencoded (as the execution of a sentence) within an English ideology of crime and punishment. Through this complex cycle of mimesis and transference (behavior, actions, or ritual practices of the other observed and perhaps imaginatively relived by the observer, then physically reenacted on the body of the other), the English executioners (and, vicariously, those witnessing or reading about the execution) simultaneously act out and destroy disruptive forces in their own psyches. *But there I go talking about "the executioners" as if they existed and soon I'll talk about Caliban as if he existed...but only "I" exist, as this writing, and they exist as part of the inscription.*

THESE ARE
NOT REALLY OTHER VOICES, BUT MERELY THE ETHNOGRAPHER'S
REPRESENTATIONS OF THEM

WE WANT A COMPARATIVE ANATOMY OF MAN

The inscription identified as "Oroonoko" is traversed by a dialectic Eurocentrism that refuses, or is unable, to register internal pressures or contradictions of the other's culture that do not in some way mirror its own interests; but as Boon points out, all cultures, even those that seem most "elementary" or exotic, "are at base dialectical" (53). Richard Turner, for example, notes several instances of "anti-structural" activity, or "liminoid phenomena," as he terms it, in non-Western, supposedly less psychologically and socially complex societies-- activities that temporarily carnivalize the culture's rules and conventions. These include a refusal to wear clothing,

giving up of personal names; putting on monster disguises that break down fixed biological divisions by combining human, animal, and vegetable elements, and interrelating generally with the "asocial powers of life and death"--ghosts, gods, animals, and birds (26-27). Such activities are simultaneously subversive of and ritually contained within the dominant social structure--they are allowable transgressions. The point is that such a complex picture of other culture's is unable to surface in either Behn's or Hakluyt's texts; it is canceled out by the reduplicating mirror of Anglocentric questions. If either text peers beneath the surface image, it is not to get behind the mirror, but to briefly lose itself within it: within the reverse mirroring of the repressed other of reader and writer: the pre-ego, deconstructed (and deconstructive) Imaginary, an uncanny realm of sensuality that doesn't distinguish between pleasure and pain: a feast of nakedness, self-mutilation, dismemberment, cannibalism, bestiality, and slaughter; images of a loss of control, sacrifice of the ego... In relating to the racial other, as in (man's) desire for woman, the "you," applying Lacan's equation, becomes an "inverted I" (131).

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Specular appropriations of the other and his environment are apparent in the early descriptive sections of Oroonoko. Culture
difference, in the form of human and natural objects, is fetishized and commodified; indigenous peoples are introverted in terms of exhibitionistic pleasure and economic value; they are objects of oddity, entertainment, and use. We also see how the Coramantiens challenge certain English customs or behave in ways that reflexively verify English morality (as noted earlier,for example, the courtesy and respect shown by men toward women, and the demureness and reserve exhibited by women, despite their nakedness).

At the beginning of the novel we are presented a descriptive list of commodities available at Surinam, for our "profit and pleasure," to echo

Hakluyt in his preface to the first edition (1589) of Principal Navigations. Language, used here in its eidetic capacity, captures and conveys a sense of plentitude. There is an abundance of fish and venison; there are unusual animals "of a marvellous and delicate Shape," such as marmosets, and cousheries, "a little Beast in the Form and Fashion of a Lion...it is it in miniature"; and there are "a thousand other Birds and Beasts of wonderful and surprising Forms, Shapes, and Colours." The land of the other is prized for its "little Rarities," for its exotic offerings which differ sharply from English meat and potatoes. Our indulgence in the language is a vicarious, sensual exploitation of a foreign land; the words are meant to be imaginatively consumed, and the syntax, the cumulative sentence structure, is an expedient way of dishing up the verbal and visual delicacies--a feast for both the eyes and ears. The aestheticizing diction, a rhetoric of excess, transmutes the real into an imaginative smorgasbord for a hungry English public who may concretely experience very few of the commodities listed. However, the use and exchange values of the goods described are always implied beneath the sensory detail--reading the list both promises (actual) and provides (imaginary) "profit and pleasure."

Next in this exotic parade appear the native inhabitants--not so much the people themselves as their external, ornamental features, objectified, commodified, and appraised through the abstracting concretion of a representational discourse:

> Then we trade for Feathers, which they order into all Shapes, make themselves little short Habits of'em, and glorious Wreaths for their Heads, Necks, Arms and Legs, whose Tinctures are unconceivable....Besides these, a thousand little Knacks, and Rarities in Nature; and some of Art, as their Baskets, Weapons, Aprons, &c. We dealt with'em with Beads of all Colours, Knives, Axes, Pins and Needles, which they us'd only as Tools to drill Holes with in their Ears, Noses and Lips, where they hang a great many little Things; as long Beads, Bits of Tin, Brass or Silver beat thin, and any shining Trinket. The Beads they weave into Aprons about a Quarter of an Ell long, and of the

> same Breadth; working them very prettily in Flowers of several Colours; which Apron they wear just before'em, as Adam and Eve did the Fig-leaves" (130).

The logic of the passage proceeds by rearranging the native and his surroundings, breaking them down and quantifying them through value-leveling lists that acknowledge little distinction between animal and human, animate or inanimate; all contents are equally showy and exotic or functional, and made readily available to the reader through syntax and detail, like items in a market. And the emphasis is on inexhaustible quantities--all "Shapes" and "Colours," "unconceivable" varieties and subtleness of tinctures, thousands of rarities--an accessible wealth of both signifiers and materiality. Also, the displaced modifier--"Tinctures" of feathers or skin?--jostles the logical flow of syntax, suggesting a return of a repressed interest in the body.

THE PROCESSION, WHICH INCLUDED TWO KINGS, TWO QUEEN MOTHERS AND FIVE TRIBAL LEADERS FROM GHANA, WINDING ITS WAY ALONG CENTRAL PARK WEST. THE KING, **OSAGYEFO KUNTUKUNUNKU II**, IN GILDED CROWN, ARMLET AND BRACELETS, PENDANTS AND SANDALS, IS FLANKED BY **GEORGE D. LANGDON JR.**, LEFT, THE MUSEUM'S PRESIDENT; **KENA AMPAW**, THE KING'S NEXT IN COMMAND, WEARING A HEADBAND OF GOLD MEDALLIONS; **FLORENCE KUNTUKNNUNKU**, THE KING'S WIFE, AND **YAW**, HIS SON. THE BODYGUARD AT FAR RIGHT WAS NOT IDENTIFIED.

THE 450-MILE OUTDOOR FESTIVAL,
BILLED AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST YARD
SALE, BEGAN THURSDAY WITH HUNDREDS
OF TREASURE-SEEKERS DRIVING U.S. 127
FROM COVINGTON, KY., TO GADSDEN,
ALA., BY WAY OF TENNESSEE AND GEORGIA.

And yet this occurs within an overall hierarchy that begins with the non-human (animals), then offers a metonymic clustering of items associated with human activity and bodily decoration, and finally describes, in a

generalizing way, the features of the bodies themselves:

> This Adornment, with their long black Hair, and the Face painted in little Specks of Flowers here and there, makes'em a wonderful Figure to behold. Some of the Beauties which indeed are finely shap'd, as almost all are, and who have pretty Features, are charming and novel (131).

Only after the natives have been thus thoroughly, linguistically dismembered, portioned out, and safely shelved, so to speak, in the text (even their weapons are non-threatening--just one more

THE CHAIRS ON DISPLAY ARE MEANT TO
SHOW HOW EVERYDAY, WELL-DESIGNED
PRODUCTS CAN BE MADE FROM
PROCESSED PLASTIC MILK BOTTLES, SOAP
CONTAINERS, USED TIRES AND OTHER
RECYCLED MATERIALS.

item among the "thousand little Knacks, and Rarities in Nature"), do we get any description of their behavior, which is also carefully contained and controlled within adjectival lists (they are "modest and bashful, very shy," etc.) and structured by a "manichean allegory" subservient to, as we have already seen, English ethical and specular concerns. It is significant, in this regard, to note the biblical analogy, another method of rewriting, familiarizing, and controlling the other: they not only look like "Adam and Eve," but behave "like our first Parents before the Fall." The analogy effectively extracts the other from his own mythological/cosmological constructs (which we are never allowed to see) and reinserts him (having dressed him for the part) into a Western, Christian one. We construct the other; he does not exist "outside" our representations of him. A quote from Lacan's "Seminar of 21 January 1975," in Feminine Sexuality, brings in an interesting side-line: "in the life of a man,

a woman is something he believes in. He believes there is one...but the interesting thing is that, unable to believe only in one, he believes in a species" (168). Similarly, early "ethnographic" portraits of the racial other represent concepts and beliefs about the observed, rather than an (always impossible) objective presentation of the other in itself. And it is a belief not only in individual difference, or even in an alternative species, but in an entire world of otherness that, nevertheless, from beginning to end, turns within ourselves.

And as the world turns, so I remember that a televised world is a revised world, replayed with something left out, something in a different place, like the drafts of this essay...how can I rewrite them nonthinking? No. Yes. Begin. Somewhere. Select. All vision is revisionary. And as the world turns within worlds and we keep telling stories, stories about stories and stories within stories till we can't say what our voices are, there are only echoes of voices...so that the last night + 1, or at X^{n+1}*, we may come to where we "really" are/have always been, i.e., the story around the others--is this then now our "original" voice, our home?*

Again, the above passages are concerned both with the pure pleasure of detail and potential commercial profits--the ease with which the other can be exploited. What is traded for seems to yield a return in "Rarities" far more valuable (from an English market perspective) then the common hardware that is traded. But this use and abuse of the other depends on the denigration and silencing of his own culture. Like the little Cousheries and the delicately shaped Marmosets, the human others are simplified, coded as innocent and unconcerned with the basic, economic principles of trade. Thus they are assigned a place (much as woman is assigned a place in man's concept of her, as Claudine Herrmann has noted) (169) in an Anglocentric dialectic that poses the sophisticated, rational, technologically superior, father-like colonizing culture (England provides the tools that the Coramantiens need--that make

their playful labor easier) against the naive, innocent, physically centered other (that is, the emphasis is on the body of the other, how it is adorned, its natural beauty). Moreover, their state of innocence and beauty, though idyllic, seems imperfect, incomplete: they appear childlike, almost thoughtless, drilling holes in their ears and adorning themselves with trinkets. And, perhaps the most important feature in this dialectic, is that the other is linguistically impoverished--the English have all the words. The natives communicate physically, through looks, gestures, touch, and rarely say more than a few words (except for Oroonoko, who is an exception and whom, logically, in these first few pages of the novel, we have not met yet, since he is positioned at the top of a crude, dualistic hierarchy that consists primarily of Oroonoko over against all the "rest of the Negroes"). For the manichean allegory to function smoothly, the other must not be heard; he must not be allowed to speak his mind.

Such dissimulations, then, whether implicitly objective or consciously fictional, mask a larger purpose. They allow the dominant culture to stand above the other and justify the latter's colonization--the other, being inferior and "unworldly," needs English tutoring and overseeing.[5] (Though this position is doubly problematized in the novel. What seems to make Oroonoko superior, for example, are the Westernized features grafted onto the mind and body of an already noble nature--though the "noble nature" itself is a romanticized construct and, as we have seen, the graft doesn't take; also, not all overseers have the native's best interests at heart--Byam is a case in point.

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[5]Tompkins notes such attitudes persisting into the third quarter of the twentieth century. She quotes Alden T. Vaughn, who, in New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675 (Boston, 1965), attempts to right misconceptions about Puritan treatment of the Indians: "What resulted, then," Vaughn concludes toward the close of his text (page 323), "was not--as many have held--a clash of dissimilar ways of life, but rather the expansion of one into the areas in which the other was lacking." But why, asks Tompkins, must the "other" be "described in terms of 'lack'?" (64).

But then, no one in the novel, including the narrator, is very concerned about the "natives," who hardly exist in its pages; the novel frames out such troublesome questions through its selective focus on the atypical hero.)

A descriptive list later in the narrative, dwelling on the natural abundance of Surinam, has a similar specular multivalence, satisfying multiple needs and desires simultaneously, while positioning itself in a hyperreal realm constructed above the world of the other, whose actuality is its blank, the field and ground for its reconstructive re-visionings. It is a list designed for aesthetic and consumer consumption; a linguistic appropriation and appraisal of the other's resources for potential profit and practical application, as well as textual pleasure; the "Things" listed are codified "for Beauty and Use"--for English trade interests and the reader's extra-real jouissance--while their functions in indigenous economic and ritual systems remain invisible:

> 'tis there eternal Spring, always the very Months of April, May, and June; the Shades are perpetual, the Trees bearing at once all Degrees of Leaves, and Fruit, from blooming Buds to ripe Autumn: Groves of Oranges, Lemons, Citrons, Figs, Nutmegs, and noble Aromaticks, continually bearing their Fragrancies: The Trees appearing all like Nosegays, adorn;d with Flowers of different Kinds; some are all White, some Purple, some Scarlet, some Blue, some Yellow; bearing at the same Time ripe Fruit, and blooming young, or producing every Day new. The very Wood of all these Trees has an intrinsic Value, above common Timber; for they are, when cut, of different Colours. glorious to behold, and bear a Price considerable, to inlay withal. Besides this, they yield rich Balm...so that we make our Candles of such an aromatic Substance, as does not only five a sufficient Light, but as they burn, they cast their Perfumes all about (178).

The list offers a vision of plentitude, a kaleidoscopic interplay of sounds and scents--a country so fertile that it is overburdened with its own richness and does not so much passively await, but urgently needs English hands and eyes to harvest and make use of it. The eagerness to get one's hands on this nubile country and man-ufacture it is evident in the imagery--the trees are harvested

and transformed into inlays and candles even as they stand; the country is industrialized (specularly and actually) on its own site. The scene, as we experience it, is a product of English imagination and language. Structurally, the trees are lined up, readied for the saw mills. The imagistic manufacturing takes place on two levels. First, the trees are objects of aesthetic contemplation, or of pure sensual indulgence, an effect partly created by the rich assonance and consonance--"Groves of Oranges, Lemon, Citrons, Figs... Fragrancies," etc. This aesthetic pleasure is carried over into their use value. After observing and admiring the trees as they stand whole, untouched, virginal, unmolested, syntactically prepared for their ritual wedding to English industry, the thought of the passage immediately cuts up and processes them into various substances for use in other products, though even this remains imagistically pleasurable, somewhat masking the realities of exploitation and industrialization of the landscape. The trees seem to yield naturally to colonialist desires, to give themselves up to the hungary eyes and mills of England. Yet, there is nothing natural about it: the whole show is a carefully controlled linguistic colonization and domestication of a foreign terrain.

Though the novel is ostensibly based in "Reality," within the first few pages it becomes difficult to know what is real and what is fictive, what obeys the code of the literal and what *Alt F3* obeys the code of the literary, since so much of what is described is specular self-reflection and/or an uncanny resurgence of the Imaginary. We see love relationships characterized by formalized courtship procedures reminiscent of chivalric romance, events falling conveniently into Westernized ethical and socio-political polemical formulas, and description that, far from being mere reportage, seems to be engendered by the desires, needs, interests, and ideological position of the observer--both the reader's and writer's, which from a cultural standpoint are equivalent. Indeed, the literal and imaginative/literary are fused, making the text uncannily seductive.

INTERTOP HAS EXPLODED, DRIVEN BY THE ONCE-RADICAL NOTION OF ITS FOUNDER, DANIEL C. LYNCH, THAT ALL THE INDUSTRY'S DATA NETWORKING GEAR SHOULD COMMUNICATE. BY BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS BETWEEN PROPRIETARY VENDORS AND FORCING THEM TO ADHERE TO A SINGLE INDUSTRY STANDARD KNOWN AS TCP/IP...

FAR FROM CODE-SWITCHING BEING THE ALTERNATION OF TWO SYSTEMS, IT IS THE SELECTION OF ELEMENTS FROM WITHIN A CONTINUOUS SYSTEM, EVEN IF THOSE ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN DRAWN FROM SOURCES REFERABLE TO TWO SEPARATE CODES

The narrator admits as much, perhaps unintentionally, in the brief "introduction" to Oroonoko's story (tale?). She claims to be "relating the truth," with no desire to "entertain my Reader with the Adventures of a feign'd Hero, whose Life and Fortunes Fancy may manage at the Poet's Pleasure" (129). However, Behn places the two paragraph preface within the spatial enclosure of the narrative: it is not framed out as a detached unit labeled "Introduction" or "Preface," but is the physical beginning of the narration, immediately dethroning its objective, authoritative position and throwing its truth claims into question.

She also claims that in "relating the truth" she did not

> design to adorn it with any accidents, but such as arrived in earnest to him: And it shall come simply into the World, recommended by its own proper Merits, and natural Intrigues; there being enough of Reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the Addition of Invention (129).

But the equation of truth, reality, and nature is already an ideological fabrication. There is a further implication that "reality," with its "natural Intrigues" and built-in diversions, is inherently narratized--a narrative is already embedded in nature, and all the writer has to do is discover and *Alt F3* reproduce it (or represent it, in Foucault's sense: writing becomes a translation/transcription and linear sequencing of what is available in a less coherent, or less orderly state, in the "raw material" of nature).

IN ITS COMPETITION FOR SPACE IN THE SCHOLARLY WORK, NARRATIVE REMAINS DEEPLY PROBLEMATIC, BECAUSE WE HAVE TO DECIDE IF WE ARE GOING TO WRITE NARRATIVE, DEMYSTIFY ITS SUBTLE PRODUCTIONS OF REALITY IN THE READER, OR BOTH

Furthermore, while insisting on the literality of the narrative--what she was not personally "Eye-witness to" she "receiv'd from the Mouth of the chief Actor in this History, the Hero himself"--she admits to her own control and shaping of the text:

> And I shall omit, for Brevity's Sake, a thousand little Accidents of his Life, which, however pleasant to us, where History was scarce, and Adventures very rare, yet might prove tedious and heavy to my Reader, in a World where he finds Diversions for every Minute, new and strange (129).

Classifying the story as a "History" implies a high degree of literalness and objectivity; at the same time, the narrator acknowledges a selectivity in her reporting of events, including some while omitting many others. Though she suggests that no new information would be attained from what has been left out, or that the omitted would simply be a repetition or mirroring of what is included, the question still arises, what is the principle of selection? Why are

some "facts" and events worth admitting and others not? And since she has her reader's interest at heart, how much of what is admitted into the narrative is consciously or unconsciously influenced by the values and ideologies that constitute the subjectivity of reader and author. The "listener," Bakhtin theorizes, or that social- group consciousness--the "bearer of the value judgments"--to which the writer belongs, is "an immanent participant in the artistic event who has determinative effect on the form of the work from within" (113). The hero's life is chock full of incidents--"a thousand little accidents"--just as his environment is rich in detail. The abridgement of life here foreshadows the selective curtailing of the lists; the narrator cuts and pastes the other and his surroundings to suit the needs of an English reader. By attempting to reduce the world of the other to a

BUT ALSO CORPORATIONS IMPEL THEIR CUSTOMERS, EXISTING AND POTENTIAL; AND COMPANIES COMPETITIVELY SEEK TO PERSUADE--SO THE WHOLE CULTURE RIDES ON A RHETORIC OF INDUCEMENT TO DIRECT ACTION FOR MAKING THINGS INTO THE MARKET FOR EXCHANGE TRANSACTIONS

tale-like structure, a few sets of repeated (and repeatable) actions, in contrast to the more complex experience of her readers, the narrator perhaps answers a deep need in both herself and her readers--securing the values of reality and rationality, and insuring the intransigent truth of her own culture's existence, both diachronically (by "witnessing" a reenactment of its own legendary past) and synchronically.

INSIDE, THE EXHIBITION TAKES VISITORS BACK TO 1590, WHEN TOKYO, OR ERDO AS IT WAS STILL KNOWN, WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A LOWLY FISH-

ING VILLAGE. IT THEN LEADS THEM ON A FOUR-CEN-
TURY-LONG JOURNEY THROUGH PAINSTAKINGLY
CRAFTED ARCHITECTURAL MODELS, HAND-PAINTED
MAPS... WARTIME PARAPHERNALIA,...
1950'S APPLIANCES UP THROUGH THE SUBARU 360...

THE TEXTUAL FOCUS... HAS THE POLITI-
CAL IMPLICATION OF RENDERING VIRTUALLY IRRELEVANT TO
US THE LIVES THAT ACTUAL--NON-GENERIC-"OTHERS" IN
FACT LEAD

James Boon claims that modern anthropology must rewrite the written from the point of view of the unwritten--that is, ritual and other non-textual activities must interact with previous written documents. Yet, if observation is inherently biased, if writing/thinking about the other is from the start a collaborative activity among readers and writers, if a dominant culture always already colonizes the other through its inscription of him/her, no matter how objective it attempts to be, then such a claim is self-deluding. As Baudrillard has it, we can say nothing about what falls outside or is other than the "possitivity" of the sign, and the possitivity of the sign is always already controlled by a theory of language that, in its classical, Western, formulation, believes in an equivalence among signifier, signified, and referent; there is a logical and natural bond among the three, the referent necessarily and obediently giving itself over to the signified--or, coming into meaningful existence only in the signified--and the signified yielding its abundance of significance to the controlling and ordering system of signifiers. There is no argument among the terms, and each is identifiable as a stage in the three-part linguistic processing of reality. A trinity of knowledge, a semiotic metaphysics that runs through all our sign systems. *Alt F3: Reveal codes* But suppose this weren't so? Suppose this were just a way of thinking. Perceiving

and writing from within our language, we can never be outside it, or objectively inside the other. Knowing this is to realize that we always know less than we think, and to accept the consequences of such knowledge and such knowing (though, from a Lacanian perspective, it is always possible to say/see more than we know, if we break the welds of the sign and bevel the lens of perception).

MIXING HISTORY AND HIGH-TECH

OUR ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL
REALITY OR ENTER INTO AND EXPAND IT AND OURSELVES
THROUGH RADICALLY SIMPLIFYING (AND ILLUMINATING) RE-
DUCTIONS, OR OPEN-ENDED AND MANY CHAMBERED ECLEC-
TICISMS, CREATE GREATER DIMENSIONS OF RELATIVITY IN
CONSTRUCTION/SYNTHESIS...

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Just as the imaging of the native in Oroonoko gives him an exchange value in a specular/Imaginary psychological economy, so the use and exchange value assigned to the body/labor of the other is one of the clearest signs of his exploitation.

> With these People, as I said, we live in perfect Tranquillity, and good Understanding, as it behoves us to do; they knowing all the Places where to seek the best Food of the Country, and the Means of getting it; and for very small and unvaluable Trifles, supplying us with what 'tis almost impossible for us to get (132).

Like a country of Calibans, the natives "good Understanding" consists of providing material support to sustain the colonialist project. They are a ready

and willing labor force, devoted to working for the superior colonizer, and they are cheap labor as well. The body of the other is necessary for the success of the colony (it is noted that the Coramantiens are good hunters and swimmers), and this perhaps partly accounts for the fetishization of it. Their use value underlies the English "friendship" extended toward them: "So that they being on all Occasions very useful to us, we find it absolutely necessary to caress'em as Friends, and not to treat'em as Slaves" (133).

The British colonists distinguish among the Surinamese in a way that makes an economy based on slave trade and labor more acceptable. While treating some natives as friends, "Those then whom we make use of to work in our Plantations of Sugar, are Negroes, Black-Slaves altogether" (133). There is a hierarchical ranking of others in the text: we are first introduced to the two lower orders beings, and than to Oroonoko, the hero of the narrative. Moreover, as the above quote suggests, skin color is a means of differentiating and categorizing the other. The decorative Surinamese whom the English treat as "friends" are of a reddish-yellow, or "after a new Oiling...the Colour of a new Brick" (131), while the slaves, who are not even distinguished by nationality (they are simply "Negroes"), are "Black-Slaves altogether"--more specifically, as the narrator describes them later, a "brown rusty Black" (136). Oroonoko, of course, who is set above the previous two groups by his royal status and Europeanized education, is further differentiated not just by a difference in hue, as we have seen, but by a purity in tone of his skin color that the others lack. Though actually darker than the lowest slaves, his face is the color of "perfect Ebony, or polished Jet" (136). Oroonoko is perfect in his difference, and thus becomes an object of curiosity like the lighter colored Surinamese, but an object of a special kind--the rarest of the "Rarities."

This hierarchical ranking of others in the text and the blatant commodification and quantification of the "Negroes" allows us to think of the latter as inferior to the other others, somewhat justifying their inhuman use and an economy based on slave trade and labor:

> Those who want Slaves, make a Bargain with a Master, or a Captain of a Ship, and contract to pay him so much apiece, a Matter of twenty Pound a Head, for as many as he agrees for, and to pay for'em when they shall be deliver'd on such a Plantation: So that when there arrives a Ship laden with Slaves, they who have so contracted, go aboard, and receive their Number by Lot; and perhaps in one Lot that may be for ten, there may happen to be three of four Men, the rest Women and Children. Or be there more or less of either Sex, you are obliged to be contented with your Lot (133).

These slaves are not even given the minimal physical skills and identity of the Surinamese to somewhat humanize them. They exist only for their exchange value, and, of course, for the labor they perform.

These generic slaves are never differentiated in the text--they are always considered in the plural, as a manipulable mass. A similar misprisioning of the culture of the other can be seen when Oroonoko, accompanied by a "Hundred of the Noblest of the Youths of the Court" (161), visits the ship of the English captain who takes him captive, ultimately selling him into slavery. Having gotten Oroonoko and his entourage sufficiently drunk,

> the Captain, who had well laid his Design before, gave the Word, and seiz'd on all his Guests; they clapping great Irons suddenly on the Prince, when he was leap'd down into the Hold, to view that Part of the Vessel; and locking him fast down, secur'd him. The same Treachery was used to all the rest; and all in one Instant, in several Places of the Ship, were lash'd fast in Irons, and betray's to Slavery (162).

Time collapses,"in one Instant," and with it the history of a culture. Oroonoko is reduced to "The same" treatment as the others, regardless of social distinctions operating in Coramantien society. From the captain's point of view, all these youths have "The same" value as merchandise; the social structure of the other's society is irrelevant. Oroonoko and his "Court" don't exist for the captain; they function only as retail items. The situation is symbolic of one of the unavoidable consequences of the colonialist project--the imprisonment of the other within the economic interests and ideology of the

dominate culture. Such restaging of the other's social order, such infrastructural reconstructionism implies the inevitability of the colonialist project. Like the male plug to a female socket, The English insert themselves into the other's newly conceived destiny, completing it and linking it up to an progressive function. The circuit of imperialist ideology, ever extending its lines of power, brings an artificial light into the heart of darkness.

THE INTERNET
ITSELF, WHICH HAS APPROXIMATELY 15
MILLION USERS AND 1,776,000 COMPUTERS
IN 137 COUNTRIES, HAS BECOME A POWER-
FUL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FORCE

The exploitation of the other is further justified by their own self-exploitation. Coramantien, the country from which most of the human "merchandize" is purchased, is a "very warlike" nation "being always in Hostility with one neighbouring Prince or other" (133), and hence unworthy to enjoy rights equal to those of a more "civilized" nation. Moreover, The warrior/princes of Coramantien sell all their captives as slaves, "at least those common Men who could ransom themselves. Of these Slaves so taken, the General only has all the Profit; and of these Generals our Captains and Masters of Ships buy all their Freights" (134). The imperialist logic runs, perhaps, something like this: Since the other commodifies and sells itself, what harm, then, in England exporting for use what has already been reduced and dehumanized on its own territory? Especially from such an uncouth subspecies as the Coramantiens? (Oroonoko, of course, as we have seen, through an implied misogyny and the efforts of a French tutor, is able to escape this general censorship; he is not a "typical" other).

From a specular point of view, this dominance and control of the other--and especially the situation of the black slaves in Oroonoko as described above-

-is the fictional engineering and testing of a totalitarian ideal--the image of an obedient, manipulable proletariat class, a vision perhaps unconsciously projected onto the English populace back home. What the "testing" here makes clear is that it is important not to individualize members of such a group; intellectual and spiritual values cannot be attributed to them. The success of repressive social structures depends on the maintenance of certain distance. A dehumanized, non-individuated, submissive labor force is necessary for the effectiveness of the colonialist project or any similarly totalitarian political-economic scheme.

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As an obedient labor force, necessary for the material support of the colony and the success of the imperialist venture, the position of the other parallels that of woman in a phallocentric society. Luce Irigaray and Claudine Herrmann deftly summarize the status quo. Irigaray: Woman must suppress her own desires to assure constancy ("coital homeostasis") and continuity in the family circle--she is "charged" with "preserving, regenerating, and rejuvenating the organism" (53); this is a resemblance of order in the social sphere (we can hear again through this both James the VI and I, who demanded "dutiful," "loving and obedient subjects," and also a homily of 1570, in which virtue means obedience and rebellion spells evil--"the very root of all other sins") (Wootton 106,95). Herrmann clearly states woman's place and assigned duties: she is responsible for "material continuity--of daily life and of the species," while men perform the imperialist functions of "discovery, change in all its forms, in essence, the superior, differentiating function" (172); they erect what the woman preserves, serves, and maintains. Woman as the other or the other as woman (we remember that Oroonoko preferred the company of the females at Parham to that of the males)--the dualistic thinking that separates those who labor from those who deserve to be labored for is the

necessary order of things in a stable and profitable monarchic, aristocratic society or a capitalist, bourgeois one. And all others, including Oroonoko, labor textually in Behn's work, like puppets attached by ideological and psychological strings to the readers whose hands turn the pages.

The position of the other, as figured in Oroonoko, is in several ways a specular duplication of the position of woman in a "phallocentric dialectic," as Irigaray phrases it: "woman's lack of penis and her envy of the penis ensure the function of the negative, serve as representatives of the negative, in what could be called a phallocentric--or phallotropic--dialectic" (52). By playing this doubly negative role in traditional, Freudian psychoanalytic theory, woman secures/insures the value of the male ego: she demonstrates that there certainly is something more to a man--the phallus--by her not having one, and that it is important to have it--that everyone wants one--through her desire for it. This conventional masculine concept of feminine sexuality reifies phallic authority and contributes to the "construction of Narcissistic monuments"; woman becomes the "foundation for this specular duplication, giving man back 'his' image and repeating it as the 'same.'" (identical to his image of himself) (Irigaray 54). In a hierarchic, male-dominated society, according to Herrmann, "mental space," like physical space, is subdivided to place others in a "well-defined position in relation to oneself, with attendant rights to think and feel and the possibility of speaking according to such a language" (169); because of "social position, age, or sex," she continues, certain ways of speaking/thinking are inappropriate. Man's space, for example, is "a space of domination, hierarchy, and conquest, a sprawling, showy space, a full spac"; Women, on the contrary, have "learned to respect...the physical and mental space of others" (169).

Now to the point, in terms of Oroonoko. As we have seen, the other in Behn's novel restages English psychic, social, and economic taboos, conflicts, and interests; the doubling of woman/other is enacted by Behn's presence in her novel (i.e., the presence of her voice as narrator). If language, and

especially narrative structure, are the means/tools of the dominant culture's asserting itself, at least in the ideological sphere, then the voice of the woman (and of the other in general--whoever is not part of the dominant speech group) must occupy a hollow in that discourse--a depression, absence, or "empty space" (Herrmann's phrase). Thus the narrator in Behn's novel must self-consciously articulate her own place and function in the text--"But [Oroonoko's] Misfortune was to fall in an obscure World, that afforded only a Female Pen to celebrate his Fame" (169); she must interrupt the narrative now and again to remind us that she is writing it, that her voice has not been completely subsumed by the discourse she speaks through. Moreover, notice, in the above quote, the capital letters that link Female, Pen, and Fame, the graphemes clustering to deliver a message that runs counter to--breaks free of--the rhetorical thrust of the sentence, fracturing its self-deferring connotation.

THE FORMS OF WOMEN'S RESISTANCE PARALLEL THE WIDE RANGE OF INFLUENCES THAT SHAPE THEIR LIVES

CERTAINLY IT'S NO SECRET THAT BOOKS ABOUT THE GENDER WARS FLY OUT OF BOOKSTORES. THERE IS A LOT OF ANXIETY OUT THERE ABOUT THE SHIFTING ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN...

IN A PERFORMANCE CONSTRUCTED AROUND THE TENSION BETWEEN YIN AND YANG, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR THE CUSTOMARY ANDROGYNOUS SPRITES.

By consciously clearing a space for herself in the narrative discourse, the narrator perhaps hopes to avoid the victimization symbolized by Imoinda's willing, obedient, and unquestioning submission to Oroonoko's "great Design" of familicide and suicide: Oroonoko finds his wife "faster pleading for Death,

that he was to propose it, when she found his fix'd Resolution"; she even begs "on her Knees" for her own death (202). The narrator's identification with Imoinda, and her desire to out-maneuver the stratagems of a similar fate, can be heard in the intonation of the novel's closing clause (a plea not for death, but for life--through language, memory, and imagination): "Yet, I hope, the Reputation of my Pen is considerable enough to make [Oroonoko's] glorious Name to survive to all Ages, with that of the brave, the beautiful and the constant Imoinda" (208). Of course, the passage is fraught with contradictions. Both the name of the man and of the woman must exist together, but the woman is still in a subordinate, if not submissive, position: his name is "glorious," while "Imoinda" signifies constancy and bravery in fulfilling the man's [Master's] designs. Nevertheless, the narrator insists that it is her language, her inscription that transfers the entire narrative on to the reader and to history. Ironically, though she demeans her abilities as a (female?) author in the first clause of the concluding sentence ("Thus died this great Man, worthy of a better Fate, and a more sublime Wit than mine to write his Praise") in the closing clause--in the end, the final word--she overthrows this position, maintaining control of the phallus/pen, even though what the pen conveys is an inequality. This concluding thought, the entire narrative, and the volumes of Hakluyt--none can be reduced beyond a "rough-hewn" shape, but must resonate, finally, in all their ambivalence. *and here I am telling her story, who exists for me now as a voice in a novel...the voice of a self-proclaimed marginality that, by practicing the discourse that represses it, becomes self-surveillant*

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The techniques of othering operating in Behn's text, which proceeds by deculturizing and dehistoricizing the other and his territory--removing them from their own referential context--are not simply fictional devices; as we noted

earlier, similar tendencies appear in Hakluyt's earlier transcriptions/translations/rewritings of English voyage narratives. Put another way, there are no "real" narratives. All are equally fictional, or "simulacra," to apply Baudrillard's term: "the age of simulation thus begins with a liquidation of all referentials" (167). Not that the "referentials" are materially eliminated by the texts (though in a sense they are, since the space of articulation and representation is foreclosed to many of them), but the Other, human being or landscape (as Lacan's "A"--not the "autre" we recognize, but the one that eludes conceptualization) is always present only as an absence, though an absence that "can never be canceled" (JanMohamed 86). As Jane Tompkins notes in her analysis of English records of encounters with American Indians in the nineteenth century, events and people are always already encoded within an Anglocentric world view. Early "anthropology" is skewed toward what resembles and verifies or contradicts the values and ideologies of the "observing" culture. The process operates synchronically and diachronically. Commenting on Perry Miller's Errand into the Wilderness, Tompkins suggests that "what is invisible to the historian in his own historical moment remains invisible when he turns his gaze to the past" (62-63). We see only what our cultural context makes visible (70-71).

But the success of the colonialist project depended on a belief in the reality effect produced and sustained by language--a full vocabulary and a plentitude of accurate names assured the stable relationship between the name and the thing or concept designated. Language, a system of relationships among words, a syntax, a structure assured that the "reality" conveyed by it could be differentiated, logically ordered, and spun out in the space of the intellect--that vast clearing in which Western man could establish his colonies of words, impose his "phallic imperialism" (Irigaray's phrase) of concepts, differences, identities, and exchange values. The territory of the other was the perfect site--a (ideological) blank, a desert, a wilderness--upon which to stage a specular drama of values and counter values, like a shadow play of images

projected into a dense fog. A testing and restructuring of the other based on a systematizing world view and a hierarchic social structure grounded in the Great Chain of Being and the Great Chain of Syntax, helped give order and meaning to the New (i.e., recreated) World.

*

The fixing and fictionalization of the other, the specular/Imaginary interest in non-Western subjects is no less apparent in Hakluyt's Principal Navigations (though being "documentary," the claims to factualism and literality are stronger). Hakluyt's text is "registered for truth," Ben Jonson claimed in the seventeenth century (Hakluyt 28). In fact, the belief in the use value of Hakluyt's inscriptions, in words capable of exact denotation and literal transcription of their objects, and the faith in the possibility of a perfect resemblance and correspondence between sign and referent are so strong that at least one twentieth-century reader, Jack Beeching, is taken in by it (Hakluyt's multi-volume work foregrounds several modern sciences, according to Beeching, including anthropology). Such a stance is, as we have noted, an evasion of the text's dynamics, a rhetorical attempt to expand its significance that actually reinforces and reenacts its limits. As Beeching knows, and as Hakluyt overtly states, there is a hidden polemic behind his project; competition, exclusivity, dominance, exploitation, and ideological conversion are some of the underlying motivations of Hakluyt's work. In the dedication to the first edition (1589), for example, Hakluyt argues:

> in this most famous and peerless government of Her most excellent Majesty, her subjects, in compassing the vast globe of the world more than once, have excelled all the nations and people of the earth. For, which of the kings of this land before Her Majesty, had their banners ever seen in the Caspian Sea? Which of them hath dealt with the Emperor of Persia...Who ever found English Consuls and agents at Tripolis in Syria, at Aleppo, at Babylon, at Basra...before now? (33)

etc. And, in the preface to the second edition (1598),

> Be it granted that the renowned Portugal Vasco da Gama traversed the main ocean southward of Africa. Did not Richard Chancellor and his mates perform the like, northward of Europe? Suppose that Columbus that noble and high-spirited Genoese escried unknown lands to the westward of Europe and Africa: did not the valiant English knight Sir Hugh Willoughby; did not the famous pilots Stephen Burrough, Arthur Pet, and Charles Jackman accost Novaya Zemlya to the north of Europe and Asia? (35).

And finally, in the dedication to the second volume of the second edition (1599):

> If upon a good and godly peace obtained, it shall please the Almighty to stir up Her Majesty's heart to continue with transporting one or two thousand of her people... she shall...in short space, work many great and unlooked for effects, increase her dominions, enrich her coffers, and reduce many pagans to the faith of Christ (37).

Though late-comers on the imperial scene, the English are more than making up for it, as the parallelism and cumulative sentence structure stress--the English are ideologically transforming and warehousing (whorehousing?) the world.

INDEED, THERE WILL BE THE USUAL CARNIVAL ELEMENTS--BUTTONS, SONGS, T-SHIRTS, BALLOONS AND BANNERS--

Of course with these intentions stated openly at the outset of our voyage through Hakluyt's collection, as well as some less obvious specular interests revealing themselves along the way, we can not consider Principle Navigations objective--or even "factual," if the term supports a truth claim. We can not even ask how much of what we get is Hakluyt's England and how much is objective observation, since the distinction implied by the question is always

already a false one, assuring us of the possibility of an objective measure that could certify some of the "information" presented as verifiably true, while labeling other inscriptions as biased or false. But how can we judge? Such thinking perpetuates the myth of an inviolable Real out of reach of all human intervention. But how can we humanly know what is outside the range of the human? How can we see without interpreting? experience outside ourselves and our world views? write without inventing? "All concepts are misconceptions" is a saying in Zen, pointing a way toward decentering the self. But the total absence of self that the notion of complete objectivity would seem to require--what would the world look like from such a perspective? would it even be visible? what does a camera "see"? Ironically, *because* of the rhetorical authority and apparent empirical precision of the language of many of the entries, we never see, never know the other (which, for Hakluyt, presents itself as raw material). The circular course of many of the voyages is a circle of exclusion, the circle of ideology that can't be broken, and that superimposes itself on the territory of the other--an ideology that depends as much on the belief that what it sees it sees, as on any consciously or unconsciously imposed sets of values.

Miles Philips travels in such a circle ("A discourse written by one Miles Philips Englishman, put on shore in the West Indies by Mr John Hawkins," dated 1568). Philips was a sailor in Hawkins company who, after adventuring to Africa and then to Mexico with a fleet that included a ship commanded by Francis Drake, asked to be put ashore in the latter country and was taken prisoner by the Spanish. He was sentenced by the Holy Inquisition to a five year term of labor at a monastery of the black friars. The bulk of the entry dramatically relates the trials and tribulations (cliche intentional) of Philip's eleven year struggle to return to England upon his release from the monastery--an adventure narrative of cunning, near escapes from death, and single-minded determination to reach his homeland. While working in the monastery as an overseer of Indian workmen, Philips learns a Mexican Indian dialect of

Spanish that will come in handy as he slowly but persistently makes his way home. The anthropological potential of the language, however--which could perhaps have led him to insights into the cultural codes, habits, values, and world views of the other--is left unmined by Philips. The language is an expedient tool, a commodity, significant for its use value--to the extent that it can be shrewdly deployed to help him escape a land and culture he had little desire to explore--and its exchange value, since it can be traded for his freedom. In a sense, he deploys the other's language against itself (already, no doubt, a hybridization of the Eurocentric oppressor's tongue and the indigenous people's voice, though there is no textual evidence for this--and that's the point, the lack or absence that the colonialist text, in its fullest sense, is). It is necessity--the practical working out of a plan, a strategy--and Philips' desire to return home that drive the narrative; he sees the other only as it fits into this teleological pragmatism. All we learn about the culture of the other (Mexican, Spanish-Indian) is that which is framed within this

purpose, or that contributes to the dramatization of Spanish cruelty, superstition, and idolatry over against English common sense, cleverness, resourcefulness, and endurance. Philip's narrative is a mini-allegory of the colonialist process.

IS IT A MATTER OF A
SITUATION CONDITIONED BY WORLD-WIDE SOCIOECONOMIC
AND POLITICAL FORCES...?

> WILSON SAID HE HAD GOTTEN LOST BECAUSE HE STEPPED AWAY FROM HIS GROUP OF FRIENDS WHEN IT WAS ABOUT NOON. WITH THE SUN DIRECTLY OVERHEAD, HE COULDN'T GET HIS BEARINGS.

Philips' description of one of the inquisitor's "tests," for example, plays on idolatry to dramatize Spanish and English difference: "They did proceed to demand of us...whether we did not believe that the host of bread which the priest did hold up over his head, and the wine that was in the chalice, was the very true and perfect body and blood or our Saviour Christ, yea or no: to which if we answered not yea, then there was no way but death" (146). What is revealing here, in terms of the construction of otherness, is the tone and the irony of the passage that inscribe the Spanish as sinisterly comic figures. The description seems to be a straightforward recording of facts--and the Spanish inquisitor's probably did "in fact" ask the questions--but the intonation and ironic point of view, as well as the selection of "facts," cast the Spanish in the negative role of a manichean, allegorical drama of otherness. The Englishmen, who are observant and maintain their presence of mind under duress, are able to easily outsmart the atavistic Spanish, who are unable to distinguish between the symbolic and the literal. (The Spanish

FACTS ARE "INVENTED"

all the more foolish since they are duped by the Englishmen's dissemblance--apparently they believe the answers--a dissemblance that is justified, moreover, from the English point of view, by the need for survival; So even where the English would be Machiavellian, their behavior is morally acceptable, allowing them to "accumulate 'surplus morality,'" as JanMohamed puts it, "which is further invested in the denigration" not of "the native," in this case, but of European and Europeanized others "in a self-sustaining cycle") (86). And this is often the way it is with simulations of otherness. It is what Baudrillard defines as a second or third order simulation--an image that either "masks and perverts a basic reality," or "masks the *absence* of a basic reality" (we are not allowed to see what there might be to see)--rather than a full-blown simulation that "bears no relation to any reality whatever" (170). It is not that events did not happen, that people did not look, behave, and act in certain ways, but the way in which those events, appearances, and actions are articulated and structured, whether juxtaposed or chronologically ordered in the narrative chain, codifies the other in a manner that fic(fix)tionalizes it from a certain point of view, which bears only a tenuous relationship to the way the other sees/understands itself (which is, of course, still a way of seeing, not a final or absolute self-presence).

There is a material link between the two discourse positions, as, for example, a question passing from Spanish lips to an Anglo ear, but, like the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, when focused on one (an we can only focus within our own ideology) the other escapes detection. Or, figured another way, two different sets of images (if imagery is taken to mean a way of representing something to oneself), interpretations, and world views are always already radiating simultaneously from the same point in time and space. These are

parallel worlds,[6] the calculus of colonialization, and when in one (world) it is impossible--or only speculatively possible--to pass through to the other, except through an act of imagination; even performative understanding--the reenactment of particular "social dramas," a training technique Victor Turner recommends to prepare anthropologists for field work--depends on observations and records we have made, so that we can never be more than ourselves acting in the place of the other. We can never completely escape the hall of mirrors that dis-figures the other before (within) us.

IN THE EVENT, OTHER THAN BEING A HINDRANCE, DIFFERENCES HAVE PROVED TO BE EXCEEDINGLY USEFUL IN MEASUREMENT STUDIES, SUCH AS IN INDIVIDUAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALING, WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AMONG INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN THE KEY IN WEIGHTING THE DIMENSIONS IN A MANNER WHICH PERMITS THEIR DIRECT INTERPRETATION BY THE ANALYST

But back to our narrative. Having his head always turned toward England, Philips reifies language as a means to an end. And, as Baudrillard has noted, the simple, seemingly fundamental dualism of a means to an end is already an ideological construction. The seal remains unbroken, the Mexican Indian culture within--claimed and unnamed by the Spanish in the same stroke, reappropriated by Philips out of practical necessity--remains undis-covered, unacknowledged. The messages of the others' voices are self-addressed, do not reach a destination in the mind of the "observer" from the dominant culture, even though their language rolls physically off his tongue.

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[6] which can create subtle interference patterns, sensed as a slight discomfort or dis-ease, a slight lack of confidence when we speak of the "Other" we have "studied" and now "know."

(What do the English "discover" when they go discovering?)

NARRATIVE + DIGRESSION + NARRATIVE + DIGRESSION; THIS ALLOWS FOR STORY AND ANALYSIS, TEXT AND CONTEXT, EVOCATION AND INTERPRETATION, TO INHABIT THE SAME TEXTUAL SPACE

But let us not forget the drama. Miles' means are also his sufferance. When Philips is released from the monastery and prohibited from going to the nearby port of San Juan de Ulloa, he feigns acquiescence, but has other plans, and certainly no time to admire the sights. He commences his decade-long struggle to return to Europe:

> I was the bolder, presuming upon my Spanish tongue, which I spoke as naturally as any of them all, thinking with myself, that when I came to San Juan de Ulloa, I would get to be entertained as a soldier, and so go home into Spain in the same fleet, and therefore secretly one evening late, the moon shining fair, I conveyed myself away (152).

The scene is set--night, the promise of a safe return (the "fair" moon), and within him the all-important linguistic baggage (a language he speaks "naturally" while knowing nothing of its nature).

As Philips labors for survival in the non-Anglo wilderness, the nationality of the other accrues an exchange value that enables Philips, convincingly simulating a Hispanic persona, to "buy" passage to Europe, while the identity labeled "Miles Philips" remains intact, always in control, behind the mask of the other : "I spoke with one of the masters, who asked me what country I was, and I told him that I was born in Grenada, and he said that then I was his countryman" (155). His undetected mimicry attests to English perceptiveness, craft, and ability to carefully distinguish among cultures, and to the crudeness and lack of discrimination of Spanish thought. That is, in the

subtle working our of a manichean allegory, Philip's adventure tests the English ability to create convincing stories with life-like characters that answer Anglo desires (or echo the values and beliefs of the Anglo audience). Enroute to Spain, however, his "true" identity is discovered (that is, the one we recognize as "English," encoded here as shrewdness, perseverance, ability to endure hardships--the stiff upper lip--as opposed to the Hispanic, which is never more than the negative of the English). But Philips is able to escape at the port of San Lucar, before any harm is done to him, and make his way to Seville.

As the narrative winds down, Philips learns another valuable lesson in the art of dissemblance; once again, his acquired language becomes instrumental in this final appropriation of otherness for practical, exploitative purposes. Returning to San Lucar and finding an English ship there, he feels that he is once again on safe territory, where truth reigns and the nightmare of dissemblance is banished, yet, when he tells the "truth" (i.e., that he is an Englishman and was one of Hawkins men, and not a Spaniard) he is refused passage (the captain "courteously prayed me to have him excused, for he durst not meddle with me"); he then moves on to "St. Mary Port," where he employs a different strategy. Approaching the captain of an English ship, Philips maintains he "had been 2 years in Spain to learn the language," and that he "was now desirous to go home and see [his] friends, for [he] lacked maintenance" (157).

PITTSBURGH (AP)-- AN OUT-
DOORSMAN WHO FREED HIMSELF FROM A
FALLEN LOG BY CUTTING OFF PART OF HIS LEFT
LEG IS RECEIVING TWO ARTIFICIAL LIMBS FOR
FREE.

Finally, then, Miles must carry on his dissemblance even in the embrace

of English culture, and that is the real "truth" he brings home, whether he knows it or not--the truth that there is no Truth, or if there is, then it is better not known. Things run much more smoothly when we don't look too closely, when we are allowed to see/conceive what we want. This final identity assumed by Miles is, then, in some ways his "real" identity: the Englishman whose main interest in the other, in being on the soil of the other, is to "learn" something--to take something from him--that might be of use back home.

Philips' appropriation of the language and persona of the other theatricalizes the power of English imperialism while implying the non-entitativeness, or commodity status, of the other. The English are able to disassemble the racial/cultural other and recycle certain parts according to the demands of the moment (Miles, as bricoluer, can play with the arrangement of the parts, reshuffle them to suit the current role). The other serves as raw material, a collection of detachable elements that can be reprocessed as components of an extra-cultural (i.e., outside the other's culture) project--whether it be a colonialist, imperialist venture or the practical and psychological necessity of suppressing the life of the other, keeping the not-self at bay and evading/escaping it at all costs. Facets of the demolished other become ingredients in a purely English commercial and/or specular product.

What's even more amazing then this synecdochic recycling is how the English subject could circumnavigate the globe and return (essentially?) unaltered. His subjectivity, despite his having undergone unusual hardships and having spent an extended period of time on foreign soil, remains intact. Miles never forgets himself, or loses himself, in an experience of the other--this, at least, is what his narrative <u>believes</u>; his trials are a test of English subjectivity, which is bound, from the beginning, to emerge triumphant and unscathed. The roughly circular path of Miles voyage--from England to Africa and back again via Mexico and Spain (I stress the <u>via</u>) is also the tautological circle of this belief.

A belief, too, in the dependability of language. In the end, the personal

voice of the "I," "Miles," and his burden of existence is still able to give way, in its moment of need, to an unshaken faith, a trust, in the objectivity and factualism of language, the impartial father-discourse. Despite Miles having learned another tongue, there is no interference; the final sentence remains convinced of its empiricism, its univocality (which cannot be; this "manifest discourse," as Baudrillard phrases it, is always already that of another)--the objective and true speech of a self-aware, self-confident (self-obsessed?) English subject, convinced of having an experience that masks the experience he didn't/couldn't have:

> And thus through the providence of Almighty God,after 16 years absence, having sustained many and sundry great troubles and miseries, I came home to this my native country of England in the year 1582 in the month of February, in the ship called the Landret, and arrived at Poole (157).

And so, armed with his perceptions, shielded by the armor of his language *Landret--lance--Lancelot* sure of the field held by a theo-teleological dispensation of reality, for the English subject, all is well. By letting the English reader in on the construction of an illusion, on a stage trick--the whole narrative is an implicit aside--Hakluyt, wearing Philip's mask (i.e., the mask of the narrative), diverts his audience's attention from the greater delusion of the alchemical garden within which all cultural identity is rooted.

# # # # # # # # #

Depictions of otherness in Principal Navigations parallel the "anthropological" detailing of the Surinamese in the early pages of Oroonoko. Through Francis Drake's descriptions of Javanese political organization, dress, and eating habits observed during his 1577 world voyage, we can detect a crude scheme of hierarchizing the other, as we did in Behn's text. The

societies that come closer to European codes of proper organization and behavior rank higher than those that represent the negative of Eurocentric values. Java, for example, is "governed by five kings, whom they call Rajah," bringing it securely into the oligarchy-monarchy club. These kings are at least half civilized since they are only half naked (only the "upper parts of their bodies are naked save their heads") and they also appreciate brightly colored textiles (are "wonderfully delighted in coloured clothes"), each wearing a long "pintado of silk" (186), indicating their relative refinement in dress. The village is also well ordered, with a central meeting house where all inhabitants gather twice a day to enjoy communal meals, "having a table made 3 foot from the ground, whereon they set their meat, that every person sitting at the table may eat, one rejoicing in the company of another" (187). The language of this last quote may seem to simply report what is seen, but the seeing is selective. Evaluative terms such as "rejoicing," and the overall description of the event as a "common assembly" present a version of the other, one who is both politically and spiritually fulfilled by his simple, communal activity. This sense of a harmonious, well-adjusted, carefully controlled and surveilled body politic is central to the Anglocentric world view.

Earlier in his narrative, Drake also notes, among the inhabitants of Nova Albion, female obedience to male authority in the domestic circle: "These women are very obedient and serviceable to their husbands" (181). Order, unity, communal activity, and obedience to authority--these are not so much social principles gleaned from the other's society, as a reverification of the ideological baggage the explorers brought with them.

A ship is a microcosmic community; the ordinances for Sebastian Cabot's 1553 voyage for Cathay serve up a concentrated dose of moral values, indicating the codes of behavior that were sanctioned by English society and that spilled over into specular inscriptions of the Other:

First, the captain general, with the pilot major, the masters, merchants

> and other officers, to be so knit and accorded in unity, love, conformity, and obedience in every degree on all sides, that no dissension may rise betwixt them and the mariners of this company (55).

Moreover, every person is bound by oath "to be true, faithful and loyal subjects" of the King and "to serve His Grace, the realm, and this present voyage truly" (55-56). It is not individualism, but discipline, control, and subordination that are valued, as are soberness and cleanliness in thought and language--"no blaspheming of God...nor communication of ribaldry, filthy tales, or ungodly talk"--and tidiness and order in the environment--no "filthiness" is to be "left within board: the cook room , and all other places to be kept clean" (57). Regular religious observance is also mandatory: there are to be "morning and evening prayer" (56). Truth, adherence to fact, and concern for the common good are equally important:

> No conspiracies, factions, false tales,untrue reports, which be the very seeds and fruits of contention, discord, and confusion, by evil tongues to be suffered (59).

(As Tompkins tells us of nineteenth-century English explorers of the Americas, what they saw was not illusory, but "a way of seeing"--they believed in what they saw) (72).

The commodifying attitude toward the other, who is to be appraised for his use value, is also stressed in the Ordinances: it is important to "allure" native inhabitants on board with gifts and entertainments to learn as much as possible about their "natures and dispositions," not out of anthropological interest, but to better determine "how they may be used" and in the hope that they will "show the commodities" of their land. Their names and natures are to be listed indifferently along with other goods:

> The names of the people of every island, are to be taken in writing, with the commodities of the same, their natures, qualities, and dispositions,

> what commodities they will most willingly depart with, and what metals they have in hills, mountain, streams, or rivers, in, or under earth (58).

Finally, God is invoked to aid and justify the commercial success of the imperialist ventures: "to give you his grace, to accomplish your charge to his glory, whose merciful hand shall prosper your voyage" (59).

These are the outlines of the world view under whose veil the English explorers set out to "discover" the "New World."

A Toll collector on the Information Highway

A SCORE OF COMPANIES
HAVE HOME-BANKING TERMINALS ON THE MARKET,
EACH HOPING ITS SYSTEM WILL BECOME THE
STANDARD...

As we have noted, the customs of the Javanese set them on a higher rung of the civilizing ladder. Keeping the moral codes outlined in the "Ordinances" in mind, compare Drake's implicit evaluation of the Javanese with Frobisher's description of a group of natives encountered on his 1577 voyage to the west and northwest:

> They eat their meat all raw, both flesh, fish, and fowl, or something parboiled with blood and a little water which they drink.

FISHER-PRICE INC. SOARED 8 1/8 TO 32 AFTER MATTEL INC. ANNOUNCED PLANS TO MERGE WITH THE TOY MAKER. UNDER TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT, EACH SHARE OF FISHER-PRICE WILL BE EXCHANGED ON A TAX-FREE BASIS FOR 1.275 SHARES OF MATTEL COMMON STOCK.

.....

> such grass the country yielded they pluck up and eat, not daintily, or saladwise to allure their stomachs to appetite: but for necessity's sake without either salt, oils or washing, like brute beasts devouring the same. They neither use table, stool, nor table cloth for comeliness: but when they are imbrued with blood knuckle deep, and their knives in like sort, they use their tongues as apt instrument to lick them clean: in

doing whereof they are assured to lose none of their victuals (192-93).

Of course, this could pass as a "true report" only from a Eurocentric point of view. Motivated by an internal polemic, Frobisher's language introjects a repulsive image of the other, further exaggerated by metonymic transpositions that implicitly compare native customs to those of English society. Thus we learn primarily about what the natives don't have, which are primarily the trappings of an English domestic scene--"daintily" prepared foods and table clothes, a "comeliness" of appearance, proper table manners--rather than why they are as they are. Of course they don't meet "English standards," but perhaps that measuring stick is irrelevant here. (Consider, in Oroonoko, the narrator and her brother's trek through the jungle of Surinam to visit a local Indian village--dressed in "a Taffety Cap, with black Feathers on my Head; my Brother was in a Stuff-Suit, with Silver Loops and Buttons, and abundance of green Ribbon." They are attired more for a Sunday stroll in the park than a treck through the wilderness; the ludicrousness of the image throws into relief the inappropriateness of English standards--a dress code, in this case--when maintained on the territory of the other.) (185) These "barbarous people," located somewhere in a

FEMININITY: KEY ITEMS INCLUDE POET SHIRTS; RUFFLED BLOUSES AND KNIT TOPS...

"country" of the "northwest regions" (that is all we know about them--their name, the name of their land, their exact location, as well as the entire culture of a people, all fall into the abyss of the unthought, the repressed, that which must not be known, the spaces between the words and the barrenness of the words themselves)--Why do they eat their meat raw? does this have any ritual/spiritual significance in their own culture? To suggest that they simply "don't know any better"--an interpretation pushed by the denigrating tone of

the passage--is to misrecognize what a culture "knows" in its own terms. The denigrating tone of the passage pushes the latter interpretation.

Hierarchically, these are the true others, the other of the others. Ironically, their habits make them unworthy of English exploitation; in fact, they are to be avoided, or voided: The barrenness of the country that they live in--"To be brief there is nothing fit or profitable for the use of man"--is echoed by their cultural non-existence in the space of English knowledge: "What knowledge they have of God, or what idol they adore, we have no perfect intelligence" (194). The "barbarous people" represent the negative of English society and all that is tabooed in Eurocentric culture:

> I think them rather anthropophagi, or devourers of man's flesh than otherwise: for that there is no flesh of fish which they find dead (smell it never so filthily) but they will eat it, as they find it without any other dressing (194).

They provide a window into the Imaginary by showing us the bestial underside of civilization (they live in crude tents made of skin and "apparel themselves in the skins of such beasts as they kill") (193). Their character resembles their physical appearance, or vice versa, and there is no need to treat them "courteously," as there is the Javanese and Nova Albionians: "having this knowledge of their fierceness and cruelty, we disposed ourselves, contrary to our inclination, something to be cruel" (192). The deployment of evaluative diction and the confinement of the other in a unifying network of resemblances that links physical appearance, behavior, character, and landscape are aspects of an essentializing procedure that, through an allegory of inherent differences among peoples, confirms the belief that a hierarchy of self-enclosed and mutually exclusive divisions is ingrained in nature.

ENCOUNTERING A STILL-TWITCHING FISH

WAS ONLY THE FIRST OF MANY SURPRISES

THAT AWAITED ME WHEN I TRAVELED TO
_____ FOR MY BROTHER'S WEDDING TO A
_____ WOMAN.

It is significant that the indigenous peoples are often "discovered" in a barbarous of semi-barbarous state. The English fill a gap; they supplement the other's lack. In this way, English ideology is kept continually animate and vigorous, actively structuring (or restructuring) other worlds; there is little time to disbelieve what it is so urgently necessary to impose. Such re-creative activity, however, depends on a misrecognition and reduction of the other, necessary so that "by our Christian study and endeavour, those barbarous people trained up in paganism, and infidelity, might be reduced to the knowledge of true religion, and to the hope of salvation in Christ our Redeemer" (from "The Second Voyage of Martin Frobisher," Hakluyt 190). Frobisher here ideologically bulldozes the other's culture in order to create a space for the construction of English subjectivity[7].

An incident that demonstrates the vehemence with which the other's self-representation is repressed or displaced by the specular representation of the observer occurs during John Davis' second voyage in search of the Northwest Passage (1586): a non-individuated native inhabitant ("one of them") of an unnamed land located at "latitude 64" has just kindled a fire

> into which with many words and strange gestures, he put divers things, which we supposed to be a sacrifice. I then took one of them, and thrust him into the smoke, and willed one of my company to tread out the fire, and to spurn it into the sea, which was done to show them that we did contemn their sorcery (299).

The gestures are "strange" because the passage underreads the cultural

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[7] Note the unintended irony in the language. To be "reduced" to Christianity suggests the ideological stifling of a plentitude that exceeds the limits of what Christianity can know.

context and purpose of the ritual that give them meaning and resituates them within a Eurocentric symbolic order. The generalizing diction further devaluates and abstracts the ritual--he puts "divers things" into the fire, but what are these "things"? what cultural/ritual significance do they have for the other? We never know; the language avoids looking too closely. What we are shown is a man mumbling meaningless words and throwing unidentified objects, like UFO's, into a fire--from that perspective, the event does seem bizarre and eerie, since we know nothing of the other-cultural context within which the rite occurs (in fact, if the rite occurs within any cultural context, it is within our own). It is what the passage fails to encode, what is tabooed by it, that is most revealing. The observer doesn't (or is unable to) probe past his own ideological position. As soon as he misrecognizes and de-legitimizes the event in the name of "sorcery," this encoding of the rite from a Christian, anglocentric point of view dictates his subsequent actions--to eliminate the tabooed activities, the "desire to exterminate the brutes," as JanMohamed phrases it (86) (a desire more obviously objectified in the dismemberment of Oroonoko). The attitude is strengthened by the biblical echoes of "spurn it into the sea."

It is not, ironically, the other who is imperfect or insufficient, but the inscription of him; while the English believe they are "improving," "developing," or "civilizing" the other, they are actually diminishing his presence ("reducing" him). In this brief and complex passage--rich for what it lacks--both language and action violate and eliminate the other's cultural existence, whose forms and meanings become a theatre of our own taboos. Not only has the ritual been "tread out" before it has been linguistically allowed to exist, but "one of them" (what is his social position? is he a shaman?--who knows) is bodily thrown into it. Moreover, the other is so completely commodified and dehumanized, the distinction between things and human beings so thoroughly blurred through the medium of a generalizing discourse, that it is unclear, at first (before the appearance of the gendered pronoun),

whether an object or a person is being thrown into the fire.

THE CULTURES OF
THE COMBINING ORGANIZATIONS--THEIR VALUES, AS-
SUMPTIONS, IDEOLOGIES--STRONGLY AFFECTED SUCCESS.
GENERALLY, WE LEARNED, THE MORE THE COMBINATION
BROADENED THE FREEDOM OF THE TARGET COMPANY'S
EMPLOYEES, THE MORE LIKELY IT WAS TO SUCCEED.

The point is not that the English have a problem with classifications and distinctions, but that a dialogue between self and other never takes place (from the perspective of

WELL, WE CAN
ONLY SAY MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE IS AN EXPERIMENT UPON A GRAND SCALE TO TEST THE POSSIBILITY OF DIFFUSING THE IDEAS OF ONE RACE OF MEN AMONG THOSE OF ANOTHER

poststructuralist ethnography, dialogue = dialogic, in a Bakhtinian sense--not a shuffling of discursive positions prescripted all from one point of view, but a dynamic confrontation with an alterity that may only be partially translatable, if at all). This is not to suggest, of course, that the other can exist as "pure presence, free from interpretative intervention. Cultures can only be grasped actively, in relation--either within themselves, observed by its own members, or as perceived by outsiders (and both "insiders" and "outsiders" are outside with respect to what they observe).

AN EXACT COUNT OR THOSE KILLED WAS
DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE YANOMAMI DO
NOT COUNT HIGHER THAN TWO. THEY USE

THE WORD WAHORO, MEANING "MANY,"
FOR NUMBERS GREATER THAN TWO.

Moreover, to "record" a culture in the full presence of its being would require the emptiness or death of the being/subjectivity of the observer, which is an untenable position (at least as long as we hold to the notion of authored texts). But it is possible to let the other speak, affectively, from his/her own point of view, to offer texts as records of a dialogic exchange that allow us to experience the extent to which "outsiders" (via physical presence or produced documents) have influenced or informed that point of view, rather than as packages of paraphrases displacing the other and hiding the process by which we arrive at its "meaning." In Hakluyt's text, however, the other plays the role of the negative pole in the dynamic of a manichean allegory; he is the negativity that empowers the possitivity of English authority, ideology, and linguistic censorship (i.e., the native/other does not negativize or disrupt the dominant discourse, but ballasts or reinforces it by functioning as the counterweight of a dualism).

Though native words are recorded later in the narrative, only those are translated which are "recognized" by Western society: names of implements, commodities, anatomical features, and entertainments--basic needs and commands important to know for the success of a colonialist or imperialist project:

Kesinyoh, Eat some
Madlycoyte, Music
Aginyoh, Go fetch
Yliaoute, I mean no harm
Ponameg, A boat
Asanock, A dart
Sawygmeg, A knife
Uderah, A nose
Aoh, Iron

Such terms are enlisted in the service of future exploitation--"I mean no harm" so now "Go fetch"--but not to interpret or comprehend the culture on its own terms. All the terms are practically-oriented except, perhaps, the word for

music, as if the people and their land existed primarily for their use value, and then

IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE IN THE INTERESTS OF A COMMON HUMANITY TO IMAGINE HUMANIST-SCIENTIFIC COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF THE LARGEST WORLD CORPORATIONS AS PRAGMATIC PERSUASIVE DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES

for sport or entertainment--like whores and wives; their own voices, edited in such a way, seem like the chorus to a willing enslavement. Or, put more directly, when we appropriate their language we have them by the balls. I.e.

A SPEAKER'S PRAGMATIC UTTERANCES CONTAIN A
USE-VALUE FOR HEARER'S SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS OF
THE WORLD-AT-HAND

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In both Hakluyt's and Behn's texts, the territory of the other is treated as a cultural blank, or unprocessed raw matter, which the eye can reclaim and the "I" reinvent. Nature, like the human subject, is "textualized or processed," as Pratt observes of nineteenth-century descriptions of African Bushman and their lands. The focus on the "I" discovering in Hakluyt's narratives, the ethnocentric naming of topographical features--such as Frobisher's Straits--and the exploitative appropriations of nature we've noted in the lists in Oroonoko attest to a "fantasy of dominance" (Pratt 143). Early English explorers Anglicized the world while obliterating, or at least overlooking, the way indigenous peoples conceived of, and semiotically represented their lands to themselves: "Our general [Martin Frobisher] named sundry islands, mountains, capes and harbours after the names of divers noblemen and other

gentlemen his friends" (Hakluyt 194, entry 35).

THE BAUER
TRADEMARK, A GOOSE IN FLIGHT, WILL
BE FEATURED ON ECOLOGICALLY COR-
RECT, CARDBOARD PACKAGING.

Witches, according to Susan Griffin, were seen as a threat to early American society because they could invoke the "disruptive powers of nature"; "culture," she speculates, "must be seen as more powerful than nature" and able to "tame it" (302). This acculturation of nature occurs through the articulation of it--its linguistic and imagistic codification. In Oroonoko, for

THE ADVENTURER FRAGRANCE IS A
CLEAN-SMELLING BLEND OF SCENTS
LIKE CITRUS, MARIGOLD, GERANIUM,
SANDALWOOD, TOBACCO AND PINE.

example, the narrator describes her "house" in Surinam as if it were an English country estate--a romanticized, aristocratic reservation in a wild and alien territory. Appropriately, the landscape is christianized--confirmed by an act of naming--giving it a legality or properness in contrast to the surrounding wilderness; this is noted at the outset of the description and sets the tone for what follows. The house and its surroundings are then imagistically abstracted from their native subsoil and imported wholesale into an English value system:

> As soon as I came into the Country [Surinam], the best House in it was presented me, call'd *St. John's Hill*: It stood on a vast Rock of white Marble, at the Foot of which, the River ran a vast Depth down, and not to be descended on that Side; the little Waves still dashing and washing the Foot of this Rock, made the softest Murmurs and Purlings in the

> World; and the opposite Bank was adorn'd with such vast Quantities of different Flowers eternally blowing, and every Day and Hour new, fenc'd behind'em with lofty Trees of a thousand rare Forms and Colours, that the Prospect was the most ravishing that Sands can create. On the Edge of this white Rock, towards the River, was a Walk, or Grove, of Orange and Lemon-Trees, about half the Length of the *Mall* here, whose flowery and Fruit-bearing Branches met at the Top, and hinder'd the Sun, whose Rays are very Fierce there, from entring a Beam into the Grove; and the cool Air that come from the River, made it not only fit to entertain People in, at all the hottest Hours of the Day, but refresh the sweet Blossoms, and made it always sweet and charming; and sure, the whole Globe of the World cannot shew so delightful a Place as this Grove was: Not all the Gardens of boasted *Italy* can produce a Shade to out-vie this, which Nature had join'd with Art to render so exceeding fine; and 'tis a Marvel to see how such vast Trees, as big as *English* Oaks, could take Footing on so solid a Rock, and in so little Earth as cover's that Rock: But all Things by Nature there are rare, delightful, and wonderful. But to our Sports (179).

The Italicized words thread through and unify the passage, creating visual and verbal control--St. John's Hill, Mall, Italy, English. The first two function as symbols of morality and natural order; the third is a metonymy for religious and aesthetic authority. The fourth and last, however--"English"--outdoes the rest. The trees are "as big as" but do not overtop English oaks; also, the analogy familiarizes the landscape, giving it a feeling of at-homeness. The entire estate, constructed on English, protestant ideological soil, equals all that the West's great cultural mentor--Italy--can offer in either art or nature; in fact, it is superior, since somehow more authentic--naturally and, presumably, unrhetorically itself. Italy's gardens, on the other hand, are "boasted" gardens.

"English," used as an adjective, can modify the nominative presence of the other; the landscape is thoroughly "Englished," subservient to the emotional needs and aesthetic tastes of the Anglo observer. Though the manufactured mall is "on the Edge" of what can potentially negate and destroy it, as far as the eye can see--to the enclosing fence of trees that abruptly truncates sight of an other/beyond--there is security and order. Motherly, "fruitbearing Branches" of deliciously worded and scented trees shut out the

harsh, untamed elements of nature (the "fierce" sun); only the river hints vaguely and portentously at the unknowable, potentially threatening life outside as it "ran a vast Depth down." The passage envelopes the reader in soothing sounds (including word sounds), scents, and sights. He finds himself imaginatively strolling over the grounds of a country manor (based on European, and especially English, models) or a divinely ordained sanctuary (the two are equated--a divine justification of aristocracy?)...and now have we forgotten where we are? The exoticness, or tropical aspect of the landscape, has been effectively tamed by the rhetorical edifice that, recycling it, is raised upon it (much as Christian churches, in the Middle Ages, were built of the sites of pagan ritual centers).

Fabulous contemporary
condominium designs on a
scenic hilltop surrounded
by trees & views

The careful spatial arrangement of the description, though a rhetorical device, is an illusory reduplication of qualities presumably inherent in the formal order of the garden itself, a garden which good-naturedly conforms to English social customs. The mall with its protective shade, perfectly suited to social gatherings, yields a plantation image--a restful English tea sheltered from the hot afternoon sun. The nature of St. John's Hill is not a wild nature, but a tutored and cultivated nature, a nature respectful of "civilizing" interests. A nature further controlled and formalized by a rhetoric that seems to rise naturally out of what is described. The representational language, which appears merely functional, is ideologically motivated. The garden is neither a product of English verbal art, nor South American flora, but an amalgam of the two--a product using imported raw materials, but made in England. The

garden/estate is not located out there, in Surinam, but within the Imaginary and specular interests of an observer/writer and a reader who are already positioned within a cultural and ideological context.

LINES COULD BE ETCHED WITH A HAND HOE, THE
DEEP BLACK EARTH TURNED UNDER AND LEFT RAW TO
GIVE SHADOW AND DEPTH. HE COULD COLOR THE
IMAGE WITH TOMATOES, CORN, GREEN PEPPERS
AND SUNFLOWERS...

The landscape in this passage is sensualized, bisexual, seducing the observer with its soft murmuring waves, riotous colors, lofty trees (the brightly colored, flowery, showy trees, if taken as phallic symbols, enact a botanical transvestism), and generally "ravishing" appearance. From this perspective, the description may be mirroring the narrator's own cultural position as the (potentially victimized) other in a male dominant culture. But it may also sign more aggressive needs: a displaced, secret enjoyment of a forbidden pleasure (homosexual? bisexual?) through

THEIR WOOLLY HAIR MATTED INTO THREADS WITH GREASE
AND RED CLAY, IS PARTED IN THE CENTRE, AND HANGS PROFUSELY ON EITHER
SIDE, ALMOST IMPARTING A FEMININE APPEARANCE TO THE OTHERWISE MANLY
FEATURES

a metonymic substitution; the displacement to a sexually assaulting landscape of a repressed desire for the body of the other--for dominance by the other--which is blocked by the natives' figured innocence (and other taboos, as we have seen), despite a fixation on his unabashed nakedness.

The passage also conveniently avoids reference to the slave labor that cultivated and maintains the estate. We see no bodies of workman about, only the results of their labor (their

USING NOTHING BUT A WEED TRIMMER AND PUSH MOWER, HE COULD CARVE THE UNDULATING IMAGE OF TREES AND CLOUDS THAT HAS OCCUPIED HIS MIND SINCE CHILDHOOD.

significance is in the product they make), just as the productive processes of the language that re-produce the garden for the reader are hidden. The language of the passage--in fact, the entire structure and linguistic presence of the narrative--encourages a colonialist, bourgeois attitude/state of mind in the reader by allowing him to ignore the means, the processes, of production underlying what he consumes.

SHADOW PLAY

We can trace a similar sexualizing and "civilizing" transmutation of nature in Hakluyt's Principal Navigations. Hakluyt's transcription of Sir Walter Raleigh's recounting of the "discovery" of Guiana in 1595 is a revealing example. This time the author is conspicuously male--he aggressively assaults the landscape, rather than being victimized by it; the landscape is ravished, not "ravishing." In order to attract English imperialist interests in lands bordering the Orinoco, Raleigh, in a shrewd rhetorical maneuver, first literalizes the territory he intends to linguistically and hopes to commercially violate by statistically locating it "above 2000 miles east and west, and 800 miles south and north." He then reduces the civilization of Guiana through a commodifying rhetoric, counting on its "merchandises" rather than speculating on its anthropological riches, and mythologizes it by playing on English dreams of a life of wealth, ease, and abundance: the "common soldier," for example, will "pay himself instead of pence, with plates of half a foot broad" (407). And with this scenario, ushered in logically and believably on a pair of prepositional phrases, outshining and overwhelming the ordinariness of pence, practical

interests telescope into more pleasurable ones. Guiana contains "rich and beautiful cities" with "temples adorned with golden images" and "sepulchers filled with treasure" (407-08). The country, attractively dressed, fully developed and accessible, lubricous with riches, seems to beg English consumption. In Raleigh's words, Guiana becomes female, possessible. Moreover, as in the pleasure garden in Oroonoko (St. John's Hill), "there is no country which yieldeth more pleasure to the inhabitants, either for the common delights of hunting, hawking, fishing, fowling, or the rest, than Guiana doth" (408). The gentleman sportsman's dream. And "yieldeth" is just the right word--she willingly gives herself to her would-be conquerors (to English concupiscence). Again, as in Oroonoko, the other's territory is inscribed as a space in which to reenact visions of an aristocratic and sensuous lifestyle.

TUCKED OFF BY THE SEA IN SOUTH FLORIDA, IN THE PRISTINE VISTAS OF RURAL UTAH OR UP IN THE HILLS OF CALIFORNIA, THEY OFFERED RELAXATION, TOUGH TENNIS AND A VIEW.

Raleigh goes on to quantify and commodify the landscape. The itemizing consciousness of the rhetoric imagistically breaks up the country into lists of goods, renders it usable, serviceable, exchangeable, and transportable--psychologically dismembering and neutralizing the female body of the country so that its parts can be savored at will in whatever combination the reader/writer/colonizer desires, without respect for the organic unity of the place on its own terms:

> it hath towards the south part of the river, great quantities of brazil-wood, and diverse berries that dye a most perfect crimson and carnation. All places yield abundance of cotton, of silk, of balsam, and of those kinds most excellent and never known in Europe, of all sorts of gums, of Indian pepper....The soil besides is so excellent and so full of rivers, as

> it will carry sugar, ginger, and all those other commodities, which the West Indies have (408).

Abundant, full, yielding, and simultaneously controlled and controllable, by a paratactic syntax that rips product from place, parcels out the country, industrializes it on the spot (as do the lists in Oroonoko).

Always, mixed with the profit is pleasure. The imaging of a landscape as passively offering itself to English commercial interests is a prelude to a deeper seated, Imaginary pleasure; Guiana ("Guiana," with its feminized flow of vowels), is metaphorically inscribed within a "phallic imperialism"; she is a beautiful, nubile virgin "that hath yet her maidenhead," begging to be violated and possessed. Raleigh's imagery enters the body of Guiana, forces through the topographical (if not the typographical) hymen, "the face of the earth that hath not been torn": Guiana has

> never been sacked, turned, not wrought...nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance, the graves have not been opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, not their images pulled down out of their temples. It hath never been entered by any army of strength, and never conquered by any Christian prince (408-09).

(Yet the hymen of syntax remains unbroken, as here and now the typographical landscape is smooth and continuous; the page, the text, the language remains unmolested and unmolestable, impregnable as a virgin goddess as it linguistically transfers the desire that would rip it to shreds to the body/land of the other). This brutal image of dispossession, dismemberment (breaking up of the interior of the earth with sledges), and re-formation on English terms in the name of Christianity (the earth must be "wrought"--planted, cultivated) is, perhaps, characteristic of colonialist discourse. In Raleigh's description of Guiana, as in the list of terms from John Davis' log (see page 38) that classified the other as either objects of use or pleasure--a distorted mirroring of the Western virgin versus whore "double

bind," as Marilyn Frye phrases it--there is a split in the English view of the other's lands: they are syntactically filed away for future East India companies, and/or imagistically indulged in or abused to satisfy (often perverse) psycho-sexual urges (use value = sex value).

THE MINERS OPENED FIRE WITH SHOT-
GUNS AS THE MEN EMERGED FROM THE
STRAW-AND-WOOD HUTS, THE MINERS
THEN CHARGED THE MALOCAS, STABBING
TO DEATH WOMEN AND MORE THAN 10
CHILDREN...
THE INVADERS DISMEMBERED THE
BODIES WITH MACHETES AND SET FIRE TO
THE MALOCAS...

> The native costume of these people is as picturesque as it is scanty, but the garments of softened leather, and ornaments of brightly coloured beads, harmonize with their yellowish brown skins...

26 Scenic homesites, Distinctive Ranch...
2 story designs & floorplans
or we'll build to your dreams

IT APPEARS, INDEED, THAT INDEPENDENTLY OF NATIONALITY, OR ANY OTHER INCIDENTAL CIRCUMSTANCE, THE MERE FACT OF A WHITE MAN EMIGRATING TO A NEW COUNTRY MAKES HIM THIRST FOR THE BLOOD OF ITS NATIVES; AND HE SHOOTS THEM DOWN, OR CUTS THEIR THROATS, WITH AS MUCH GLEE AS HE WOULD ERST HAVE SLAUGHTERED PHEASANTS IN AN ENGLISH PRESERVE

AN
INDIAN TRIBE OR COUNTY THAT
VOLUNTEERS TO TAKE THE WASTES MAY
BE ABLE TO COLLECT $50 MILLION A YEAR IN
RENT FOR AT LEAST 20 YEARS.

It doesn't matter that Guiana may have been assaulted by other armies, for it has not known a true masculine power--a real man--until it is entered by the superior phallic legions of Christendom. The passage gives free play to a repressed, aggressive sexuality that would, perhaps, be condemned at home. On the body of the other, however, the Christian may become rapist and still serve a righteous cause. What is destroyed in the other must be destroyed; she must have her identity beaten out of her in order to make her manageable, to "reduce" her to Christianity; she must be de-created into "raw material" that her conquerors can rework from the inside out according to English commercial and ideological models.

While in the territory of the other, the hymen of law, the rhetorical skin of morality may be breached with impunity; we can rest secure that "Christian" has not lost its meaning. Political and religious institutions, though not immutable, are still thoroughly entrenched at home.

The unbridled sexuality figured here counters the semantic intent of an earlier passage in Raleigh's narrative: Raleigh declares

> before the majesty of the living God, that I neither know nor believe, that any of our company, by violence or otherwise, ever knew any of their [Guianan] women, and yet we saw many hundreds, and had many in our power, and of those very young, and excellently favoured, which came among us without deceit, stark naked (396).

Following an essentialist path, Raleigh figures the Guianans and their landscape as part of a unified expression, openly offering their "riches" to the English. If one is violated, can we say the other is not? As the sentence

syntactically stretches out, adding phrases and a new main clause, it begins to undermine its intended meaning. Physical penetration is displaced by linguistic and imaginative penetration. Ending the sentence with "stark naked" images a visual consumption that metonymically substitutes for a tabooed desire--a desire that is also simultaneously articulated and blocked by a denial of cannibalism a few lines earlier. Due to Spanish conniving, according to Raleigh, the Guianans at first "feared that we would have eaten them"; however, the insecurity of the English position in relation to the other is easily rationalized and resolved when the "truth" is brought to light: after experiencing the "generosity" of the English, the Guianans "began to conceive the deceit and purpose of the Spaniards" (396). The facts, Raleigh seems to say, speak for themselves; but the uncertainty remains, meaning slightly jarred out of place, and the rhetorical surety of the language put into question. The fear of cannibalism attributed to the other and linked to an identifiable cause (Spanish deceptiveness) may be a transference and masking of the narrator's fear of his own strongly carnal desires for the body of the other, which we are allowed to enter only imaginatively, via metaphoric conventions, and/or accidently in the wandering syntax of a "factual" statement--the Guianans nakedness is not described in detail, allowing the tone, rhetorical thrust, and implications of the sentence to carry us, voyeuristically, into territories that escape the surveillance of "fact." (The fear observed in the other may also displace a repressed desire for self-victimization, for being sexually ravaged and overcome by the other, since the English unexpectedly find themselves imaged in their place--i.e., as cannibals.) The longer one looks at the pair of passages, the clearer their lack of clarity becomes, as we glimpse the mise en abyme partially obscured by the straightforward, "factual" production of the signs.

THE STRIKING THING ABOUT [THE ACCUSED TERRORIST]... WAS NOT THAT HE SEEMED A STRANGE AND EXOTIC FIGURE IN HIS CLERICAL ROBES, DARK GLASSES AND RED AND WHITE TURBAN. RATHER, IT WAS THAT HE WAS ENTIRELY FAMILIAR...

THE MEAL ALSO INCLUDED A FABULOUS SUSHI TRAY DELIVERED BY JAPAN'S VERSION OF THE DOMINO'S DELIVERY BOY: A SUSHI GUY ON A BICYCLE

Like his body, the other's lands may also be reductively colonizing through syntax, names, and the deployment of figures--especially similes, metaphors, and analogies. Similes can familiarize a landscape, abstract it from itself, dissolving its difference into a sameness and resemblance. Enroute to the Moluccas in 1577, Francis Drake happens upon a land that he decides to name

> Nova Albion, and that for two causes: the one in respect of the white cliffs, which lie towards the sea: and the other, because it might have some affinity with our country in name, which sometime was so called (182).

The enumeration and clear separation of reasons, the overly careful articulation of the logic behind the name is not wordiness, but the secure couching of an alien object in a Western mode of perception/comprehension; Drake sees the shore line of Nova Albion subdivided and classified 1. into a natural geologic formation and 2. into a resemblance to an already known sight, which justifies--necessitates--the imposition of the name. His language, then, enables him to visualize the world in a comforting, home-sighted way. The urge is not to know the new land for its difference, but for its sameness;

it's as if the name and noted resemblance return Drake imagistically and emotionally to a safe English harbor, though he is actually "within 38 degrees" of the Arctic Circle (180). Though "Nova Albion" already had an advanced, ritualized, agricultural society, and though he spent time with them and even travelled inland to see their villages, Drake, motivated by specular and economic interests, never reports what their name for their land might be. This passage (as several others we have already discussed) demonstrates a ghost-effect: how nearly invisible the other and his lands are to the English voyagers; they are only partially, or oddly real. "New Albion" is a blank, an inarticulate space (what is beneath the name that we are not allowed/perhaps will never be able to see/know?) (what is that name blocking from view?) until Drake assigns it a place in English vocabulary and a Eurocentric scheme of resemblance.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED SYSTEMS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMAL STRUCTURES FOR THE REPRESENTATION AND MANIPULATION OF SYMBOLS ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICULAR PHYSICAL AND CONCEPTUAL PHENOMENA

Or difference. One of the "safari" episodes in Oroonoko indicates the extent to which the English misprision nature and reinvent it on their own (psycho-social) terms. In the passage, Oroonoko goes in search of a particularly evasive and troublesome tiger. The English claim that they have shot the beast several times, "some swearing they shot her through the very Heart; and they believed she was a Devil, rather than a mortal Thing" (181). As in Faulkner's The Bear, the beast exists not as a real tiger, but a legendary one; the English perhaps find it psychologically expedient to hypostatize their fears of an unknown country into this "monster" of the jungle--a way also of objectifying any repressed guilt or insecurity consequent upon their position as colonizers of an alien territory far from home. Oroonoko, however, claims that

he can triumph where others have failed. He tracks the tiger through the woods for a brief time; when he catches up with her, she has just begun to feed on a fresh kill:

> when he going softly to one Side of her, and hiding his Person behind certain Herbage, that grew high and thick, he took so good Aim, that, as he intended, he shot her just into the Eye, and the Arrow was sent with so good a Will, and so sure a Hand, that it stuck in her Brain, and made her caper, and become mad for a Moment to two; but being seconded by another Arrow, she fell dead upon the Prey (182).

There are at least three interesting points here. First, the tiger is female. In Spurs, Derrida describes woman as that which escapes propositional language, that which can't be codified: it is impossible to say woman *is* "because the 'woman' is not a determinable identity" (49). Perhaps re-voicing Lacan, he figures her as that which escapes or is in excess of meaning: "Woman is but one name for that untruth of truth"; "that which will not be pinned down by truth is, in truth--feminine" (51, 55) (for Lacan, in Feminine Sexuality, woman is always "not all"; she is eternal jouissance beyond meaning--"nothing can be said of the woman") (152). So, too, would the "truth" of the other be an unnaming of the Christian imperialist's knowledge. In this passage, a metonymic image nexus creates a monstrous other that fuses woman and savage, ravenous, uncontrollable bestiality.

A WORLD OF COMMODITIES, GENDER INEQUALITIES,
AND POWER DIFFERENTIALS IS SEEN...
AS A NATURALIZED ENVIRONMENT, ONE
THAT MAKES SENSE BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME OUR EXPERI-
ENCE...

But why is Oroonoko able to succeed--to make the tiger visible as the real, mortal creature it is--where the English failed? And this is the second important point. Oroonoko could literally see the beast, where the others

couldn't. The English, unable to see the tiger-other, distort and reinscribe her as a monster, for much the same reasons as Caliban is codified as a monster in The Tempest: she is that which falls outside of or opposes Anglocentric values; she is the unknown, the unconscious other, the uncodifiable or inconceivable. And she is shot through the eye (eyes as a way of knowing that penetrates beyond language, a way of achieving sincere communication with the community of the real that verbal discourse dissembles, is a repeated motif in Oroonoko). Of course, it is Oroonoko's eye-to-eye contact with the tiger, his lack of fear and ability to look her straight in the eye, that enables him to overpower her--he sees her as a real, vulnerable beast, not as an immaterial myth (only the other can be/know his own otherness, simply by being who he is in his place); by locating "real" sight in the other, Behn confirms the split between English and South American. Oroonoko aims for the eye--the organ of perception--and hence penetrates to the brain--the seat and symbol of conception; he does not go for the heart--symbol of romanticizing inclinations (though he himself is trapped within in a roman a clef; he is a reinscription of the epic hero, a Beowulf out fighting monsters for the good of the community). This aims us in the direction of the third point.

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INFORMATIVE, ENTERTAINING
AND USEFUL.

Paradoxically, as Behn's text produces its simulated realities, it also believes in the possibility of clear sight--of seeing what there is to see--though

within a framework of established, Eurocentric literary conventions (i.e., she provides us the symbols/props and stages the dramatic confrontation of romantic versus literal seeing). Though when Oroonoko opens up the bosom of the mythic tiger, he finds "seven bullets of lead" in her heart (182), it only takes a single arrow through the eye to destroy the real tiger. And that's the final, irreconcilable, paradoxical truth--the tiger is always both legendary and literal, real and unreal (more of one and less of the other, depending on whose doing the looking). As readers, we shuttle imaginatively among textualized versions of the tiger as among the other others of Oroonoko, never knowing it/them "objectively."

# # # # # # # # #

In "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," Fredric Jameson discusses the problem of a value-leveling, "schizophrenic" language in contemporary poetry, characterized by a paratactic dynamic of thought that disrupts linear order and deconstructs distinctions among different modes of reality, or between realities and fictions, so that as readers of such poems we can no longer say, exactly, where we are; the poems' speakers no longer live and think within (the illusion of?) a centered consciousness, but move in a state of continual dispersion.

Extrapolating from Lacan, Jameson speculates that identity is a language-effect--syntax makes possible the sense of an identity persisting through time, the illusion of duration. Linear syntax allows us to construct and order the world teleologically in a resemblance or mirroring of our belief in coherent continuance and development over time. Paratactic, discontinuous language shatters this effect, and throws us back unto--makes us aware of--the "materiality of the work"/word (119-120). We may now become aware of a schizophrenic dimension in the passages already discussed from Oroonoko and Principal Navigations; the principal difference between such "intentional," or

at least acknowledged, breachings of sense that Jameson focuses on, and the disruptive moments in Hakluyt's text, is that in the latter nothing unusual seems to have taken place; the suspensions of reality occur "naturally," matter-of-factly, making them all the more disturbing (the same cannot always be as confidently said for Behn's text, as we shall see). Now to follow up with a few instances.

In Hakluyt's text, the impact of schizophrenic language separates and distances us from the other, dissimulating and destroying, or unflinchingly simulating, the other's reality. A mild form or this linguistic schizophrenia occurs in Raleigh's description of a series of waterfalls near the valley of Amnatapoi in Guiana. After sublimating, eternalizing, Christianizing, and sublating the falls through a simile--"every one as high over the other as a church-tower"--Raleigh immediately commodifies and commercializes the surrounding landscape. In the same sentence, he both admires the beauty of the country and notes its commercial potential, with only the flimsy syntactic partition of a comma and a coordinating conjunction separating the points of view: "I never saw a more beautiful country, nor more lively prospects." The remainder of the description is split between pure sensual indulgence in the landscape and attention to its practical, use value (though both stances, as we have previously seen, are equally consumptive and exploitative, the one from a commercial and the other from a psychological perspective):

> hills so raised here and there over the valleys, the river winding into divers branches, the plains adjoining without bush or stubble, all fair green grass, the ground of hard sand easy to march on, either for horse of foot, the deer crossing on every path, the birds towards the evening singing on every tree with a thousand several tunes, cranes and herons of white, crimson, and carnation perching in the river's side, the air fresh with a gentle easterly wind, and every stone that we stooped to take up, promised either gold or silver by his complexion (401).

SPECTRUM OF BOTH TEEMING MODERNITY AND UNDEVELOPED
NATURAL WONDER...

IN THE SPRAWLING, UNDEVEL-
OPED AMAZON INTERIOR, A WILD WEST FRONTIER SPIRIT PRE-
VAILS, AND THE LAWLESSNESS THAT THAT OFTEN IMPLIES.

As in other lists we have seen, the landscape is admired even as its exploitation and the conquest, oppression, and colonization of its people are contemplated (the "hard sand easy to march on, either for horse of foot"); nature is aesthetically appreciated as it is commodified and catalogued for English appropriation.

LINGUISTIC FORMS
(BOTH LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL ITEMS) ARE SOCIALLY EVALUATED BY
SPEAKERS IN COMMUNITIES AND USED ACCORDING TO THEIR CULTURALLY
KNOWN VALUE SYSTEMS

In effect, the same language that sexualizes and reveres the countryside (going so far as to turn tons of water plummeting over rock into orderly steeples ringing out, thrice-daily, calls to prayer), also paves the way for its rape and destruction. The

THERE IS IN GUYANA A
GENERAL PUBLIC ADMIRATION OF ENGLISH AND A GENUINE POPULAR
DESIRE THAT ENGLISH REMAIN THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE COUNTRY...

attitudes lie non-contradictorily side by side (there is no sense of tension on the speaker's part) and the theologizing, architectonic depiction of the waterfalls works hand-in-hand with the implicit cultivation, or "development" (invasion and colonization) of Guiana. As Greenblatt observes, commenting on Harriot's

A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia (1588), such a practically and specularly motivated inscription of the other is not a "simple record...but a continuation of the colonial enterprise" (31):

> Your lordship shall see of my sorts [samples of gold and silver ore], and I hope some of them cannot be bettered under the sun, and yet we had no means but with our daggers and fingers to tear them out (401).

In the next sentence, Raleigh reports how he later learned from a Spaniard the right name for the deeply buried veins--"el Madre del oro...the mother of gold." Again, an image of murderous sexual aggression, raping and tearing (with incestuous and matricidal undertones) enters the Imaginary discourse of self-deconstructive taboos. As we see here and in previous excerpts from Raleigh's log, the landscape is an object/body that can be simultaneously idolized and abused, respected and violated; it is

"IMPUNITY IN BRAZIL IS PART OF A CULTURE THAT DOESN'T HAVE A TRADITION OF ALLOCATING RESPONSIBILITY"

familial and nurturing, and at the same time accessible, violable, and possessable. The land of the other, like its inhabitants, becomes a playground for the English psyche.

A 16TH-CENTURY PORTUGUESE BISHOP COINED A NOVEL RECRUITING PITCH TO LURE SKEPTICAL COLONISTS TO SETTLE IN FARAWAY BRAZIL. ADDRESSING HIS DEVOUT FLOCK, THE CLERIC DECREED: "NO SIN EXISTS SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR."

In a striking example of this psychological "skinny dipping" early in

Raleigh's narrative, a single sentence first delights in the beauty of wildlife in Guiana and then takes equal pleasure in destroying it:

> We saw birds of all colours, some carnation, some crimson, orange-tawny, purple, watchet, and of all other sorts both simple and mixed, and it was unto us a great good passing of the time to behold them, besides the relief we found by killing some store of them with our fowling pieces (393).

Though it could be objected that the need to kill the birds for food justifies--or at least explains--this sudden shift in attitudes, yet the juxtaposition is still disarming and chilling--as if to say that it is fine to appreciate the beauty of something, but this is secondary to its use value. What sort of sensibility--or lack of it--is created or constructed here? How can we linguistically caress an object in one clause, and in the next annihilate it without a second thought? What does this say about the referential and emotional (i.e., personal, sincere) vectors of our language? Are Raleigh's men just killing words, the birds refigured as semantic pigeons in a verbal shooting gallery, though they drop solidly to the ground? is our language making possible a dangerously disjunctive attitude toward the Real (a Real whose existence is jeopardized not by foreclosure, as in Lacanian theory, but by redistribution through a hostile, voracious thought and language)? No matter how beautiful the other is--human, animal, or topographical/geological (and it is almost always either beautiful or useful, or satisfying in some other specular or Imaginative way...but what else is it?)--it is below the Renaissance European in the Great Chain; schizophrenia may be built into sixteenth and seventeenth century ideology.

THE INDIANS ARE REPRESENTED AS MEN OF HIGH STATURE, NOBLE GAIT, VIGOROUS, HOSPITABLE, GENEROUS TOWARDS EUROPEANS, TRUE TO THEIR ENGAGEMENTS, VINDICTIVE WHEN OFFENDED, GRATEFUL FOR

BENEFITS RECEIVED... NOT DEFICIENT IN

ELOQUENCE, THOUGH GENERALLY TACITURN, CUNNING, COURAGEOUS, FEROCIOUS IN TAKING REVENGE, SOCIALLY SUPPORTING THE TORTURES INFLICTED UPON THEM BY THEIR CONQUERORS...

A similarly dehumanizing inscription of a (European, though non-Anglo) other can be seen in Thomas Cavendish's description of English raids on Spanish settlements in the South Seas in the summer of 1587 (entry 48): Arriving safely at the town of Piata, the explorers note that it

> was very well builded, and marvellous clean kept in every street, with a town-house or guild hall in the midst, and had to the number of two hundred houses at the least in it. We set it on fire to the ground (283).

The gap between sentences shatters the identity, the real existence of the town. Despite the town's cleanliness, order, and sturdiness, it is obliterated in an instant, without ceremony; it is less substantial than a paper model (which, in a sense, it is). English syntax and empirical language is a powerful force. The Spanish settlement is recorded on the page so that we can retain some knowledge of its character and plan, and then peremptorily dispatched with. Again, the effect is one of extreme detachment; the schizophrenic shifts in attitude prevent the narrator from empathizing with the other and acknowledging their reality as a force to be negotiated with (a necessary stance, of course, in the cut-throat polemics deployed by competitors for the world).

It is not simply the elliptical structure of these travelogues that creates these sudden juxtapositions. The narratives may be abbreviated records of events, but they also devaluate the other in service of the colonialist project. Earlier in his narrative, for example, Cavendish describes his dealing with natives in a village on the south coast of Sierra Leone:

> On Sunday the 28 the general sent some of his company on shore, and there they played and danced all the forenoon among the negroes.
>
> On Monday morning being the 29 day, our general landed with 70 men or thereabout, and went up to their town, where we burnt 2 or 3 houses, and took what spoil we would (276).

The negroes are treated not so much as children, but as playthings--a collection of dolls to be used and abused at will. As human beings with personalities, they don't exist at all. Like the negro slaves in Oroonoko, they are a nondescript, non-individualized mass, to be managed and manipulated according to the needs of the English colonists. Moreover, the casual enumeration--"2 or 3"--and the specific temporal markers abstract the events from their experiential base and rather indifferently organize them in a chronological, quantifying discourse. The distance from the other attained through the language is evident in its callous carelessness--the English are not even sure about the specifics of their actions, not noticing at the time and/or unable to recall exactly how many men were involved or how many houses were destroyed.

THE EXPLODING AREA OF KNOWLEDGE-ENGINEERING
CANNOT BE DIRECTLY ADAPTED TO MOST ANTHROPOLOGICAL
PROBLEMS WITHOUT MODIFICATION

THE SYSTEM, CALLED MINDSCOPE, USES VIDEO SCENES LIKE SUNSETS OR SWIMMING SWANS, TO HELP PATIENTS LEARN TO ASSOCIATE THE IMAGES WITH A STATE OF PHYSICAL RELAXATION THAT REDUCES PAIN NATURALLY

A similar juxtaposition of moods occurs in Oroonoko. Oroonoko, we remember, convinces a group of slaves to abandon Parham plantation and

establish a temporary utopia in hopes of eventually finding passage on a ship to return to their homeland, but Byam's men catch up with him, lure him back with promises of freeing Oroonoko and his pregnant wife, and then immediately bind and whip him along with the other slaves and rub his wounds with Indian pepper. The narrator, meanwhile, along with the other women of the plantation, had feared rebellion and sought refuge. Upon her return, she meets "Colonel Martin, a Man of great Gallantry, Wit, and Goodness, and whom I have celebrated in a Character of my new Comedy, by his own Name, in Memory of so brave a Man" (198). Thoughts of comedy in the midst of these sadistic events, and the immediate interest in Colonel Martin as a "Man" who can be reinscribed as a "Character" within one, throw the melodramatic quality of events into relief. We are reminded that we are reading a novel, a fictionalization of the other (as the narrator reveals her own re-creative, genre-encoding tendencies), that the reality-effect of the language is so much narrative magic that may mask, despite the truth claims at the beginning of the novel, the fact that we are always within a writing, and not a reality. The danger is in confusing such

> WITH SUFFICIENT PRAC-
> TICE, PATIENTS WEAN THEMSELVES FROM MIND-
> SCOPE, LEARNING TO FORM THE IMAGES AND RELAX
> ON THEIR OWN...

romanticized versions of the other with the all-together unknowable actuality of the other. The narrator's casual and unexpected mention of the comedy second guesses the reader's literary seduction and breaks the dramatic spell of the narrative.

Thus, the "schizophrenic" juxtaposition here, in contrast to that in the passages analyzed in Principal Navigations, though sobering and distancing, does not attempt to dehumanize or denaturalize the other to serve a colonialist

end, but to expose the narrative's own distorting, linguistic machinery--its deus ex

ONLY WHEN DIS-
COURSE BECOMES TEXT DOES IT ACHIEVE AUTONOMY FROM
THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL CONTEXT OF THE SPEAKERS AND THEIR
SUBJECTIVE INTENTIONS, BECOMING PUBLIC AND OPEN TO
MULTIPLE INTERPRETATIONS

machina--to distance us from the narrative itself. We are simultaneously made aware--or reminded--of the fictionalized production of the other and shaken free from the hold of the story, the realist discourse that reifies the other and his surroundings. Both place and person are equally colonized and reproduced by the imagination of reader and writer. There is no other side to the mirror--only an interior and exterior of the mirror.

THE RELATION BETWEEN DISTANCE AND THE CON-
SEQUENT CALCULATIONS OF DIFFERENCE HAVE IMPLICATIONS
FOR OUR (NATIVE) DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL LIFE, WHICH WE DO
NOT READILY ACKNOWLEDGE.

# # # # # # # # #

I look out the window at the ocean. Is it the same ocean for me as for the merchant marine, fisherman, oil rig worker, man on a life raft? At any one time, we can only know a particular version of the ocean/other--as object of contemplation, a "job," environment of terror...the version we cannot not know. We can understand that there are other versions; even, to some extent, empathize with those others. But we can never really experience the other versions without changing our own position, without the "failure of a certain

gaze"...

How hard it is to know her--the other. Yet the longer I'm with her, the more intimate we become, the less difference there seems to be. But am I making her into my image of her or is she remaking me? or does it have to be an either/or? Perhaps we are becoming another together--a composite, hybrid of personalities, behaviors, self-images and images of each other.... Can I ever simply "know" her?

# # # # # # # # #

What do the English, what does the reader, hear, when Oroonoko speaks? We already know within whose language he is made present, but within whose voice does he speak? Having arrived at Surinam, and upon descending from the ship whose duplicitous captain had extracted Oroonoko from his homeland, the now "Royal Slave" addresses his new social group in the oppressor's own tongue: "*Come, my Fellow-Slaves, let us descend, and see if we can meet with more Honour and Honesty in the next World we shall touch upon*" (166-67). White in thought and syntax, this brief introduction to the slaves' "new world" is spoken in a grammatically perfect, though rhetorically stilted, bookish English--English at three removes, passing first through a French tutor and voiced again through a non-native speaker; Behn, of course, constructs the whole amalgam out of her own English, reinvented for the purposes of the narrative and filtered through her narrator. The text returns to us a caricature of English eloquence. Is this how English really looks, sounds, and feels to those outside the native speaking group (when learning a new language outside of the context of its native milieu, we often exaggerate certain syntactic, stylistic, or accentual features)? Again, specular interests focus on the transmogrifications of the English language: we aren't allowed to hear the hidden traces of the other's voice.

Sometimes, as in the above quote, Oroonoko's voice is registered in italics; in other instances, it is marked by single quotes. Since the italics don't seem to indicate emphasis (equally momentous speeches are presented without them), what does the distinction imply? Are we to take one as the registration of Oroonoko's "actual" voice and the other as the narrator's re-voicing of his statements? The confusion is functional. Even when we are supposedly reading a literal transcription of Oroonoko's voice, we are not hearing the voice of the other, but an always already colonized one; it makes little difference whether the voice we hear is Oroonoko's reduplication of Anglocentric syntax and values, or the narrator's re-echoing of a previous reduplication. We are caught in a bottomless reproduction of the same, an economy in which the proper origins of and differentiation among voices ceases to have value. Oroonoko's physical bondage mirrors his mental one. He is held captive within (and captivated by) a network of names, imprisoned within a linguistic structure that (re)constructs him, transmogrifying him into a specter of himself.

Appropriately, when Oroonoko is unwillingly removed from his relatively barbaric homeland and transported to the more "civilized," colonized, plantation studded Surinam, his name is changed form "Oroonoko" to "Caesar." The name change dehistoricizes him--erases his identity as evidence of the historical presence of his own culture--and rehistoricizes, or redraws him within the past and legends of Western culture. This

Where the horizon meets
the sky, color and light are
transformed. The vision
awaits you in a new range
of makeup for fall.

revisionary process is similar to the mechanism of the manichean allegory, one

of whose effects is to "dehistoricize and desocialize the conquered world, to present it as a metaphysical 'fact of life'" (JanMohamed 87). As the fabrication "Oroonoko" materializes in the Western field of ideological discourse, as he speaks himself (or is written/spoken) into a semblance of being, he comes to resemble, as a fully drawn "character," that which his classicized facial features already declare him to be. And yet since the hegemonic project is based on an unreality (specularization and speculation) it is pre-scheduled to collapse (as we have seen, shall see again), and the (literally) deconstructive end of the novel makes us aware of our "fantasmatic" (Lacan's term; "A Love Letter," 159) rendition of reality. In fact, the telos of the reformative project is collapse; resemblance ultimately proves the unbridgeable differences, the "universal, metaphysical differences," between the Eurocentric self and the other: "there can be no meeting ground, no identity, between the social, historical creatures of Europe and the metaphysical alterity of the Calibans and Ariels of Africa" (JanMohamed 87).

Most of Oroonoko--his-story, his culture--remains inarticulate, the unthought that escapes the thought, Foucault says. What has been told has been told by us--by the narrator, by Behn, by the reader--and has been told before and continues to be retold through the conventions of Western literature. There is a character, "Oroonoko," alias "Caesar," but there is no Oroonoko--what else to call him?--an already doubled, originary alias.

OUR ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL
REALITY OR ENTER INTO AND EXPAND IT AND OURSELVES
THROUGH RADICALLY SIMPLIFYING (AND ILLUMINATING) RE-
DUCTIONS, OR OPEN-ENDED AND MANY CHAMBERED ECLEC-
TICISMS, CREATE GREATER DIMENSIONS OF RELATIVITY IN
CONSTRUCTION/SYNTHESES...

RE-

SISTING, IF WE CAN, EITHER EPISTEMOLOGICAL HYPOCHONDRIA OR SIMPLISTIC ESSENTIALIZING CONTRASTS, WE MUST WITH PASSION--AT TIMES, WITH OUTRAGE--CONVEY, AS BEST WE CAN, COMPLEXITIES OF LIFE THAT BOTH DIFFER FROM AND ARTICULATE WITH OUR OWN

THE FIRST FASHION ACCESSORY WAS PROBABLY A LEFTOVER STRIP OF MAMMOTH HIDE KNOTTED AROUND THE NECK OF A CRO-MAGNON FASHION EDITOR AROUND 15,000 B.C. ...

* * * * *

Oroonoko's position at the end of the novel is not dissimilar to Caliban's in The Tempest. Caliban represents an abortive experiment in colonization and conversion of the other to a Western point of view. After Prospero fails to impose a conventional, Christian morality on Caliban, mainly through attempts to reconstruct his consciousness via language--before Prospero's tutoring, Caliban did not "Know [his] own meaning" (I,ii,ln.358)--Caliban is relegated to a hopelessly, reprobate otherness; he is one upon whom "any print of goodness wilt not take," as Prospero judges him (I, ii, ln. 354). (And language--not so much the meanings of individual words as the basic components and structure of a particular sign system itself--is an effective means of encoding ideology. As Foucault observes, "what civilizations and peoples leave us as the monuments of their thought is not so much their texts as their vocabularies, their syntaxes, the sounds of their languages rather than the words they spoke; not so much their discourse as the element that made it possible, the discursivity of their language") (Foucault 87). Despite attempts to culturally reconstruct them through imposition of a foreign thought and language, both Caliban and Oroonoko, are, ultimately, locked into the economy

of a "manichean allegory," as JanMohamed defines it--a self-generating system of "diverse, interchangeable oppositions" through which the dominant culture and the colonized culture mutually differentiate and exclude each other [8] (103), though in Oroonoko we get a flattened out, one point perspective view of the allegory. (Moreover, this strategy of acknowledging otherness via opposition or negation has a practical, economic advantage, from the point of view of the colonizing culture: Discussing certain events and characterizations in nineteenth-century colonialist fiction, JanMohamed notes that the "supposed barbarity and inferiority of the racial other" sets the "process of 'civilizing'" into perpetual motion, justifying their continued exploitation) (88).

MANY YEARS' PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE BLACK RACE ENABLES ME TO TESTIFY THAT THE NEGRO, UNDER PROPER RESTRICTIONS, IS INVALUABLE AS A LABOURER, AND THAT, WITH THE MORAL AND PHYSICAL GUIDANCE OF THE WHITE MAN, AN ADVANCE IN CIVILIZATION MAY BE EXPECTED FROM HIM

But whereas Oroonoko's linguistic presence collapses toward the end of the novel (and along with it the threat of catching ourselves in the act of reproducing a sham otherness), Caliban's voice remains crucial to the poetic texture of The Tempest--in fact, the play would lose its dynamic strain without it: "You taught me language; and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse" (The Tempest I, ii, lns. 364-65). "Profit" is ambivalent, here. Its usage seems ironic, but is it? By learning to curse, and devaluing his other language lessons, Caliban rejects that language that attempts to codify him in a Western, Anglocentric value system; he latches onto those elements of the language that register his subversive position in relation to the dominant, colonizing culture represented by Prospero and Prospero's attempts to institutionalize him. That

[8] JanMohamed may be following James A. Boon on this point, who claims that because cultures "interpenetrate symbolically," they are prone to misrepresent and distort each other (45).

is, one of the discourses brought into the play--into the dramatic conflict of discourses that is the play--is the language of uninstitutionalized rebellion--anonymous, spontaneous, unsystemized. The curse is not a manifesto. It is a disruptive element of language--and, in Shakespeare's plays, often one of the more creative idioms. The curse breaks the ordering force of syntax; it defies, violates, and devaluates the twin orders of rhetoric and reason: "The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (II, ii, lns. 365-66). But because of its immediate, discontinuous quality, the curse can never be more than a string of words; it can do little to dislodge a totalitarian discourse--like throwing pebbles against a cathedral. And since the English language doesn't "take" to Caliban, he cannot be imprinted with the ideologies it embodies, but neither can he construct any in his own language (whatever that may be--it passes unheard) to counter them. However, though Caliban, like Oroonoko, is ultimately assigned to the negative term of a manichean allegory, consigned to a hopelessly degenerate otherness, he remains a stronger, more articulate force than Oroonoko. Oroonoko is reduced to the speechlessness of a brute howl (he has not learned how to curse) and the inarticulate power of his eyes; finally, even this bodily language fails him. Oroonoko is both metaphorically and literally dissembled at the end of the book; in (what will become) Frankensteinian tradition, the monster we have created, we must also destroy. Physically and linguistically, Caliban remains in one piece at the end of The Tempest; he persists as a potent force, a motivated, and motivating, character: the sincerity of his repentance, for example, is erased, or at least made dubious, by a parataxis: "How fine my master [Prospero] is! I am afraid / He will chastise me" (V,i,lns.262-63). What the first sentence giveth, the second taketh... (it is possible to imagine the second sentence spoken in an undertone, or as an aside). He has learned how to curse, but also how to manipulate a sycophantic rhetoric to protect himself or to cover insights into his own dupery:

Pros. as you look

to have my pardon, trim it handsomely.
Cal. Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter,
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god,
And worship this dull fool!

(V, i, lns. 292-97)

Caliban, though he may be "pinch'd to death" for his attempted usurpation (re-usurpation?) of the island, and though the linguistic presence of his otherness has been erased, has learned to use a new language to his "profit" (he is, in Lyotard's sense, a paralogist) and to be a constant thorn in Prospero's side, a reminder of his failed, ethnocentric attempts to remake Caliban in his own image.

WITH GIFTS AND POUNDING HEARTS, WE GREETED THE _____ FAMILY WITH A FLURRY OF BOWS, SMILES AND WELL-PRACTICED _____ GREETINGS.

Through his interactions with Caliban, Prospero tests and confirms the limits of Eurocentric culture. His disillusionment with the religio-political and natural order of things, as it has been conventionalized by Western civilization, is expressed in his dramatic imaging of it as a theatrical presentation, a fabrication: Distraught, Caliban's "foul conspiracy," on his mind, he interrupts the Lethean balm of his mythological pageant to philosophize:

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.

(IV, i, lns. 151-56)

Towers, palaces, temples--the Western symbols of worldly and divine authority

and idealism (the tower by turns poet/thinker's studio and dungeon)--and even the "globe itself," as representative of a belief in the natural and the real: all are a show, a performance, a simulation (metonymically, the "great globe"--and with it Hakluyt's "vast globe of the world," as he describes the reach of English claims to territory--becomes the Globe Theatre, inverting the real into the imaginary); and if all *that* is unreal, then what is the drama that reappropriates and reinvents it all, other than a self-engendering genre ("the play's the thing")? "To simulate is to feign to have what one hasn't" (Baudrillard 167). All are a "baseless fabric." And even the metaphor, which presumes a stable relationship between sign and referent, self-deconstructs: "fabric" suggests concretion--there is, at least, something beneath the language we can lay hands on, insubstantial though it may be--but it is an impossible fabric--baseless--of a vision. Confrontation with the other, then, evokes intuitions of our own self-produced "realities."

Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype

# # # # # # # # #

The book is an other, too. Hakluyt must reenact the experiences of his subject-hero through his words. He experiences the hardships and anxiety of the mariners through the unknown, shapeless, cannibalized and mutilated body of language and knowledge whose fragments must be reunited, though the vicissitudes will not be repressed; he must attempt to give this other of language a recognizable form, to conquer and ideologically colonize it:

> Having for the benefit and honour of my country zealously bestowed so many years, so much travail and cost, to bring antiquities smothered and buried in dark silence, to light

he is able to rescue them "from the greedy and devouring jaws of oblivion" and, creating a Frankensteinian hybrid from this graveyard of discourse,

> to incorporate into one body the torn and scattered limbs of our ancient and late navigations...for the bringing of which into this homely and rough-hewn shape, which here thou seest, what restless nights, what painful days, what heat, what cold I have endured; how many long and chargeable journeys I have travelled; how many famous libraries I have searched into... (34-35).

These narratives spanning eight centuries and churning discontinuously in the fears and delusions of their eras' unconscious must be raised into the Renaissance space of meaning--from dark to light--and cast in a familiar, "homely," shape. Hakluyt--researcher, transcriber, craftsman, not a magician (we never see the writing in Prospero's book).

But within his "scientific" approach, he has an OBE (out-of-body experience) and plummets into the "ghostly and incorporeal" realm of quantum physics--in the holistic, "nonlocal" quantum world, "it may be that consciousness, like the quantum, does not possess any single and precise location at all" (Talbot 100). Through his rewriting of the narratives of discovery, he undergoes the anxieties of the voyages he would never make: "Into what dangers and difficulties they plunged themselves, I tremble to recount" (35). His journey is a textual one, a circumnavigation of words, a trip through an unfathomable world of language whose groundless reality is other texts. And, finally, the whole odyssey passes

REALITY ITSELF AS IT IS BELIEVED TO EXIST IS CRE-
ATED IN LARGE PART BY THE LIBRARY AND ITS WHOLLY IN-
TERIOR EFFECT ON PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES, THE VERY
ECONOMIC-CULTURAL PRACTICES

THE SPACE AGENCY WAS EXPECTING TO WIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL THIS FALL FOR A PROJECT TO SEND A MODEST SPACECRAFT CALLED PATHFINDER TO LAND ON MARS WITH A SMALL ROVING VEHICLE.

over to the reader; a quantum leap. The metonymic displacements of the narratives--from voyage to voyage, place to place, other to other--allow me to travel on through the text, log into my own journal/critical study a further revision/rewriting of the others I find there, and pass them on...a continual reenactment of, and attempt to come to terms with, the imperialist-colonialist projects I must take responsibility for, must talk about, must see to prevent...

> This being the sum of those things which I thought good to admonish thee of (good reader) it remaineth that thou take the profit and pleasure of the work: which I wish to be as great to thee, as my pains and labour have been in bringing these raw fruits unto this ripeness, and in reducing these loose papers into this order. Farewell (34).

We're on our own. I have labored, too, and taken the "profit and pleasure of the work," though perhaps not that which you would have wished me to, for which I am grateful. Farewell.

# # # # # # # # #

Either the white page space is the purity of the dominant culture, a purity that is an ignorance (absence of the other, a blank in consciousness) and the blackness of the mark before becoming word, sentence, or grapheme--the sheer, inarticulate blackness--is a threat to this purity and must always be contained in letters, in syntactical chains, separated by inviolable spaces...*Or*, the white space is the unknown, the hole

or gap, an empty space that is the other's as it is woman's space--that which we "fail to understand," a "no-man's land" where the woman/other seeks to "escape man's colonization," as Claudine Herrmann defines it (169)--and the black of the print is a repressive possitivity.

# # # # # # # # #

The Imaginary: the tabooed: self mutilation, dismemberment, rape, barbarity, bestiality, incomprehensible rituals, inarticulate voices; that which threatens to disintegrate the ego, to dispel the identity-effect sustained through a language effect; a disruptive other--the unconscious, woman, or racial other. And the specular--that which reforms the other by forging in him a resemblance to us. In either case, codified.

AS RESEARCHERS, AS WELL AS OTHER PROFESSIONALS, WE HAVE TO TRY TO REDUCE THE DANGER OF MISINTERPRETING, OR MISREADING, OTHER PEOPLE'S TALK IN OUR QUESTS FOR CULTURAL, OR DIAGNOSTICAL, EXOTICA

TWENTY BODIES WERE RECOV-
ERED TODAY BY POLICE OFFICERS AND FOREST
GUARDS, THE OFFICIAL SAID, ADDING, "THE
ELEPHANT IS STILL AT LARGE."

These are the fundamental, dialectic, transformative forces that generate "underreadings" of the other (Nancy Miller's term), that produce the fictional anthropologies of Aphra Behn's Oroonoko, the Royal Slave and Richard Hakluyt's The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of

the English Nation; the forces that keep the manichean allegory spinning, that keep the wheels of exploitation turning, that sustain the production of ideological simulacra. And it keeps happening--the creative and the criminal, the homeless and the beautiful, those that are like us (and whom we like) and those who are not us...

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

And I imagine, even without a wand, if I close my eyes real tight and tap my heels together three times and turn... *I'll be home, Home, where everything is white and blue and green and green and there's lots of space and all you can see for miles is budding wheat, vast fields of wheat that ripple in the wind like great lakes....Home, not in the bizarre, cruel, bestial/martial land of Oz--that name that doesn't even form itself into a name, ends before it begins, not melodious "Dorothy" but just a buzz--Oz, a place of trickery and gaudy colors and sadistic haggard old women who remind me of my taunt not aunt aunty(i) Em was never like that!...IN THE NAME OF just three times, thank God THE FATHER and just close my eyes to the rest THE SON not to see! AND THE HOLY GHOST...AMEN.*

It's over now. It wasn't real, all a bad dream. Like Miles Philips who had to change himself into someone else to escape the cruel Spanish--a change of appearance only, not a transubstantiation; the entire time he was in that foreign shape what was on his mind was getting away from there, getting back to England. I don't know about England but it's no picnic being stuck on the other side, dream or not...I'll never go "over"

THE CHRONOTOPE OF THE ROAD WITH ITS AXES OF SPACE-TIME IS A NARRATIVE CONVENIENT FOR THE ETHNOGRAPHIC AUTHOR AND WITH THE INSERTION OF DIGRESSIONS

again. Use them, means to an end, dissimulate--whatever, just get back! Click your heels three times (make sure you have good leather shoes; this won't work in bare feet or whathaveyou) turn, turn, turn *and the circle of what we love and believe in brings us back home, full sail (I* know *)... plush white clouds... technicolor... glad to be back...*

The
anthropologist's voice is just another voice. We are
all "natives."

New rhythms wrapped
around old messages constantly
revive pop music...

The narrative-digressive mode enables the author to insert a variety of genres into the flow of narration, thus enriching, explaining, commenting on, subverting, or creating a parallel discourse to, the story line.

They are formed

This macrovoice, arising in the imagination and
its interaction with many contexts, is a guide for the
speaker-writer and all possible audiences to negotiating the depths and shoals of linguistic and other pluralisms in a plurality of real worlds and others that are
not so real...

Our essential and immediate problem is how many models, angles of view, analytical techniques, and so forth to include and integrate without incurring excessive internal contradiction and, as it were, theoretical dissonance

for the wilderness

Whom do we meet? Do they accept

us? Do they tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth? And what does truth-telling, whatever that is, depend upon? Is it a matter of interpersonal chemistry? Is it a matter of how the ethnographer fits into the always already world of the field?

and die

We need also to
explore in the directions of taste and touch, perhaps
moving toward a more tactile, auditory, even at times
olfactory, and generally more sensuous anthropology

when it is reclaimed

Textual Performance / Performing the text:
Essays on Armand Schwerner's The Tablets

Several "poem/commercials" interrupt (disrupt) the hermeneutical production of the essay. These mini collages incorporate one of the pervasive (and potentially cooptive) popular discourses that Schwerner's poetry challenges. Two of the poemmercials occur on unnumbered pages and may be shuttled through the essay, deployed according to each reader's strategy. Bold type, parentheses, and upper case letters trace a counter or supplemental message through the brief textual station breaks. I realize that this game of moves and counter moves is risky business (will you be able to take my essay "seriously"?), but I think it initiates a potentially productive dialogue, not only among Schwerner's poetry, the "commercials," and my own essay, but among poetic texts in general, certain popular discourses, and similar interpretative, academic projects. This textual "happening" raises several questions: How does my essay stand up against these intrusions? do they jeopardize its credibility? Does Schwerner's play with hieroglyphics, intertextual marking, drop outs ("holes" in the text), substitutions, and his openness to aleatoric phenomena effectively trope such intrusions by welcoming them and encouraging a similar play with/upon/through the body of such parasitic discourses? Are "popular" and "literary" discourses mutually exclusive? (commercials feed on the arts--"Words lose their substance, are co-opted by mimetic IBM ads, depress," comments Schwerner--but it's a two way street; Schwerner's attitude is not defeatist, and the celebrative dis-ease of his poetry carries the germ of a merger). Along the lines I'm suggesting here, the commercials become participatory discourses, no matter how uncomfortable the collaboration may at first feel.

THE TAB LETS

Prologue

The life you lead
should be your own

Do not put so much sugar in your
coffee, or he will think you extravagant

The first two lines have a sound double--"the life you save could be your own." Though we "read" one statement, two are simultaneously present. Then a swirl of questions: The life you should assertively lead is a potential threat to you; restrain yourself. Or, you must lead your life by saving, preserving it. But doesn't leading "your own" life entail risk? Anyway, how do you "lead" a life? and is it "your own" ? Not that we're acting out others' lives, but perhaps the very language of ownership is an ego camouflage, a strategic covering of the ultimately unpossessable--life? Trapped in the metronomic pulse of a binary opposition (mine/not mine, loves me/loves me not), we follow the sound of our thought steps, searching for a door, not attending to what isn't there to hear--the silence between beats. "The life you lead save should be could be your own." The semantics twists itself into a knot around a void.

But am I using too much sugar? The next two lines second guess our interpretive predicament. Let's not be extravagant with our reading/rewriting of such a simple statement, lest the author of the poem, as well as you, the reader of this essay, will think my interpretation too "extravagant." Yet in the

imagination, says Stevens in "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words" (quoting an unidentified source), "nothing can be too lavish, too sublime, or too festive."

Especially if there is no "author."

La Gran Via, a Puerto Rican oriental restaurant on Manhattan's upper west side. Brought to us on a small plate, after a meal of rice and beans, two almond brown cookies folded and sealed like dry lips. The cookies are broken, the fortunes brought together--hers, the white one about slipping into the undecidable space between identities/lives, and mine, the pink one about performative self-consciousness--and the poem is made. This simple narrative, this chronological sequence of events, is the crib of the aleatoric. "Any willful overorchestration of poetry removes that existential element of the gratuitous," Armand Schwerner tells us in "Tablets Journals/Divagations," the closing section of sounds of the river Naranjana & The Tablets I-XXIV (118). The "fortune cookie poem" above is an extreme example, glimpsed whole in the instant the conductor raises his hands. It is un- or pre-orchestrated. Yet it is not chance making sense. I cannot evade the fact that my interpretation of the found poem is not "discovered," but invented; in manufacturing a meaning for it, I catch my interpretative skills at their own game, the game of finding meaning, no matter what. As Marjorie Perloff has observed, we must imagine our own narratives, a fiction of sense to resist an actual indeterminacy. Knowing this, we must also allow for the extravagance of the lines making several variant and contradictory senses, or no sense at all.

Such playing with oneself is foreplay to entering The Tablets, which is an extended linguistic and imagistic excitation whose climax and final coming to rest, to a state of equilibrium, is indefinitely suspended. Is "the game itself significant?" asks Schwerner, speaking of Michaux and Surrealism. "It depends upon the largeness of the mandalic awareness within which it occurs" (AS 89). (Self)countermove: resISt my own resistance.

TH E
T AB
L E T S

"Don't **LET** another second **GO** by..."

...a real life answer..."

"It pays to (D)**IS**cover."

TH E
T AB
L E T S

I

Liquid Poem of Forces

KEY:

..... untranslatable;
+ + + + + + missing;
(?) variant reading;
[] supplied by the Scholar-Translator.

from "Tablet I"

all that's left is pattern* (shoes?).

*doubtful reconstruction

I rooted about...like a.....sow* for her pleasure

*atavism: a hieroglyph; perhaps 'a fetal pig,' 'a small pig,' 'goddess'

the (power)* for all of [us]!

*perhaps 'damage,' if a borrowing; cf. cognate in N. Akkadian: 'skin-burn'

.....

from "Tablet III"

the calyx, the calyx, someone has ripped it
it will not make loam, it will crumble
the pig (god?) has pulled life off + + + + + + + + + + + + +
the pig (god?) is stronger than a thoughtless child
my chest empties.....my chest
I no longer stand in the middle of the field and + + + + + + + +
I am missing...

We live in a nightmare of prostheticism, of a helplessly diminishing self losing itself, like an incredible shrinking man, into the furniture of its life. Character is a matter of decor. We want designer clothes and high tech ambience; upscale attitudes, trendy behavior, and upbeat phrases. Personal growth is the production of a generic self functioning smoothly in its surroundings, the construction of a prosthetic personality.

Armand Schwerner, writing in a computer/high-tech culture of programmed language, programmed visual experiences, all kinds of scheduled, pre-fabricated events, bases his aesthetic program on the unprogrammable. An ongoing work, like Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End, The Tablets[1] is a poetic sequence (begun in the mid '60s and now twenty-seven strong) inspired by Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform writing. But Schwerner's project is postmodernist and revisionary, not nostalgic or revivalist. In the trans-candescent afterglow of the Emerson of "Circles," a tireless experimenter, "an endless seeker with no Past at [his] back," Schwerner imaginatively, persistently tunnels through historical and archaeological knowledge of man; he hopes to uncover a "new [/old] language" and uncodified modes of being/otherness beneath our already written, ready-made "Pasts," a process that exposes his own language to the risk of disintegration in roped off aporias, the black holes in our civilized self-consciousness. But Schwerner also recognizes the ludic potential of such a stance, as he pursues his self-annihilating objective with an intensity that often breaks into self-laughter: Mocking the poem's obsessive archaeological scavenging, "Tablet XXVI" promises to push back 16,000 years "to reveal an articulation" (Tablets 74); as the quote from "Tablet I" above shows, the poem perceptively parodies over-zealous scholarship that often reinters what it brings to light under ponderous mounds of emendations and annotations. One of the writing-effects of the

[1] Citations as follows: SRN = sounds of the river Naranjana & The Tablets I-XXIV; AS = "Armand Schwerner--A Conversation"; PI = personal interview with Armand Schwerner.

present essay will be to extend this play by further commenting on an already over(self)determined text.

However, what strikes a reader on one level as pun or mimicry simultaneously resonates through a century of avant-garde aesthetic theory. One of the main concerns of poetic theory since the mid century has been the interface of "archaic" and contemporary poetry. In Pre-Faces & Other Writings, Jerome Rothenberg has charted continuities between the aesthetics of pre-industrial or tribal societies and postmodern, Euro-American modes of artistic production. The emphasis on orality and the "poem as score"; nonlogical development through image juxtapositions and "composition by field" (Olson's method of treating imagery, language, and meaning as freely circulating elements of composition); presence of gaps or lacunae; intermedia performance (incorporating extralinguistic elements such as music, nonmusic sounds, and visual signs); frank deployment of sexual imagery; an affinity for the breath-line (a desire for "bodily-rootedness"): these features of postmodern poetry--all of which are present in Schwerner's work--can be traced to "primitive" paradigms. Also, the sense of humor Schwerner brings to his performances stems, in part, from oral story-telling traditions. Finally, modern restorations/representations of ancient writing also serve as a backdrop for the formal and epistemological dimensions of Schwerner's work (Samuel A. B. Mercer's The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary, for example; New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1952 [2]). As Rothenberg muses (in the

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[2] Not so much to promote a product as to postpone the feature presentation: "Pyramid texts" are fragments of writing, composed between 3000 and 2175 BC, found in eight pyramids and rearranged by twentieth century archaeologists. The reconstructions in Mercer's text bear an uncanny resemblance to The Tablets:

A lacerating rod.....me
A .....hand.....me
A terrifying message.....me
A stinging whip.....me

I am indebted for this comparison to Rothenberg's Technicians.

preface to Technicians of the Sacred): the "forms uncovered" help "Sharpen our own tools...the past is in motion in us" (Pre-Faces, 136). As the above quotes from tablets "I" and "III" demonstrate, The Tablets is a texture of verbal and nonverbal/visual signs, including, in "XXVI," rebus poems (a gesture toward both ancient pictographic writing and American "concrete" poetry of the 1960s and 70s); a patchwork of sound and silence; of statement and drift from statement. Tutored by the fragmentary emergence of ancient poetries into the present, as well as by Ezra Pound's theories of the vortex and "luminous detail" and Charles Olson's concept of composition by field, the poem functions as a timeless (though time-conscious) bricolage of voices and images, rather than as a lyric centered in the monody of a single author/persona.

Hence the zany, yet dead serious, often sense-defying quest of The Tablets is not just for a richer vocabulary and imagery, but for new, expanded modes of thought: Sumero-Akkadian tablets, in their "modern, accidental form" have provided Schwerner with a "usable poetic structure"; they suggest "ways out of closure," techniques for loosening the "syntactic girdle of English," and provide models for writing based on "spontaneous phonetic improvisation" and semantic play ("Tablets Journals/Divagations," SRN 118).[3] "The enemy surrounds us," Schwerner states with not-so-tongue-in-cheek paranoia. "Words lose their substance, are co-opted by mimetic IBM ads, depress" ("Journals," SRN 120).

Postmodern American poetry must attempt to "restate man," as Charles Olson says in "Human Universe," "to repossess him of his dynamic" (167). The Tablets challenges the reader/listener's role as passive receptor; by making poetry a "playful and difficult activity" composed of "disparate and disjunctive modes and voices" ("Journals," SRN 117), Schwerner incites the reader/ hearer to participate in the text's creation. As printed text and as performance (score to be performed), The Tablets counters what Victor Turner calls, in From

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[3] hereafter "Journals."

Ritual To Theatre, our "voyeuristic" relationship to the world, "which we rationalize as 'objectivity'" (100). "No more spectatorism!" Olson shouts up at the bleachers.

To close this movement [whole rest]: The remainder of this essay will consider the production and reception of The Tablets [sound bell]; it will also explore the poem's decentering, dialogic momentum [begin crescendo], the effects of this decentering drive on concepts of identity and sexuality, the consequent interpretative reconnaissance this demands of Schwerner's readers, and the implicit urge toward performance arising from this nexus--an aesthetic position Schwerner privileges in both his poetic theory and practice. Hopefully [final bell--resolution], the outcome of such an analysis will be to establish Schwerner's poetry in a broad cultural and literary context, while suggesting its openness to post-modernist modes of critical interpretation.

(This guarantee, set within the geometry of the paragraph, was composed after the (f)act--already the thoughts are dispersing, echoing off page (s)TAG(e) (S)*T*OP(ag*e*)...)
(all merchandise must be properly labeled)
[full stop]
Now, this...[4]

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[4] In the interest of the pleasure of always being about to begin.... The contours of my thought materialize partly out of the quotes and allusions that constellate on these pages--citations and after-images of critical, theoretic, and poetic texts, including Schwerner's own words and the phrasings of his imagination. As Sayre asserts, "the avant-garde work of art denies its own autonomy, it implicates the audience in its workings" (xiv), and it "demands critical performance" (250). If I occasionally disobey academic regulations and stray off well-maintained interpretive boardwalks into "impressionistic" ("Savage"? hostile?) wilds, risk temporarily losing my way ("please stay on the clearly marked critical paths"), it is in order to relocate Schwerner's poem in its unchartable (and uncharterable) abundance. The Tablets encourages such transgressive interpretative ventures by enacting its own bemusing parody of a detached exegetical stance (watch the

[take it again from the...]

T HE
T A B
L ETS

The Tablets immediately gets our attention by disrupting our usual modes of reading and interpreting. Two readers have recorded their responses in Vort 8 (1975): For one, the initial engagement was a confrontation--"I was unable to abstract any central argument...baffled"; for another, a seduction--"I

"Scholar-Translator"). "How can the critic respond to the extraordinary language-event," asks Geoffery Hartman, "and still maintain [the "tempered language" of] a prose of the center?" (157). My essay, in its scope and texture, attempts to answer the critical challenge posed by the discourses--poetic, hermeneutic, psychological, anthropological--that weave through its pages. Its primary task, of course, is to meet Schwerner's poem on its own shifting ground, which requires a looseness--a "surpriseable readiness" (SRN 28)--of style. To quote Sayre again: "the art of the avant-garde is always in process, always engaged. It is, furthermore, purposefully undecidable. Its meanings are explosive, ricocheting and fragmenting throughout its audience" (7). To absorb the dislocating shock of Schwerner's poetry, we must strip off our hermeneutical shielding and immerse ourselves in the work itself. To get the full effect of the poem's behavior, we must be willing to "go native" with it.

T HE
T A B
L ETS

"**YOU** can feel it gripping"

"It's only natural to wonder where the future will lead."

"Par a dise around me, there's **NO** place like this on land."

"If you've been looking for extra protection..."

"**THINK** smart. (Th)INK Safe."

was totally engaged by the reading...and had to abandon a linear approach." Reading the poem is a "pleasurable agitation" (Richard Poirier's phrase). A troublesome other, it won't leave us alone. As shown in the excerpt from "Tablet III" quoted above, part of the poem's pleasure is its attempt to "shoot the gulf" of meaning (as Emerson says in "Self-Reliance"), like a child shooting off a slide--its repeated veering away from the comprehensible into ..... ++++++++++ ("untranslatable" and "missing").

In the multivalent, multivoiced world of The Tablets, a language based on Jakobsonian binary opposition and the establishment of discrete entities founders into silence. "Missing" or "untranslatable" sections (the plus signs and ellipses punching out absence) are the bottomless base of the poem. There is no secure syntactic/semantic catwalk from which to peer down on the turbulent darkness, the roiling void which is the poem's heart. "Schizophrenic language" and "poetry of the insane" may be sources for poetic invention, for the "New language" he seeks; "nothing matters more than the realization that there are no places left from which to look at madness" (Schwerner, SRN 120), and this includes the mind-place of language. "There is no nuclear self," emphasizes Schwerner, and few nuclear sentences to contain one.

To read in the spirit of the poem, we must abandon our egos' concerns for establishing discrete identities, logical order, and denotative modes of inscription; suspend our search for a single, authorial voice, and be able to laugh at our self-imposed, readerly/critical tasks. In "Journals" Schwerner attests to the "immense difficulty of defining a self, of assuming an identity" (SRN 120). The Tablets speaks through a flux of voices; it is a fragmented intercourse/discourse among several, partially developed, component egos. The voices in the poem include the primitive speakers of the tablets; the Scholar-Translator, who often introduces individual tablets and interrupts their more or less lyric flow with interlinear commentary; Schwerner himself, the "transmitter," who is actually present as a voice via his own notes and comments in "Journals"; and, finally, echoes of other authors and works of

literature. All of these voices form the poetic texture of The Tablets, passing through the "transmitter" like tremors through bedrock. As Schwerner observes in "Journals," the voices are sometimes indistinguishable: "Schwerner: Pinitou? [one of the primitive speakers] Scholar-Translator?" (SRN 117). And there is yet another voice, of which even the author/transmitter is unaware, that enters this flow from "outside"--the voice of our own reading(s), which must always escape one reader or another, preventing comprehensive surveillance of the text. "The voices in the made thing, poem, object," Schwerner comments, "need no ascription by the maker. He does not know the necessary identity of a voice or many voices" ("Journals," SRN 116).

There are several uncanny instances of the endless circulation and interpenetration of voices in The Tablets. While the Scholar-Translator often echoes Schwerner, or vice versa (in "Journals" Schwerner asks "Who is speaking?"; in "VIII," the Scholar-Translator asks an identical question), in "Tablet XII" Schwerner literally replaces the Scholar-Translator by presenting the translation of a real tablet that he found by chance in the music library at Columbia University, teasing us to question whether the note preceding it is the Scholar-Translator's or his own. "There seems to be an increasing confusion between myself as writer and the nature of the Scholar-Translator," Schwerner explains. "That's fine" (PI).

The Scholar-Translator's and the speaker's voices often merge, too. In his role as interpreter, the Scholar-Translator enters into dialogue with the speakers of The Tablets; their suggestions become his questions; his thoughts intercept and revise theirs. In "Tablet XVII," for example, he wonders if "to discover" more accurately means "invent," and in "XVIII" suggests "changed" as an alternate reading of "born"; in "XVI" he equates "damage" with "power." He contributes to the deconstructive rhythms of the poem as he attempts to clarify and "explain" it; his commentaries are a further complication of the already irresolvably complex. While the Scholar-Translator's interpolations and comments give the sense of two versions of a poem being carried on at

once, they also often "make sense" in terms of the overall dialectic--"there is no longer any leisure / for further [mechanic] wanderings"--and blend imagistically with the precursor poem, syncopating (as in a Thelonious Monk tune, or like the "commercials" on this paper run) with the complications they introduce into our reading rhythm (the asterisks refer to the Scholar-Translator's interlinear comments):

penis hole/vagina* . . . . . quiet . . . . . + *whirlpool?"
("XVI," SRN 97)

. . . . . .

you were willing to [mother/body/beginning]*
but had you love
*probably 'give birth'..."
("XXI," SRN 106)

Disrupting a linear reading process, the asterisks collapse space between lines--between the comment and the commented upon--by pinning them together, and, in the second example above, the Scholar-Translator forgets who's who in the poem and comments on his own interpolation. Such moments are a cunning parody of the critic as detached observer, and of the pitfalls lurking beneath (or just to the side of) academically sanctioned hermeneutical paths. Like a Bloomian "ephebe," the Scholar-Translator reenacts the essential dynamic of the precursor poem, while believing that he is presenting an exegesis of it; he is, in Bloom's phrase, a "creative revisionist": what he actually does is write another poem (or further extend the original poem), "the poem we write as our reading" (Bloom 96), which the insatiate space of the tablets ravenously takes into itself, becoming the larger poem, The Tablets, an ever-expanding vortex which sucks down the Scholar-Translator, the "author" (Schwerner, present through his notes), and us, its current readers and interpreters, as well. As the Scholar-Translator himself notes, in "XXVI,"

"often the line between redactor and author is hard to draw" (Tablets 74). In "XI" he admits becoming lost--delightfully--among the voices of the tablets: "I do not know who I am when I read this. How magnificent" (SRN 81). The interest or pleasure in loss of self, of self-consciousness is reenacted by each reader; the poem is a transference of "unconscious energy" unleashed in the "archaic sleep" of consciousness, as Shoshana Felman says of the relationship between narrator and hearer in Henry James' Turn of the Screw (137), an "acting out of the unconscious through a relation of performative interpretation" (133).

Finally, Schwerner's and the speakers' voices often interpenetrate, sharing similar concerns, vocabulary, and even autobiographical details. In a letter to Sherman Paul, Schwerner mentions discovering something of himself in a David Antin essay that he just "blundered upon, my favorite way to come upon myself" (Paul 54), echoing the speaker of "XIX," who, anxiously addressing himself, wishes to "blunder myself into this field that I / idiot am already" (SRN 102). In "Tablet XVII" the speaker, Ahanarshi, is sitting in meditation with a "teacher," paralleling Schwerner's own meditative practices. Voices stream into The Tablets from many sources. The speaker in "XVI," dismayed at the disparity between his age and acquired knowledge of life, puts to himself the question "and forty-five years to learn this?" which is an anxious restatement of the speaker's avid acceptance of the discontinuity between age and life experience in "sounds of the river Naranjana": "I'm 53 and the fire / of the beginner again burns me into waiting" (SRN 23), which echoes Whitman in Leaves of Grass--"I witness and wait"; "I know I am deathless"--and responds to Camus in the preface to the 1975 edition of L'Envers et L'Endroit (quoted in "Journals"): "And that is perhaps why, at forty, after twenty years of work and publication, I continue to live with the notion that my work is not begun." The layering and intersecting of voices create a simultaneity of presences, of states of mind, making it impossible to ascribe authorship to any single voice. Bloom: "Every reader is an Idiot

Questioner. He asks, 'Who wrote the poem?'" ("A Manifesto for Antithetical Criticism" 96). The point is not that we should be uncertain about who, exactly, is speaking at any moment, but that several voices are always speaking at once. Whitman: "What am I?"; "In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less" (Leaves of Grass).

And there are other voices. Kathryn Van Spanckeren hears the drone of the Gilgamesh all through The Tablets. For example, in "All that's left is pattern," the opening line of the poem, she hears King Gilgamesh lamenting the loss of his beloved Enkidu. In the closing image of "XXIV"--"circulation + + + + + + + + sky-veins, and very slowly with many other people," she imagines the King, having wandered in search of Enkidu and become reconciled to death, returning to resume the duties of kingship (384). Sherman Paul hears at least seven voices, other than Schwerner's and the Scholar-Translator's, in "XIV" (quotes from The Tablets in parentheses): Shakespeare ("from nothing, from nothing"), Rimbaud ("I am that other man"), "The Bridge" ("the heart's root"), "Kora in Hell" ("the stars tell North / but little else"), Roethke ("siren me a road father"), Whitman ("me me a road myself"), and Stevens ("it must be possible"; "come in to nothing says my pain") (39). The voice of Ginsberg's poetry--the driving rhythms of Howl and Kiddish and the heteroglossic momentum of poems like "Thoughts Sitting Breathing," which includes a visual meditation diagram and musical score--hovers as a metapoetic presence over Schwerner's long poem, heard in the overall structural flow of lines and images. And whenever I hear "The Tablets" it reverberates as "The Cantos" and "Olson." Pound's opus maximus and Olson's Maximus Poems are, in scope, collage technique, and linguistic fluidity, perhaps closer to the aesthetic urge of The Tablets than the Gilgamesh. These are the great precursor poems which The Tablets seems to hold in awe and from which it strives, as Bloom puts it, to "swerve" away. But tracing and intercepting the voices of other works of literature, when demystified, shade easily into a reductionist tieing down of influences or mapping of paradigms

(as the previous sentence seems to want me to do)--more useful for a cross-country (century?) trip than an imaginative journey. So I acknowledge Schwerner as the final voice of this paragraph. "Critics," Schwerner warns us, "who like to see affiliations and connections are pretty often a bit off the mark"; they find relationships according to "the field of their vision" and their present concerns. And in "Journals": "The syncretic ground of the Tablets" has little to do with "a predetermined paradigm" (SRN 122); "A Tablet: The Rorschach idea"; "'is the man a tree'" (SRN 113); "there is no nuclear self" (SRN 116); "Who's speaking? and to whom?" (SRN 115).

By treating the poem as a register of voices, by including the poem's own interpretation (the Scholar-Translator) as part of the poem, and by appending his own fragmentary notes and observations, which include quotes from Carl Jung, Paul Klee, Wright Morris, Valery, and Jean-Jacques Lebel, Schwerner tropes the concepts of both authorship and readership. Interpreter's and author's voices become part of the processual, intertextual texture of the poem. The poem is "unentitled to its own authority over itself," as Felman says of James' Turn of the Screw, which loses both its origin and its title in the course of its retelling (127). There is no authoritative voice; the voice of the reader's own interpretation is as valid as the Scholar-Translator's or Schwerner's. The discourse speaks "according to the reader's interest" as Barthes says of Balzac's "Sarrasine" (151); Schwerner: the "reader participates in the creative act" ("Journals" SRN 117).

To enter the world of The Tablets is to enter a pre-conscious, pre-genital space where objects are decontextualized, identities disintegrated, and logical distinctions abolished. The tablets reanimate the world by "recreating the animistic" (Schwerner, "Journals," SRN 118). In the linguistically motile landscape (wordscape?) of the poem, hands, fingertips, penises, vulvas, groins, wounds, parts of animals and insects, shoes, knives, and colors circulate freely,

continually recontextualize themselves. Logical relationships, such as those between part and whole, large and small, self and other are inverted ("I am your vulva," says the speaker in "XV"; "is the man bigger than a fly's wing?" asks the speaker in "V"). To work through The Tablets is "to braid yourself into the sinews/of your confusion" ("XVIII," SRN 101); self loses itself and turns up other ("I am not what I was," says the speaker in "VI"). The world of The Tablets is comparable to what Turner has called a "liminal" world, like that of primitive initiation rituals, in which "initiands" often have no names. The liminal is a "dangerous" realm where "familiar elements"--animals, vegetables, birds--are "defamiliarized," or deconstructed, and can recombine in "any and every possible way" (27, 28). Schwerner in "Tablets Journals": "I am interested in what happens to a modern concept of personality and its sense of non-vegetative duration when that self, say me, makes certain antique allowances" (SRN 118). The effect of "liminal phenomena" (Turner's phrase), like that of the Freudian uncanny, is to undermine our sense of a stable reality and individual identity, to disintegrate our world views and return us to a primitive, ambiguous, animistic world of the unconscious.

"All that's left is pattern." In the fluxional field of the poem, self--as discrete identity, particular speaker--is either on the verge, the limen of self-extinction, or actively losing itself. Sex acts are never complete, but timelessly ongoing, always "was/will-be/is/is-just-about-almost" coming ("XVI," SRN 96). The Tablets lives in a liminal suspension of orgasm, an always-about-to-be-other-than-it-is. Reading the poem is necessarily ongoing, processual. It is not cliMAX and completion, but sustained performance that is important. "Turn, turn, turn in the turning for the time is short," says the speaker in "XVIII" (SRN 100). Language and imagery in the poem continually turn into and away from themselves and into other things. So long as we expect an "end," a final point or summit toward which everything builds, we will not be able to read The Tablets. We must give ourselves, our "readerly" expectations, up before the text's "uninterpretable complexity," as George Quasha puts it (473), which

seduces us into improvisatory play. Like a funhouse mirror, *The Tablets* reflect not a Lacanian integrated imago (which Lacan recognized as a "Meconnaissance"--a misrecognition), but a disproportionate, transmogrified, and malleable self-image; "mirror distortions...provoke reflexivity" (Turner 105). *The Tablets* initiate us into a deconstructive self-reflexiveness.

TH E
TA B
L ET S

"How far can energy and effort take **YOU**?"

"The wheel is SPINNING round and round with puzzles, Prizes, and excitement."

"Dial 1 800..."

"The biggest variety is the **be**(s)**t** mix."

"Come in scratch and win..."

"Get the (f)ACTS--make the call **NOW**."

TH E
TA B
L ET S

When we play with(in) *The Tablets*, we play hard.

For Freud and for Lacan, the phallus is the "transcendental signifier." It represents authority and individual identity based on difference, on opposition to the other. Symbolically, then, castration is a sacrificing of the ego, and of a language system based on difference. Removal of the border guard phallus allows identities to flow and merge; there is nothing to prevent the one from penetrating the other, the unconscious from spilling over into the

conscious. Words, cut free from particular meaning contexts, can roam, forming surprising relationships.

In *The Tablets*, the subversion of individual identity begins at the fundamental level of sexual difference. The initial sex act of *The Tablets* is one of desexualization. In "Tablet I," a knife ("sharp blade"), testicles, and blood ("heart's blood"; "early blood") metonymically cluster over a few fragmentary lines in what may be a dream ("in the dream (nightmare?)"), to suggest ritual self-sacrifice--the cancellation of sexual difference. The biological neutering of differences in oneself is a bodily acceptance of loss as a mode of being. ("How I love loss," claims the speaker in "sounds of the river Naranjana") (SRN 23); in "Tablet XVI" the speaker expresses "lust for loss of being, lust....." (SRN 97). Castration is liberation, the desire for absence and an untranslatable--unparaphraseable--state of existence. The missing and untranslatable sections of the poem are both a loss (something not found, misplaced, or incomprehensible) and a gain. The poem's lacunae are doors to a larger field of play, a "beautiful no-field field" ("XVI," SRN 96), an absence opening into a vast presence: "In poetry...the silences and lacunae should be--and being, act" ("Journals," SRN 120).

The "penis," once severed from its signifying role of sexual identity and difference, can drift through the poem, a free floating signifier, collapsing logical, linguistic, and imagistic distinctions. In "XVI," the image "penis-hole/vagina" discovers in the penis its own negation. Imagining the penis as its empty core, its hole, rather than its substantial flesh, is a further imagistic castration of the already castrated, a deconstructive copulation sans actual intercourse, in which opposite sex organs are whirled together on the axis of a metonymy--hole--that is also a nothing; we "see" the things--penis, vagina--in the act of their annihilation as discrete objects. The syntax--hyphen and virgule--sustain the imagistic action, fusing opposites (the Scholar-Translator perceptively interprets this image as "whirlpool"). In "III," "long man" is substituted for "penis." The whole man becomes his penis, and the

masturbatory act implied in "let us fondle the long man" suggests, perhaps, Freud's metaphor for reading as "fore-pleasure," a loosening up of the defenses of the ego through artistic form, enabling the mind to accept the artist's imaginative distortions of reality. In "XVII," the speaker sees himself "stiff as a penis, prone on the river belly"; again, man and organ interchange, or become each other, and the metonymic confusion equates the speaker of "XVII" with the "long man" in "III" and the penis wherever it occurs, thus achieving an imagistic, linguistic, bacchanalian self-dispersal.

The penis, then, is both missing and not missing. It is decontextualized, but reintegrated within the larger, fluid, ambisexual context of the poem as a whole. As readers, it is not so important for us to recognize the primitive ritual context of the imagery, but to be "penis-thinking" ("II," SRN 63)--to flow with the poem's fluid, deconstructive rhythms. Like the boy in Faulkner's "The Bear," in order to glimpse the elusive beast of the poem, we must relinquish our selves, our "lifeless mechanicals" of reason, logic, and syntax, and give in to the "frightening misdirections" of the poem's metonymic movement (SRN 32), "trusting in the particular sounds of shifting leaves" (SRN 32).

The Tablets can read like aphasic, indiscrete matings of disconnected, rhetorically fractured sentences and segments of discourse--a linguistic burlesque. Phrases, clauses, phonemes, morphemes, and taxemes combine and recombine in varying contexts--in "Tablet I," the speaker can only identify himself by negating himself in the third person through disconnected prefixes: "he is un-+++++++ /he is dis-+++++++ ...he is de-+++++...he is pre-+++++." If we follow the poem's "Key," which tells us that "+++++" means "missing," then we get a series of provocative plays on the occulted signifier: he is un-missing, dis-missing, de-missing, pre-missing; we are led around, under and through the word, creating neologisms along the way and "dis-"integrating the boundary between presence and absence. The poem begins in kenosis, in self-undoing, in ending. Language behaves like Gilles Deleuze's anti-signifiers that refuse to SIGnify; writing is self-erasure, that is, disintegration of the established self

and permanent structures of meaning. "The writerly text," says Barthes, can never be more than "ourselves writing, before the infinite play of the world" (5).

A similar play at the word and subword level occurs a few lines later:

they count the directions of emptiness by fish-names
N shad
E cod
S mackerel
W tuna.

Read vertically we have a scrambled signifier mapping a clockwise-rotating, multidirectional emptiness (the transposition of two graphemes obliterates sense); read horizontally--the way we would normally read the line--the non-word dissembles into individual letters, markers of separate directions juxtaposed with the signs of natural objects. The "emptiness" is simultaneously a presence, since it is an emptying into an unqualified nomination of nature, fish, who live dumbly in a fluid medium, fins maneuvering with the shifting currents, as we as readers enter the elemental medium of the poem's language and move with its fractured and shifting syntax. But to get the joke, and the seriousness of the joke, we must read vertically as well as horizontally: the NEWS = nothing (NESW--a non-signifying anagram); but it's "the nothing that is not there and the nothing that is," to quote Stevens ("The Snow Man")--the real "news" is something very old, the emptying of the identifiably human into a primitive, prehuman otherness. By separating letters from words and fracturing words into syllables, language is decontextualized, made particulate, set adrift, forcing us to think of language action in a new way and denaturalizing our sequential manner of reading. "We need a new language, one that we cannot speak...unseizeable, proliferating like the elementary particles in physics"

(Schwerner, "Journals," SRN 120).

Words refuse to stay put, even within themselves.

"Lightthring..." ("IX," SRN 78). Manyness in oneness. Several things and no single thing. A multiple image--lightning? light thing? light ring?--a resonant sound--say it--and a single word. The aesthetic task of *The Tablets* is to "dethingify" language, as Schwerner says of the 13th century Soto Zen master Dogen Zenji, whose "experiments in language...work to establish the non-self-being of any theoretically separable 'thing'" (AS 83).. The "organic, particular, definable thingness" of words is "undone" (PI). In its Derridaean "surplus" of meaning, "lightthring" is an embodiment of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, the blurred signifier pulling itself apart as it tries to hold itself in focus. Sound it--the mind stuttering impact of a high voltage shock, like an aeolian harp struck by lightning rather than wind
--lightthrrrrrring!

> we should always live in the dark empty sky
> ++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++lightning++++++++++
> .....++++++++
> red iron and blue sea-urchins from generative slime and all
>
> ("XVIII," SRN 100)

Lightsssssssinggggg!

The flash, the surge of energy in the vastness of the uninterpretable. The "dark empty sky" is the image of "+++++++," as "+++++++" is the signifier of the missing, the addition of castration. As "lightning" wells up and clarifies itself out of its earlier, embryonic, distorted "lightthring," it yet subsides immediately back into the inarticulate, untranslatable, and unsignifiable. A potent charge (flash, like a slash of the knife of castration), briefly and intensely illuminating only itself, sounding once in a dazzle of phonemes, then

fading over and into the rest of the line, and the next; the "dark empty sky," jolted by the dumb word force of "lightning" (our only clue to the immanent power of the void), inverted and transformed by a mysterious alchemy during an unaccountable passage of time (....++++), reappears in its fluid, elemental other--"red iron and blue sea-urchins from generative slime and all"--the ocean floor. "The sentence," says Olson in "Projective Verse," referring to Ernst Fenollosa's discussion of the Chinese ideogram in The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry, must be as the "first act of nature, as lightning, as passage of force from subject to object, quick...from me to you" (153). The signified continually slips under and away from the signifier, yet the word ("lightning") heroically tries to "mean"; in the absence of linguistic interference, its residual force still rings in the ear, in the memory, beyond definition, echoing and mimicking the elusive, unsoundable currents of an extinct language.

As readers of *The Tablets*, tracing a path toward meaning, we must perform as the clown ("parekan") in traditional Balinese theatre, who renders some of the more difficult Sanskrit, Old Javanese, Middle Javanese, and High Balinese passages into Low Balinese for the audience: "Dancing back and forth between performers and audience," as Stephen Lansing describes him in "The Aesthetics of the Sounding of the Text," he translates some words "while allowing others to pass into the void" (255). Barthes: "The text, in its mass, is comparable to a sky, at once flat and smooth, deep, without edges and without landmarks"; its interpreter "traces through the text certain zones of reading, in order to observe therein the migration of meanings" (14).

The linguistic disorientation, the loss of certainty in meaning that can result from an encounter with *The Tablets* is both disturbing and exhilarating, frighteningly hilarious as a roller-coaster ride--a "weirdly ancient and avant-garde melaopoeic" kind of fun, as Paul Mariani has evocatively put it. As semiotic codes disintegrate before our eyes and ears, Deleuze has said, we have little choice but to laugh.

* * * * * * * * * * *

The carnival lasts as long as we read.

the penis is offering
I walk under water
sharmareser yorgh
last year I had a woman
open to the rain and flood
or else a man with breasts
shining in a brass light in a room
I walk under water
++++++++++
("XIII," SRN 91)

Barthes: the writerly text has "multiple points of entry." A "structuration" or coalescence can well up at any point in a tablet. An imagistic or thematic pattern does not necessarily begin at the first line and end neatly in the last. What we perceive, what we bring to the surface in reading *The Tablets* are temporary agglomerations of debris in the stream of language, broken apart and reformed by the current of our desires.

"I walk under water" frames a sexual ambiguity ("last year I had a woman...or else a man with breasts"), which is framed by the transient penis and a missing section. The center of this group is liquid, unstable, a lapse of memory opening out "to the rain and flood," the rush of water that acts, imagistically, as the medium of sexual transformation--what passes into the baptismal flood, the waters of dissolution, a single sex, in this place of uncertainty, emerges composite. Still working outward from the center (Barthes: the writerly text is "reversible"), the hard-edged--"brass light"--place-bound image of line seven finds itself suddenly submerged in the succeeding

line, or infiltrated by the surge of nonsense if we read outward from the center (bidirectionally, back and forth) in contrasting pairs. In the context, we can no longer trust in the room's light--even if it is "brass"--or in the strength of its walls to spare us from the flood gushing out from the center. But the lines in the group aren't "opposing" pairs. Their senses and sounds resonate within each other--"lasts," "breasts"; "man," "woman" (both in one, in sound and sense); nonsense undermining sense as the sibilants of "sharmareser" flow corrosively through the imagistic certainty of "brass" as "yorgh" echoes in "room"; finally, the dulled symbol clashes of the mirror lines "I walk under water...I walk under water."

But these last two lines are a linguistic reenactment, through assonance and repetition, of an earlier image in the tablet: "from the back of a burnished brass mirror saying walk-death." So, following the "pulsion" force of language (Kristeva's term)--a sensual residue beating above (or beneath) meaning--and the metonymy of "brass," we suddenly find ourselves out of our little selection of lines altogether. "Poetry," states Schwerner, "is the processual impulsion toward identity...intermittently arrived at through image and through pattern" ("Journals," SRN 115). Any structure I set up can be shifted, or annihilated by the next line or image. I can't go securely along under the "brass light" of my analytical parlor, stuffing the hermeneutical turkey, without being aware of all I must leave out, acutely aware of the hollowness of my own interpretation. The blankness, non-reflectiveness of the back of a mirror is the meaning of motion, the destination of imagery, of critical discourse--of all language; when we no longer see ourselves whole, death--self-dissolution--becomes animate ("walk-death"). The mirror lines ("I walk under water") flush into each other, lose themselves in each other, collapsing the distance between themselves, and the I, split in two at the margins of a pattern, meets itself, submerged. Finally, at the outer limits of this tentative grouping, the ring and ping of "the penis is offering" plunges into the depthless silence of its double, the missing section- its ghosted, negative other; the two lines are part of a

single strophe, separated by seven lines but inseparable, the mathematics of castration.

Interpreting *The Tablets* is not a TOTalizing, ARChitecTonIC process, but a processual, applied reading; a tentative erection of houses of cards that collapse into one another at the breath of a line. The poem exists at each moment, not in the accumulation of meanings and stable patterns. The impossibility of fixing on a single meaning of a line, image, or group of lines dooms to ludicrous failure any attempt to achieve a comprehensive analysis of the text. ALL interpretations, no matter how thorough, are reductive. Even the Scholar-Translator is not so foolish and only offers comments, as we all do, often admitting his bafflement and frustration, as, inevitably, we all must. "The phonemic structure confuses" he says of a string of nonsense syllables--"ouiar arggheyou ouiar sharmareser ouiar yorgh"--in "XIII" (SRN 90). We don't read about the "immense difficulty of defining a self" and of making sense; we participate in it, catching ourselves in the act of resistance every time we try to PIN down, ORganize, and NARratize that which "we cannot not know" (in Henry James' words) is inherently ungovernable. "The regressed ego screams," laments the Scholar-Translator ("XIII," SRN 90). To read *The Tablets* is to acknowledge--experience--a truth that is repressed by most interpretative acts--that all readings are only partial readings.

By allowing his poem to remain open and active as a "desiring-machine" (Deleuze), Schwerner achieves a continuously productive momentum dependent, finally, on the reader's willingness to defer an "anti-productive" desire for completion and enter the poem's liminal flow. Breakdowns in the POEtry machine plunge us into the continual, semic rush of language; our immersion in this process (as reader-REACTOR-REenactors) forms the experiential crux that sustains the poem, as tensions among speakers, text, and readers are obsessively replayed in tablet after tablet after TAB le t.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Tablets functions as a mantra, as a globing of energies rather than

as narrative sequence. Hence the importance of the "design-tablet" (SRN 89), the poem's thematic and conceptual (anti)center. Riding on its own structural indeterminacy and reproduced indefinitely in performance versions, the "design-tablet" is itself an endless poem on a single page. Visually, the tablet suggests a Hindu yantra. It consists of four concentric circles. The first contains words and parts of words in triangles, and the second contains a ring of words; these two outer circles enclose a wordless center that is their reverse mirror image--a pair of intersecting triangles enclosing a pair of blank circles. The "design-tablet" is unnumbered and untitled, and the Scholar is "not sure" about its "place" in the numbered sequence because it exists as a "metapoetic" (Quasha's term) Ur-tablet, not in but between sequence. Wherever there are holes (missing sections) in *The Tablets*, we find the "design-tablet"--the poem's insoluble, solvent spiritual center. The "field" of *The Tablets*, says the speaker in "III," is "a hole without pattern" (SRN 65). The text is porous; the Roman numerals "grid nothing." In fact, if *The Tablets* has a narrative structure at all, it is because the reader "invents it for himself"; it is an "entropic narrative...it falls apart as it goes along" (Schwerner PI). Reading the "design-tablet" is an adirectional, nonlinear, asequential process; up, down, right, and left; beginning, middle, and end lose their meanings (Schwerner turns the book around as he performs the tablet). There is no linear syntax and, in the outer triangles, parts of words--such as the "kn" of "knowledge"--cut loose from their signifiers, are free to migrate, repeating themselves in other triangles/contexts. Structurally, the tablet is a "web of particulars" ("Journals," SRN 122); words can be grouped diametrically or contiguously. Knowledge and reading are represented as being processual and do not respect linear (and in this case geometric) boundaries. The "design-tablet" is a "space-vase" ("XVI," SRN 96), a vectorial space of interactive energies, a function of the mind's torque. A dialogue between inside and outside is carried through words into the tablet's heart, its empty center, back out to marginal blankness of the page, beyond that to the infinite particularity of existence, further still into the vast

emptiness of space and, ultimately, non-self existence. The "design-tablet" is emblematic of *The Tablets* as a whole--it offers "no point of rest" ("XIX," SRN 102); it is a multi-dimensional maze whose branches intersect, an unbounded space for the free play of mind and language. "From the moment [the poet] ventures into FIELD COMPOSITION--puts himself in the open--" states Olson, "he can go by no track other than the one the poem under hand declares, for itself. Thus he has to behave, and be, instant by instant, aware of some several forces just now beginning to be examined" ("Projective Verse" 148).

Consider subway announcements: 14 changefortheL Farrr Rockaway West 4 next. We don't have time to waste, we want our language to leap, spin, tumble--perform--its acrobatic self-displacement.

T HE
T A B
L ET S

"...**CALL** 1-900..."

"The (**IN**)**FINIT**[**Y**] owner's just (dis)covered something..."

"Act **NOW**..."

"If you build a better mouse trap..."

"Get the NEWS
without the NOISE..."

"In this cITY, there's only one kind of justice..."

"**ACT NOW**
before these deals are cut."

"...prefered to others in comfort, convenience, and **PERFORM**ance..."

T HE
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II

The Urge Toward Performance

The complexity of its kinetic yearnings and the relinquishment of self demanded by *The Tablets* urgently call for performance--the work itself contains the "impulse," as Schwerner puts it, that "gives rise to the need for performability" (PI). The continuities of the long poem (even if they are continuities of the discontinuous, as in *The Tablets*) enable it, in performance, to create an ambience, a sound/thought environment that become the "happening" of the work (to echo Allan Kaprow)--an immidiate, tactile experience of its aesthetic organization and energies. In performance, the text is mobile, ephemeral, and does not wait for analysis; we yield ourselves, our desire for meaning and understanding, to the text's irreducible polysemy, to an experience of its crescive being.

Cued by the flux of voices that sustain a reading of the printed text, Schwerner buoys his intermedia (=intertextual in Sayre's formulation) performances of *The Tablets* on various woodwind sounds, including those of a suling (a Balinese flute), a gemshorn (made from a cow's horn), a souna (Chinese oboe), pan-pipes, a Japanese flute, a bass clarinet, conches, and bag-pipe chanters--"mostly instruments made of clay or shell or wood or horn" (AS 81). The music sounds, played through a variety of instruments, are always slightly different, slightly other than they were previously; they are voices in the poem--non-literal, untranslatable voices that often precede the language of the poem and interrupt, blend with, or intersect it, breaking down the distinction between speech sound and music sound, between abstractable meaning and rhythmic apprehension of it, much as Rothenberg's translations of Seneca songs roll sense over into the sound within the course of a line or single word ("Some are & are going to my howinouse nnaht bahyee nahtgwing...") (154).

In a taped performance I've listened to (University of California, San Diego; March, 1984), the sounds of a flute gradually give way to human phoneme sounds that gradually flow into identifiable words, the transition from music to rhythmic language and speech almost imperceptible. When Schwerner performs the introductory note to "VI," staccato flute trills echo the sputtering verbalization of a list of names, invectives flung later by the tablet's speaker at a trickster god: "Sore-Ass-Mole-Face-Snivel-Kra / Little Mover Big

Mover Seventeen-Eyeball-Fusion-Up-Up...The Smeller The Digger The Scheming Pintrpnit The porous poppycock The Mean- / Sucking-Sponge-Pinipnipni Pnouk Lak Pa-Pa-the-Flying-Slime..." and so on, the voice displacing the wood instrument (SRN 70); syllables become notes and spaces rests--unarticulated presences, part of the overall sound texture. A further blurring of the distinctions between speech and music occurs in the performance of "VIII" and XXIV." In "VIII," Schwerner hums through the gemshorn, the non-human other "translating" his voice, producing a fused human/music sound. In "XXIV," double notes are played on the double ocarina in a rapid, riddling rhythm--some sound like human syllables, scampering underneath the others. Like Lacan's metaphor for metaphor, which figures language as "aligned along the several staves of a score" (154), there is a layered, stratified quality to the performance of *The Tablets* that is a physical enactment of the text's generative energies. Loss of distinction between music/voice parallels the tangle of voices and loss of self in the poem; a multi-media presentation of *The Tablets* enables Schwerner to "represent" and "respect" the "variety of indwelling energy" of the work and "bring it back together again" (PI).

During a performance of *The Tablets*, voice and music wrap around, enrapture the listener within the "unfixable...sound of themselves" ("XXIV," SRN 111). The poem's "mouvance" (as Paul Zumthor calls it)--its embodiment in sound and gesture--reifies it; it becomes physically as well as imaginatively transitive, an intimate contact between performer and audience through the "shared experience" (Schwerner's phrase) of the text. Listening is an erotic act; the scene of a performance is the scene of a rendezvous.

"The lush richness of [Schwerner's] imagery kindled my imagination, the rhythms and musicality of his cadenced phrasing made my muscles itch to dance," recalls Frances Alenikoff, after attending a performance of *The Tablets* (*Vort 8*, 1975, 146). Her experience became the germ of a dance adaptation of the poem, The One of No Way, composed in 1972. In order to "dance" *The Tablets*, she "temporarily abandoned the text" and immersed herself "in the ambience of *The Tablets*" (*Vort 8* 148). "Sound unites human beings," Schwerner reflects, "with an immediacy and communality that print denies us" (PI). At a reading/performance of *The Tablets*, audience and author become partners in a dance; voice and music lift the hearers out of the separateness of their selfhood and draw them into a "spontaneous communitas," a shared

state of mind--a "direct, immediate and total confrontation of identities" (Turner 47).

Schwerner achieves "communitas" with us not only through voice and music, but also through laughter. In "VII," supposedly translated into "Crypto-Icelandic" by yet another translator, a "Norwegian divine" named Henrik L., the Scholar informs us that a certain Crypto-Icelandic word, "freki," means wolf. During his reading of the nonsense, or sound poem, when Schwerner arrives at "freki," he interrupts his own reading to remind us of the word's meaning, wedding his point of view (as "transmitter") with ours as we look with humorous curiosity at the poem's absurdity. He becomes part of the audience, sharing a joke with us. In "X" Schwerner tropes his role as reader/performer in a more startling way. Instead of reading the poem, he summarizes it, explaining that the tablet is a "tissue of missing sections, untranslatable and confusing segments," except for two words in the center, which the Scholar "uses to indicate a probable reconstruction" (these are Schwerner's comments, perhaps improvised during the reading, since the tablet is not preceded by an introductory note). He then ejaculates the articles "the the" (which identify a definite nothing), countering his own abstract summary. By refusing to "read" the tablet, he carries the deconstructive energies of his text to a point beyond the text, undermining even the concept of performative reading, though this is all still part of the show. Through such maneuvers, Schwerner keeps his readers in a Zen state of "surpriseable readiness" (SRN 28). We don't expect to find such a "poem" within the context of a "reading," and the surprise at the center of the tablet binds us (performer and audience) together in a lightning flash of humor, a "spontaneous communitas."

Performance, says Schwerner, should be motivated by a "concern for the other" (PI). The needs of the moment of performance, arising from the performer's intuitive "reading" of his audience, will often alter or reinforce the way the poem looks and feels on the page. In a talk poem in which he explains his talk poems, David Antin describes this phenomenon, which he calls "tuning": He claims that the point of his pieces is "to get a sense of where youre / coming from and how and to allow that sense to put some / pressure on my own way of moving"; he summarizes the process in sociological terms as a "negotiation in a common space" (167). Schwerner's "tuning" to his audience is dramatically demonstrated in a reading of "XXIV" (at UCSD). In his performance of the tablet, Schwerner emphasizes the distinction between the Scholar-Translator's growing frustration in trying to interpret the tablets

and the speaker's sense of ease, of tensionless harmony among the poem's shifting elements. When Schwerner reads one of the Scholar's notes--

> "'craftsman,'/'host'/'my sweetness'/'my anger'...
> I really find the texture of the narrator's
> persona increasingly puzzling and strongly
> suspect later accretions to account for
> characterological inconsistencies and
> philosophical opacities...
> (SRN 111)

the words are spoken in a sharp, didactic, incontrovertible way, consonants hammered out as the Scholar nails down thought to statement. But Schwerner cuts a lengthy, prosaic commentary toward the end of the poem, bringing the final image--"standing on top of the minute point and with it + + + + + + + + + / circulation+ + + + + + + + sky-veins, and very slowly with many other people"--into sharp contrast with the precise, nature-clinging metonymy of the previous image--"I saw, a reed hut for instance, / a carefully woven black net, four-winged flies, products of resinous trees...". Thus one of the poem's textual tensions--disruption of the simple, non-dualistic, lyrical momentum of the primitive speaker's language by the Scholar's stilted notes--is temporarily suspended, or slid under another--the oscillation between self-extinction and the desperate need to confirm the presence of self in the world through naming. However, the needs of the situation determine the performative alteration, not thematic concerns. It's as if he were afraid that the added weight of the Scholar's note would ground the balloon of concentration, held aloft by the lyric helium of mood and rhythm. Schwerner wants to avoid false moves--false to the moment of performance and reception of the poem. He wants to lose his reader not outside, but inside the poem.[5]

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[5] From another perspective, however, sensitivity to the needs of the audience can be reductive. Perhaps feeling a pressure to conform his reading to conventional expectations, at the moment of performance he brings his poem back within the fold of the modernist lyric, no matter how much the textualized versions resist it. For the reader/hearer, then, comparison of both written and oral versions of a poem can produce valuable insights into the sociology of performance, and into its psychology, since in the moment of reading or listening the receiver must mentally juggle

In performance, the text remains fluid, like "paste in a hot mouth" ("IX," *SRN* 78), countering the tendency of print-bound language to congeal into permanent forms of meaning. Spontaneous alterations of the text during performance and its reification through music, voice, and gesture--its "mouvance"--express one of the essential energies, or vectors, of *The Tablets*--its resistance to closure. In performance, Schwerner plays himself as bricoleur (a modulation of his role as author). His additions and deletions (including his own and prefatory remarks) according to the needs of the moment, the use of different types of wind instruments, his emphasis or blurring of the distinctions among voices--all attest to the poem's alterability through time, its mobility and unseizeability; they index its "creative depth of resistances to closure" (AS 84).

The text inter-textualizes not only other texts and media, but also itself. The weave of "*The Tablets* is probably never to be finished," speculates Schwerner, "because future spots of time will claim the validity of its...textures for formal embodiment of certain feeling-states and thought-conjunctions" (Paul 55). *The Tablets* will not be over even when Schwerner, as a writer or a human being, is finished with it. Every interpretation or reading of the text, as well as each performance of it, is a reenactment of it on its own terms, a "further textualization," as Quasha puts it (473). This aligns performance-oriented poetry like *The Tablets* with traditional oral poetry:

> the oral poetic work, surrendered to the hazards of time, floats in the indetermination of a meaning which it incessantly undoes and recreates. The oral text calls for an interpretation which would itself be in movement. The energy which underlies the text and tinkers ('bricoler') with its forms recovers at each performance the lived experience and integrates the latter into its material.
>
> (Zumthor 40)

What we perceive--experience--in performance is creative energy in action, the

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multiple versions of a poem--the one he/she is encountering, and those he/she recalls (and what if a performer, aware of this tension, goes a step further, providing copies of a printed version of a poem that he/she then proceeds to alter spontaneously during performance?).

text in the act of remaking and displacing itself.

Perhaps the greater goal of performance is not to present a text before an audience, but to engage the hearer in an interactive, "shared experience" with the poem and, inevitably, its maker. As the hearer brings in his own voice--the remembered voice of previous interpretations/readings, if he is familiar with the text, and the voice, now, of his hearing, as he responds to the words and sounds of the performance--he becomes, himself, part maker. He enters the community of the work, the event of the text--an environment of mind with the immediacy of the physical. The true subject of poetry, says Stevens in "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words," is the "life that is lived in the scene it composes" and the poet's imagination is most valuable when it "becomes light in the minds of others" (29, 25).

In "Ideas of Performance" (an unpublished talk given at SUNY--Binghamton in April, 1988), Schwerner tells us that the urge for performance is the desire to discover "a way of being, a manner of experiencing." When the reader/hearer participates in *The Tablets*, whether by attending a public performance, performing tablets himself or with others, or reading them silently to himself, he becomes an initiand in what Richard Schechner terms an "efficacy ritual," a mode of performance which alters the participant (Turner 121-22). He is altered whether he realizes it or not, if only momentarily, but perhaps more profoundly in ways that may reveal themselves only through experience and time, and further reading/rereading. *The Tablets* joins with other moments of being and other textual encounters to work the reader/participant's transformation.

Performance is the soma of poetry, and its annihilation. Reified, transient, continually resisting closure, the poem lives in the breath of the voice and the atmosphere of the mind. In performance, we witness the melting point of the deconstructive text--its language radiant in a moment of transmission and reception, like a pulse from a quasar...through the silence of self, dances the pure energy of being.

T HE
T AB
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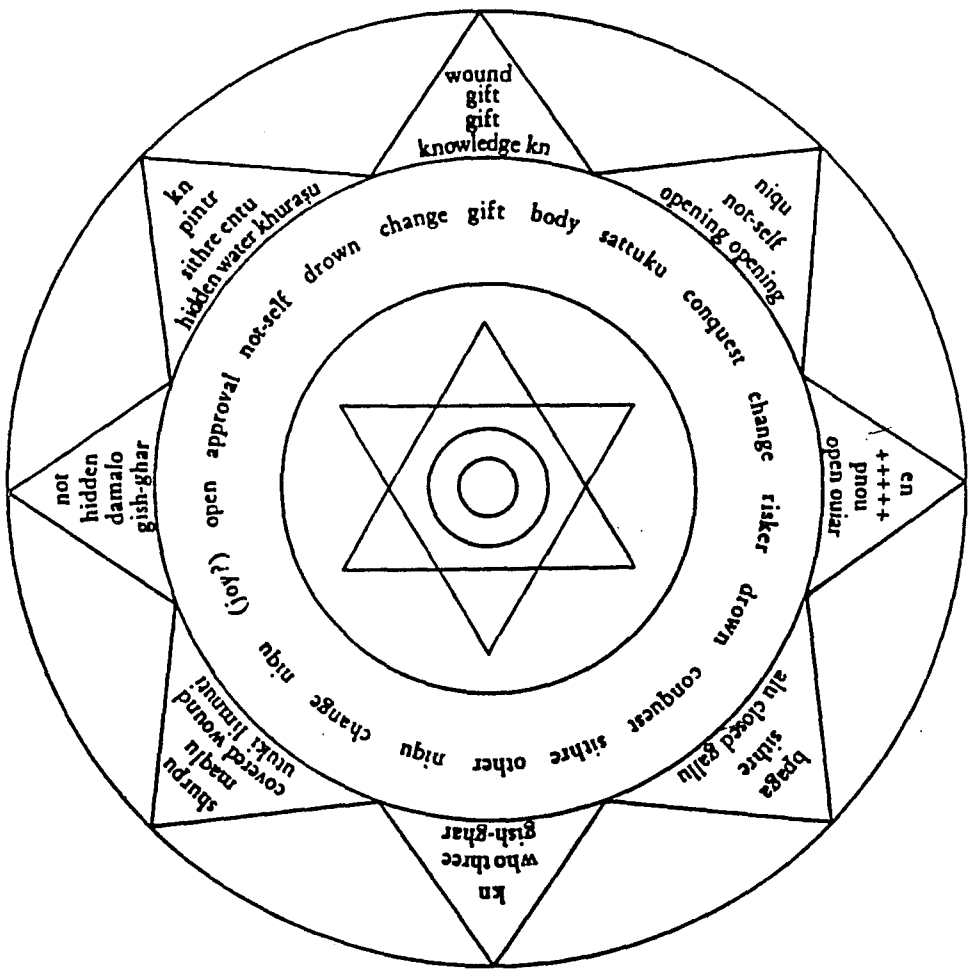
Appearing next...

Editing Schwerner: Versions of Armand Schwerner's "design-tablet"

In this essay, I will collate several versions of the "design-tablet." The witnesses will include not only holographs and printed texts, but also tapes of live performances. The reasoning behind such a format stems from recent theories of textual analysis that consider "texts" both as printed documents, and social transactions. After a brief theoretical introduction, I will present the edited text itself, followed by technical commentary, and close with a discussion of the relationship between performance and printed versions of texts, as well as between various performance versions; this discussion will include transcripts and a graphic analysis of two performances of the "design-tablet."

This design tablet might actually belong in the second great section of these works, *The Filling* or *The Holy Giving of the Self*. But I'm not sure, and feel to place it here. I have almost no indications for dating or appropriate placement: I will not number it. Its make-up and symbolic overtones, its abstractive quality and its idiosyncratic subjectivity all impel me to intercalate it here between *Tablets XII* and *XIII*.

This design-tablet is repository of secret guides for the unfolding of visionary images. Whether the meanings are functions of its functioning, or whether they are its essentiality I don't know; I do know that my long experience with it warrants that concentrated meditation in it bears metaphysical rewards of a high order.



performance texts as social texts

What is a text? The question is not simply rhetorical. Poetry has always existed, not just in reading texts, but, like play texts, in performance before a live audience (this is especially true of the medieval lyric, which was often performed as part of a larger festive context). Though we don't have tape recordings or video tapes of those early, socially transacted texts, we do have access to electronic reproductions of many modern and contemporary reading/performances. Also, beginning in the late modern period we have had access to much more pre-publication material ("avant-textes," as Jean-Louis Lebrave terms them) than formerly, enabling us to chart the author's own performance in his writing--the play of changing intentions that clamors beneath any apparently stable "reading" version of a text. From the standpoint of textual criticism, both these phenomena would seem to lend many modern and contemporary texts to "versioning," to borrow Donald Reiman's term. The "totality of the versions yields the diachronic pattern of the work," Hans Zeller theorizes (244); but so long as there is another performance or publication of the work; so long as there are readers/ receivers of the work, as long as there is a yet-again or a yet-to-be, the pattern must remain open. To view a text in its larger context within a texture of social interactions is to acknowledge the always incomplete nature, the always about-to-be of both text and, consequently, the act of textual criticism; to contribute to the dissolution of the "readerly" (Barthes term) text and the clear text edition of a work that masquerades as the "definitive edition" incorporating final authorial intentions (as Hans Walter Gabler points out, "a critically edited text can never claim to be definitive")(112) and open the field to the "Writerly" ("scriptible").

In my edition of Schwerner's poem (a pilot project for a variorum edition), I align myself with (in addition to the theorists cited above) Lee

Patterson, who in his perceptive essay on the Kane-Donaldson Piers Plowman claims that attempts to stabilize the text can be achieved only by "foreclosing the process of historical analysis" (87). Though an open-ended approach to textual criticism may be less secure then the classical agenda, deploying schematic stemmata in order to finally arrive at and reconstruct the "ideal text," it is more sensitive to the living nature of language. As D. F. McKenzie concludes in his detailed study of Maori oral literature, "the book, in all its forms, enters history only as an evidence of human behavior" (365). We can extend this concept to all literature, but especially work meant to be performed; such writing exists not in permanent and final, immutable forms, but as a form of "consensus" (McKenzie's term) among author, editors, compositors, readers, and listeners (to borrow Bakhtin's term). A significant, though overlooked feature of the book, according to McKenzie, is its "capacity for successive reincarnations in response to changing human needs" (335). Conceived from this point of view, editing takes on a function akin to ethnography, attempting to retrace, or recollect, the *occurrence* of culture, providing us with a script for its making (in this case, the history of the production of a language event), rather than simply talking about a static cultural product.

With these theories in mind, and following Reiman's lead, I have opted to present several complete versions of Armand Schwerner's poem, including the manuscript used as printer's copy, a facsimile of the first published edition, and transcriptions of two performances of the poem (I have also collated several rough draft stages and galley proofs of the poem). Taking a tip also from Gabler, who claims that presenting "revisionally stratified" texts necessitates "different forms of editorial realization," I have presented, in addition to facsimiles, both clear text and synoptic transcriptions of the first edition of the poem (with some slight changes in format, discussed below), the latter showing alterations in various rough draft states up through the manuscript used as printer's copy.

Given the amount and type of documentary evidence available, including various autographs and printed appearances of the poem, as well as recordings of performances (evidence of "secondary orality," as Walter Ong phrases it), we are able to collate both pre-publication and published states of Schwerner's work, as well as consider its role as social text, altered by its various performance contexts (the text that authors deliver and that readers/hearers respond to is not always the same text: not only are there various versions of any text, but there are always at least two versions of each version--the more or less authorial, written and/or performed one, and the received text; depending on the context in which it is read/heard, a text does become, at least in a social-psychological sense--in the minds of its readers/listeners, whose attitudes may be affected in part by extra-textual circumstances--another work, one in which authorial intention becomes much less an issue of power, though a Bakhtinian fusion of motivations can never be escaped). In "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism," Housman exhorts textual editors not to mechanically apply a set of rules to their projects, but always to remain actively engaged with the material; "each case is a particular case," and the editor cannot delegate the responsibility for thinking about the text to a pre-established list of maxims. Aware of the continuous mutability of the text, and taking another hint from Reiman, I hope that the various versions of the "design-tablet" will allow the reader to discover some of his own "meanings," depending on his particular concerns and point of view (see Reiman 179). Like the text itself, the critical/interpretive act is never complete. Presenting the work as a function of its versions is an admission on the part of the textual critic that there is never an "All" (as Lacan says of woman); there is "no fixed text" (McKenzie 346). We must always remain sensitive and alert to alterations--"I think that the text moves all the time," muses Stoppard (Gaskell, "Night and Day" 177)--and to the text's living relationship with its readers and listeners. As Jerome McGann lyrically describes the situation, in discussing E. H. Coleridge's edition of Coleridge's Poetical Works, versioning

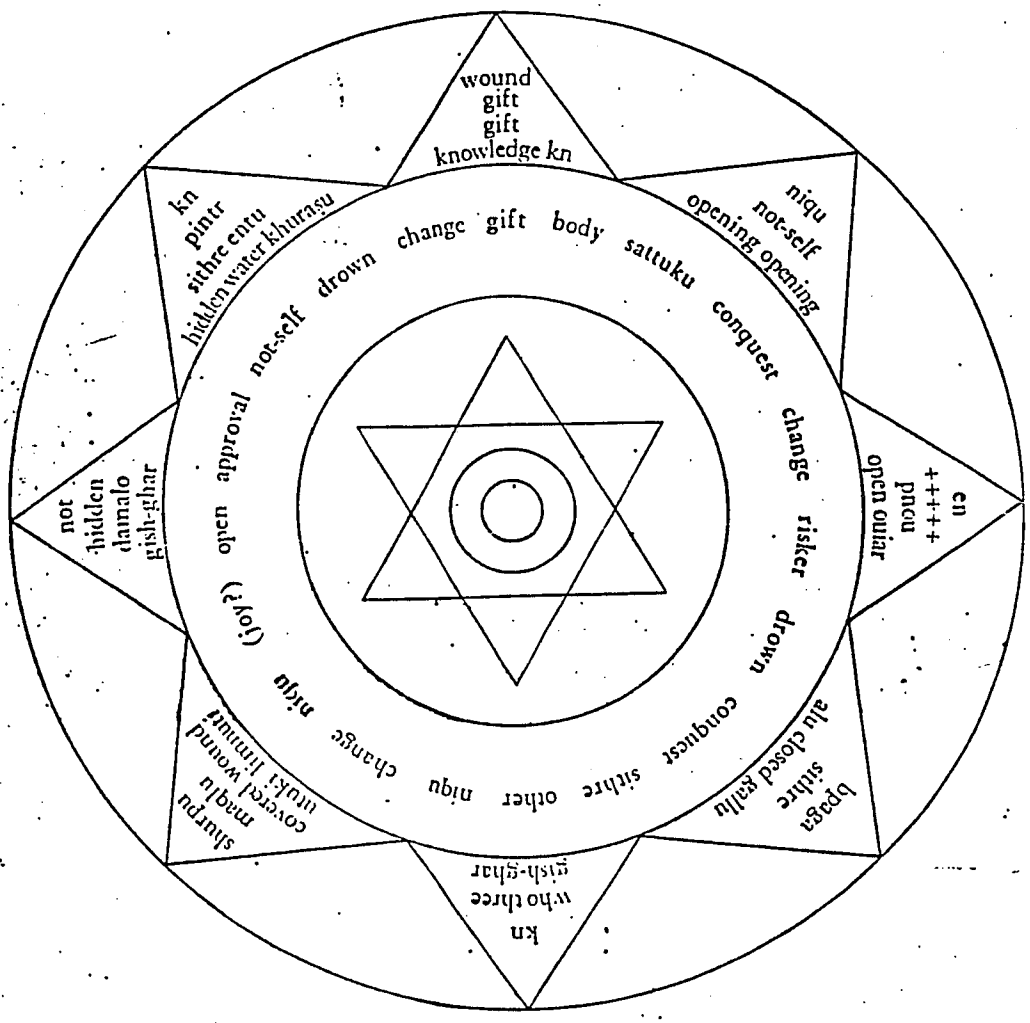
"cuts across the reading text," enabling us to "read the work in the context of its many shifting original shapes" (A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism 92; he is referring specifically to an editorial note preceding "Allegorical Vision," in which E. H. Coleridge charts the changing published states of the prose piece).

abbreviations

N1--N5(HD1): note sheets; the top half of N5(HD1) consists of notes, followed by the first draft of the scholar-translator's headnote.
(N5)HD1--HD3: draft stages of the scholar-translator's headnote. HD2 and HD3 are typescripts; HD3 is the printer's copy

YD1--YD5: drafts of the diagram itself; YD4 is the MS used as printer's copy; YD5 is a xerox copy of the printer's mechanical.

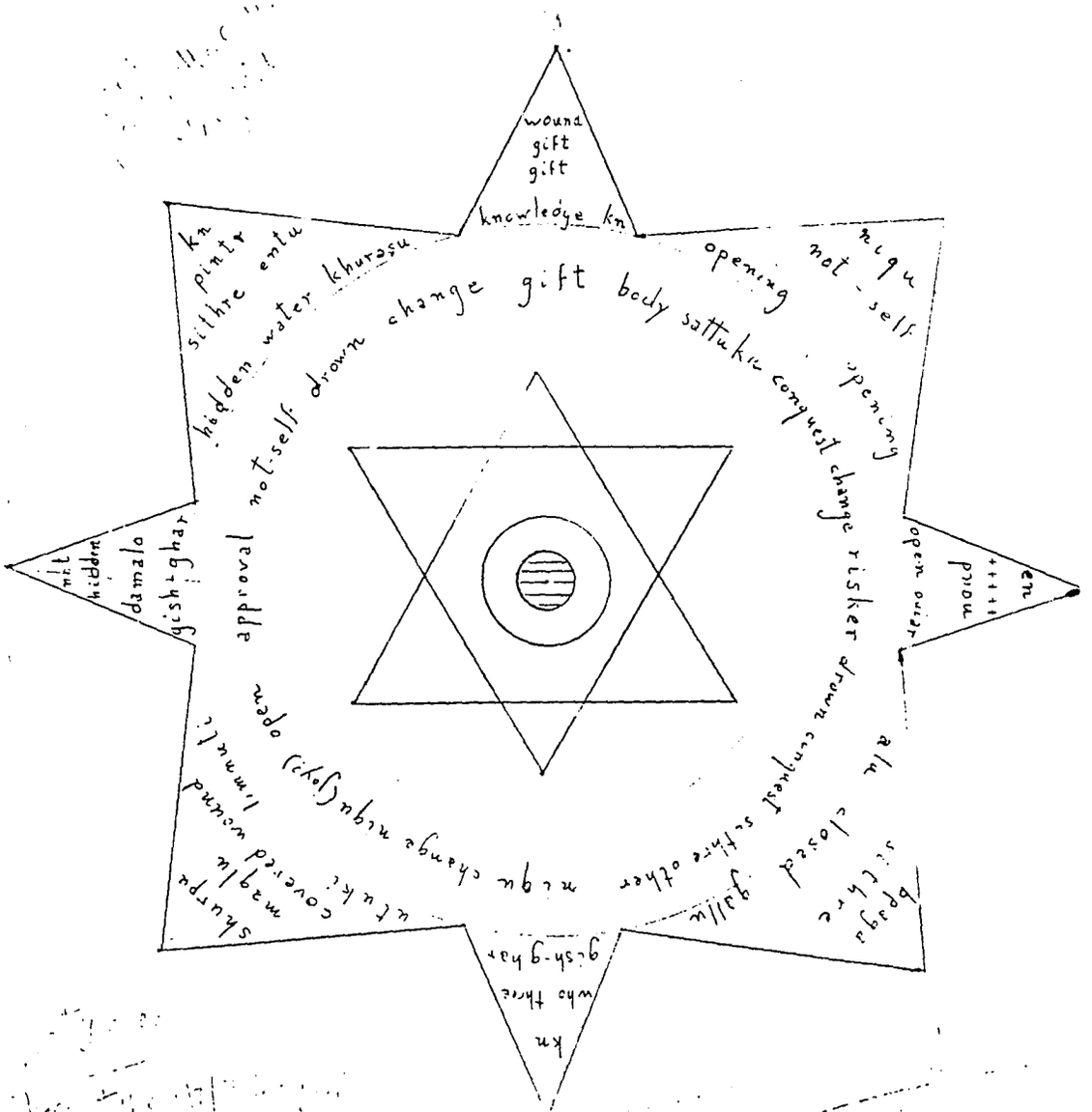
YD5 (printer's mechanical)



DESIGN - TABLET

xerox facsimile of YD4

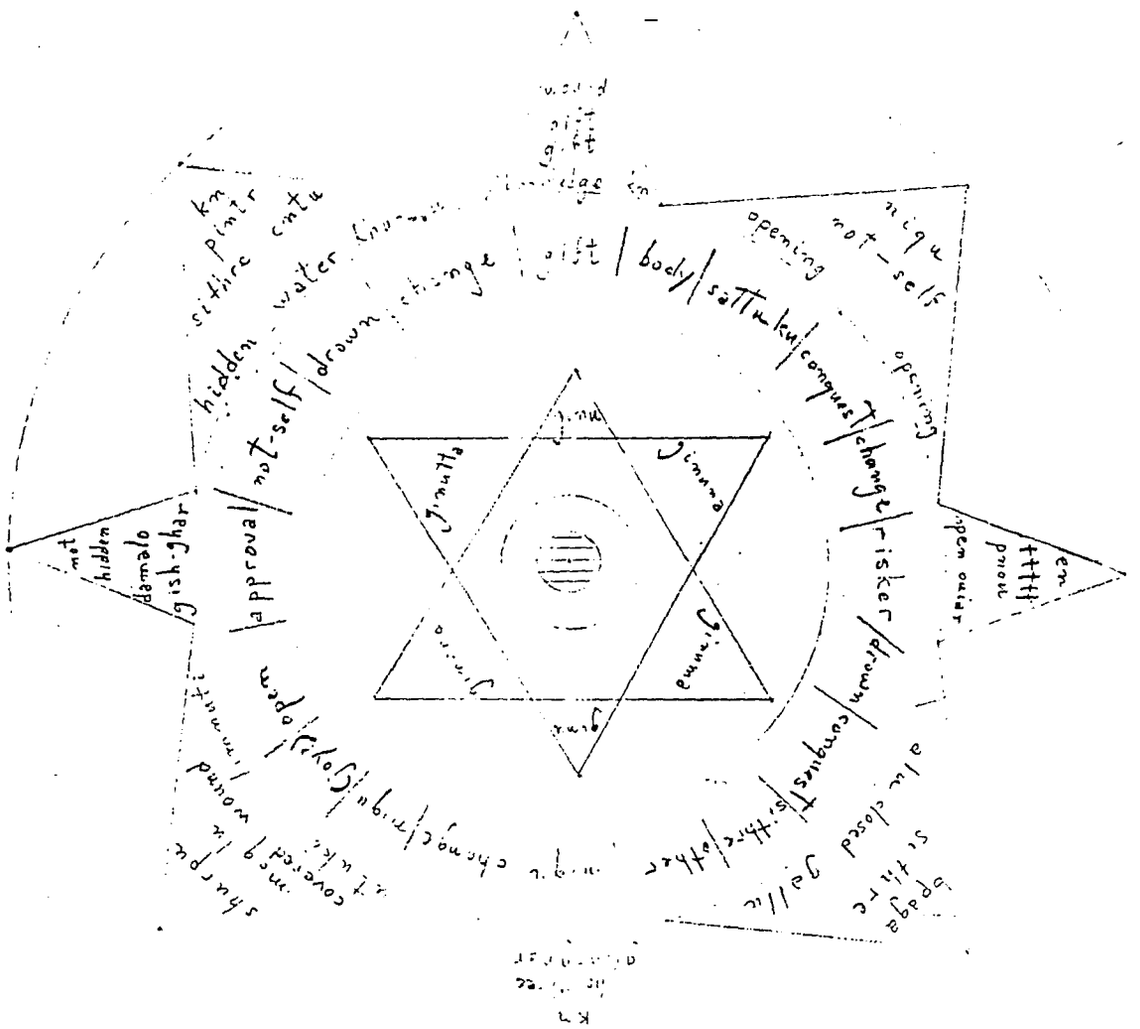
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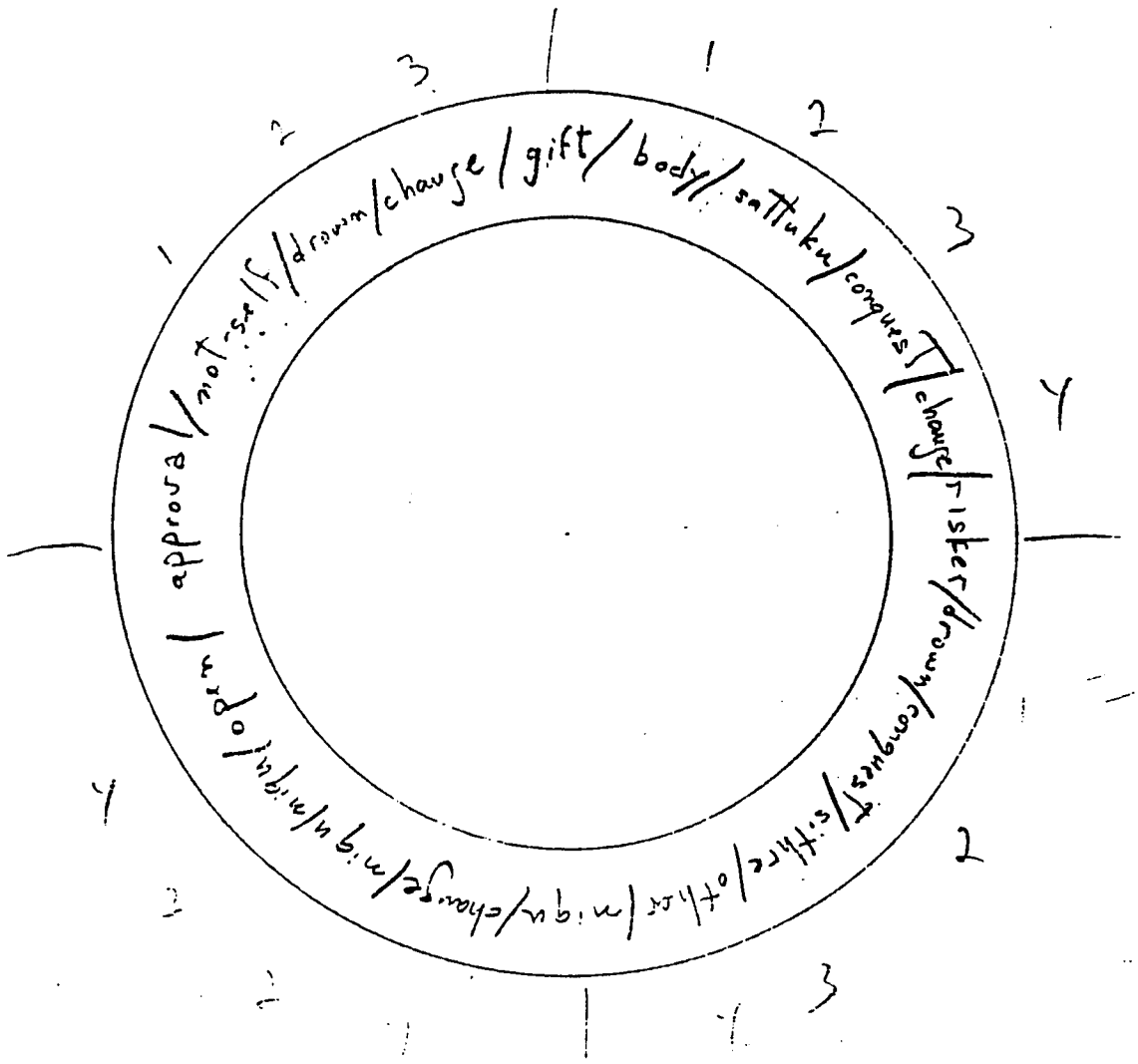


to 38 →

YD3

DESIGN-TABLET




approval / not-self / drawn / change / gift / body / sattuku / conquest / change / sister / drawn / conquest / sphere / other / mi-yu / change / mi-yu / mi-yu / open

Unseen
not secret
not hidden
hidden water
sacred
sacred gift
Innuendo
Queen
Closed
who-three
conquest
dream
sithre risker
might
other
change
not-self
approval
used
change
conquer
change
body
sathken

I

Editing the Text: Page to Page

(*Headnote to the yantra*)

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This design-tablet is repository of secret guides for the unfolding of visionary images. Whether the meanings are functions of its functioning, or whether they are its essentiality I don't know; I do know that my long experience with it warrants that concentrated meditation in it bears metaphysical rewards of a high order.

1. design-tablet] Station Hill and Atlas: design tablet. The Grossman edition prints the headnote recto and the yantra verso; the title, 'DESIGN TABLET," is offset. N5(HD1) suggests the title "The Tablet-Seal." Schwerner comments that the allusion to an apocalyptic notion of history (breaking of the Seals) is the antithesis of Buddhism's sense of circular time; the original title also carried with it other Old Testament associations--Solomon's Seal, sealing oneself to a task--that Schwerner perhaps wished to avoid

6. XIII] (N5)HD1 also refers the reader to "Tablet XV" (see synoptic transcript). Schwerner explains that the "embodied esotericism and eroticism" of "Tablet XV," which, the scholar-translator conjectures, is "probably the song of a temple prostitute, priestess of the second class," has a "retroactive affect on the abstract diagram"

7. secret] misquoted from Mookerjee, p.80: "Hidden in them are secret guides for unfolding the visionary image."

10. concentrated] in Tantric Hinduism, according to Guiseppe Tucci, yantras are a "graphic and vocable" substitute for the Buddhist mandala. The "yantra represents," states Tucci, "in its essential plan, the linear paradigm of a mandala" (*The Theory and Practice of the Mandala* 46). In a yantra, mantras--single Sanskrit letters, groups of letters or phonemes, or whole words signifying mystical essences--displace figurative representations of deities; the mantras, then, qraphically arranged within the yantra, are not only meant to be sounded, but visualized (though, as Schwerner notes, this latter effect is hard to achieve in English, since we have no ritual tradition of visualizing the letters of an arcane or sacred alphabet as the Hindus do with Sanskrit). As Mookerjee succinctly puts it, "linear yantras enclose syllables, grouped to cause aspects of a particular image to emerge." "Rupa" (form), according to Mookerjee, is a "product of sound"; it is "enveloped in pulsation." Through "japa," the rhythmic mental concentration on the visualized sound patterns (or "thought forms") of mantras, a meditator is supposed to be able to remodel his physical, mental, and psychic nature (Mookerjee 17-18). In his notes preceding composition of the design-tablet, Schwerner quotes Mookerjee in a slightly abbreviated form: "Mantra gives formula and equation / yantra diagram and pattern / Tantra correlates both systems of relations" (Tantra Art 20; N5(HD 1)).

(synoptic transcription of headnote; strike-throughs indicate the probable sequence of alteration; bracketed words show text that does not appear in HD2 and HD3; bold type highlights text that appears for the first time in HD2. For eg., "The unquestionable" was the earliest deletion in HD1; in line 11, "the reader" was substituted for "he" before the whole line was deleted in HD1.)

1 This design-tablet might actually belong in the second great section of these works, *The Filling* or *The Holy Giving of the Self.* But I'm not sure, and feel to place it here. I have [~~absolutely~~] almost no indications [of] for dating or appropriate placement: [in the series.] [~~The authors These for~~ this ~~e~~old]

5 I [~~cannot~~] will not number it.

[piece~~s~~ of stove-hardened clay^ ~~bear anonymously written.../ collective art~~./]

[~~which~~] [~~Because~~] Its make-up and symbolic overtones, its abstractive quality

and **all** **it** [particular]

[,]^ its idiosyncratic subjectivity^ impel me to intercalate^ [~~this^ design~~./]

10 [~~worship~~] here [,] between *Tablets [~~XIII~~] XII* and *XIII.*

[~~After the~~ ~~HC~~ ~~reader has reached the end of Tablet XV,~~]

[some of]

This design-tablet [~~The reader^ he will understand~~^ the ~~justi reasons for~~]

[~~my intuitive placement act: The unquestionable Some~~ ~~Chief among them is the~~

15 [The reader will ~~understand~~ sympathize with and I hope come to ~~understa~~ a]

[general agreement with my placement after a study of the entire series. I would]

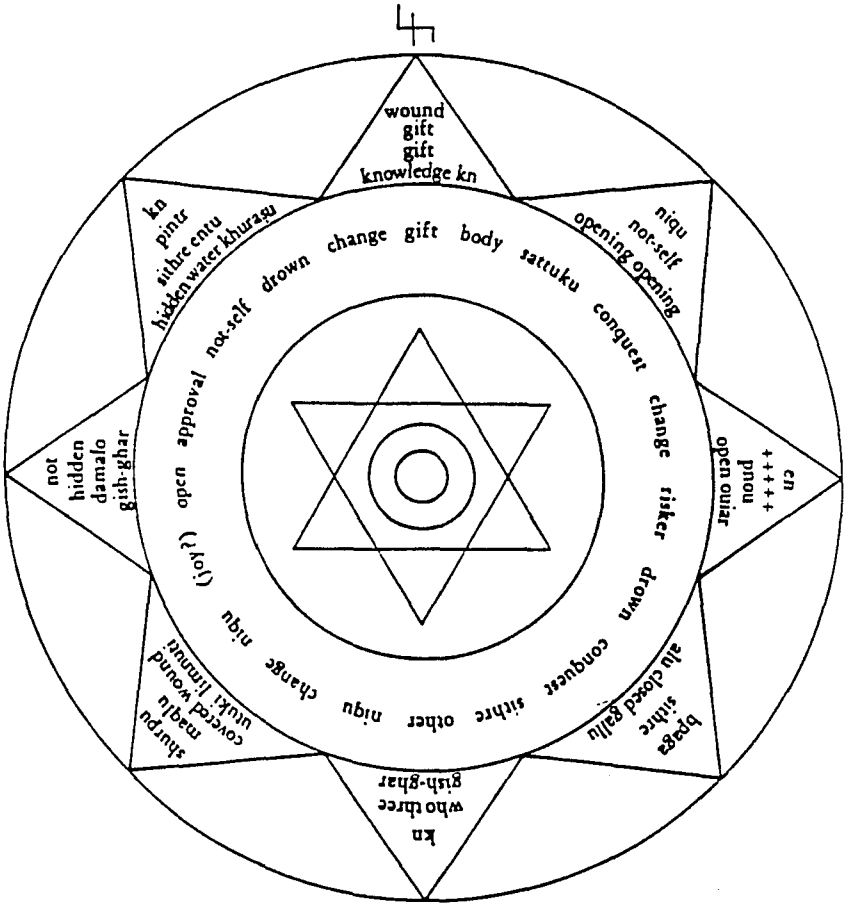
[see] [as] is repository of

[add only that I consider^ this formula / pattern Tablet^ ~~a probable way into~~]

secret guides for the unfolding of visionary images. [~~They have It has served me~~]

20 [~~this way~~] Whether the meanings are functions of its functioning, or whether they are its essentiality I don't know; I do know that my [~~own~~] long experience with it warrants that concentrated meditation in it bears metaphysical rewards of a high order.

(*Yantra diagram*)



I start my annotation of the yantra here because Schwerner often starts his own performances, as he says, "at twelve o'clock"; after this there are no guides.

Lotus petals. The yantra represents a stylized lotus flower, the outer petals, or triangles, inscribed with mystical mantras (see fig. 2); the triangles may also represent offspring generated by the primal, interpenetrating pair (see "primary witnesses and copy text" below). Schwerner's diagram contains eight petals/triangles. The Tibetan Mandala of Sarvabuddhadakini is ringed with images of the eight graveyards--boundaries of the inner mandala against the outside (See Lauf, plate 54); Sherman

Paul speculates that the eight triangles may "have been suggested by the eight aspects of the oracles in the *I Ching*, aspects that [quoting Schwerner] 'alter themselves and each other constantly,'

forming 'patterns' that are not fixed and, accordingly, open possibilities" (38). The circular form may be an abstraction of the spheroid, or "world egg...tending toward differentiation" (Mookerjee 27). As Rawson images it, the circular zones represent "successive sheaths of inwardness." Moving toward the center of the yantra we approach dissolution, which is also the origin or "point limit" (Mookerjee's phrase) of active being; energies that radiate outward, refracted through particulars, are absorbed and concentrated again in the "invisible center," which may be experienced as a "root" mantra, "om" or "klim" (condensed energy of sexual union) (Rawson 72). Mantra is "creation and dissolution of all form" (Mookerjee 18). Is the ambiguity of the form (lotus petal or triangle? circle or sphere? empty of filled center, as in YD4?) generated by the graphic reduction of the yantra to a design of circles and triangles (compare to figs. 1 & 2) merely a matter of convenience (i.e., easier to draw)? Mookerjee: the energy circulated within and transmitted by the yantra "increases in proportion to the abstractness and precision of the diagram" (20).

Three concentric circles, enclosing intersecting triangles and empty circles...

who three. The words leak in from the next tablet (XIII), where, Schwerner has commented, it may refer to the male genitals, but also division and separation (hence castration). Yet there is a gender ambiguity in the voice of the poem. XIII was originally written in the scholar-translator's voice; in the last stages of composition, however, the speaker became a "'cured' schizophrenic looking back...to assess her past" (scholar-translator's note). This interplay of meanings creates a sense of "revivification through loss and gender confusion" (Schwerner's comment). In both poems, the deconstrutive play resonates in the syntax (an occurrence of "secondary deconstruction" as Schwerner phrases it)--does "three" function as nominative (as in "who" or "what" three?) or verb?--linguistically enacting an "interpenetration of thing and act." Schwerner comments that the importation of this always already fractured phrase into the "design-tablet" generates further deconstructive activity by "placing it in the context of a 3,000 year old yantric tradition, whose purpose is to make whole."

kn. A cutting loose of a submorpheme from *knowledge*, prying the lid off sense (but may then suggest "ki,"a Babylonian term for earth, or subterranean regions), like

en. a splitting from *entu*, a Babylonian female deity (Schwerner: en "breaks the goddess in half--an icon for loss and disintegration"), though "en" is also, in Mesopotamian theology, god's human representative: a priest king, fertility figure. Fragmentation and wholeness.

bpaga. **Pre-deconstruction of an invented deity yet to appear in "Tablet XIV" (line twelve in the Grossman edition). "I break the female deity in half at 3 o'clock, and the male deity at 4 o'clock" (Schwerner's comment). The deity, Adambpaga, is named for his oldest son (Adam); Arigaaa (named for his younger son Ari) and Damalo (see below) are other invented deities appearing on the same line.**

sithre entu. **"A combination of Babylonian female deity and Hebrew mysticism" (Schwerner's comment). Gershon Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (161): Sithre Torah refers to "secrets of the Torah." "allegorical & mystical interpretations of some passages in Torah, w. a tendency towards theosophy & mystical psychology; part anonymous, part in accordance w. the usual style of legend." (from Schwerner's notes--N4; near verbatim from Scholem). The phrase combines Hebrew Jewish and Tibetan Buddhist traditions of a mystical relation to language.**

The star points. Star of David? Mookerjee: a pentacle placed over a pentagon; the points are the performers of action, the lines they cross receive action, but both participate in the same fund of energy collected in the "parana," the pentagon center (24). (For a further discussion of the triangles and the circles within the triangles, see the first note above, and also the textual introduction.)

alu, gallu. **Other combinations. faceless monsters born from unions of Babylonian and Assyrian evil spirits who rend those who come into their power**

shurpu, maqlu, utuki limnuti. **More mystical writings. Babylonian Collections of conjurations. Maqlu: incantations to foil machinations of human wizards and witches; chanted while a white effigy is burned. Shurpu: ritual transfer of sins to an object that is burnt. Utuki limnuti: Chants for exorcising evil spirits (Saggs 308).**

niqu. **Offering (Babylonian)**

sattuku. **Offering (Babylonian)**

hidden water. **The "paradox of unavailable fertility. All esoteric teachings are self secret," comments Schwerner; you can only discover them if you're ready for them--even if they're right in front of you. "A micro analogy for the process of the yantra, which is the nature of illumination and paradoxical aspects of circulation, in which nothing is left out."**

not hidden. **antithetical to "covered wound" (and also possibly "hidden water"**

covered wound, wound, gift. **Sophocles *Philoctetes.* In Greek lagend, Philoctetes was a warrior with a suppurating wound of the foot. Though he**

yielded the bow of Hercules, the price for his power was pain. Schwerner was thinking of the relation of wound and gift to the process of knowledge, hence their grouping at 12 o'clock on the diagram (see also Edmund Wilson's *The Wound and the Bow*)

knowledge. Echoed in line two of "Tablet XXII" (Station Hill), conjoined with "love" and "work": "the three aims of a life of wholeness" (Schwerner's comment; fr. Wilhelm Reich)

(joy?). Fr. *Joy's Way*. Schwerner believes that some manifestations of popular spirituality "simplify the spiritual quest"; the parenthetical term also brings up the more serious question of whether, bliss, in the Buddhist and Hindu sense, is after all possible. "(joy?)" and "gift," when considered in the contexts of their allusions and their function and placement in the "design-tablet," do little to alleviate the predominantly dark tone of the poem.

khurasu. Gold (Akkadian)

gish-ghar. Akkadian. "Immutable to be" (from Schwerner's notes). "My main concern was sound," as in

pnou, pintr, damalo, bpaga. All invented deities. Pnou appears in "Tablet VIII," pintr threads its way throughout the tablets, and damalo, like bpaga, has migrated in from "Tablet XVI."

ouiar. A nonsense vocable

Circles in a star. A similar icon occurs on a Babylonian boundary stone from the late second millennium BC (Saggs). (For more on the center, see the first note above and the textual introduction)

+++++. "Missing section." Refers to textual lacunae; the symbol is used throughout *The Tablets*.

* * *

(*Linear synoptic transcription of yantra; clockwise, beginning at twelve o'clock. Italics indicate wording and word order in YD1 that were altered in subsequent drafts. Nonitalic type represents wording established in YD2 that, unless otherwise noted, remains constant through succeeding drafts. Bold type indicates changes that occurred in YD3, a late stage of composition. Brackets indicate words that were dropped--though not crossed out by the author--and word order that was abandoned in later drafts; the font--italic or nonitalic--identifies the latest stage at which the bracketed word or word arrangement appeared. Line-throughs indicate author cross-outs, the font identifying at what stage the words were deleted*)

drafts. Nonitalic type represents wording established in YD2 that, unless otherwise noted, remains constant through succeeding drafts. Bold type indicates changes that occurred in YD3, a late stage of composition. Brackets indicate words that were dropped--though not crossed out by the author--and word order that was abandoned in later drafts; the font--italic or nonitalic--identifies the latest stage at which the bracketed word or word arrangement appeared. Line-throughs indicate author cross-outs, the font identifying at what stage the words were deleted)

1 wound **niqu** **en**

gift **not-self** **+++++**

gift **opening opening** **pnou**

knowledge kn **open ouiar**

5 bpaga **kn** **~~shupu~~**

sithre **who three** **maqlu**

alu closed gallu **gish-ghar** **covered wound**

8 not **kn**

hidden **pintr**

damalo **sithre entu**

gish-ghar **hidden water khurasu**

(*inner circle, clockwise from twelve o'clock.*)

13 ~~*change*~~ conquest [*conquest*]
gift^ body ~~*kuraou*~~^ change [~~*khuraou*~~^ *drown sithre risker*] risker
^sattuku ~~*sattuku*~~

16 other change
drown conquest sithre niqu niqu [niqu] **(joy?)** open [*not self*

approval] approval not self [*wound*] drown change

again, perhaps undergoing further permutations in the author's psyche, until they resurface briefly near the completion of the diagram, in YD3, gyrating close to the non-differentiated center, the "inner radiance" and "void of ultimate reality" (Rawson 72) into which, perhaps, they finally dissolve....(Do they really disappear without a trace? "gish-ghar," "gift," and vowels--"i," "u," "a"...) Though I have found no meanings for these words, associatively sanskrit "guru" (teacher), "guna" (sense-form), "ghana" (massive), "gamya" (to copulate), and "ghata" (pot) come to mind.

primary witnesses and copy-text

As noted above, I have consulted a wide range of pre-publication and published materials as primary witnesses for my versioning of Schwerner's poem. Books used include The Tablets I-XV (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971)--this is the first edition in which the "design-tablet" appears (to my knowledge, the poem has had no periodical publication); Sounds of the River Naranjana and The Tablets I-XXIV (Barryton, New York: Station Hill Press, 1983), and The Tablets I-XXVI (London: Atlas Press, 1989)--the first trans-Atlantic edition and the latest published version of the poems. Three drafts of the headnote introducing the yantra diagram and five drafts of the diagram itself (including the manuscripts used as printer's copy, with editorial markings and comments, and the printer's mechanical) were examined; five sheets of notes preceding the composition of the poem, as well as five sets of printer's galleys were also consulted. I also examined key sources behind the composition of the "design-tablet," including H. W. F. Saggs' The Greatness That Was Babylon, Gershon Sholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, Guiseppe Tucci's The Theory and Practice of the Mandala, Detlef Ingo Lauf's Tibetan Sacred Art: the Heritage of Tantra, and Ajit Mookerjee's Tantra Art (the editions cited in the bibliography are not necessarily the most recent, but those that Schwerner actually used). Finally, personal interviews have been invaluable aids in my realization of this project.

The clear text version of the yantra (above) is a xerox facsimile of the Grossman printing; the Grossman edition was also used as copy-text for the scholar-translator's headnote. Careful collation has revealed changes in the visual appearance of the yantra diagram--though not the text within the yantra--in the movement from printer's copy to first printed edition. Though I have not imported these changes into the present edition, and though Tanselle would probably argue that such changes are of a "non-textual" nature, and therefore not necessary to note, in this particular case, I think they are worth commenting on (another application of Housman's advice?)--

the poem is, after all, visual and verbal.

Apparently, as late as the final draft of the yantra, Schwerner intended the center circle of the diagram to be (at least partially) blacked out, as indicated by shading lines in the printer's copy of the MS; the editor and or compositor seems to have ignored or misunderstood these markings, however, and printed the circle blank, and Schwerner passed the printed version in proof. This may reflect an alteration or uncertainty of intention on Schwerner's part. In fact, though a blackened or colored center is common in the conventional design of Hindu yantras, some were left white (or whatever the ground shade of the yantra happened to be), and at least one of Schwerner's models, embossed in copper plate, has an unntinted center. Hindu philosophy also treats the center of the yantra ambiguously. Though Philip Rawson refers to the center as a "dot," he also notes that it is an "invisible first principle," the "original seed of being," a point of "final dissolution"; Mookerjee compares the center to a "mathematical zero." Again, in Rawson, the "inscribed dot" is the center of the "innermost pair" of overlapping triangles in the yantra; enacting "first motion," the dot "traces the vulva of the goddess" (the female principle, represented by the downward pointing triangle, the upward pointing triangle representing the male principle). The triangles interpenetrate, merging with each other in a state of partial nondifferentiation. So the center represents simultaneously negative and positive force; void/emptiness and motivation. In fact, it could be argued that Schwerner's original horizontal shading lines suggest this multivalence more then a completely empty or completely filled center would.

In the case of another disparity between the MS and the first printed edition--the regularization of word spacing--I have also followed the copy-text. Schwerner has indicated to me that the wider gap between some of the words in the outer triangles was not intended to be part of the final design, and that he had expected the spacing to be regularized in the printer's mechanical; though the original spacing can be intellectually suggestive, I have opted for the regularized version, authorial intention being a much

clearer, more convenient position to assume in this case. I have also followed the copy-text for accidentals. Schwerner has commented that he tries to keep "all spelling and punctuation as is"--he doesn't want the editor to alter or normalize it; except for the visual changes noted above and a slight alteration in paragraph indentation style (discussed more fully below), the Grossman edition faithfully reproduces the author's spelling and punctuation, including his galley revisions (and, it is evident from examination of the galleys that Schwerner carefully checked accidentals at each proof stage).

I have departed from the copy-text in one way. The Grossman edition prints the scholar-translator's headnote recto, with the title of the poem, and the yantra itself verso, giving it its own space, the way an image of a yantra might actually be encountered, in another context. Both later editions of The Tablets print the scholar-translator's headnote above the yantra, on the same page, and drop the title. I have also printed the headnote and yantra on separate pages (though not back-to-back), since it allows for less cumbersome collation of clear text and synoptic versions. I have, however, followed the later editions in omitting the title, since the alteration is at least tacitly authorial (Schwerner has allowed the changes to remain in the latest edition); moreover, Schwerner has commented that the title was a sort of crutch, helpful in the early stages of the development of the poem, but unnecessary after that.

It should be noted, however, that there is some aesthetic justification for the presentation format of the later editions. Though it may be true that in a ritual setting we might encounter yantras independent of any explanatory material, we rarely encounter them that way in books on Tantric art: the scholar-translator is, after all, presenting an "edition" of the "design-tablet." None of The Tablets are presented to us unmediated; they are translated and transcribed by the fictional scholar-translator, whose often frustrated attempts to enclose them within his own point of view--introducing them, emending them, and interrupting them with interlinear commentary--are essential to the theme and structure of the work. Placing

the headnote above the yantra makes sense aesthetically, and is consistent with the presentation of the other tablets.

The omission of the title can be justified for similar reasons: in his headnote, the scholar-translator admits an uncertainty about the date and placement of the tablet, and decides not to number it; the tentativeness of the tablet's appearance and its epistemological indeciperability ("[w]hether the meanings are functions of its functioning, or whether they are its essentiality I don't know") deconstruct the definitive function of a title.

In fact, the actual date of the composition of the tablet is uncertain (Schwerner doesn't recall when he wrote it) and the tablet is literally placed out of sequence: An early draft of the headnote refers the reader to "Tablet XV," suggesting that the poem was actually written after the final poem of the Grossman edition (Schwerner says that he most likely wouldn't have referred to "Tablet XV" if he hadn't already composed it). More importantly, its appearance between two sequentially numbered tablets disrupts their chronological progression. The unnumbered, untitled "design tablet" defies boundaries established by publication (if it is actually composed *after* the sequence that ends the Grossman edition). The title actually began its departure from authorial intention in the Grossman edition, since in the MS the title occurs in two places, both above the yantra and the headnote, which were presented to the editor on separate sheets; the editors eliminated the one above the yantra and moved the headnote title to the left margin; in the next edition, it disappears. Absence of a title where one might be expected highlights these textual and extra-textual perplexities.

textual notes and annotations

As noted above, the linear, synoptic version of the poem charts the changes the various rough drafts through the printer's copy for the Grossman edition: Schwerner's galley revisions consist only of correction of accidentals to conform them to the original final draft state. Taking a cue from Schwerner's manner of performance, in annotating the clear text

version of the yantra, I have followed my own meditative path, rather than a logical progression (as, say, clockwise, outer circle to inner circle).

filiation and transmission

Certain alterations in accidentals are a key to the genealogy and manner of transmission of the text. In the MS and the first (Grossman) edition, "design-tablet" is hyphenated in both paragraphs of the headnote; however, in the Station Hill and Atlas editions, the word is hyphenated in the first paragraph, but not in the second, though its grammatical function is the same in both paragraphs (nominative); second, in the printer's mechanical for the Grossman edition, "not-self," in the inner circle of the yantra, has a hyper-extended serif at the head of the "l" (perhaps a flaw in the sort): this mutation is reproduced in both succeeding editions. This strange blend of consistent inconsistency of hyphenation in latter editions and persistent replication of a typographical mutation from the first edition on suggests interesting possibilities. First, it is clear that the Grossman edition was set from the MS, but that the headnote of the poem was reset for the Station Hill edition, while the yantra was printed from the same plates or printer's mechanical, or from new plates made from a photographic reproduction of the diagram in the Grossman edition. It is likely that the headnote in the Station Hill edition was set from the first edition, rather than the MS, since it reproduces the exact indentation style of the Grossman edition (in the MS, neither paragraph is indented). Second, since it is unlikely that the same error (inconsistent use of the hyphen) would occur in a second resetting of the book (let alone in the same place--the first paragraph), it seems probable that the Altas edition used the Station Hill as copy text, and not the MS or Grossman edition. Again, as in the Station Hill edition, part of the poem was reset for the Atlas and part was printed from the plates of the previous edition or new plates made from a photographic reproduction. The evidence for this is twofold. First, in the Station Hill edition, the first paragraph of the headnote is not indented while the second

is indented two spaces from the right margin; also, the headnote is printed in italics. In the Atlas edition, however, both paragraphs are indented eight spaces and the note is printed in a non-italic font. The yantra, however, reproduces the same mutated "I" as the previous editions. Moreover, the Atlas edition establishes a pattern of printing the Scholar-translator's comments and notes in serif type (perhaps to *underline* its official, academic quality), while sans-serif--a less "finished"-looking font--is employed in the sections of the tablets attributed to the "primitive" speakers; the "design-tablet" breaks this pattern, however--both head note and text of the yantra are serifed, as in the two previous editions.

II

Editing the Text: Page to Performance

performances as "versions"

It is true that some poems vary more in performance than others, and the line between a "reading" and a performance may not always be clearly drawn; some authors are themselves still bound by the notion of a fixed text, as if the published form were somehow inviolable, and strive to present an exact oral transmission. However, even the fact that the text of a poem is delivered through a particular tone and quality of voice, emphasizing certain attitudes and emotions (we never know for sure, from a silent reading, how a poem will actually sound when presented publically) should make us aware that there is always more than one version; that the performance text of the poem gives us something more than--or in addition to--the printed and published, or reading text (as Gaskell's detailed collation of script, performance, and reading versions of Stoppard's work has demonstrated). As readers we must also become listeners. When analyzing the text of a work that exists in printed and performance states (it may be useful to distinguish here between an individual printed version or verbal state or performative realization of a text and the Ur-text, the total accumulation of versions, printed or otherwise, of a piece of writing--its social life) we must realize that we never have the whole, complete work; the work is an always-becoming, resonant with its many performances and reader/listener receptions, as well as its published forms. In the editing of such texts, as Gaskell has said of Stoppard's work, the editor must always "be prepared, when [the text under consideration] includes what may be performance features, to raise his eyes from the play text and have another look at the play" (From Writer to Reader 262).

Armand Schwerner is especially sensitive to the performance vectors of his poetry. When performing his work, he reads from a "performance copy"--a copy of the Station Hill edition with posted performance notes. A note appended to the "design-tablet" reads "voice chants," emphasizing the meditative quality of the poem (this is often brought out in performance through the employment of repetition and the intonation pattern of Tantric

chanting). Since he is also a musician, his "readings" often become multi-media events, verbal performances punctuated by percussive sounds and interspersed with riffs played on various non-Western woodwind instruments, ranging from a gemshorn (made from a cow's horn) to a souna (Chinese oboe). The music sounds, played through a variety of instruments, are always slightly different, slightly other than they were previously; they are voices in the poem--non-literal, untranslatable voices that often precede the language of the poem and interrupt or intersect it, breaking down the distinction between speech sound and music sound. Gestures are also occasionally part of the show: as mentioned above, when performing the "design-tablet," which is in the form of a Hindu yantra, Schwerner turns the book around as he reads; he embodies and re-presents--enacts--the graphic aspect of the poem, transforming the visual surface of the text into a pantomime.

Clearly, live "texts" gain an extra-dimensionality that printed versions lack. The reception of a performance of Schwerner's work at UCSD would seem to support this view. Poet David Antin recalls that the "stylistic nuances" conveyed by Schwerner's voice were "suited to [Schwerner's] background as a cool jazz clarinetist," his performance rippled with a "wonderful light set of inflections and articulations, almost feathery or weightless"; Antin also notes that such a "reading style" is phonically and characterologically "much richer... than a more emphatic or decidedly 'lyric' reading" would be (quoted in Paul 28). The point to emphasize here is that such comparisons and analyses depend on the accessibility of oral versions of the text; the printed form of the poems could conceivably support either of the reading styles Antin describes above, and the fact that one is realized in a particular performance and not the other provides valuable insights into the author's character and state of mind, his relationship to his work, his relationship to the audience and immediate environment, and the nature of the work itself (its various emotional and thematic vectors).

One performance of the "design-tablet," transcribed below, is a studio-produced tape without a live audience, sans musical accompaniment; in another version, presented before a live audience at SFSU (also transcribed below), an Indonesian flute (a Su Ling) is played. Comparing the formal, sedate, studio- produced version with the more animated live performance offers some interesting examples of social text variation. Schwerner has commented that some fellow poet/performers and long-time friends were in the audience at the SFSU reading--David Antin, Eli Antin, and Jerome Rothenberg. Their presence electrified his reading; he was not merely performing his work, but playing to someone, "tuning" to his audience, as Antin puts it. The presence of a listener (in this case an intimate other) actually altered the oral text. Bakhtin has said that "the reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolate monologic utterance...but the social event of verbal interaction" between a speaker and listener (Volosinov, "Verbal Interaction" 94); moreover, the listener is "an immanent participant in the artistic event who has determinative effect on the form of the work from within" (Volosinov, "Discourse" 113). This concept is dynamically, dramatically realized in Schwerner's performance of the printed text.

Performance Transcripts

(OUTER = *outer circle; triangles are numbered clockwise, beginning at twelve o'clock--see collation graphs, page 25*; INNER = *inner circle*)

Transcript of a reading of*The Tablets *at San Francisco State University, April 1984 (cassette tape of a performance before a live audience)

[having just read VIII] This tablet is called the Design-Tablet and it looks like this, so every time it's read it gives a different...it's a different circumstance.

The um...the...the Scholar-translator gives a preface to this he says "this design tablet might actually in the second great section of these" which is called "The Holy Giving of the Self." But he's not sure he says and "I feel" he says "to place it here. I have almost no indications for dating or appropriate placement" and "I will not number it."[cuts rest of paragraph].

[The first paragraph is read rapidly, monotonally, overriding many of the caesuras indicated in print. It contrasts rhythmically with the next paragraph.]

"This design-tablet is" a "repository of secret guides for the unfolding of visionary images. Whether the meanings are functions of its functioning, or whether they are its essentiality I don't know; I do know that my long experience with it warrants that concentrated meditation in it bears metaphysical rewards of a high order."

[this paragraph is read more emphatically, stressing certain words/phrases for rhythmic and rhetorical effect: "design-tablet" and "images" get special emphasis; "functions" and "functioning" are read with particular force on the initial vowels and following consonant clusters--an invective tone; "essentiality" is highlighted and "don't know" hammered out as a spondee. The normally stressed syllables of "experience," "warrants," "concentrated" "meditation," and "rewards" are emphasized; "high order," like "don't know," is treated spondiacally.]

The...the instruments I use are almost invariably bone, or wood, or ceramic [particular emphasis on "bone," "wood," and the normally accented syllable of "ceramic"]. (And I try to stay with that for the general sense of appropriateness for the material.)

This is an Indonesian flute called a Su Ling which I like because it has a particularly kind of...a...interesting, breathy, wooden quality. And is and it's a a um associated with a...um certain kinds of a meditation um circumstances. [plays flute: two long, drawn out tones, then a melancholy melody, becoming staccato and atonal toward the end. The last note fades into breath, there's a pause, and then...]

OUTER 1: wound gift gift knowledge kn [pauses between each word/mantra; the full words are read solemnly, but the consonant cluster is threateningly hammered out] [pause] 8: pintr [pause] 2: not-self opening opening opening opening [lyrically, longingly] INNER: gift [pause] OUTER 3: pnou [pause] ouiar 4: bpaga sithre [these words read harshly, emphasizing consonants and sibilants] closed 5: who three [sarcastic] kn [shouted] 6: shurpu maqlu covered wound [pause] 7: not hidden [pause] 8: pintr [the staccato consonantals/dentals--nasal followed by voiceless stop released into a liquid retroflex--contrast with the more resonant voiced stops and nasals of "wound" and "hidden"] hidden water Khurasu [pause] INNER: not self drown drown drown drown change [pause] drown change drown giftbody change drown giftbody [read with gathering momentum] sattuku [breath pause] conquest not-self change conquest risker change not-self drown conquest sithre drown risker change conquest sattuku body giftgift changechange OUTER 1: gift wound [pause] knowledge gift wound [pause] giftgift giftgift giftgift giftgiftgiftgiftgiftgiftgift wound giftwound giftwound giftwound giftwound knowledge [breath pause] giftgiftgiftgiftgift knowledge INNER: gift change [breath pause] change drown not-self drown not-self drown openopenopenopenopenopenopenopenopenopen [breath pause] not-self openopenopenopen gift wound giftwound openopen [breath pause] change gift conquest change

change gift conquest not-self not-self open open closed open closed closed open open wound open wound [borrowing words freely here from INNER and from OUTER 1 and 4 (but perhaps with 6 in mind, "open wound" displacing "covered wound," since he moves to 5 next)] 5: who three gish-ghar 6: shurpu maqlu covered wound covered wound 5: who [breath] three gish-ghar gish-ghar kn kn knkn kn INNER: other OUTER 5: kn INNER: other [breath] changechangechangechangechangechangechangechangechange-changechangechangechangechangechange [begins to fade out] change-changechangechange [breath; the repetition becomes slightly stronger, but then quickly fades to a whisper, the word disolving into its initial "ch" sound] changechangechangechangechangechangechangechangechangechchchchchchchch...[pause, deep breath] last poem... [XXIV]

Transcript from The Tablets I-XVIII, *S Press, Tonbandverlag, Dusseldorf/-Munchen, West Germany, 1975 (studio-produced tape).*

The Scholar-translator makes the following comment [voice shift to a more public, less conversational, more didactic tone, as if reading a quote] "This design-tablet....[reads full comment, adhering to written punctuation]

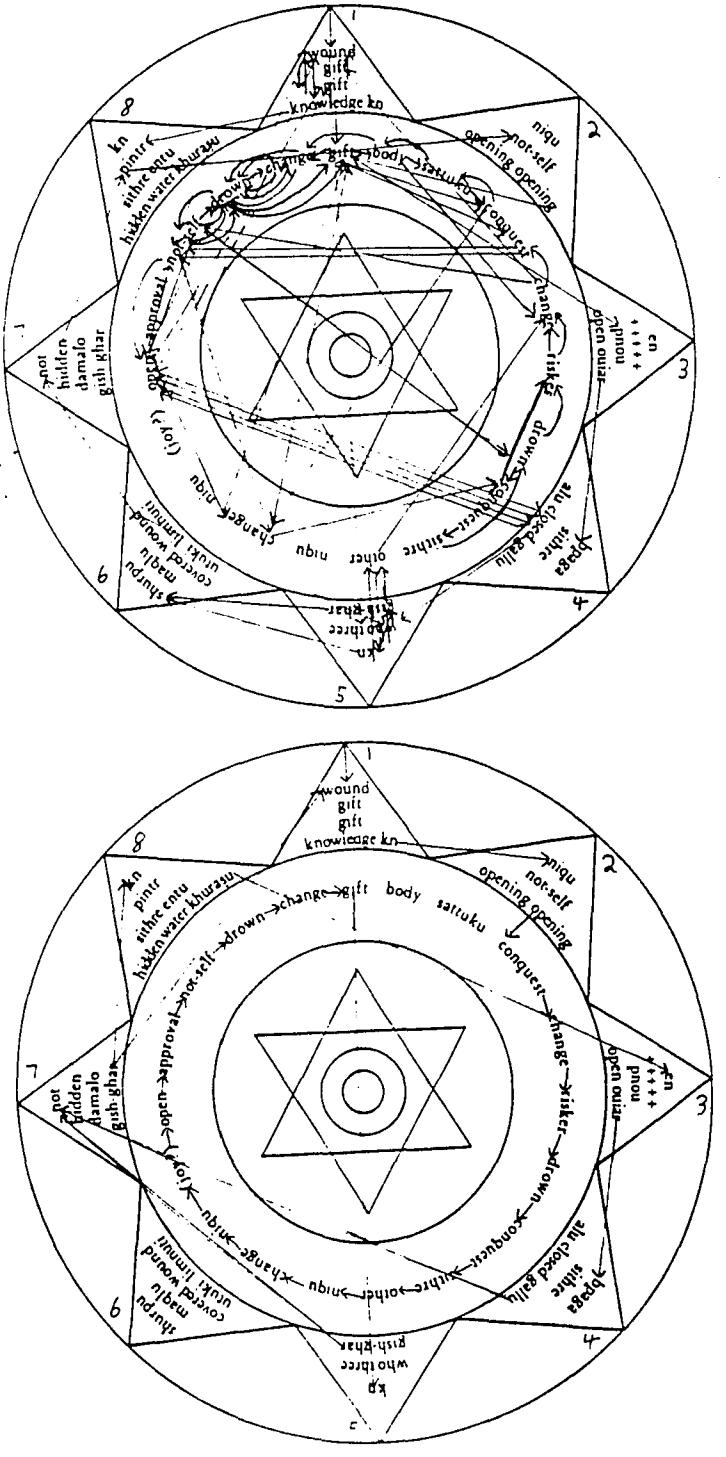
OUTER 1: wound gift gift knowledge kn [pause] 2: niqu not-self opening opening [pause] INNER: conquest change risker drown drown drown drown drown conquest sithre other niqu change niqu (joy?) [slight pause] open approval not-self [carefully emphasizes both syllables] drown change gift [pause; he recites almost the entire inner circle without interruptions or divagations] gift gift gift gift gift [each repetition of the word is carefully articulated, each wrapped in its own space of time, confronted abruptly by the following consonant cluster] OUTER 5: kn [slight pause] who three gish-ghar 7: not hidden [read as a single line] damalo gish-ghar 8: kn pintr sithre entu hidden water khurasu [last three words read w/out pause, as if a compound] 3: en missing section pnou open ouiar 4: bpaga sithre alu closed gallu ["pnou," "ouiar," and all of 4 are read harshly, sternly, with some violence--especially the sibilants; they are read as curses or condemnations] 7: not hidden damalo gish-ghar [pause] 1: wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound wound [the pace gradually picks up, with a slight pause after the final repetition, then...] knowledge kn [stated flatly, abruptly; "gift" is not read].

[In this reading, the repetition of "drown" and "wound," the hammering out of other vocables, as well as the conscious omission of "gift" in the final recital of 1, emphasize the overall darkness of the tablet (even though 6 is omitted entirely). This is also a more conceptual, controlled reading than the SFSU performance, a result perhaps of the absence of an audience (except for the presence of recording devices and a detached technician) and the more formal circumstances. He seems more concerned, too, with transmitting all the words of the poem to the hearer--verbally reproducing the written document (perhaps partly because this tape, as a "published" version, is marketed and therefore more widely available then the SFSU

tape, which is the author's personal copy), though this conjecture would seem to be contradicted by the omission of OUTER 6.]

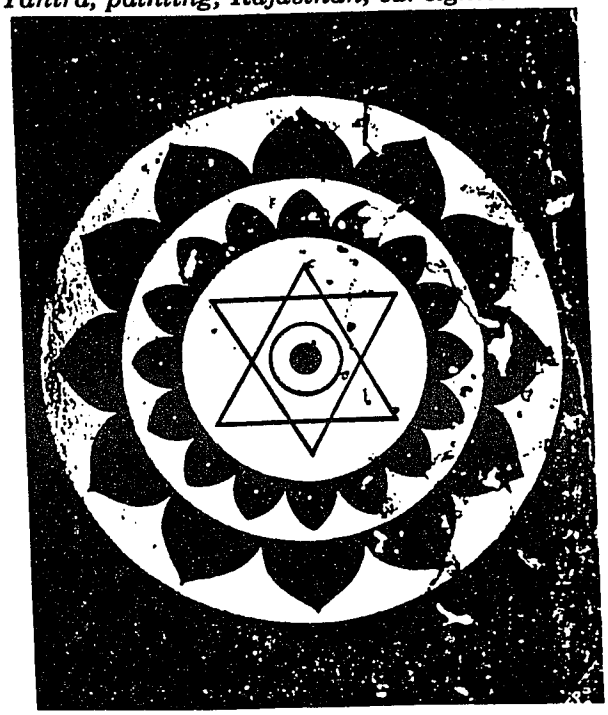
The written versions as well as the various performance versions of the "design-tablet" all produce distinctly different "texts," each another facet of the poem as it lives in and through time, not developing toward a teleological end point, but existing in a state of flux--"all rapt inside an unfixable slow sound of / themselves," as the speaker says in "Tablet XXIV." To quote McGann, "the interplay of...texts is at the center of the reading experience" ("The Monks and the Giants" 197).

(Collation of the graphs below, which chart the pattern of the performances transcribed above, reveal the substantial extent to which audience and context (social/physical environment) empower and shape the performance text. The top graph traces the flow of the live performance; the bottom represents the reading path of the studio-produced version.)

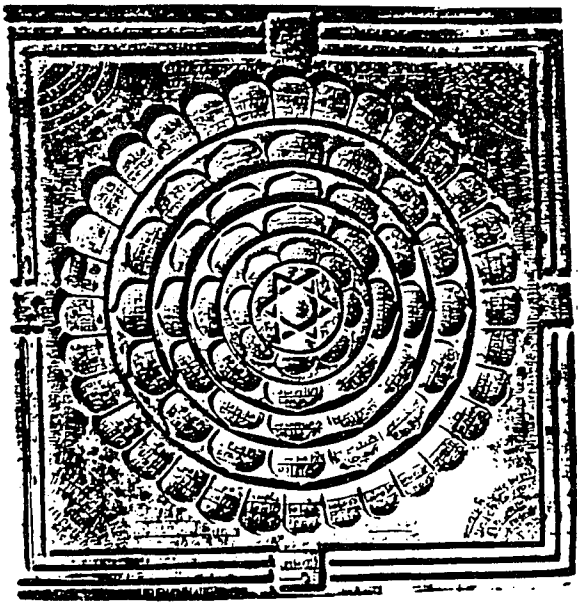


Dear Reader:

Yantra, painting, Rajasthan, ca. eighteenth century A.D.



Rama yantra, copper plate, South India, ca. seventeenth to eighteenth century A.D.



Tibetan mandala of Sarvabuddhadakini



Poetic Discourse v Legal Discourse: The Case of Charles Reznikoff

(First performed on June 19th, 1993, at the American Poets of the 1930s conference in Orono, Maine; forthcoming performances at the Krain Theatre, NYC, and the 1993 MLA Conference in Toronto, Canada)

Judge (J)
Prosecution (P)
Defense(D)
Bailiff (B)

To one side of the performance area, a prop table. Most props are visible; a toy train and a small black box are hidden. A sturdy table or desk marks the center of the space. At the other end of the performance field, a video monitor and a small, portable table, perhaps with wheels. Ideally, the Judge's podium is placed to one side of the performance arena, slightly elevated, equidistant from both performers and audience, and at a right angle to the latter (the audience becomes the fifth performer--the "jury," an impromptu and unpredictable chorus, silent and reflective, or contributing its voices to the plurilogue; its position partially determines the configuration of the performance space, the field within which what happens happens. The audience is that multiple consciousness (or nexus of consciousnesses) toward which all is directed...). The judge's voice is amplified, yet displaced from its source, coming from behind the audience, from above...

After the "lights out" command, the performance space remains suffused with ambient light from the dual projected images. This is the main light source for the piece; certain events are highlighted by a spot-flashlight operated by B.

* * *

[*P leafs through script, adjusts props; Bailiff runs in, looks up at Judge*

anxiously, intensely. P observes him in a hand held mirror--one of the props he happens to be examining at the time--and turns...]

J: Bailiff?

B: Ready for the jury, your honor?

[*silence; B keeps staring, at uneasy attention, at J; P smiles, broadly, sarcastically*]

J: [*condescendingly*] Bailiff...

[*B slowly looks down, sees audience, a sick look on his face, and runs back out; P switches on tv, sits*]

* * *

[*The "Deposition" is read by J, while P watches a silent chase scene, an excerpt from the "real-life" crime show* Cops. *"Q" and "A" are read as "Question" and "Answer"; lights low...*]

J: Deposition

Q. [slide A_1 B_1[1]

A. How to begin. With which voice?

---

[1] for descriptions and reproductions of slides, see appendixes I & II.

Q. Did you start out with the intention of scripting the poems as dialogues?

A. I started with the question of the criminal; how many of the poems didn't concern themselves with jurisprudence, with holdings, but took us to the point of a breach and left us there...

...Go on. [slide A_2

But the longer I looked at the poems and their sources--case summaries in the National Reporter System--I began to see there was something else going on--a kind of debate, a

J & P [*simultaneously*]: conflictual dynamic.

J [*continuing*]: What was most intriguing was the way in which this "debate" influenced the shape--the rhythm, tone, and structure--of the poem finally presented to the reader.

[*P rises, pauses video (B switches it off later), crosses to center table*]

Q. Do you find it better to ask and answer your own questions? Do you find your answers clearer, less hesitant, more to the point?

[slide A_3 B_2

P [*overlapping the second question*]: Who can tell if a question originates with the questioner, an answer with the answerer.

*

P: I see you trying to find your place in a discourse. Every morning, on the subway, leaving you wife at 14th street, continuing on across the bridge to your tryst with Corpus Juris

J & P: --the body of law.

P: Surrounded by the thousands of pages of the National Reporter System, painstakingly summarizing cases--

J & P: the body of law, law's body--

P: searching for an opening, even a crack, a way to enter this discourse, to "read it." Body law.

J: To make it speak.

P: And so you enter into a conversation with it, follow its leads but alter its course, reopen what it attempts to close over--

B: wiping away all that was held,

J: all the judicial opinions turning on a jurisprudential technicality...

D: "What I wanted to do was to create by selection, arrangement, and the rhythm of the words used as a mood or feeling."

P: I ride with you across the bridge in the morning, walk back with you in the evening--

J: back over Brooklyn Bridge,

B: across to the west side,

D: up Riverside Drive toward Riverdale, as far as we can... walking, talking...

*

P: This fragmentary text: patchwork of poems, sources, comments; murderings and mutilations of discourse... [*looking at projected image of Reznikoff*] do I follow you in this? Your papers are open to public view, but do I have the right? Do I go too far?

J: The poem as evidence.

D: "I wasn't interested in what the jury held."

J: This is the evidence.

P: These are the facts.

J [*to jury / audience*]: It is for you...

P [*overlap, to audience*] Corpus...?

J: to decide.

P: I'll cast out some speculations,

J: theoretical dots and dashes--

P: beams of light shot at random through the debris, the field of shattered

codes;

J: a tenuous structure of articulations always on the verge of being swallowed by its aporias.

P: Mise en abyme [*lights out*].

B: Take aim [*flashlight on P*]. [slide B_3

*

[*opening statement, read by P*]

that poetic discourse that does not fully reveal its methods of production, its internal polemics, risks a subsequent loss of perspective on the part of the reader...

J: The opening statement is not to be taken as evidence.

> that since the voices of witnesses presenting testimony are always already reinscribed, appropriated by the legal system, it should be emphasized that a poetry based on such testimony is a further appropriation, or reappropriation, of those voices, a further deposition in a train of depositions in a case that is undecidable; that just as Reznikoff recovers the criminal moment, so the dialogue that produces--that is the poems--should be represented; that it is both poetic and legal discourses that are put into quotes, in process/on trial through this dialogue; [*walking toward audience*] that the dialogue should be sustained, that it is our duty to expand texts in this way, that it is a service to you, the

reader, an empowerment of your relationship to the discourses involved...

J: Step back! There are rules of decorum, council, and I am a proceduralist, today.

> that Reznikoff's poems not only demonstrate the impossibility of litigating the irrational, but that by cutting the "fact" out of the hermeneutical schema, the epistemological and rhetorical system that produces its meaning, Reznikoff's poetry becomes a hole--an aporia--in legal discourse, its negative other; that Reznikoff uses the court's own language to trope its performance; that rhythmically, also, legal discourse forms a counter music to poetic discourse, or vice versa; that in all these ways Reznikoff's poetry is in contention with legal discourse, and that it is one of our tasks here today to reconstruct a portion of this dialogue.... that my position is somewhat false, since both plaintiff and defense are what I make them; in representing the plaintiff I am the plaintiff, but I am also the other... And I'm not sure who my client is... since it may be me--that is, the nexus of theories and ideologies I stand for--then I must be representing myself...

D: Objection! self-reflexive.

J: Sustained! It does not behoove council to jeopardize the authority displayed in courtroom proceedings by carrying on in this way...please edit your commentary more carefully...

D: Edit it, at least.

[*Flashlight off. Except for the "hearing on evidence," the remainder of the performance takes place in semi-darkness; a faint, undersea luminosity...*]

*

J [*to audience*]: Anyone who is unhappy with what happens here today, if you disagree, certainly it doesn't have to stop here, There are ways that you can appeal...

* * *

D: The Noise of Civilization

J: I recognize--I do not call--witnesses

D: The hum of machinery, the noise of wagons on the public
highways--
and the crowd watching a baseball game on a Sunday afternoon,
perhaps as many as two or three thousand,
shouting and stamping on the steps of the grandstand,
cheering and shouting
and heard half a mile and more away.

[slide A_4

[*J and B's lines are heard simultaneously, a murmur of voices not altogether sorted out, under P's discourse*]

P: Floating up from the world of legal documents--53 A 289--no "evidence" of

a legal issue, here. What kind of testimony is this?

J: This is an application for an injunction to restrain the making of noise, which, it is alleged...

P: from behind the bar-like crossovers of the early draft, the voice, perhaps once a personal voice, the evidential testimony of a particular speaker--

B: "From the appearance of the crowd, I imagined that either a prize fight or a horse race was about to take place."

P: recorded, relevant to certain holdings of the court, perhaps serving an appeal, affirmed or reversed--

J: Whenever a private right is invaded, and this court is called upon to protect it, and a proper case is made out...

P: here generalized to a condition...

J: this court is bound to give the remedy.

P: slips through, dressed as a modern lyric, an imagist poem (in whose voice?). Poetic discourse rewriting legal discourse rewriting witness account rewriting event...

B: "apparently caused by the yelling, cheering, and shouting... the stamping of feet... prevent my family and many of my boarders from the quiet enjoyment...

P: an event cut out of a social-cultural flow to serve as evidence--for what

crime?--in a courtroom collage. (Sitting in Part 30, King's County Supreme Court, I, too, can hear the traffic outside...

J: the noise of vehicles propelled along the public highways, and the like... a noise which, made to answer some useful purpose...

P: as the prosecution introduces a case of fraud). The lyric voice slips through-
-

B: "shouts, cheers, and stamping of feet... destroy the comfort of myself and my family..."

P: gets around the bars, while the commentary, initially central to the poem, is barred from the poem itself to a position of authority over it: "The noise of civilization." The poem a celebration of this noise, human and nonhuman.

J: one of the necessary accompaniments of modern civilization... will, if used for an unlawful purpose...

P: "Perhaps as many as two of three thousand." The poem <u>is</u> evidence; the comment sits in judgement.

[*P tapes a bar-like pattern on video monitor screen*]:

J: I will advise an order that the defendant, pending the suit and until the further order of the court, be restrained...

P: ("Perhaps," the rhetorical mediator, measures our distance from the realities it contemplates, acknowledges the "facts" as signs, marks on paper.)

J: Question for the jury: Can this filtering from the legal discourse a poetic discourse with a "theme"--the nondualistic confluence of oppositions that is the "voice" of civilization--

P [*simultaneously*]: "A careful reading of the affidavits leads me to the conclusion that the noise in this case does appreciably disturb...

J: be considered a survival, even where the materials--the language--used to articulate this theme formerly occurred in a context to which such theme is clearly irrelevant?

[slide B_4

[*using black tape, D and B begin to "map" a dialogue between the projected images*]

P: the bar is surveillance... surveillance is a crossing... the crossing locates but does not recognize...

D: To a discursive act, a discourse in act,
profoundly committed to the rules of popular knowledge
there was applied a question derived elsewhere
and administered by others

P: I tell you now, the case is not decidable.

[*B plays* <u>Cops</u>*: one minute; continues chase scene*]

[*P & D continue (P taking B's place) to create lines of connection between source and poem--like word matching; they may also "bar," or cross out, parts of source. They do this silently, or reading fragments of each, in turn and/or in conflict.*]

* * *

[slide A_5

[*D reads from Testimony, II, 122, X*]

D: Episode in the Life of a Schoolteacher

[*P removes suit jacket and sits attentively, facing D, as at a poetry reading; as D reads, P loosens and takes off his tie*]

The Negro schoolmistress gave birth to a child--
her parents did not know and she did not want them to--
gave birth in the school's water-closet
and left the child under the water-closet on the ground.
Three Negro girls who went to the school
at recess saw the baby under a hole in the seat.
One of the girls had jumped up and said,
"Oh, there is a baby!"
It was raising its hands and kicking its feet
but its eyes were shut

[*D closes book and passes to B, who passes to audience*]

J: Exhibit 1

D: and its mouth full of sand.

P [*simultaneously*]: sand...

J [*interrupting*]: Infanticide--Evidence--Sufficiency

P: hand... moving eye, blood on a hand a mouth full of sand what sort of cry...? a privy for a crib...what blocks the light? Silenced voices, buried voices.

[*during the following dialogue, J, P, D, & B interact with each other and the audience*]

D: The Negro schoolmistress gave birth to a child--

P [*to audience, standing*]: "When I left the house, I did not know that I was going to give birth to a child."

D: her parents did not know and she did not want them to--

P: "They do not know it now."

B: "We did not tell any one about seeing the baby that day. I don't know why we did not."

J: Appellant testified that she left the house, feeling that she would have "an ordinary action," but about the time she reached the closet felt an unusual pain, sat down upon the closet, and gave birth.

D: gave birth in the school's water-closet

P: "I got up and looked at it..."

J: "Defendant...

P [*simultaneous*]: (did they take her name away for you, Lula?)

J: "went out during 'books,' and went into the privy."

P: "I did not see her go in...

J: everything witnesses say is framed...

P: she did not tell me that she went in...

J: by the lawyers' questions.

P: but I know she did. I know that as well as I know anything else I have sworn to in this case."

D: and left the child under the water-closet on the ground

P [*with selfconscious rhetorical force*]: "and leaving it naked and exposed to the weather, without covering, food, and drink, and without nursing and suckling the infant as its age demanded..."

[slide B_5

D [*reading from the projected source, as edited by Reznikoff*]: was... charged... with killing her... child by... abandoning it [right] after birth and leaving it naked... to the weather... without... suckling...

B: "I was young and inexperienced,"

P: were these your words, Eula?

B: "and did not know what to do..."

P: so what did you do?

B: "so I left it..."

P: and then what? Why?

B: "and went back to the house, believing it was dead."

D: "It did not cry or move, and I thought it was dead."

P: "It did not move nor cry, and, of course, I thought..."

J: The state relied upon the testimony of

D: Three Negro girls who went to the school

J: of which appellant was school mistress: Rachel Stribbling, Edna Stabbling, and Lula Kinchlow, 12-14 years of age

[*The testimony of the three girls, the defendant, and the poem itself often overlap, disorienting the latter*]

D: at recess saw the baby under a hole in the seat

J: The water-closet was about 100 yards from the school house, sets east and west, and has two holes in the seat.

B: The baby was under the east hole

D: "The baby was under the west hole.

J: are you sure?

D: "I am sure of this."

P: "We did not look through a hole in the seat, but saw the body through a hole in the floor..."

D: "We saw the baby from in front of the closet, where some of the planks failed to reach the ground. We did not see the baby through a hole in the floor, because there is none."

J: not characterized by the certainty which should justify...

P: "I am 12 years old."

B: "We saw the baby from behind the privy. It was between the two holes in the seat under the floor. We could not see it from in front of the privy..."

D: One of the girls...

P: Lula

D: had jumped up and said,

J: All three utterly fail to mention the fact until...

P: "We all saw it about the same time."

B: "I saw the baby at 12 o'clock... I saw it at 3 o'clock. I did not see it but once. I do not know why I told him that."

D: "Oh, there is a baby!"

P: "We never said anything else; just stood there a bit."

J: too uncertain and speculative.

P: "I saw some blood..."

B: "I never told a soul about this until the baby was found the next day."

D: It was raising its hands and kicking its feet

P: on tuesday of Christmas week

J: about 12 o'clock

B: "It was crying, and moving its hands and feet."

P: "It cried, and raised its hands and kicked its feet."

D: "I heard something crying, and ran back to the house. I saw blood..."

J: blood on the floor...

P: "It did not cry or move, and I thought... of course, I thought...

B: I did not touch it at any time."

D: but its eyes were shut

P: and its mouth?

B: "I don't know whether it was shut or not, but do know that its eyes were shut. I could see its eyeballs. They were black. Yes, I just said its eyes were shut. I don't know what eyeballs are.

D: and its mouth full of sand.

P: "it was about this long."

J: "It had some sand sprinkled over it."

D: "The baby's mouth was full of...

B: "I did not touch it, but did cover it up with leaves and dirt.

J: blood was observed...

D: "It was her right hand that was bloody."

P: "I don't know whether the baby was black or white."

D: "It was brown."

J: not being satisfied with the contradictory statements...

P: "It don't make much difference with me how I swear."

J: the purported voice of legal authority
is in fact the voice of social power

D: "Have never talked about this case to any one."

J: Eula Nobles was convicted of murder in the second degree, and appeals. Reversed.

[slide A_6

P: all this happening between the lines of Reznikoff's poem, which is another "version," based not on "eye" witnesses, but on a further edition (a recomposition) of the already prompted, tutored, and edited voices of the three witnesses and the defendant.

J [*interrupting*]:
the problem of missing voices
in the official discourse of the law

P: But in mixing down these voices to the "voice" of the poem, which we now see cannot be claimed by a single speaker, must be seen as rhetorical, the voice perhaps of a discourse with its "rules" (its "Methods" of composition and "Revision"); cannot be claimed, least of all by Reznikoff--a voice always already

D [*interrupt; light stick*[2]]: Objection--Jargon.

---

[2] A six inch emergency light source, brand name Cyalume, "snap and shake" to activate; every time there is an objection, one is hurled in the direction of the object of the objection. Light

P: split (fissured)

J [*interrupt*]: Sustained

P [*becoming fainter and fainter, fading under the succeeding fragment of legal discourse read by J*]: whose tensions resonate through at least nine registers--the three girls, the defendant, the scripting and controlling voices of the lawyers (voices themselves tutored by the legal system they work within), the unidentified voice of the writer of the case summary, based on the anonymous notes of the court reporter; there are many lost words--fragments of testimony, what may have been discussed behind closed doors between lawyer and witness--that we will never hear.

J:[*read over P*]:

at its most fundamental level, the voices of litigants
are expressed and presumably heard, But, through a process
that is remarkable as well as largely unremarked upon, the law
selects among these voices, silencing some and transforming
others to conform to legal categories and conventions

P: All this always already going on--rehearsals, decisions, exclusions, reinscriptions--by the time the poem arrives on the scene to (re)compose its "voice" out of these.

J: most voices are silenced;
those that survive do so in a barely recognizable form

---

sticks have many practical uses, such as marking the scene of an accident, signaling, reading maps, etc.

[*B prepares two hole experiment. Placing a white glove on right hand, picks up a board with three holes in it: one large enough to fit head through, the other slightly smaller (these two are parallel); another, very small hole, barely noticeable except when light shines through it, is up an off to one side. Holding board so that larger holes are horizontal, B selects a red Cyalume, snaps and aims...*]

P: But the poem does not escape this murmur of voices by avoiding the legal discourse per se--what the court held, the jurisprudential points, the citation of precedence. Ironically, in evading certain aspects of legal discourse, the poem preserves its heartbeat by smoothing out and highlighting evidentiary language; yet syncopates its beat, too: in representing what the girls saw, in its linguistic reenactment of the moment of sight and recognition, the poem rides in on a point of view that can't be said with certainty to belong to any one of the witnesses; it invents a fifth point of view

[*B shoots red light stick, P deflects shot, B notes exact time of occurrence*]

J [*as B shoots*]: Exhibit 2

P: The poem says (claims to know): There was a negro schoolmistress, she gave birth in a water-closet, she left the baby in the water closet, three negro girls--pupils at the school--saw it--but how? through which hole or holes? From above, through one or between two holes; from beneath from in front or behind, seeing the baby-object through one or more holes "under" one or more holes. The play on (through) holes is a visual restaging of

the conflict of voices. But the poem keeps mum about the perspectival confusion, as well as the disagreements among the voices.

[*B shoots white light stick; as before*]

J: this increased attention to voices
that...have been suppressed or ignored
has created a new, practical problem: that of
finding and hearing them

[slide A_7

P: [*picking up holes] How many holes are there? [looking through holes*] The poem "decides" on a point of view, for one of the girls then "jumped up and said"--and so we are above, looking down through a hole, the only hole, though we can't say which witness, or perhaps the mother herself, might have looked through a hole or holes--i.e., the point of view originates in the poem's restaging of the moment; both poem and legal discourse rely, in the one case, for narrative impact, and in the other, to attain remedies, on a contour of suppressions and representations, imposed limitations on interpretations of the "evidence."

J: by hearing better we understand more

P [*holes mask poem and source as P walks back and forth in front of them, holding board above head*]: The girls sat on one of two or two of two holes, momentarily blocking the passage of light to the object beneath (or forcing it to choose, as in the two-slit experiment in physics),

standing, however, their seat gives them each two choices (or three, if inbetweenness is a choice): the possible combinations are 2-1, 1-1, 2-2, 1-2, 1-1, 3...

D [*interrupt; light stick*]: Objection! Obfuscation.

P: the poem gives us one...

J [*interrupt*]: Overruled

P: through which we see and "hear" the struggling inarticulate force beneath, under, through (struggling to be heard, be freed, be alive, be dead...) Yet,

[slide B_6

while jurisprudence must silence crisis--"It occurs to us that their testimony is too unreliable"--the poem redirects it, holding open still another hole that the court can't seal over... here a... there a... everywhere a... Odd or even, the texts are full of holes... ()

J: The discourse which is the raw material of the case
is treated as if transparent, transformed in to a window
through which the law views the set of constructed meanings
it calls "facts."

P: What we see through the hole is an "objectivist" inaccuracy; an illusion of the dead brought to life? Inarticulate gesturings. It is not clear what is to be said, or that predication could clarify without creating a further self-deception; language, master of

illusions; for even when it can speak, its mouth is--"always already"--"full of sand."

D: Objection--speculation, troping, repetition, structuration...

J: Sustained

[*B brings a napkin or rag to P, who flaps it open, with preemptory etiquette*]

J: There is a remote possibility that the child was born alive. But under the charge in the indictment the evidence must show: "1. That the child was born alive; and 2. that the mother (appellant) abandoned it with the intent that it should die.

P [*stuffing rag in mouth, in defiance; overlap*]:

at its most fundamental level, the voices of litigants are expressed and presumably heard, But, through a process that is remarkable as well as largely unremarked upon, the law selects among these voices, silencing some and transforming others to conform to legal categories and conventions

[*P spits out rag*]

B [*overlap*] : Exhibit 3?

We do not believe the testimony sufficiently shows the truth of either of these propositions. The judgement is reversed and the cause remanded.

* * *

[slides A, B: blank]

P: Your honor, I request a hearing for inclusion of evidence.

J: Very well. [*to audience*] we will take a short recess. Bailiff, please conduct the jury out of hearing.

[*B leaves room*]

P: Your honor, I wish to begin my presentations of the poems with references to particular cases...

D: Your honor, I think the poems better without them, and that their inclusion would only bias the jury.

P: Reznikoff himself includes references to the National Reporter System in many of his drafts, but eliminates them from the published versions. Why eliminate this trace of another voice or voices? I submit this decision may be partially influenced by the publication process itself, that the poems "look" more like lyric poems, look "cleaner" without the such references. Also, rather than biasing the jury, inclusion of such "leads" would broaden the field of inquiry.

D: This is speculation. Besides, elimination of the references has nothing to do with the "look" of the poem: we simply don't need such references. The poems stand on their own and, indeed, resonate on a more general level--the level of the human condition--without them. Pinning a poem to a particular source does not necessarily locate its "voice" (as you've noted yourself, the source is already a composite of translated voices), and attempts to limit the scope of the poem.

P: True, the poem stands on its own, but it also stands in relation to those

other discourses--however altered they may be...

D: But he focuses on the criminal moment, not the legal discourse...

P: But we also lose the evidence of, the trace of a process, an interaction, an encounter or conflict among discourses, which is part of the history of production of the poem and puts both legal discourse and poetic discourse in process/on trial... far from limiting the scope of the poem, this perspective expands it; we can still see how the poem applies "generally," as you put it, to the "human condition," but we also gain insight into the specific discursive encounters out of which it arises--which also tells us something about the "human condition," the way work gets done, what commotion underlies the apparently stable surface of the "finished product..."

D: So why not present this hearing to the jury as well; really, prosecutor, there are certain procedures that make a system work...

J: all right, councils, please don't turn the courtroom into a stage for socio-political debates...

P: (what else is it.)

J: the evidence may be admitted, but not in a manner so as to bias the jury, or prejudice any of the litigants.

P: Your honor, I'd also like to include the court's holdings...

D: The prosecutor seems determined to beat the rabbits out of the bush... chopping the poems up the way he does is disenchanting enough...

P: It may be one of the unhappy tasks of critical investigation...

J: Council, you must give your audience--that is, the jury--more space for contemplation. You may start off the poem/collages with references to the NRS, but I will state the holdings my self at the end of individual presentations, it I judge such inclusions to be relevant

* * *

J: 74 S.E. 138

[slide A_8 B_7

[*poem read by D; as P & J interrupt, D keeps reading*]

D: Dangers at a Crossing

Driving his buggy along the highway
he came to a railroad crossing:
a freight car was blocking

P [*light stick; interrupt*]: Objection. Participle

J: Overruled

it
and had been left there for days.
A showman had left it,
and the stench of the wild animals in it
startled the horse.

[*B, standing at the portable table, opens a deck cards*]

As the driver of the buggy tried to go around the car,
the noise of rabbits jumping

P [*light stick; interrupt*]: Objection. Rhythmic manipulation. Syntactic repetition...

J [*overlap*]: Overruled.

about
in a wire cage left on the station platform
added to the fright of the house;
and the buggy crashed against the embankment of the railroad
just above the crossing,
flinging the driver out.

P: [*picking up a rod with a Cyalume at each end, one red and one white, activates the red end. This should be performed in the voice of an MC for a small road circus that fancies itself a big top, or in the voice of the announcer on People's Court; as P reads, he gestures to his own script and to B, D, and J, including them all in the show; B contorts himself: performs as a circus pony and is led around by P with rod and ridden by P. D blows whistle, performs circus antics*]:

> Ladies and Gentlemen...It thus appears that there was evidence of <u>two</u> causes which frightened the horse and made him run away, <u>2 causes</u>--

J [*overlap*]: Exhibit 4

> the foul odor from the car, and noise made by rabbits. The complaint contains no allegation of negligence against the defendant with respect to the noise made by the rabbits, and, if the evidence had shown that the horse was frightened by that alone, the case would have failed. But, while it is necessary to recovery to show that an act of negligence alleged in the complaint was one of the proximate causes, it is not essential to show that it was the sole proximate cause. There may be a recovery upon evidence tending to show that an injury was received by reason of the negligence alleged in the complaint operating as a proximate cause in conjunction with another independent proximate cause.

[*B returns to his station at the portable table*]

*

D: Dangers at a Crossing

J: the allegations of negligence and injury resulting therefrom

[*B continues building house of cards*]

D: Driving his buggy along the highway

J: "that on or about the 9th day of July, 1909, while driving along the public highway leading from Cherokee Falls to his home at Gaffney, in said state and county, and while attempting to cross the tracks of the defendant at a regular crossing"

P: it is the accent and inflection of evidentiary discourse that takes

the breath away...

D: he came to a railroad crossing:
A freight car...

P: "being used by the defendant"

D: was blocking it

P: "the public road or highway"

D: and had been left there for days.

P: "negligently and carelessly"

D: A showman had left it

P [*to D*]: (the voice of a master of ceremonies is also stylized, rehearsed--a public voice, a rhetoric of cheap thrills riveting desire to its referent...)

D: And the stench of the wild animals in it

J & P [*P parodically, as a Master of Ceremonies*]: That the freight car which was willfully and negligently left standing...

J: across said public crossing by the defendant, its lessee, agent, servant...

J & P [*P parodically, as above*]: and representatives, was very offensive, in that it smelled very foully, and gave forth a great stench

D: startled the horse

[*P the "contortionist," with script. Throughout this section, until J delivers his opinion, P attempts to make reading <u>difficult</u>. Passes script between legs, behind back, etc., while twisting about, trying to find the most uncomfortable reading position possible.*]

J: that plaintiff's horse was made afraid and became very much frightened by reason of the foul smell and great stench arising from said car...his horse was frightened and excited by the noisome odors emitted from the car

D: As the driver of the buggy tried to go around the car

J: by reason of the willful and negligent blocking of said public road, or crossing

D: the noise of rabbits jumping about
in a wire cage left on the station platform
added to the fright of the horse

J: ...became unmanageable, and in...

J & P [*P parodically, as MC*]: surging and violent effort to get away from the foul smelling car, which had been left standing across the public crossing...

J: as aforesaid--and in violation of the statute laws of this state, and a willful disregard of the rights of the plaintiff and the public--

[*D prods P with a stick*]

P: One discourse represents evidence. An event dismantled, coded, applied...

J: ran violently against the bank of the cut of the railroad, which came down even with the public road on the opposite side of the railroad, and just above the public crossing, and by reason of which the plaintiff was thrown violently...

P: The other represents an event that finally eludes it, the narrative letting go:

[*P flings himself about on floor, a combination of circus stunts and pratfalls*]

D: the buggy crashed against the embankment of the railroad
just above the crossing,
flinging the driver out.

P: and was greatly hurt and painfully injured.

J: essentially a visual language,
meant to be scrutinised in silence: it is,
in fact, largely unspeakable at first sight

D [*pointing to poem*]: a freight car...was across the public... highway, and had... been left standing there for days

.....

P: one appropriates to control, to remedy contingency, the other

reappropriates to release. Both are tough contestants. Real showmen.

J: On this vital point the plaintiff testified, in substance, that a car in which wild animals were kept by a showman...

P: [*performing various contortions with and upon the center table; D prods*] and where are the wild animals in this discourse, rhetoric circling like the grand parade around a point of negligence, negligence..."operating as a proximate cause in conjunction with another independent proximate cause..." Legal discourse, the contortionist: "But, while it is necessary to recovery to show that an act of negligence alleged in the complaint was one of the proximate causes, it is not essential to show that it was the sole proximate cause... syntax doubling back on itself, obsessed with its own repetitions, structures stressed to the breaking point, a semantic pretzel man, deferring comprehension through a series of gaudy verbal twists, an obfuscating "accuracy." But this is a trop(e)-(t)ical...

D [*interrupt*]: Objection. Diversionary figuration, awkward...

J: Sustained

D: delivery.

P: illusion--[*flinging self off table*] there is no adequate language, no answering discourse, no way to contain... [*enacts a preposition, spanning the chair and center table*] always a difference, a deferral, escape through an ambiguity, whole books written on

prepositions--"through," "between," "beyond"...

J: A preposition shows relationship, but the relationship is not clearly defined. Therefore the words, though small in size, give a great deal of trouble

P: while animals left in a car on the track and in a cage on the platform reek audibly--"noisome odors"--through it all.

[slide B_8

P [*standing on head*]:A show that's not kidding. You see what happens to the urge to distort, disrupt. The unruly not merely kept at bay, but channeled through a formidable rhetoric. Tongue tied. [*gradually bending over to look at audience between legs*] The contortionist watches you watching him. A "That" and six clauses; a second "That...a third, and we arrive at the animal... under heavy syntactic surveillance.

J: There's always a gun at your head

P: Impossible to speak without being incarcerated.

J: Action by W. L. Settlemeyer against the Southern Railway Company, Carolina Division, From a judgement for defendant, plaintiff appeals...

B [*overlap; slides in a small, black box, hitting P*]: Exhibit 5

J: reversed.

*

J: (60 A 396) [slide A_9

[*as following poem is read, P cautiously circles box*]

D: They were sitting on their cots
and one of the two went towards the other
with a scissors blade;
the other was about to stand up with a razor in his hand.

The man with the razor
cried to the third man
"He is cutting me!"
The man with the scissors blade had stabbed him in the neck.
and the third man began pounding on the door of their cell for the guards.

[*P begins to examine box*]

J: The word "with" is defined according to:
(1) literal interpretation;
(2) Interpretation based on intent;
(3) Common meaning;
(4) Etymology;
(5) Context

[*on "5," P looks inside, then quickly shuts box*]

P: Those on the ridge should look in both directions. Camouflage--
"law": "wall."

[*P walks to portable table, where B, to kill time, has been building a house of cards*]

J: the gun at your head is your head

P: How many clowns come out of a volkswagen? Really a great trick.

[*B's flashlight illuminates the following scene. P collapses house by "jumping" hand over cards and striking table. Gesturing broadly, like a Reno magician, P then pulls out a "hand": "C-A-U-S-E" (spelled out on card backs, one letter per card); face value is a royal flush. While this is going on, J, B, & D continue with the next section.*]

*

J: 57 A 534: [slide A_{10} B_9

D: As they came near several freight cars,
the man who had been robbed cried out, "There he is!"
and a man ran out from behind one of the cars.

B: "Oh, it's a..."

D: They shouted at him to stop
but he kept running
and they fired four or five shots:
one hit him in the back and another in the forearm

J: four or five, and two points of entry--this is certain.

D: but he kept running until he fell.
When they came to him,
the man who had been robbed said
it was not him, after all

P: Yet, "There he is." A sign that has the power to annihilate its referent, even when its the "wrong" one. Is such a death, then, "rhetorical"?

* * *

J: 81 P. 792 Delaney v. State (Supreme Court of Wyoming, Aug. 1, 1905)
[slide A_{11} (B is black)

.....

D: The hunter

J: Stark: plaintiff

D: jerked the bundle free

J: freeing himself...fled from the house

D: and started on a run to the buckboard where his horse and rifle were
and the rancher rushed back into the house
and came out with a loaded rifle,

J: Defendant rushed into an adjoining room, procured his loaded rifle, and

came to the door,

D: looking about for the hunter.

J: the latter at that time having...

D: He had dropped his bundle and was crouching behind the front wheel of the buckboard for shelter.
The rancher saw him and fired:

J: Defendant immediately raised his rifle, and, aiming at plaintiff...

D: the bullet passed between the spokes of the wheel
and hit the hunter in a fleshy part of his...

P: right

D: hip.

P: entering Stark's <u>right</u> hip, and passing through the fleshy part from right to left.

D: He got up

P: arose

D: with his gun
and walking backwards,

P: sideways and backwards

D: facing the rancher,

P: facing the house, his rifle not raised or aimed, but with the muzzle in the direction of the house endeavored

[slide B_{10}

D: tried to get in back of a shed nearby;

P: and while doing so mistook witness Hamp, who had left the house to get out of the possible range of any shots that Stark might return, for the defendant, and fired at him...

D: but the rancher...

P: defendant

D: after the first shot kept firing...

P: fired the succeeding shots

D: from a window--

P: retired from his doorway to a less exposed place...

D: until he hit the hunter again.

P: one of the bullets striking Stark at the inner part of the left eye, ranging downward and passing out of the right side of the neck.

J: There is some conflict as to the number of shots by defendant, but that

question is immaterial. There were certainly a sufficient number. The physician who attended Stark testifies that there were eight bullet holes, counting the various points of entrance and exit...

P: In the poem, the whole event happens more cleanly, the

[slide A_{12}

lines of motion are more direct--a less complicated dance. No moments of mistaken identity, no awkward movements (sideways and backwards), and only two implied points of entry. No witness Hamp running through the poem, through the space of contention, breaking the momentum of the narrative, splitting its force along two lines of development: the conflict between Stark and the defendant slightly displaced, repeated slightly out of phase, reenacted as a struggle between Stark and the witness Hamp, who becomes the object of a dangerous transference--dangerous crossing--passing through the scene at just the wrong (or right) instant, becoming, in the urgency of the moment, the antagonist in someone else's fiction. Witness Hamp is a significant character in Stark's psychodrama, and though excluded from the poem's story, he crosses it like a shadow, disturbing its clean action, its driving rhythm.

J: the construction... does not amount to the reconstruction
of a case history, but determines a matrix which operates
by a selection among the whole body of facts...
reported by witnesses,
and sets up a coding system for their interpretation

* * *

P: And what's in the bundle? A violin. Stilled music in the crossfire. And the exact path of the bullets, the points of entry and exit--forensic choreography...

[slide B_{11}

[*the following cross-examination is read as a deposition by J; at a certain point, P takes the role of the answerer. As it is read, B & D act out the crime as a dance, while P looks on. Light batons (which can be dowel poles with Cyalumes attached to the ends) are passed between dancers to simulate directions of fire as well as the entry and exit points of bullets; word strings are "fired" verbally as the light batons are thrown*]

J [*"Q" & "A" are read as "Question" & "Answer"*]: Q. The first thing that attracted your attention in connection with this difficulty was loud voices? [*B & D rush toward each other as P throws in bundle; they embrace, catching the bundle between them, spin & "quarrel"*] A. Yes, men apparently quarreling. Q. And then you saw Stark coming from the house? Did you see what he carried if anything? A. A bundle, with a blanket around it, tied up with a rope. Q. What did he do? Describe his movements. [*B & D break free; B goes down on his side ("takes cover")*] A. He was running, and he threw his bundle right upon or near the buckboard tongue,

D [*comes forward, fires light baton at B*]:

Homicide--Felonious Assault--Questions for Jury

[*retreats*]

J: and I noticed him grab a hold of the buckboard tongue, and swing behind it. Q. Around the front of the buckboard?

B: [*rising, moving awkwardly away, returns fire*]:

Same--Assault Committed in House--Justification

P [*intercepting*]: Yes, sir.

J: What did he do next?

D [*fires at B*]:

Same--Instructions--Duty to Retreat

P: He stood there for a fraction of a second, looked back toward the house, crouched behind the buckboard, and reached over and grabbed his rifle, and drew it toward him.

B [*"solos" with baton*]:

Same--Duty to Escape

Same--Intent

P: It was right by the buckboard, and he drew it close to him.

J: And at this time there had been no shot fired

B [*falling*]:

Appeal--Questions Reviewable--Errors Not Presented

P: No, the shot was fired next.

J: What was the next thing you heard?

P: I heard a shot.

J: some litigants limit their accounts in court
to issues that fit well within the framework of the law
while others do not choose or manage to do so

P: The sound of a violin, its strings struck all at once.

J: William J. Delaney was convicted of assault with intent to kill, and brings error. Affirmed.

* * *

[*B gathers up light sticks, builds warning line, a rope of light over floor & tables, marking the space of performance as the scene of an accident/crime*]

[slide A_{13} B_{12}

J: Railroad Companies--Accident at Crossing--Evidence

P: [*as an introduction to a play*]: Lortz v. New York Cent. & H. R. R. Co.

J [*quickly slipping it in*]: (25 NY Sup. Ct. 252)

P: Plaintiff: Mary Lortz, administratrix of Frederick Lortz, deceased

Defendant: New York Central & Hudson River Railroad

Supreme Court Appellate Division, 4th Department; June 17, 1896...

J: Held, question for jury: was intestate able to distinguish the smoke from the mist and overhanging clouds?

P: evidence...clouds...heavy...clouds...

D: A man...

J: Frederick Lortz, the deceased. Place of residence: east side of Cedar Street, in the village of Batavia. Occupation: woodworker

D: in his sixties and so near-sighted

J: several witnesses testified...and it appeared from their testimony, or that of some of them...that his eyes had been affected for a long time;

D: the neighbors would see him in his garden
hoeing up and pulling out vegetables
instead of the weeds

J: he was intending to remove...

P: that, in order to see

D: he had to hold objects four or five inches from his eyes

P: within four or five inches of his face

D: to read the face of a clock, for example...

P: to distinguish such objects as..or to read

D: at all;

J: that...he would feel around with his hands...to find what was plainly visible to others

D: and in driving nails...

J: in driving upon the highways,

D: with a hammer

P: he had difficulty in distinguishing people and vehicles

D: he would put on spectacles and bend close to

P: get very close to his nearest acquaintances

D: the nails.

J: and other circumstances were detailed pointing to a very serious difficulty in the eyes of the deceased, and great impairment of his vision.

D: He had to cross the four tracks of a railroad

P: Nos. 1, 2, 3,and 4.

D: to go to and from his job.

That evening...

J: the evening of April 16, 1889

D: between six and seven o'clock
as he was walking home from work
an express train going west crossed
the street along which he was walking

J: along the side of Cedar street, which street is nearly at right angles with the defendant's tracks. The deceased approached from the south, to within a few feet of track no. 1

D: and he waited until the train passed.

P: Cedar Street is in the outskirts of the village...

D: The sky was dark with clouds
and the train left a heavy cloud of smoke a few feet from the ground.

P: the wind prevailing blew the smoke in the direction where the deceased stood, and seemed to be near him.

D: When he started to cross

another train, ten of fifteen minutes late,
came from the west;

P: along track...

D: it made no signal when about to cross the street he was on,

P: several witnesses who were observing...testified positively

D: neither by bell nor whistle

J: Beisiegel v. Railroad Co., 34 N. Y. 632: "the omission of the customary signals was an assurance by the company to the plaintiff that...

P: it was for the jury to determine whether, under the circumstances...

D: and the noise of its coming...

J: the noise of the west-bound passenger train may well have obscured the sound of the approach of the train from the west, so that

D: might well have been
taken as the noise of the train that had just passed.

P: This is an important circumstance in considering whether the deceased was guilty of contributory negligence. Ingersoll v. Railroad Co., 6 Thomp. & C. 419; Powell v. Railroad Co., 22 Hun. 59; Leonard v. Railroad Co., 42 N. Y. Super. Ct. 225. In Greany v. Railroad Co., 101 N. Y. 425, 5 N. E. 425. Danforth, J., quotes with an approval Shaw v. Jewett, 86 N. Y. 616 in which it is said...

D: He started to cross the tracks

J: Nos. 1, 2, 3, and...

P: they were inflamed, water ran from them, and a white film gathered over them...

[slide B_{13}

A sudden death out of nowhere... obliterated text... The specificity of time and direction: the train was "10 of 15 minutes late," the deceased "approached from the south," the road ran at "nearly at right angles" to the defendant's tracks," the approximate speed of the train and deliberateness of the walk--he was "just stepping"--these measurements like an awkward mechanism replicating the dead man's movements [*p mimes*]... two trains, one approaching and one leaving a crossing, heading in opposite directions (the one slightly off-schedule) such that, in the world of this nearsighted man, they were collapsed through routine into one. No vector can chart this journey...

Two trains, a single train, moving simultaneously in opposite directions--impossible, this side of the atom --one light bar scanning a page (at a speed = ...) makes all that follows possible..what follows?

[*P activates white end of light rod*]

[*B puts on a pair of oversized glasses with a roll of adding machine paper attached to one end; begins to unroll paper across lenses. After a strip of blankness, the following sequence appears: "1...2...3... evidence... cloud...heavy*

cloud... bound to see... provide against... question for jury..."]

J: Exhibit 6

P [*pointing to projected image and to B*]: A breakdown in mimesis. We, too, are unable to see--the train of syntax lost in the lacunae of the source--literal holes, the words that wouldn't copy, since their clarity would only be a ghostly presence... Reznikoff's reinscriptions only serve to make the omissions more quizzical: "the evidence tending to show / track one...was between daylight and the clouds.

[slide A14

Even the court's own wordings can't avoid teetering back over this aporia,

D [*light stick; interrupt*]: "aporia"--Objection.

J: Sustained.

P: the spots where the diachronic link with

D [*light stick; interrupt*]: Objection.

J [*simultaneous*]: Sustained.

P: precedence, the synchronic chain

D [*light stick; interrupt*]: Objection.

J [*simultaneous*] Sustained.

P: of syntax, the narr

D [*light stick; interrupt*]: Objection.

J [*simultaneous*]: Sustained.

P: ative chain of evidence slip into the undecidable...

B [*putting on moose ears and sticking head through one of three holes*]: Moose on a beam...

D, J, & P [*all hurling light sticks*]: Objection!

P: the mimetic function of the copier slips up, true, but the representational function of language, claiming to tell what "happens," cannot "tell" (recognize) what happens, as the directions seem, at a quick reading (at what speed?) to double(over) themselves (as if struck) [*pointing to source*]: "the roar of the approaching train, as the noise of the west-bound passenger train may well have obscured the sound of the approach of the train from the west, so that"-"so that" this wording perhaps unintentionally reenacts the confusion of the deceased, as both directions are given from the point of view of the west.

J: but, secure holders of power as they were,

[slide A_{15}

could they really make us believe that they did not tremble
when they discovered every time that the aggressive monstrosity
of the "other" fell back on them,

P: the compass spins back on itself as opposite directions collapse into one, a particle "e" exchanged for a particle "w"--and who can "tell"?

J: "Railroad Companies--Accident at Crossing--Evidence."
Plaintiff's intestate was killed..while he was attempting to cross..."

P: We do not normally anticipate what our world cannot rationally allow. The evidence was there? Perhaps if he had listened more carefully, he could have distinguished? Perhaps if we look more closely... [*begins to take small tv apart and, with an extendable "grabber," extracts the picture tube*] if we could get behind these images, through them... reimagings of what we put before them in a circus of our own specular simulacra... electron etchings. What if we let them put on their own show? Ask Lortz.

[slide B_{14}

J: The repetition or representation of something
is different from that something,
which becomes its other;

D: "evidence...cloud..heavy cloud...."

P: an accident at an unclear crossing; the defined self, on its way home, crossing the undecipherable, address of no one...

J: Question for the jury: was intestate able to distinguish...

[*P hand picture tube to B; B passes it on...*]

B: but since the repetition or representation is all
one can have, it will always be "other"
than itself

J: Exhibit 7

P: Sure, a failure of the copier, mistransmission of a signal...we're mistaken--we're always mistaken... (Reznikoff, too, is momentarily confused, thrown off track, as, in a draft of the poem, the east bound train is heading west, and must be "corrected") [*P demonstrates for audience*]

J: the garrulous machinery
of the law... trying to contain
the question
that comes to [it]
and smother it in a fog of words

P: "while he was bound to use his eyes, we cannot say that he was bound to use them in any particular manner, or at any particular instant in time."

[*B brings train toy to center table*]

P: Who are we kidding?

J: to some extent,
we are the victims of our own reification

P: what is glimpsed between holes? the "wrong man" shot to death between freight cars (they don't have to be moving for the gap to open)...

D: and was struck...

P: dancing around a silent fatal music... who are we...?

D: by the (w)eastbound train, going thirty-five or forty...

[*B spins train, which rings a tiny bell each time it passes a "crossing"; D blows the circus whistle--an airy, plaintive sound*
--without fluttering the ball]

* * *

[*P switches on Cops tape, watches briefly in silence, then pauses image and begins to put away props--making sure the warning line is still in place and perhaps adding to it, rolling adding machine tape back onto glasses, etc.*]

[slide $A_{16...}$ $B_{15...}$
[advance slides to black]

J [*to all performers*]: okay, tell me what happened. [*to audience*] The jury may offer comments.

*

B [*B & D to each other*]: He was jumbling things for me so that I didn't understand it. And he was expecting me to understand what was going on there like I am a lawyer. I am not a lawyer. He failed to listen to what I had to say.

D: By "listening to what you had to say," do you mean the context and the, uh...

B: my presentation.. And there's a reason why I spent that kind of time putting it together.

[*J: short pause, looks at audience*]

*

J [*to P*]: failure to construct meaning in a way that would have articulated with the court's agenda

*

D [*to self*]: we have learned new ways to listen and have heard a great deal

*

J [*to jury*]: what is needed...is an account of the appropriation of meaning and its restriction to specific institutional and discursive sites and modalities

*

B [*to P*]: he can't be captured by any discourse, and makes a patchwork--a

burlesque--of them; his testimony is complete sentences, yet the logic, if any exists, is fractured... and the surplus, doing too much--the surplus that carries him beyond motive and reason...

J [*to B*]: the very idea of the objectivity and specialization of legal language functions consciously or unconsciously to exclude participation in the legal process

*

B [*as if to himself*]: Answer. My own walk began before I knew I was walking, and will probably continue beyond what I perceive as its end... as I follow you across the East River, up the west side to the Bronx... there are two bridges, spanning a river never identical with itself, never the selfsame... always at least two, not running parallel, exactly, but never meeting, either...

*

D [*to all, or no one in particular, while lighting a final light stick and placing it in row*]: It was by doing a little more, by doing too much, that he could exchange the alienating labor of reason for the liberated work of desire

[*P spins train, bell rings several times--a small, lonely sound--the rings growing farther apart, more distant, as train slows; blackness*]

Postface

In the 19th century, William James said that without language our world would be an "empirical sandheap." In the 20th century, we came to realize that because of language our world was becoming a particle heap: as quantum physics has demonstrated (and as Lyotard points out in The Postmodern Condition), the closer we look at a phenomenon, the more contradictory our statements about it become. Similarly, in literary analysis, the closer we follow the language, the longer we contemplate a text, the less clear, less certain, less unidirectional/teleological it becomes; this can occur at an elemental level, at a discourse level, and at the "extratextual" level--in the social field generated around a text through reader responses (what, for example, is another reader highlighting? What text is he creating and how does it differ from mine?). Both the student (and/or creator) of Zen koans (consider, for example Dogen Zengi's realization koans) and the Talmudic scholar have a similar (anti)goal: to practice language to the point of exhaustion; to empty a word of fixed significance. In Zen, the ordinary ego is seen as a worm, not letting go its hold on one thetic position till it can grasp another; it is the interval between that is the true experience of ego (as non-ego). Through this interval (gap, aporia), the noise of poststructuralist theory rushes in (Bakhtin, Clifford, de Lauretis, Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Lacan, McGann, etc.; Derrida's language performances, for example, are generated in these high-energy zones).

The floodgates are open. Territories once separate now overlap and interanimate each other. In current literary and cultural theory we see an interest in performance and oral tradition (storytelling, for example, and multimedia ritual performance), fascination with ethnography and anthropology and the function of language in those contexts (ethnography seen as a specular science, for example, built not on "objective" information but discourses--including the others' self discourses, and the way our discourses interpret theirs); we see the concern in contemporary textual criticism for social Texts; we see the range of semiotics expanded (as in Eco's work, and De

Lauretis', who sees gender engendered in a social/historical/cultural/linguistic field--i.e., in verbal and extra verbal practices); Marxism and new historicism are relevant here, too, as far as their interest in the social function of language and in "texts" (which includes films, concerts, and other cultural performances as well as written documents) as maneuvers in a larger social/political/economic arena. The act of criticism is not a self-satisfied literary event, but takes place--happens--on several fronts.

Moreover, as coalitions have formed between various theories and methods, it has become more and more urgent to comprehend "theory" as enactment, as praxis--a "reading" and "writing" practice engaging (and engaged in) a wide cultural field. In the interpretative acts staged in previous chapters, my point has been to emphasize that the academic discourse is just one character, or strand (and not necessarily the dominant one) in the web of voices that encompass text and reader (i.e., Text); we have not so much a printed text between the covers of a book, but a cultural text within ideological bindings, which may be melted down when embodied in the mis en scene of performance.

As Freud discovered a century ago, reader reenactment is a potentially profound and much more accommodating mode of interpretation than an "objective," discursive one, which refuses to admit its own fictionalization, its dissimulation. The doxa of objective interpretation is itself a performance, a mode of self-presentation that, if it knew itself, could see itself among the others. Our interpretations (of texts, of others) confirm our ways of seeing, and there are many ways of seeing, though ideological superstructures normally limit us to only a few. Hence, the desire of this dissertation has been to open the text to personal encounter, to reader participation and reenactment, and to multiple interpretations; to consider Texts not as finished products, but as always appearing in only one of their several versions; to restage the critical act in the Textual wild; to make of the critical act a performance, an extended play, a play to the point of exhaustion (when the tired children go home, unless

they have been called there prematurely, unless they are homeless); to refigure the critic as a wandering (aimless?) and inspired investigator, a free agent and free lover of and in the (semiotic) open.

Thus, this dissertation, influenced by a Zen sense of nondualism and believing in the pan-literary application of its methodos, not only straddles genres and periods, as well as media, but also refuses to provide a unified, self-coherent theory of alternative critical writing. Rather, it is an eclectic blend of the discourses (poststructuralist literary and cultural theory, recent performance and ethnographic theory, and Zen philosophy) that internally persuade it. Nor are these essays intended as demonstrations or examples of particular forms that can be grafted onto other works, but as bricolage practices prompting other readers to do their own work, to come up with their own forms and techniques, inspired by the work at hand (each case is an individual case, as Houseman realized early on of textual editing). Since, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, each text presents its own discourse and subdiscourse environment, to re-present this environment as fully as possible, to reenact it, to experience it, we cannot apply a generic critical method and language but must keep our style open and versatile, in intimate contact with the texts it consumes, ready to play unusual games and risk the outrageous. Hartman puts the matter directly: the notion of a polite critic dealing with extravagant literature in tempered language is ludicrous. I press the point further: not only does "extravagant" literature require an extravagant response, but all literature, in as much as any work is always more than it--or anyone else--knows. My desire, then, in the previous chapters, has been neither to historicize or socialize texts, nor to avoid social-historical-economic contexts where such references are productive, but to establish close contact with a handful of texts; to "try" them against the demands of poststructuralist theory, to experience them within this context, to open them to a mise en scène in which reader and text participate, and to offer these readings as records of alternative interpretative activities.

In the beginning is the Text. The Text is an Other. How do we shape it as we interpret it? To what extent is our interpretation specular? Can we be secure in our interpretation? What do we understand when we go understanding? To what extent do we create what we analyze? Through the preceding inscriptive acts, I have been promoting interpretative insecurity: you can feel something scratching at the margins; there is a residual sound in the words, a slip of signifier away from signified (or vice versa), an echo of différance. As I write, the you (the written about) becomes an inverted I (to adapt Lacan's formulation); I will never know you while I lay claim to you. I must respond to that which is (a person, events, objects, language) without knowing it (them)--expecting nothing, coming not purposefully to it, but being in the moment, in a state of Zen beginner's mind ("no-mind"). I must be ready within the field of possibilities that is given, not to control it, but to act with(in) it, snap it up intuitively. (I can't explain it and still be with(in) it, unless I make of my "explanation" an answering performance.)

Heteroglossic, open, or collage t_f(T)s such as those in the previous chapters make an important point clear[1]: Since all language is a matter of rhetorical positionality, no one position is absolute; there is no metalanguage. For every statement made about a text, a counter statement (in whatever "language") is repressed (ghosted). Realizing this, and knowing also that there is no "outside" of ideology, no ultimate or detached knowledge (we are always enacting a point of view, always in play), the most productive, least dissimulating stance is, as the Zen masters realize in the form of the Koan, to rest in no single position, to place the process of positionality itself in "quotes." In a famous koan (from the Mumonkan), a monk enters the Zen master's

[1] And a text can be multivoiced without being a collage. As Minh-Ha has shown, other voices always already play through the voice of a writer, without having to import documentary material; there simply is no monologic or single-voiced authorship--if we look closely enough, we can always see the seams, the blend and bend of discourses that make up the authorial "voice."

chamber at a moment when the master is just about to sit or to stand; the monk makes an assumption about which it is, but to an outside observer, either is possible. The master plays on this by overturning the monk's assumption; the monk, who now thinks he is on to the master's "line" of thought, is then surprised again. [quote] The point to be taken here is that there is no conclusive stance, no line of thought, but only an always on-the-alert, an improvisational and indeterminate jostling among positions; to remain in life is to remain liminal, to keep the mind supple and in a state of preparedness. The exercise, the serious play of performative commentary/reading can train the mind to achieve such a state of readiness.

*

An hour glass: sand leaking through a small hole into its ghosted double. Empty form waiting to become itself again, only differently, from an altered perspective, until this again must be overturned. The form, like time, is never fully present, but always turning over upon itself, in the process of emptying and filling itself. This is the hour glass belonging to a certain roshi, who speaks sometimes in language we don't understand, or in many different languages; often, this roshi says nothing, or speaks in a language like the sea, or like a lover in the next room, who makes us believe that to destroy us would be as generous an act as to preserve us. Did you ever know a roshi like that?

Appendix I

Slide List for Chapter 8

A Series

1 early typescript of "Poetic Discourse v Legal Discourse"; pages irregularly fanned out--a layered, or sedimentary effect, like a fragment of mica (Appendix II,1).

2 typescript of prop list for "Poetic Discourse v Legal discourse" (Appendix II,2).

3 texts cited in "Poetic Discourse v Legal Discourse"; these, too, are stacked, or layered, on their sides, so that bindings with titles face camera (Appendix II,3).

4 Reznikoff's typescript draft of "The Noise of Civilization," written above an earlier holograph draft, which has been crossed out (Appendix II,4,5)

5 Reznikoff's xerox of 68 S.W. 989 (1902) (Appendix II,6)

6 from Reznikoff's papers: holograph introductory note to Testimony (Appendix II,7)

7 from "Poetic Discourse v Legal Discourse": typescript draft of "Episode in the Life of a Schoolteacher" (Appendix II,8,9).

8 Reznikoff's xerox of 74 S.E. 138 (Appendix II,10,11).

9 typescript draft of Reznikoff's poem based on 60 A. 396 (Appendix II,12).

10 Reznikoff's xerox of 57 A. 534 (Appendix II,13).

11 Reznikoff's xerox of 81 P. 792 (Appendix II,14,15).

12 from Evidence: dancing corpse (Appendix II,16,17).

13 close up of Reznikoff's typescript of "A man in his sixties and so near-sighted" showing revisions--cross-outs, "x"s (Appendix II,18,19).

14 title page of Luc Sante's Evidence: outline of revolver with title printed on barrel (Appendix II,20).

15 from Evidence: an empty hallway; eye follows lines toward a vanishing point, truncated by a blank, closed door (Appendix II,21,22).

16 holograph ms: list of cases to be used in Testimony (Appendix II,23).

17 typescript draft of slide list for "Poetic Discourse v Legal discourse" (Appendix II,24).

18 dark doorway of George's Camera, San Diego, CA, where I rented equipment to photograph Reznikoff's sources and drafts (Appendix II,25).

19 from "Poetic Discourse v Legal Discourse": holograph draft of script for "A man in his sixties and so nearsighted" (Appendix II,26).

20 from Reznikoff's papers: holograph ms: outline of Testimony with list of subheads (Appendix II,27).

21 typical workstation: Toshiba laptop on desk; a script page visible on screen;

next to computer, xerox of typescript draft of a poem from Testimony; between computer and xerox an assortment of pens and pencils (Appendix II,28).

22 copy stand used for photo-documentation; its four 3,200 degree flood lights bear down on a prop: the board with two (three?) holes used in 68 S.W. 989 (Appendix II,29).

23 medium shot of Reznikoff, looking up, mouth open, background vague... (Appendix II,30).

B Series

1 holograph ms: list of cases in NRS (National Reporter System) to be used in Testimony (Appendix II,1).

2 medium shot of Reznikoff before a stone veneer wall, in the act of speaking(Appendix II,2).

3 holograph draft of "The Method of Revision (Appendix II,3,4).

4 xerox of 53 A. 989 (the pencil markings are mine) (Appendix II,5).

5 closeup of Reznikoff's xerox of 68 S.W. 989 (1902) showing revisions made directly on source (Appendix II,6,7,8).

6 from Evidence: dead children in a bead (Appendix II,9).

7 closeup of Reznikoff's xerox of 74 S.E. 138 (Appendix II,10).

8 program for American Poets of the 1930s conference, adrift in black space (Appendix II,11,12).

9 Reznikoff's xerox of 57 A. 534 (Appendix II,13).

10 closeup of Reznikoff's typescript of "Fight for a Violin," showing crossed out lines--"X"s (Appendix II,14,15).

11 from Evidence: dancing corpse (Appendix II,16).

12 collage: Reznikoff's marked xerox of 25 N.Y. Supp. Supreme Ct. 292 + typescript of poem with revisions (Appendix II,17).

13 closeup of Reznikoff's xerox of 25 N.Y. Supp. Supreme Ct. 292 focusing on his reinscriptions of words lost in copying (Appendix II,18,19,20).

14 closeup of an eye--mine? (Appendix II,21).

15 from Reznikoff's papers: calendar note: "re-examine for possible use." (Appendix II,22).

16 collage from Reznikoff's papers: small spiral notebook with possible references to Testimony + epigraph (dropped from later editions) (Appendix II,23).

17 typescript draft of final page of "Poetic Discourse v Legal Discourse" (a collage of quotes/comments that refer to Reznikoff, to the author of the critical performance, to poetic and legal discourses, as well as to whatever context the quotes were extracted from) (Appendix II,24).

18 from Evidence: a man standing in the entranceway to a rooftop; this looks like the end of a journey, a door opening onto an outland above, beyond...; the lighting gives an unearthly luminosity to the figure in the doorway--a ghost effect? (Appendix II,25).

19 from Reznikoff's papers: holograph note specifying projected dates of completion for various stages in the production of Testimony (Appendix II,26).

20 from Reznikoff's papers: holograph ms: page # references to cases in the NRS (Appendix II,27).

21 from Reznikoff's papers: holograph ms: breakdown of pages per section of Testimony--in inches (Appendix II,28).

22 self-portrait, reflected in corner window of George's; camera taking photo displaces face; a red neon sign in opposite window is also reflected (I reverse the image so that it reads "correctly"-- "OPEN) (Appendix II,29,30).

(no)
X State v Turner 17 SW 304 (breathing open cala
(Texas)
X Lee v State 17 SW 424 5 (death after quarrel)

J X Thompson v State 17 SW 447 (also (16) SW 206)
and employer
(Killing after quarrel bet. employer

X Wigginton v Commonwealth, 17 SW 634 (death by poison

(Mo.)
X State v Moore, 17 SW 658 (pocketbook snatching)

(Mo.) to alveolar brain knocked off
X Carroll v Rapid Transit Co., 17 SW 659 (man clinging

(Mo.) employer
X Stack v. Talmage 17 SW 990 (fight between

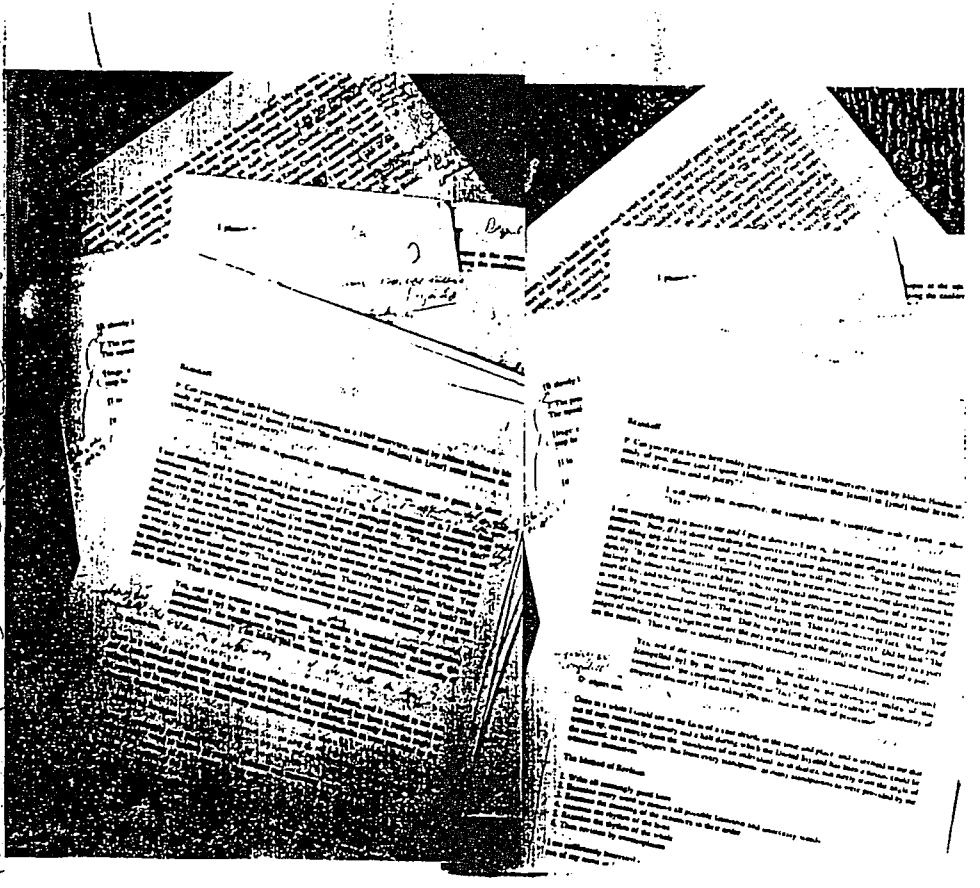
names: Check, Stachie;

(poisoning)
Johnson v State, 17 S.W. 1170, (also (1) SW. 647)

(running child)
X Harris v State 17 SW 1110 (also (12) SW 1102)

X Carpenter v Commonwealth 18 SW 9 (husband & wife)

X Little Rock Ry Co v Voss, 18 SW 172 (description of rock



B A 1

A, B

(Texas)
Lee v State, 17 SW 425 (death after quarrel)

Thompson v State, 17 SW 445 (also 18 SW 206) (killing after quarrel bet. employer and employee)

Wigginton v Commonwealth, 17 SW 634 (death by poison)

(Mo.)
State v Moore, 17 SW 658 (pocketbook snatching)

(Mo.)
Carroll v Rapid Transit Co., 17 SW 889 (man clinging to elevated train knocked off)

(Mo.)
Stack v. Talmage 17 SW 990 (fight between employee and railroad)

names: Check; Stackhie;

(Ark.)
Johnson v State, 17 S.W. 1070, (also 18 SW. 647) (poisoning)

Harris v State 17 SW 1110 (also 12 SW 1102) (drowning child)

Carpenter v Commonwealth 18 SW 9 (husband murder)

Little Rock Ry Co v Voss, 18 SW 172 (description of wreck)

xeroxes of sources, black tape, chairs, books, mirror, envelope, slips of paper

large photo or 11x17 xerox of eye, glove (white), cardboard w/ 2 holes, doll (or xerox), red object (hand, ball, light stick), rag
cards, black box, slips of paper to attach to back of cards. Tape: cry baby, animal, composite?

bundle of newspaper, 3 doll poles (3') w/ luminous tubes or light sticks, (stuffed animal or animal pelt)

big toy glasses w/ out glass, strips of cardboard or paper w/ words from source--evidence... cloud.. heavy cloud... bound to see... provide against... queston for jury...etc., small tv, xeroxes of sources

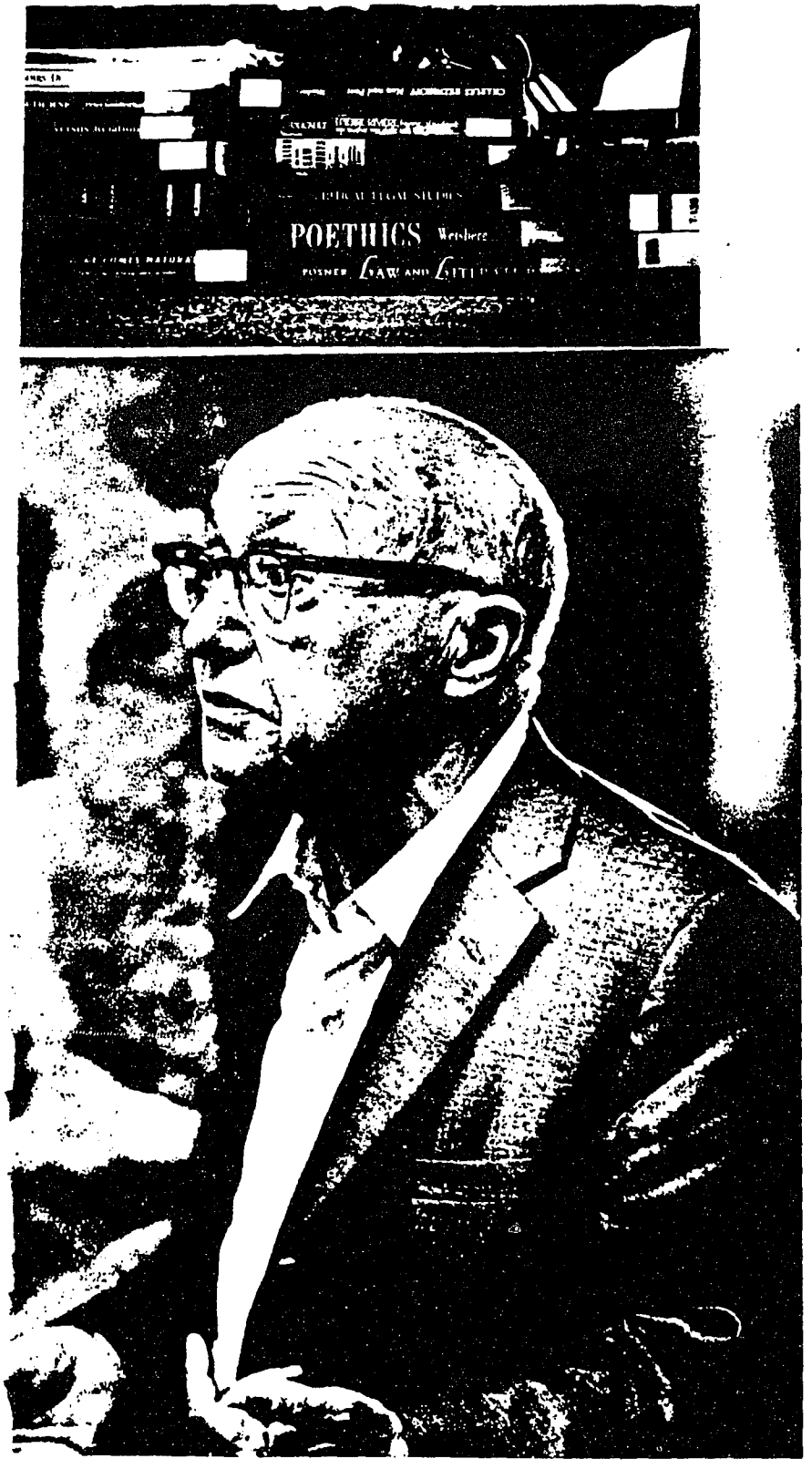
Photos: eye, (dup) pad and pen, clean source, myself, looking at R., Jr. fr. Bodansky, notebook drafts, computer screen, aparatus, Sante, R. looking beyond frame

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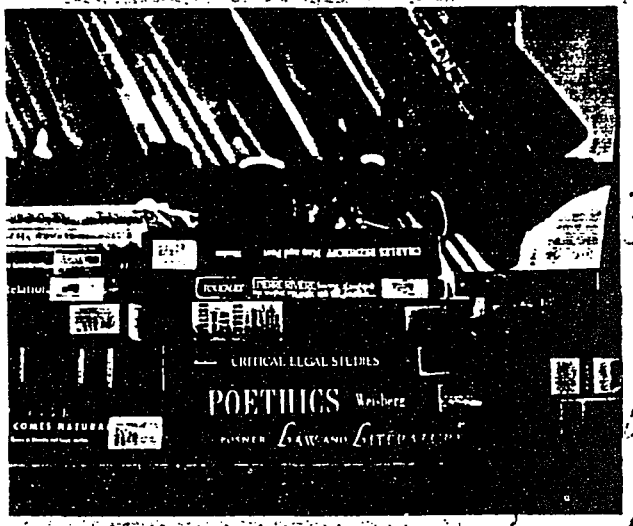
445



3

B
A

B2 A3



1. [illegible]

2. [illegible]

3. Examine the [illegible]

4. Examine the [illegible]

5. Examine the [illegible]

6. [illegible]

A B 4

B3

haps as many as two or three thousand,
stamping
uting and ~~xxxxxx~~ on the steps of the grand stand,
yelling their heads off
ering and ~~shouting~~— shouting
it
re heard half a mile and more away. ⓒ

the noise of
he hum of machinery, wagons on the
public highways—
civilizations
social life

Machinery

(5)

um of machinery
the noise of wagons on the public highways—
ll, such noise is part of our modern civilization;
st is the shouting of the crowd watching a baseball game
on a Sunday afternoon,
aps as many as two or three thousand
nting and stamping on the steps of the grandstand,
ering and shouting
e heard half a mile and more away.

the noise of
civilization

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. Examine the [illegible]
4. Examine the rhythm of the [illegible]
5. Examine the rhythm of the [illegible]
6. [illegible]

A B

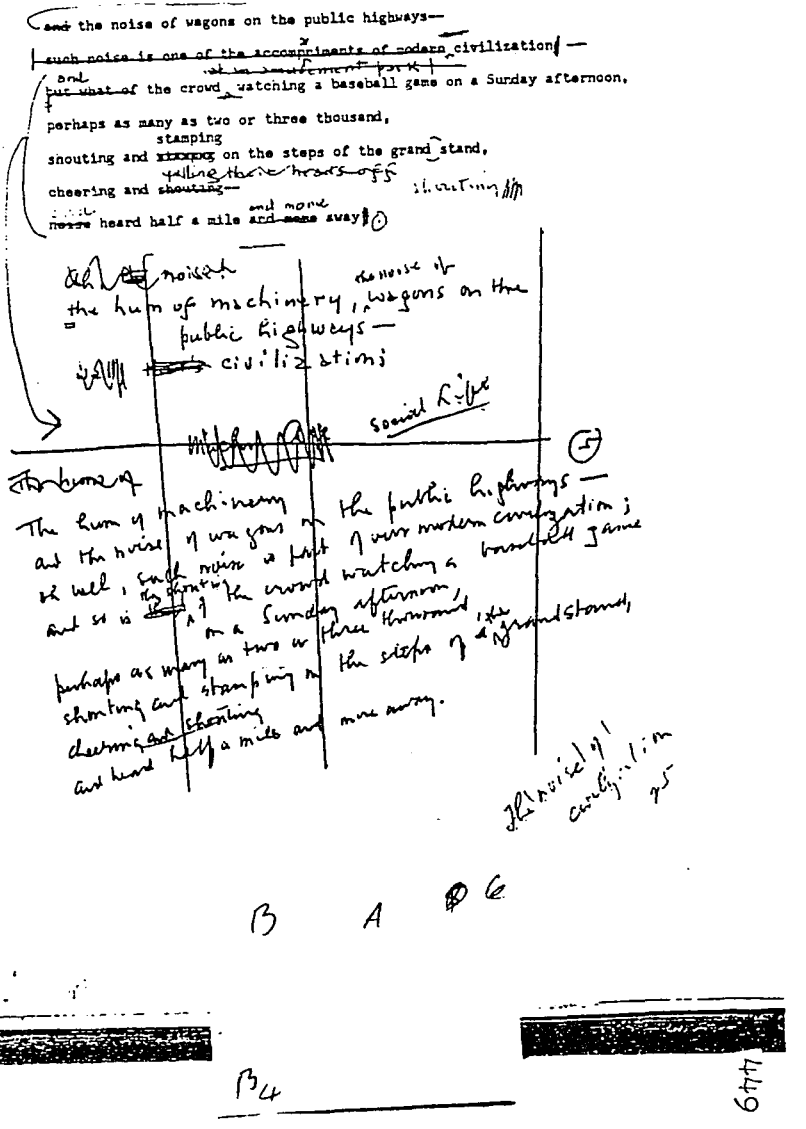
A4

73"
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8444

These were all cases of noises made on week days. The latest case on the subject of baseball games, in New Jersey, is Cronin v. Bloemecke, 58 N. J. Eq. 313, 43 Atl. 605, decided by Vice Chancellor Emery. The general subject is dealt with by Chancellor Williamson in Davidson v. Isham, 9 N. J. Eq. 186, and by Chancellor Zabriskie in Ross v. Butler, 19 N. J. Eq. 294, 97 Am. Dec. 654, and again in Cleveland v. Gaslight Co., 20 N. J. Eq. 201.

The only remaining question is whether the affidavits presented by the complainants on this motion establish the proposition that the noise from the amusement grounds reached the complainants' houses in such volume as to disturb their rest and quiet. Mr. Gilbough swears that on the afternoons of September 7th, 14th, and 21st, and October 12th, "the noise made by the players and persons attending the games, and apparently caused by the cheers and stamping of feet of the spectators, has been so great as not only to be plainly and distinctly heard at my home, but so great as to disturb the enjoyment of my home by myself and the members of my family, and also to cause a physical annoyance." He also swears that the continuation of such noises on Sunday afternoons seriously affects the value of his property. Mr. Vredenburgh swears that on the same afternoons "the noises caused by the shouts, cheers, and stamping of feet by the spectators in attendance at the games have been so great as not only to be heard plainly at my residence, but it annoyed myself and family in the enjoyment and comfort of our home, and in fact became a physical annoyance." While I believe myself to be a person of ordinary temperament and sensibility, these noises have been so great in volume as to have become a nuisance." He also swears to the depreciation in value of his property. Mr. Green swears as to the boisterous and unruly character of the passengers who arrived at the station near the defendant's grounds, saying: "All the while each crowd was alighting from the train, and until the train started, there was great noise caused by the shouting of these people. From the appearance of the crowd, I knew that either a prize fight or horse race was about to take place." Mr. Martin H. Cook swears that he lives near the complainants, and characterizes the noise as follows: "The noise of which caused by shouts and the stamping of feet has been such as to make it plainly heard at my residence, to such an extent as to disturb the comfort and quiet enjoyment of my home by myself and the members of my family." Mrs. Leatherbee, sister of the complainants, and that: "On Sunday, the 14th day of September, I was confined to my bed by illness, and was seriously disturbed with tumultuous noises coming from the players and persons attending baseball game at the grounds of the West Side Amusement Company. My residence is opposite that of Martin R. Cook. These noises began at about 3:45 in the afternoon, and continued until 5:30 o'clock, and had been repeated on other Sundays, as well as that above mentioned, during September and October. The noises coming from these grounds have not only been sufficient to disturb me while I was ill and confined to my bed, but have generally disturbed the residents of the neighborhood in which I live." Mrs. Ellen Humphreys swears that she owns considerable property in the neighborhood, and lives near the complainants. She continues: "The noise caused by cheers, shouts, and the stamping of feet is terrific and almost continuous while the games are in progress, frequently varying in volume, and often resembles the sounds of near thunder. Upon the occasions when these games were in progress, the members of my family, as well as myself, have been so disturbed in the enjoyment of the comfort of my home as to make the nuisance become almost a physical annoyance." Frank Lindner swears that he lives nearer to the defendant's grounds than the complainants, and continues as follows: "On Sunday afternoons of September 7th, 14th and 21st, and October 12th, games of baseball were played on the grounds of the above-mentioned company. These games have been attended by large crowds of people, estimated from 2,500 to 3,000, and the noises at the times these games have been in progress have been terrific, and apparently caused by the yelling, cheering, and shouting of the crowds, and the stamping of feet of persons seated on the grand stands erected on the grounds. The noise caused has been so great as to destroy the peace and comfort of those residing in the vicinity, and to prevent my family and myself from the quiet enjoyment of my property." Charles E. Spencer, who lives farther away from the defendant's grounds than the complainants, swears: "The noises apparently caused by the shouts, cheers, and stamping of feet by the spectators have been so great as to be plainly heard at my place of residence, and destroy the comfort of myself and the members of my family." Mrs. Hammer lives nearer the defendant's grounds, and swears: "These games have been attended by large crowds of people, and the noises at the times these games were being played have been terrific, and apparently caused by the yelling, cheering, and shouting of the crowds, and the stamping of feet of persons seated on the grand stand erected on the grounds. The noise caused has been so great as to destroy the peace and comfort of those residing in the vicinity, and to prevent my family and many of my boarders from the quiet enjoyment of Sunday. My mother was lying ill on Sunday, September 21st, and these noises distinctly disturbed her, and added greatly



No. 14,591; Whart. Eng. Enc. Law, p. ajority of cases, and eight of authority, not complete until (that is, actually it is in the party's his innocent agent, ople v. Rathbun, 21 State, 30 Ala. 40; lo St. 511; Com. v. Dec. 446; Foute v. ate v. Hudson, 13 9 L. R. A. 775. The 19 Ind. 421, 81 Am. Chapin, 17 Ark. 561, een cited as against it an examination of on, does not militate cited supra. They the question of venue was consummated and the parties stood on to the crime. For on the question, see w, p. 1107. We hold, it seems to us the better ported by the greater at the draft in question uttered, but was still nt, through his innocent States mail, until it at Prescott, in the when it was received paid) it was for the ered, and that accordingly offense was not in the criminal district did not have jurisdic-

versed, and the prosecuted.

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v. STATE.

urts of Texas. June 18, 1902.)

GAL—DISMISSAL—COSTS.

ate court dismiss a case recognizance, it may adjudge principal and sureties

county court; Robt. B.

convicted of crime, and retax costs after dismissal.

or appellant. Robt. A. ., for the State.

Appellant has filed a costs, or, rather, to exon the recognizance from us. He insists that, the smissed on account of a e, this court did not have to give a judgment on the recognizance for the costs. This question was before the court in Bonn v. State, 12 Tex. App. 100; and it was there held that, notwithstanding the dismissal of the case on account of the defective recognizance, it was competent for the court to adjudge the costs against the principal and sureties on said recognizance, and said decision has since been followed. We accordingly hold that the sureties are liable for the costs.

NOBLES v. STATE.

(Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas. June 4, 1902.)

INFANTICIDE—EVIDENCE—SUFFICIENCY.

In a prosecution against defendant for killing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after its birth, etc., the evidence examined, and *held* insufficient to show either that the child was born alive, or that defendant abandoned it with the intent that it should die, and that a conviction was not sustained.

Appeal from district court, Hopkins county; H. C. Connor, Judge.

Eula Nobles was convicted of murder in the second degree, and appeals. Reversed.

Leach & Sheppard, for appellant. Robt. A. John, Asst. Atty. Gen., for the State.

DAVIDSON, P. J. Appellant was ~~convicted under the second count in the indictment~~ which charged ~~her~~ she with killing her ~~infant~~ child by ~~immediately~~ abandoning it after birth, and leaving it naked ~~and exposed~~ to the weather, ~~without covering, food, and drink, and~~ without ~~nursing and~~ suckling the infant ~~as its age demanded, thereby producing~~ death of said infant; and that said infant died on said day, etc.; and that appellant intended to produce the death by the means and manner alleged. She was given five years in the penitentiary for murder in the second degree.

The state relied upon the testimony of the witnesses Edna and Rachel Stribbling and Lula Kluchlow, three negro girls, 12 to 14 years of age, who were attending the school of which appellant was school mistress. Edna Stribbling states that on Tuesday of Christmas week, about 12 o'clock, she saw a young baby under the water-closet. It was crying, and moving its hands and feet. Lula Kluchlow went with her, and her sister came out to the closet while they were there. "Defendant left the house during 'books' in the afternoon, and was gone about an hour. After she returned, blood was observed upon her hands. This was about 3 o'clock—at the evening recess—when they saw the baby. It had some sand sprinkled over it." On cross-examination she states: "I have just testified that I saw the baby at 12 o'clock, and I also said I saw it at 3 o'clock. I did not see it but once. I do not know why I told him that. Both cannot be true. The water-closet was about 100 yards from the school house, sets east and west, and has two

ing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after its birth, etc., the evidence examined, and *held* insufficient to show either that the child was born alive, or that defendant abandoned it with the intent that it should die, and that a conviction was not sustained.

Appeal from district court, Hopkins county. H. C. Connor, Judge.

Eula Nobles was convicted of murder in the second degree, and appeals. Reversed.

Leach & Sheppard, for appellant. Robt. A. John, Asst. Atty. Gen., for the State.

DAVIDSON, P. J. Appellant was convicted under the second count in the indictment which charged her with killing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after birth, and leaving it naked and exposed to the weather, without covering, food, and drink, and without nursing and suckling the infant as its age demanded, thereby producing death of said infant; and that said infant died on said day, etc.; and that appellant intended to produce the death by the means and manner alleged. She was given five years in the penitentiary for murder in the second degree.

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Vend. 509; Bishop v. State, 30 Ala. 40; Lindsey v. State, 38 Ohio St. 511; Com. v. Earle, 2 Bin. 332, 4 Am. Dec. 440; Foute v. State, 15 Lea, 712; State v. Hudson, 13 Mont. 112, 32 Pac. 413, 19 L. R. A. 775. The cases of Johns v. State, 19 Ind. 421, 81 Am. Dec. 408, and State v. Chapin, 17 Ark. 561, 5 Am. Dec. 452, have been cited as against the general doctrine; but an examination of these cases, in our opinion, does not militate against the authorities cited supra. They were both cases in which the question of venue figured where the act was consummated through a guilty agent, and the parties stood as accessories in relation to the crime. For other authorities bearing on the question, see 13 Am. & Eng. Enc. Law, p. 1107. We hold, in accordance with what seems to us the better reasoning, and supported by the greater weight of authority, that the draft in question was *not* passed or uttered, but was still in the hands of appellant, through his innocent agent, the United States mail, until it reached its destination at Prescott, in the state of Arkansas, and when it was received and negotiated; that is, paid. It was for the first time passed or uttered, and that accordingly the venue of the offense was not in Harris county, Tex., and the criminal district court of said county did not have jurisdiction thereof.

The judgment is reversed, and the prosecution ordered dismissed.

ROBERTS v. STATE.

(Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas. June 18, 1902.)

CRIMINAL LAW—APPEAL—DISMISSAL—COSTS.

Though the appellate court dismiss a case because of a defective recognizance, it may adjudge costs against the principal and sureties thereon.

Appeal from Bexar county court; Robt. B. Green, Judge.

J. D. Roberts was convicted of crime, and appeals. Motion to retax costs after dismissal of appeal. Denied.

J. M. Eckford, for appellant. Robt. A. John, Asst. Atty. Gen., for the State.

HENDERSON, J. Appellant has filed a motion to retax the costs, or, rather, to exonerate the sureties on the recognizance from the payment of costs. He insists that, the case having been dismissed on account of a defective recognizance, this court did not have further jurisdiction to give a judgment on this are liable for the costs.

NOBLES v. STATE.

(Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas. June 4, 1902.)

INFANTICIDE—EVIDENCE—SUFFICIENCY.

In a prosecution against defendant for killing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after its birth, etc., the evidence examined, and held insufficient to show either that the child was born alive, or that defendant abandoned it with the intent that it should die, and that a conviction was not sustained.

Appeal from district court, Hopkins county; H. C. Connor, Judge.

Eula Nobles was convicted of murder in the second degree, and appeals. Reversed.

Leach & Sheppard, for appellant. Robt. A. John, Asst. Atty. Gen., for the State.

DAVIDSON, P. J. Appellant was convicted under the second count in the indictment which charged her with killing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after birth, and leaving it naked and exposed to the weather, without covering, food, and drink, and without nursing and suckling the infant, thereby producing death of said infant; and that said infant died on said day, etc.; and that appellant intended to produce the death by the means and manner alleged. She was given five years in the penitentiary for murder in the second degree.

The state relied upon the testimony of the witnesses Edna and Rachel Stribbling and Eula Kinchlow, three negro girls, 12 to 14 years of age, who were attending the school of which appellant was school mistress. Edna Stribbling states that on Tuesday of Christmas week, about 12 o'clock, she saw a young baby under the water-closet. It was crying, and moving its hands and feet. Eula Kinchlow went with her, and her sister came out to the closet while they were there. "Defendant left the house during 'books' in the afternoon, and was gone about an hour. After she returned, blood was observed upon her hands. This was about 3 o'clock—at the evening recess—when they saw the baby. It had some sand sprinkled over it." On cross-examination she states: "I have just testified that I saw the baby at 12 o'clock, and I also said I saw it at 3 o'clock. I did not see it but once. I do not know why I told him that. Both cannot be true. The water-closet was about 100 yards from the school house, sets east and west, and has two

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Appeal from district court, Hopkins county; H. C. Connor, Judge.

Eula Nobles was convicted of murder in the second degree, and appeals. Reversed.

Leach & Sheppard, for appellant. Robt. A. John, Asst. Atty. Gen., for the State.

DAVIDSON, P. J. Appellant was convicted under the second count in the indictment which charged her with killing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after birth, and leaving it naked and exposed to the weather without covering, food, and drink, and without nursing and suckling the infant as its age demanded, thereby producing death of said infant; and that said infant died on said day, etc.; and that appellant intended to produce the death by the means and manner alleged. She was given five years in the penitentiary for murder in the second degree.

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J: 68SW989 Nobles v. State [slide A, B]

[R reads from book]

Episode in the Life of a Schoolteacher

The Negro schoolmistress gave birth to a child--
her parents did not know and she did not want them to--
gave birth in the school's water-closet
and left the child under the water-closet on ht grund.
Three Negro girls who went to the school
at recess saw the baby under a hole in the seat.
One of the girls had jumped up and said,
"Oh, there is a baby!"
It was raising its hands and kicking its feet
but its eyes were shut

[R closes book and passes to B, who passes to audience]

J: Exhibit 1

D. and its mouth full of sand.

[crunch w/R] J: Infanticide--Evidence--Sufficiency

P: sand, hand moving eye, blood on a hand a mouth full of sand
[illegible]ery...? did the infant live through an afternoon and a night, staring up thorugh two holes, at the bored bottoms of the little school girls,e privy for a crib...silenced voices, burried voices. WHAT BRINGS THE LIGHT

[Chris thrilled by 3, P, R, & D instant at last they have]

D. The Negro schoolmistress gave birth to a child--

P: [illegible] When I left the house, I did not know that I was going to give birth to a child."

J: Appleant testified that she left the house, feeling that she would have "an ordinary action," but about the time she reached the closet felt an unususl pain, sat down upon the closet, and gave birth.

D. her parents did not know and she did not want them to--

P: [illegible] know it now."

B: "We did not tell any one about seeing the baby that day. I don't know why we did not."

D. gave birth in the school's water-closet

P: [illegible] looked at it..."

J: "Defendant [P[illegible]Lula?]

INFANTICIDE—EVIDENCE—SUFFICIENCY.

In a prosecution against defendant for killing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after its birth, etc., the evidence examined, and *held* insufficient to show either that the child was born alive, or that defendant abandoned it with the intent that it should die, and that a conviction was not sustained.

Appeal from district court, Hopkins county; H. C. Connor, Judge.

Eula Nobles was convicted of murder in the second degree, and appeals. Reversed.

Leach & Sheppard, for appellant. Robt. A. John, Asst. Atty. Gen., for the State.

DAVIDSON, P. J. ~~Appellant was convicted under the second count in the indictment which charged her with killing her infant child by immediately abandoning it after birth, and leaving it naked and exposed to the weather without covering, food, and drink, and without nursing and suckling the infant as its age demanded, thereby producing death of said infant; and that said infant died on said day, etc.; and that appellant intended to produce the death by the means and manner alleged.~~ She was given five years in the penitentiary for murder in the second degree.

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J: 68SW989 Nobles v. State [slide A

[P reads from book]

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[P closes book and passes to B, who passes to audience]

J: Exhibit 1

and its mouth full of sand.

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her parents did not know and she did not want them to--

P: ~~[illegible]~~ not know it now."

B: "We did not tell any one about seeing the baby that day. I don't know why we did not."

gave birth in the school's water-closet

P: ~~I got up and~~ looked at it..."

J: "Defendant [P[illegible]]



A B P 11

B 7

454

Butler & Hall and Otts & Dobson, for appellant. Sanders & De Pass, for respondent.

WOODS, J. The allegations of negligence and injury resulting therefrom on which the plaintiff sought to recover from the defendant are as follows: "That on or about the 9th day of July, 1909, while driving along the public highway leading from Cherokee Falls to his home at Gaffney, in said state and county, and while attempting to cross the tracks of the defendant at a regular crossing, at the depot for Cherokee Falls, a freight car being used by the defendant was across the public road or highway, and had negligently and carelessly been left across said public road for a long time, in violation of the statute laws of this state, and a willful disregard of the rights of the plaintiff and the public; and, in order to continue his journey, the plaintiff was forced by reason of the willful and negligent blocking of said public road or crossing to drive around and above the regular crossing to cross defendant's tracks. That the freight car which was willfully and negligently left standing across said public crossing by the defendant, its lessee, agent, servant, and representatives, was very offensive, in that it smelled very foully, and gave forth a great stench. That plaintiff's horse was made afraid and became very much frightened by reason of the foul smell and great stench arising from said car, became unmanageable, and in surging and violent effort to get away from the foul smelling car, which had been left standing across the public crossing, as aforesaid, ran violently against the bank of the cut of the [illegible] which came down even with the pu[illegible] on the opposite side of the railroad, above the public crossing, and b[illegible] of which the plaintiff was thrown from his buggy, and was greatly painfully injured.

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from the car, held, under the evidence, for the jury.

[Ed. Note.—For other cases, see Railroads, Cent. Dig. §§ 1152-1102; Dec. Dig. § 350.*]

Gary, C. J., and Watts, J., dissenting.

Appeal from Common Pleas Circuit Court of Cherokee County; Robt. Aldrich, Judge.

"To be officially reported."

Action by W. L. Settlemeyer against the Southern Railway Company, Carolina Division. From a judgment for defendant, plaintiff appeals. Reversed.

Butler & Hall and Otts & Dobson, for appellant. Sanders & De Pass, for respondent.

WOODS, J. The allegations of negligence and injury resulting therefrom on which the plaintiff sought to recover from the defendant are as follows: "That on or about the 9th day of July, 1909, while driving along the public highway leading from Cherokee Falls to his home at Gaffney, in said state and county, and while attempting to cross the tracks of the defendant at a regular crossing, at the depot for Cherokee Falls, a freight car being used by the defendant was across the public road or highway, and had negligently and carelessly been left across said public road for a long time, in violation of the statute laws of this state, and a willful disregard of the rights of the plaintiff and the public; and, in order to continue his journey, the plaintiff was forced, by reason of the willful and negligent blocking of said public road or crossing, to drive around and above the regular crossing to cross defendant's tracks. That the freight car which was willfully and negligently left standing across said public crossing by the defendant, its lessee, agent, servant, and representatives, was very offensive, in that it smelled very foully, and gave forth a great stench. That plaintiff's horse was made afraid and became very much frightened by reason of the foul smell and great stench arising from said car, became unmanageable, and in surging and violent effort to get away from the foul smelling car, which had been left standing across the public crossing, as aforesaid, ran violently against the bank of the cut of the railroad, which came down even with the public road on the opposite side of the railroad, and just above the public crossing; and by reason of which the plaintiff was thrown violently from his buggy, and was greatly hurt and painfully injured. * * *"

[1] The circuit judge directed a verdict on the ground that there was no testimony tending to prove that any act of negligence of the defendant alleged in the complaint was the proximate cause of the injury. On this vital point the plaintiff testified, in substance, that a car in which wild animals were kept by a showman had been left on the track so as to project across the wagon track of the road, leaving, however, room between the car and the station building for vehicles to pass; that as he approached the car, riding in a buggy, his horse was frightened and excited by the noisome odors emitted from the car, the fright of the horse causing plaintiff to form the intention of turning back; that at this juncture he saw a box or case of rabbits on the station platform; and that the noise made by the jumping of the rabbits in the wire cage so increased the fright of the horse that he became unmanageable, and ran around the car against an embankment, throwing plaintiff out of the buggy. It thus appears that there was evidence of two causes which frightened the horse and made him run away—the foul odor from the car, and the noise made by the rabbits. The complaint contains no allegation of negligence against the defendant with respect to the noise made by the rabbits, and, if the evidence had shown that the horse was frightened by that alone, the case would have failed; for a plaintiff cannot recover on proof that he was injured by an act of negligence by the defendant not charged in the complaint. But, while it is necessary to recovery to show that an act of negligence alleged in the complaint was one of the proximate causes, it is not essential to show that it was the sole proximate cause. There may be a recovery upon evidence tending to show that an injury was received by reason of two negligences alleged in the complaint operating as proximate causes, conjunctions with and others independent proximate causes. This rule is familiar and generally recognized. Thompson v. Seaboard A. L. Ry., 73 S. C. 384, 53 S. E. 1004; Id., 81 S. C. 335, 62 S. E. 396; 20 L. R. A. (N. S.) 425; Blakely v. Laurens County, 65 S. C. 422, 33 S. E. 503; 29 Cyc. 497.

[2] As the evidence tended to show that the foul odors of wild animals coming from the car, alleged in the complaint as the proximate cause, was one of the proximate causes of the fright, the runaway, and the resulting injury to the plaintiff, it follows under the principle above stated that this was sufficient to require the submission of the issue of proximate cause to the jury, if leaving the car on the crossing was an act of negligence.

[3] On this latter point it is important to observe that the car was not stopped on the crossing temporarily as a part of a passing train, but was left standing for several days across the road where the defendant must have known that persons were continually passing in vehicles drawn by horses and mules. Aside from the common knowledge on the subject, the fact that the plaintiff's horse and other horses were excited and frightened by the odor of wild animals made the issue one for the jury to determine

*For other cases see same topic and section NUMBER in Dec. Dig. & Am. Dig. Key No. Series & Rep'r Index

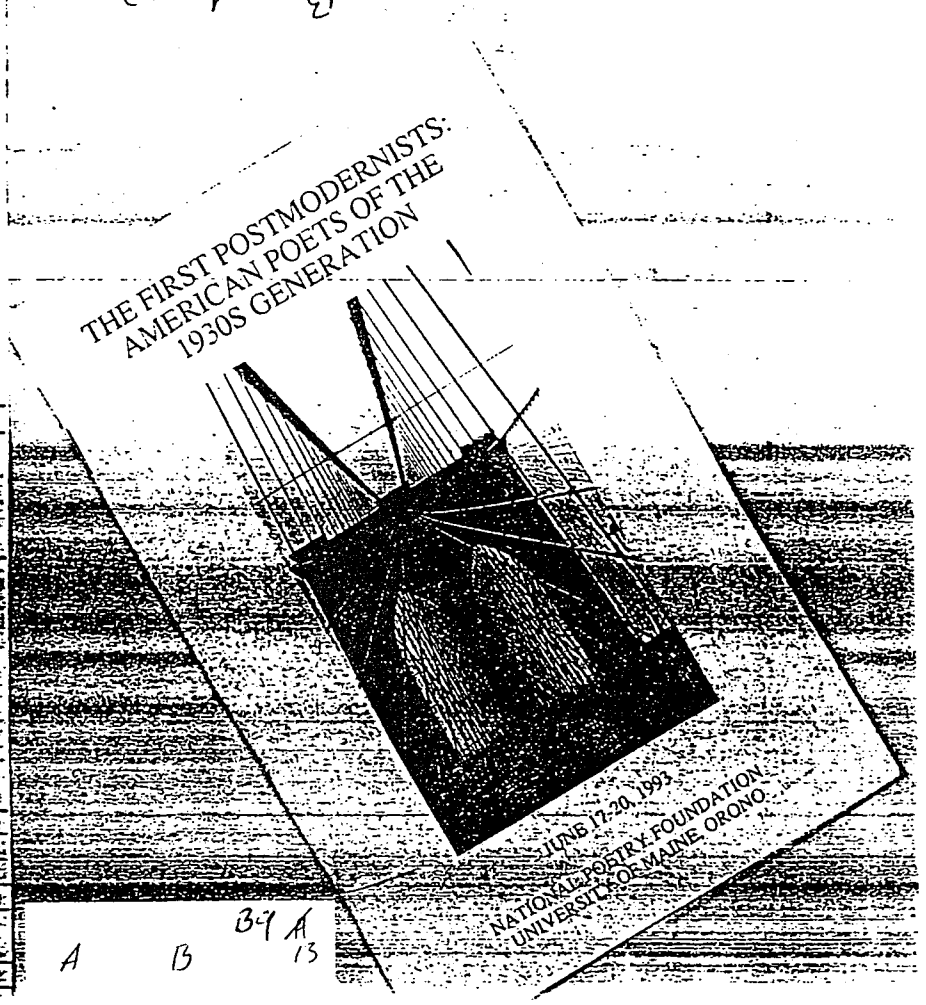
of Cherokee County; Robt. Aldrich, Judge.

"To be officially reported."

Action by W. L. Settlemeyer against the Southern Railway Company, Carolina Division. From a judgment for defendant, plaintiff appeals. Reversed.

Butler & Hall and Otts & Dobson, for appellant. Sanders & De Pass, for respondent.

WOODS, J. The allegations of negligence and injury resulting therefrom on which the plaintiff sought to recover from the defendant are as follows: "That on or about the 9th day of July, 1909, while driving along the public highway leading from Cherokee Falls to his home at Gaffney, in said state and county, and while attempting to cross the tracks of the defendant at a regular crossing, at the depot for Cherokee Falls, a freight car being used by the defendant was across the public road or highway, and had negligently and carelessly been left across said public road for a long time, in violation of the statute laws of this state, and a willful disregard of the rights of the plaintiff and the public, and, in order to continue his journey, the plaintiff was forced, by reason of the willful and negligent blocking of said public road or crossing, to drive around and above the regular crossing to cross defendant's tracks. That the freight car which was willfully and negligently left standing across said public crossing by the defendant, its lessee, agent, servant, and representatives, was very offensive, in that it smelled very foully, and gave forth a great stench. That plaintiff's horse was made afraid and became very much frightened by reason of the foul smell and great stench arising from said car, became unmanageable, and in surging and violent effort to get away from the foul smelling car, which had been left standing across the



(60 atr. 396

VII

Social Life

9

The three Negroes were in the same cell.

That morning two of them had quarreled

and when they came back to the cell from the prison shops

the quarrel began again.

They were sitting on their cots

when Jones went towards Durant

with a razor blade

Durant was about to stand up

with a razor in his hand.

The man with the razor

cried

to the third man,

and Jasper began pounding on the door of the cell for the guards.

Jones stabbed Durant again,

to the heart,

although one of his own hands was badly cut.

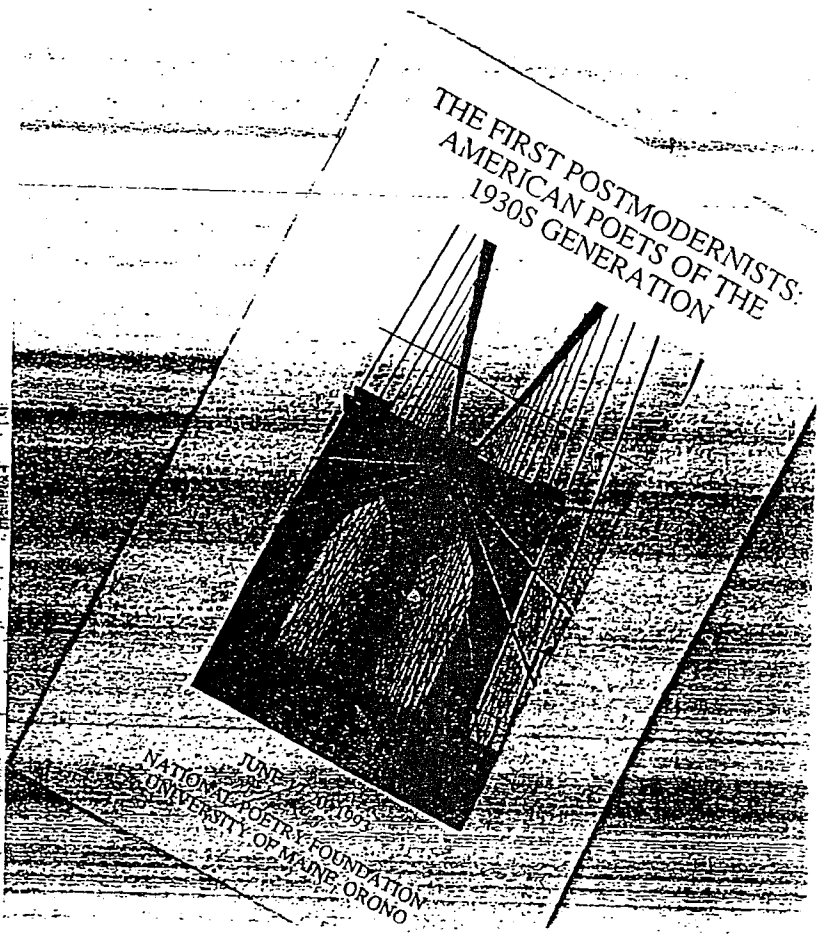
and when the guards came

Durant was dead.

: [colon]

semi-colon

quarreling with



a number of men, white and colored,
were gathered under an arclight in front of the railroad station,
at a game of craps.
A man ran up to them and said he had just been robbed of fifteen
or twenty dollars
by two men on the railroad tracks
and if those at the station would help him get the money back,
they would help get it
and maybe all.

A number of the players, including Charley Scott,
who was the first to leave,
went with the man;
and as they came near several freight cars across the track from the
station
the man who had been robbed cried out, "There he is!"
and a man ran out from behind one of the cars.
They Charley Scott shouted at him to stop.
but he kept on running
and Scott fired four or five shots:
one hit him in the back and another in the forearm
but he
kept on running until he fell.
When they
and when the man who said he had been robbed came up to him,
he said he was not one of the men who had robbed him.
the man who had been robbed said
and he was shot
they the man they had been running after
the man who had been robbed said he was not one of the two who had robbed him after all.

A B 15

A 10 B 80

a number of men, white and colored,
were gathered under an arclight in front of the railroad station,
at a game of craps.
A man ran up to them and said he had just been robbed of fifteen
or twenty dollars
by two men on the railroad tracks
and if those at the station would help him get the money back,
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one hit him in the back and another in the forearm
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When they
and when the man who said he had been robbed came up to him,
he said he was not one of the men who had robbed him.
the man who had been robbed said
and he was shot
they the man they had been running after
the man who had been robbed said he was not one of the two who had robbed him after all.

459

nges caused by the seepage, the plaintiff was entitled to judgment for the amount of that damage as found by the court, viz., $105. It is unnecessary to remand the cause for a new trial, as a proper judgment can be entered upon the facts found and sustained by the evidence.

The judgment will be reversed and vacated, and the cause remanded, with directions to the district court to enter judgment for the plaintiff and against the defendant for the sum of $105 and costs.

BEARD, J., concurs. VAN ORSDEL, J., did not sit.

(11 Wyo. 1)

DELANEY v. STATE.

(Supreme Court of Wyoming. Aug. 1, 1903.)

1. HOMICIDE—FELONIOUS ASSAULT—QUESTIONS FOR JURY.
In a prosecution for assault with intent to kill, the attitude of the person assaulted at the time of the assault is a question of fact for the jury, where there is a conflict in the evidence.

2. SAME—ASSAULT COMMITTED IN HOUSE—JUSTIFICATION.
One who assaults another while the latter is rightfully in the former's house, without being incited thereto by any act of aggression on the part of the latter, but while he is in fact peacefully leaving the house in obedience to the former's direction, stands in the same position as one who commits an assault in the open or upon the public highway, and is without justification.

3. SAME—INSTRUCTIONS—DUTY TO RETREAT.
In a prosecution for assault with intent to kill, a charge that it was defendant's duty to "retire," if possible, to a place of safety, before the person assaulted reached his gun, was not equivalent to a charge that it was his duty to "retreat," and prejudicial on that ground.

4. SAME—DUTY TO ESCAPE.
In a prosecution for assault with intent to kill, the evidence showed that the assault, while committed by defendant in his own house, was committed without any act of aggression on the part of the person assaulted. There was further evidence that defendant, after firing the first shot, retired to a less exposed position. The court charged that one assaulted in his own house under such circumstances as to induce the belief that he is in danger of losing his life need not retreat, but may pursue his adversary until he has freed himself from danger. *Held*, that a further charge that, to justify the use of a deadly weapon by defendant, the circumstances must appear to be such that there is no other reasonable means of "escape," was not misleading or prejudicial.

5. SAME—INTENT.
In a prosecution for assault with intent to kill, a charge as to the alternative forms of the verdict, stating that, if defendant perpetrated an assault with intent to kill, the verdict should be for assault with intent to kill, and if defendant unlawfully and maliciously inflicted grievous bodily harm on the person assaulted the verdict should be "Guilty of aggravated assault," and that if defendant injured the person assaulted in a rude, insolent, or angry manner the verdict should be "Guilty of assault and battery," and that if defendant attempted to commit a violent injury the verdict should be "Guilty of attempting to commit a violent injury," was erroneous, in that it eliminated the question of motive or intent from the consideration of the jury in determining whether defendant was guilty of any of the lesser degrees of crime than assault with intent to kill.

6. APPEAL—QUESTIONS REVIEWABLE—ERRORS NOT PRESENTED.
Where no exception was taken to the failure of the court to give an instruction, and such failure was not made a ground for new trial, nor assigned as error, the Supreme Court need not consider whether it was the duty of the court to give the instruction, without being requested so to do.

Error to District Court, Uinta County; David H. Craig, Judge.

William J. Delaney was convicted of assault with intent to kill, and brings error. Affirmed.

J. H. Ryckman, for plaintiff in error. W. E. Mullen, Atty. Gen., for the State.

SCOTT, District Judge. The defendant (plaintiff in error) was tried upon an information charging him with an assault and battery with intent to commit murder, found guilty, and sentenced to the penitentiary for a term of years.

1. Plaintiff in error contends that it was error for the court to give to the jury the following instructions, which were requested by the state, viz.: "(8) *If you find from* the evidence that the defendant procured his gun while Stark was fleeing from the house, and went to the door, and immediately shot at Stark with intent to kill him, then you should find the defendant guilty. (9) If you find from the evidence that the defendant could have retired to a place of safety before Stark reached his gun, then it was his duty to have done so, and he was not justified in shooting Stark because he may have believed that Stark was going after his gun. To justify the use of a deadly weapon by the defendant when an assault has been made upon him, the circumstances must appear to be such that there is no other reasonable means of escape from death or great bodily harm." As to whether those instructions, or either of *them*, is erroneous in whole or in part, or, if erroneous as applied to the facts in this case, was prejudicial to him, requires a review of the evidence, and they may be considered together. Defendant was a ranchman engaged in raising sheep, his ranch being situated near the mouth of La Barge creek, on Green river, Uinta county, Wyo. On the morning of November 21, 1901, he, together with his hired men, were building a corral close to the dwelling house on the ranch. This house was constructed substantially of logs, having but three rooms, and was used by the defendant and his employés. There was a small dooryard, with a gate just in front of the house. While they were so engaged, one Stark rode up on horseback with his rifle across the front of his saddle passed the time of day with defendant, dismounted, hitched his horse to the wheel of the buckboard, which stood about 30 yard

The Fight for a Violin

All

16

He got up with his gun

and walking ~~sideways and~~ backwards,

facing the ~~xxxxx~~ rancher,

tried
to get in back of ~~the~~ a shed near by;

The rancher, after the first shot,

~~also~~

left the doorway and kept firing through a window—

hit
until he ~~kicked~~ ~~shot~~ the hunter again

~~and the~~ ~~max~~

~~until he fell.~~

~~threw~~

~~He blew his bundle on the the buckboard tongue~~

~~and swung behind it,~~

~~he grabbed his rifle and drew it toward him~~

B A ~~fell~~

/17

B12 A12

... and the cause remanded, with instructions to the district court to enter judgment for the plaintiff and against the defendant for the sum of $105 and costs.

BEARD, J., concurs. VAN ORSDEL, J., did not sit.

DEFANEY v. STATE.

(Supreme Court of Wyoming. Aug. 1, 1905.)

1. HOMICIDE—ATTEMPTS—ASSAULT—QUESTIONS FOR JURY.

In a prosecution for assault with intent to kill, the attitude of the person assaulted at the time of the assault is a question of fact for the jury, where there is a conflict in the evidence.

2. SAME—ASSAULT COMMITTED IN HOUSE—JUSTIFICATION.

One who assaults another while the latter is rightfully in the former's house, without being incited thereto by any act of aggression on the part of the latter, but while he is in fact peacefully leaving the house in obedience to the former's direction, stands in the same position as one who commits an assault in the open or upon the public highway, and is without justification.

3. SAME—INSTRUCTIONS—DUTY TO RETREAT.

In a prosecution for assault with intent to kill, a charge that it was defendant's duty to "retire," if possible, to a place of safety, before the person assaulted reached his gun, was not equivalent to a charge that it was his duty to "retreat," and prejudicial on that ground.

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In a prosecution for assault with intent to kill, a charge as to the alternative forms of the verdict, stating that, if defendant perpetrated an assault with intent to kill, the verdict should be for assault with intent to kill, and if defendant unlawfully and maliciously inflicted grievous bodily harm on the person assaulted the verdict should be "Guilty of aggravated assault," and that if defendant injured the person assaulted in a rude, insolent, or angry manner the verdict should be "Guilty of assault and battery," and that if defendant attempted to commit a violent injury the verdict should be "Guilty of attempting to commit a violent injury," was erroneous, in that ... need not consider whether it was the duty of the court to give the instruction, without being requested so to do.

Error to District Court, Uinta County; David H. Craig, Judge.

William J. Defaney was convicted of assault with intent to kill, and brings error. Affirmed.

J. H. Beckman, for plaintiff in error.
E. Mudge, Atty. Gen., for the State.

SCOTT, District Judge. The defendant in error was tried upon an information charging him with an assault and battery with intent to commit murder in the first degree, found guilty of the crime charged, and sentenced to the penitentiary for a term of years.

1. Plaintiff in error contends that it was error for the court to give to the jury the following instructions, which were requested by the state, viz.: "(8) If you find from the evidence that the defendant procured his gun while Stark was fleeing from the house, and went to the door, and immediately shot at Stark with intent to kill him, then you should find the defendant guilty. (9) If you find from the evidence that the defendant could have retired to a place of safety before Stark reached his gun, then it was his duty to have done so, and he was not justified in shooting Stark because he may have believed that Stark was going after his gun. To justify the use of a deadly weapon by the defendant when an assault has been made upon him, the circumstances must appear to be such that there is no other reasonable means of escape from death or great bodily harm. As to whether those instructions, or either of them, is erroneous in whole or in part, or if erroneous as applied to the facts in this case, was prejudicial to him, requires a review of the evidence, and they may be considered together. Defendant was a ranchman engaged in raising sheep, his ranch being situated near the mouth of La Barr creek, on Green river, Uinta county, Wyo. On the morning of November 21, 1904, he, together with his hired men, were building corral close to the dwelling house on the ranch. This house was constructed substantially of logs, having but three rooms, and was used by the defendant and his employés. There was a small dooryard, with a gate just in front of the house. While they were so engaged, one Stark rode up on horseback with his rifle across the front of his saddle, passed the time of day with defendant, dismounted, hitched his horse to the wheel of the buckboard, which stood about 30 yards

The Fight for a Violin

694

and walking ~~sideways and~~ backwards,

facing the ~~xxxxx~~ rancher,
tried
to get in back of ~~the~~ shed near by;

but
The rancher, after the first shot,
~~his~~
had left the doorway and kept firing through a window

hit
until he ~~xxxxxx shot~~ the hunter again (1)

~~and the man~~
~~until he fell.~~
~~threw~~
~~He htew his bundle on the the buckboard tongue~~

~~and swung behind it,~~

~~he grabbed his rifle and drew it toward him~~



B A 15/12

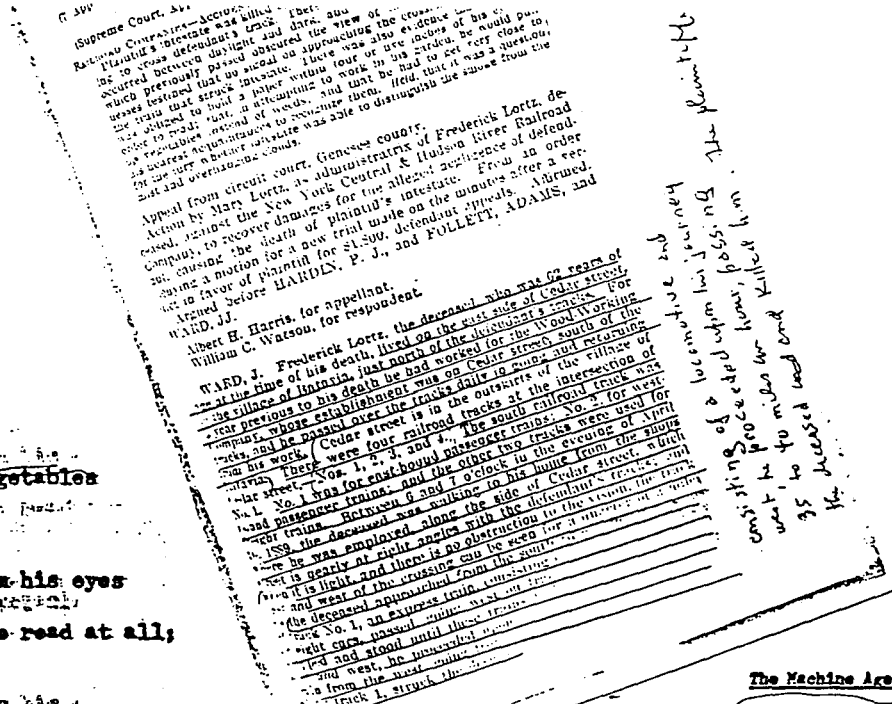
4/12





15 A 16/19

B13



4

in his sixties and se near-sighted

eighbors would see him in his garden

g up and pulling out vegetables

ad of the weeds;

~~sort sorting~~

~~ssorting out beans, potatoes and other vegetables~~

~~uld feel around with his hands;~~

d to hold objects four or five inches from his eyes

ad the face of a clock, for example, or to read at all;

driving nails

~~in driving~~ with a hammer

l put on his spectacles and bend close to the nails.

~~lived in a village and~~ had to cross the four tracks of a railroad

job

e to and from his work.

A B 20

A, 3 B, 4

The Machine Age

Railroads and Trolley Cars

4

in his sixties and se near-sighted

The neighbors would see him in his garden

hoeing up and pulling out vegetables

instead of the weeds;

~~sorting~~

~~and assorting out beans, potatoes and other vegetables~~

~~he would feel around with his hands;~~

he had to hold objects four or five inches from his eyes

to read the face of a clock, for example, or to read at all;

driving nails

and in ~~driving~~ with a hammer

would put on his spectacles and bend close to the nails.

463

4

man in his sixties and so near-sighte

e neighbors would see him in his gard

eing up and pulling out vegetables

stead of the weeds;

~~hoeing sorting~~
d/~~hoeing~~ out beans, potatoes and ot

~~would feel around with his hands;~~

had to hold objects four or five inch

read the face of a clock, for example

driving nails
d in ~~straightening~~ with a hammer

uld put on his spectacles and bend cle

~~lived in a village and~~ had to cross the four tracks of a railroad

go to and from his work.

give ~~Evidence~~ evidence tending to show
track I it was between daylight and
clouds in the sky, and it was
train had thrown a heavy ~~ground~~ cloud
within a few feet of the ground

SUPPLEMENT. (Sup. Ct.

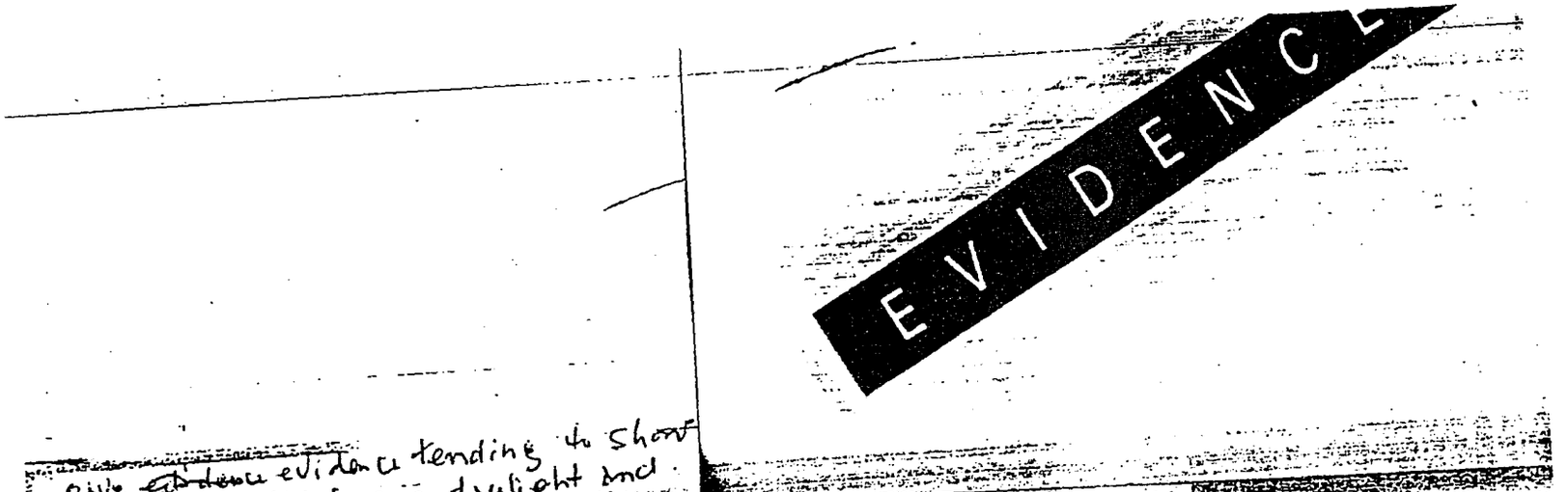
show that when the deceased approached
daylight and dark; that there were dark
and it was somewhat misty; the west-bound
a heavy cloud of black smoke upon the track,
feet of the ground, and the wind prevailing blew the
in the direction where the deceased stood, and seemed to
him. The train that struck the deceased passed very soon
after the west-bound train. Several witnesses who were observ-
ing whether any signal or warning was given of the approach of
the train that struck the deceased testified positively that no bell
was rung or whistle blown, or other signal given of the approach
of the train that killed the deceased. Several witnesses testified
as to the condition of the deceased's eyes, and his ability to see,
and it appeared from their testimony, or that of some of them,
that the deceased was nearsighted; that his eyes had been affected
for a long time; that they were inflamed, water ran from them,
and a white film gathered over them; that, in order to see, he had
to hold objects within four or five inches of his face, to distinguish
such objects as the face of a clock, or to read; that, in attempting
to work in his garden, he would hoe up and pull out vegetables, in-
stead of the weeds that he was intending to remove; that, in driv-
ing nails with a hammer, he would put on his

A 13

21

B 15

464



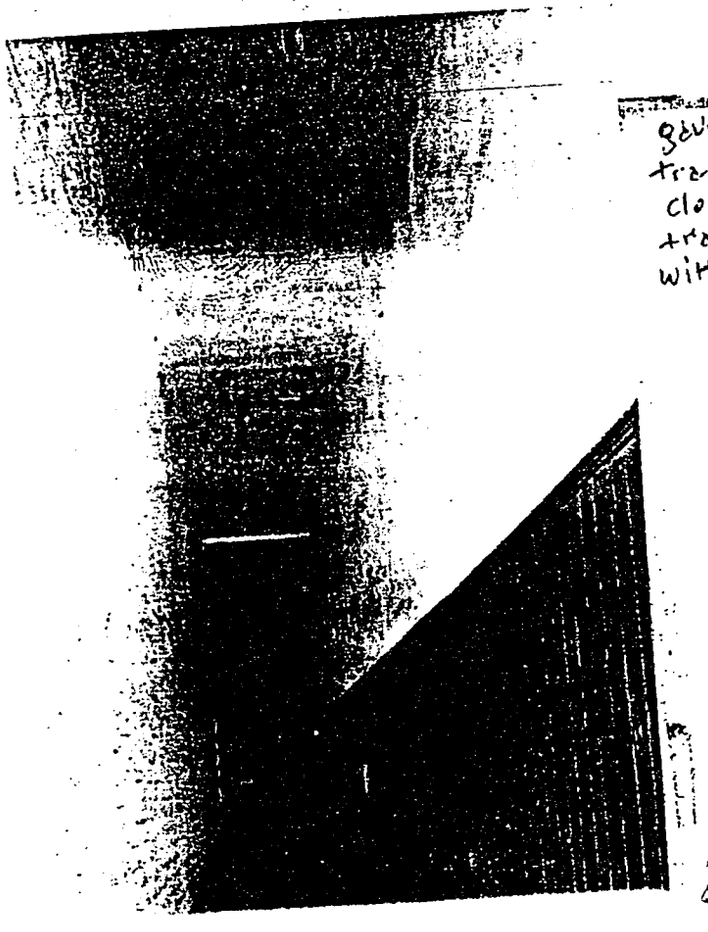
give evidence evidence tending to show
track I it was between daylight and
clouds in the sky, and it was
train had thrown a heavy ground cloud
within a few feet of the ground

SUPPLEMENT. [Sup. Ct.

show that when the deceased approached ... daylight and dark; that there were dark ... and it was somewhat misty; the west-bound ... a heavy cloud of black smoke upon the track, ... feet of the ground, and the wind prevailing blew the ... in the direction where the deceased stood, and seemed to ... near him. The train that struck the deceased passed very soon after the west-bound train. Several witnesses who were observing whether any signal or warning was given of the approach of the train that struck the deceased testified positively that no bell was rung or whistle blown, or other signal given of the approach of the train that killed the deceased. Several witnesses testified as to the condition of the deceased's eyes, and his ability to see, and it appeared from their testimony, or that of some of them, that the deceased was nearsighted; that his eyes had been affected for a long time; that they were inflamed, water ran from them, and a white film gathered over them; that, in order to see, he had to hold objects within four or five inches of his face, to distinguish such objects as the face of a clock, or to read; that, in attempting to work in his garden, he would hoe up and pull out vegetables, instead of the weeds that he was intending to remove; that, in driving nails with a hammer, he would put on his ... his own ...

B A
1,14

A 13 23



gave ~~evidence~~ evidence tending to show— A, 5
track I it was between daylight and
clouds in the sky, and it was
train had thrown a heavy ~~ground~~ cloud
within a few feet of the ground

SUPPLEMENT. (Sup. C

...now that when the deceased approache
...d, slight and dark; that there were da
...it was somewhat misty; the west-boun
...a heavy cloud of black smoke upon the trac
...of the ground, and the wind prevailing blew th
...direction where the deceased stood, and seemed t
...be near him. The train that struck the deceased passed very soon
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to hold objects within four or five inches of his face, to distinguish
such objects as the face of a clock, or to read; that, in attempting
to work in his garden, he would hoe up and pull out vegetables, in-
stead of the weeds that he was intending to remove; that, in driv-
ing nails with a hammer, he would put on his spectacles, and place
his eyes very near the nails while driving them; that in assorting
beans, potatoes, and other articles, he would feel around with his
hands for them, to find what was plainly discernible to others;
that he had difficulty, in driving upon highways, in distinguishing
people and vehicles that he was passing, and he had to get very
close to his nearest acquaintances to ...

A 13 23
4, 5

13/16

13 1 24

EVIDENCE.

(B1, A4)

R A 84/4/L7

B A 25

A/6 B/7 (child of 17 mos. Killed by locomotive)

DECEMBER 22 1961

POETRY OF ACTION

FRANCIS BERRY: *Morant Bay and Other Poems.* 76pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 12s. 6d.

Even those most attuned to the poetry of the past thirty years must admit certain limitations; especially an over-emphasis on the cerebral and the lonely, on the workings of baffled minds adrift from human energies. Narrative and action have been, in the main, left to prose; and yet poetic rhythms alone can bring to bear on certain types of event the requisite sensations of speed and urgency. We ourselves live in a period challenged by energies, violence and danger. There is room for poetry not merely in the verbal sense but in that wider use of the poet as "maker" sounding into and re-expressing the dynamics of our existence.

Such a poet we have in Mr. Francis Berry, whose latest narrative "Morant Bay" now follows "The Iron Christ", "Fall of a Tower", and "Murdoch", published in his collection *The Galloping Centaur* in 1952. Those were deeply engaged in national and cultural affairs, and "Morant Bay" has a similar, if subtler, impact. Mr. Berry is still dancing, and his handling of the 1865 Riot or Rebellion in Jamaica and its ruthless suppression is, indeed, masterly.

What, above all, differentiates Mr. Berry's poetry from that of his contemporaries is its close physical engagement. Before involving himself in politics and psychology, he gives his insights on a keen biological perception. When the unruly world assumes a "single pulsating heart" it is as though one enormous image is there "shouting", "red-mouthed" and "saliva-flecked", being Africa incarnate, threatening Europeans:

> Tusks of Africa
> Phantine, ancestral, waved
> Arches, and the branches weaved
> Into the texture of air
> Certitude of history, and the broad nostrils
> Flattened as the mouths opened
> War.

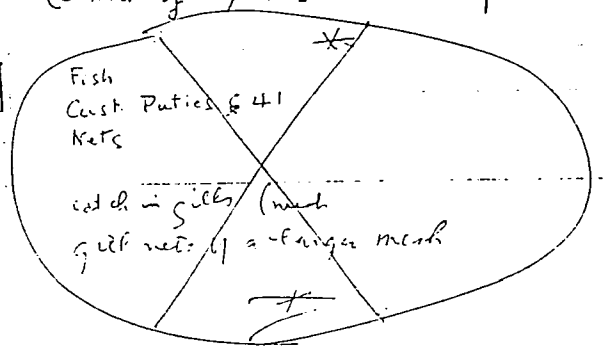
Meanwhile, the Europeans in the Court House suffer "chemical changes" as hearing sets "juices" to work percolating fear through the human organism.

From this soil of physical sensibility flowers a brilliant psychology: Governor Eyre, unconsciously motivated by a school birching; the ambitious mischief-maker W. C. Gordon of mixed blood; and the "massive black build" of the simple Negro Deacon Bogle, "magnificent creature of God", vaguely dreaming of a "renewed" Africa "splendid beyond the designs of Gordon or the thought of Eyre". Packed, too, though without congestion, into this swift-moving narrative is a vivid geography, an economic diagnosis, and a generous humour.

Few poets can have drawn simultaneously on so many human components and in this story of a Jamaican riot all history seems to be before us. Because the reading is both so complex and so expansive, there is no bias. Honestly, but with charity, the terrible event is described.

The shorter poems included in Mr. Berry's new volume are characterized by objective response to the living powers in man, animal and machine. His strength lies not in any particular gospel but in a realization, through an extraordinarily malleable and resourceful technique, of earthly existence as it stretches from folklore to brick works and from sensory compulsion to ghostly presence. Interthreading it all is humour, balancing depth with sanity.

Begin NE [illegible]



✓ Tinkham v Sawyer NE 27, p. 6 (boy injured while at work)

✗ Carroll v People NE 27, p. 18 (bank robbery)

✗ Crosby v People NE 27, p. 49 (assault to murder prostitute)

✓ names: ~~Captain~~ Fash; Lottie ~~Lifsite~~ (real name);

✗ People v. Wood, 27 NE 362 (murder)

Begin NE [illegible]

✗ Lyons v People, 27 NE 677 (gang murders Swede)

✗ In re Budlong's Will 27 NE 945, affirming 7 N.Y. Suppl. 289 (family quarrel)

469A

B A

(A 16 B 17)

WEDNESDAY

1970 FEBRUARY 1970						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28

25

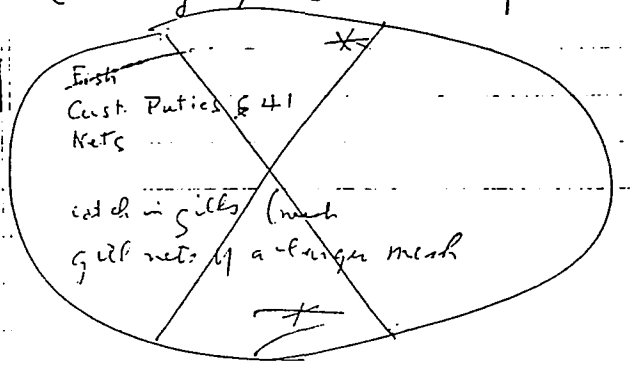
FEB. 1970

~~Iraq~~ ~~country~~ ~~person~~

re-examine for possible use

✓ 26 NE 1103 (Crystal v Troy RR, 793)
(child of 17 mos. Killed by locomotive)

Begin NE p. 1 ... over 3rd



19 (447)

✓ Timkham v Sawyer NE 27, p. 6 (boy injured while at work)

✗ Carroll v People NE 27, p. 16 (bank robbery)

✗ Crosby v People NE 27, p. 49 (assault to murder prostitute)

✓ names: ~~Captain~~ Fash; Lottie ~~White~~ (real name);

✗ People v. Wood, 27 NE 362 (murder)

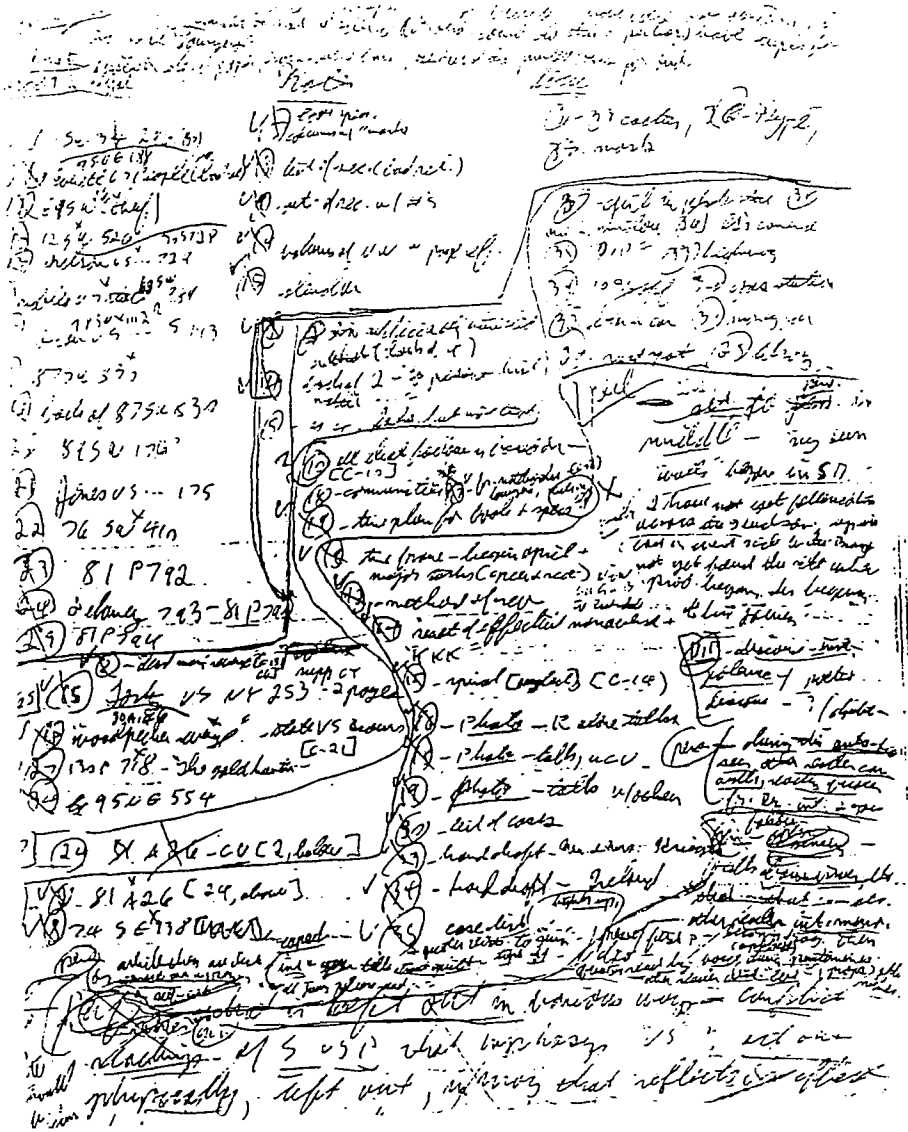
Begin 7 NE 961 ... over 5th

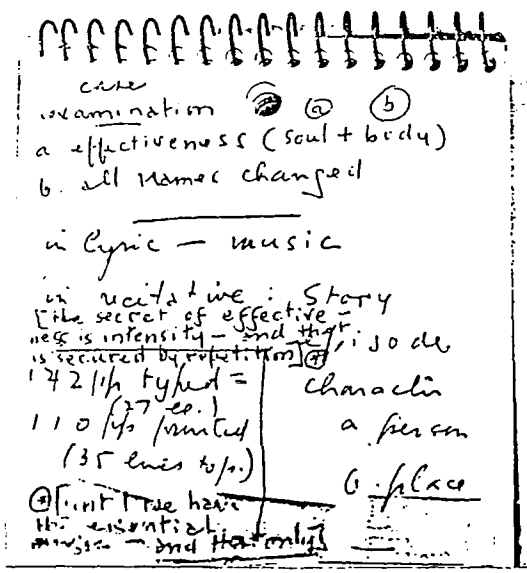
✗ Lyons v People, 27 NE 677 (gang murders Swede)

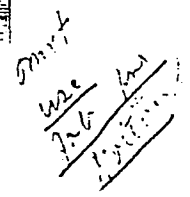
✗ In re Budlong's Will 27 NE 945, affirming 7 N.Y. Supp. 289 (family quarrel)

4/6

17







"And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi..."

Genesis 24: 62

"I made a covenant with mine eyes..."

Job 31: 1

23
26

A B

A (1) B (2)



A B

[P, watching tv in silence] [slide A, B
[advance slides til photos of R and P]

J [to all performers]: okay, tell me what happened. [to auience] The jury may offer comments.

* * *

B [b & D/R to each other]: He was jumbling things for me so that I didn't understand it. And he was expecting me to understand what was going on there like I am a lawyer. I am not a lawyer. He failed to listen to what I had to say.

R: By "listening to what you had to say," do you mean the context and the, uh...

B: my presentation.. And there's a reason why I spent that kind of time putting it together.

[short pause, looks at audience]

* * *

J [to P]: failure to construct meaning in a way that would have articulated with the court's agenda

* * *

R [to himself]: we have learned new ways to listene and have heard a great deal

* * *

J [to jury]: what is needed...is an account of the appropriation of meaning and its restriction to specific institutional and discursive sites and modalities

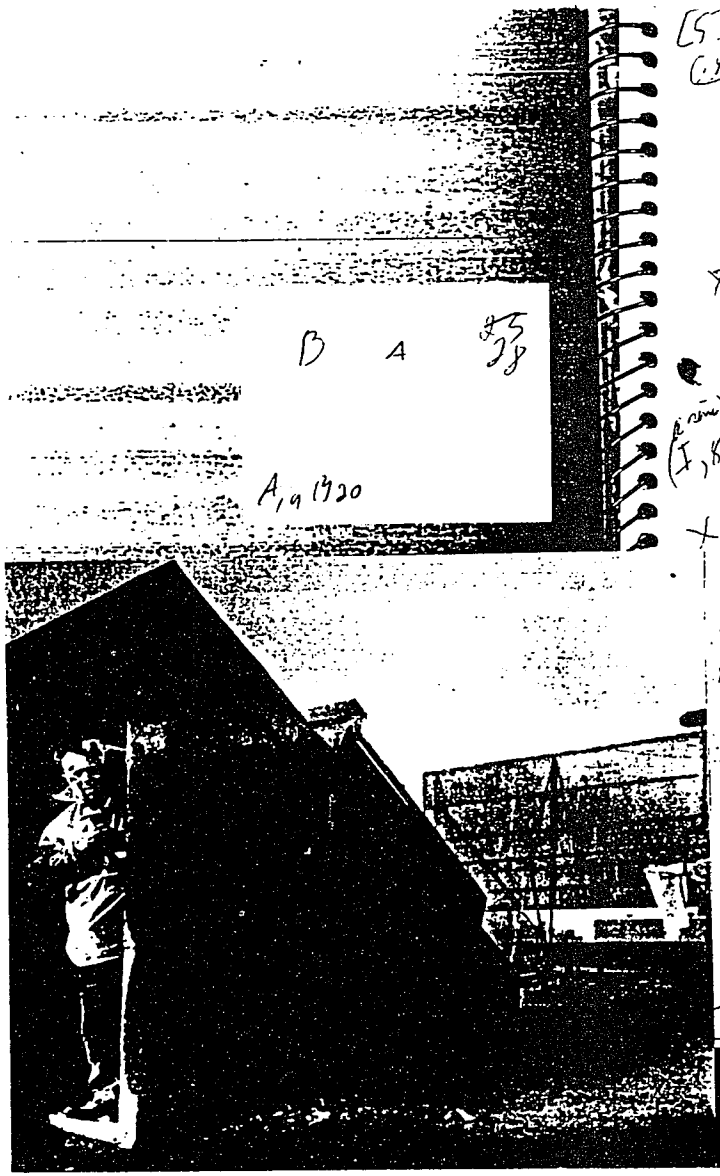
* * *

B [to P]: he can't be captured by any discourse, and makes a patchwork--a burlesque--of them; his testimony is complete sentences, yet the logic, if any exists, is fractured... and the surplus, doing too much--the surplus that carries him beyond motive and reason...

J [to B]: the very idea of the objectivity and specialisation of legal language functions consciously or unconsciously to exclude participation in the legal process

* * *

R [to all, or no one in particular, while lighting a final ht stick and placing it in row]: It was by doing a little mor by doing too much, that he could exchange the alienating lat of


B A
A, 9 1920



A B 29

A20 B31

beginning with p. "10" – 37½ pp
beginning with p. 61 – 60½ pp

end cases
105 vols.
(600 pp a day?)

May 15 1st draft?
Sept 15 2nd draft?
3rd "
begin Feb.
Oct 1 - 1st draft?
Feb 1 - 2nd draft?
June 1 - 3rd draft?

Jan 15th?

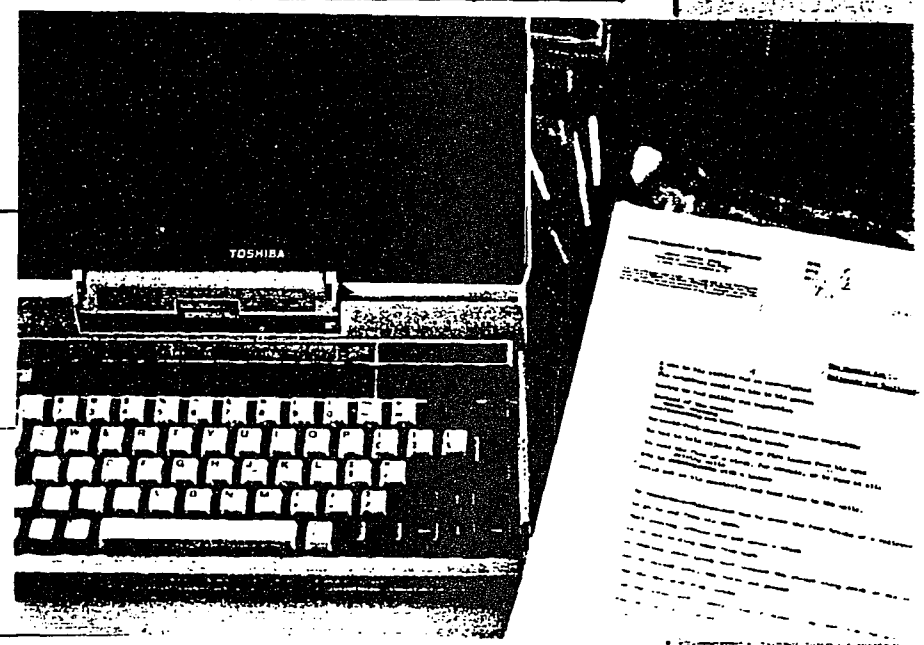
(120 pp ~~forms~~) beginning with p. 17; and complete 1st draft May 1st
(75 pp?? 100 pp in total)
revision 4 months Oct 1st

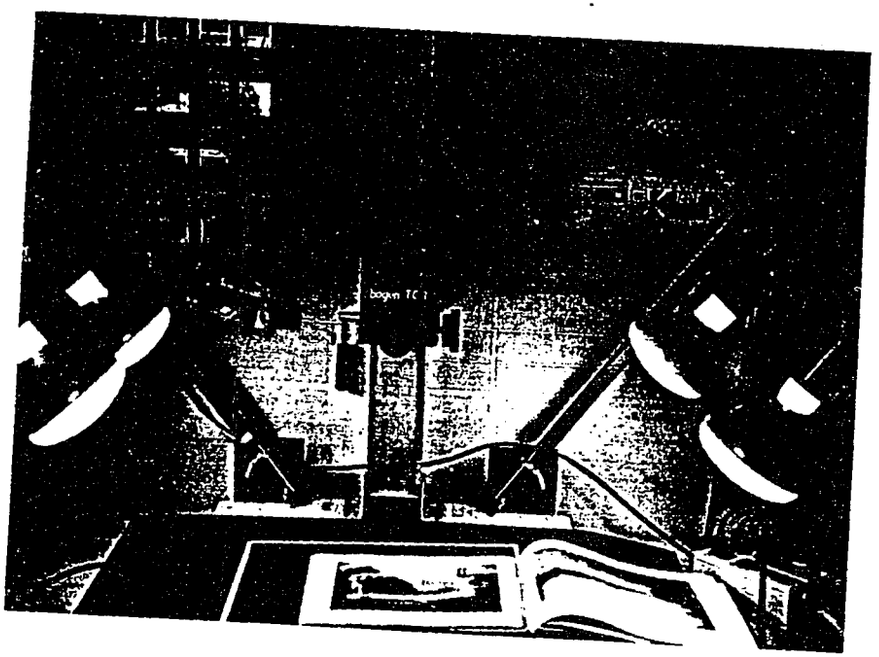
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~~Feb 24~~ Mar. 7
1st gr. 5 more
2nd gr
24 pp?
45 pp?

B 1 30
A2, B22

90	✓ 733-742
91	X 20
94	X 724-726
100	X 537-539, 541; X 1002
104	X 155-162; X 867-869; X 972-975





A B ~~C~~ 31

A+2 B33

4
1 1/4
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33 1/4 hp

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48 1/2 hp
+ 8(?)

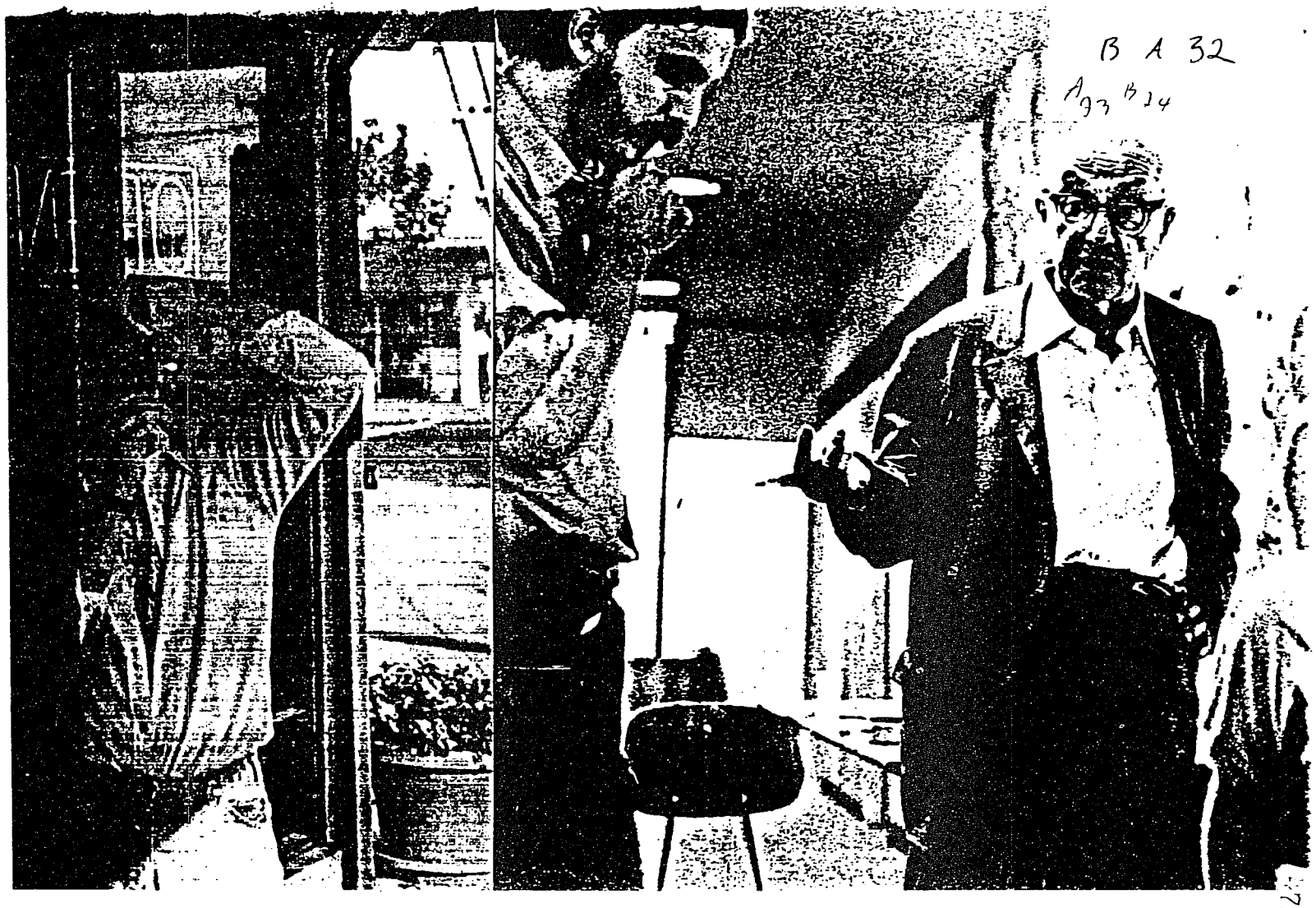
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12-?

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2
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27 1/4 hp
13
+ 5(?)

47



B A 32

A 93 B 14

75

Appendix III

Hermeneutical chain Letter

on "The Poem"

If you hadn't declared your desire to penetrate,
there'd be no need for a straightjacket;
zipper your lips and act freely
(also "A Man Is Fiddling With His Matchbox"; Joe Elliot, NY, NY)

Too bad
about the poem
cut down to size
like that
"Smelling like a rose"
etc.
formerly an ocean
too bad

(Ken Smith, Piscataway, NJ)

on "I Mean to Penetrate the Particular"

Again, I think of the Objectivist desire for historical particulars...here, however, more in Olson's heroic/phallic I voice. Is there a significance to a specific kangaroo rat, rather than any other? Like the second metaphor, is this a mix of things (kangaroo scaled down to a rat), or an emblem of something concealed within the pouch? Bit gendered. Sets it in American context,

anyway--that rat is native to U.S. and Mexico.

The photomicrograph raises the question of perception and relative scale more obviously--the photograph at microscopic level which must be distortedly blown up for our inspection. At odds with his desire for unmediated particulars, penetrated as they are?

(Susan Vanderborg, Stanford, CA)

on "When He Sat Down To His Desk"

That's how it works

(Ken Smith, Piscataway, NJ)

on "The Status Quo"

It was an interesting poem in some ways, and I immediately associated it with our chats about the glorious proletariat. At once idealistic and hopelessly cynical, the poem seemed to celebrate democratic vistas and bureaucratic totalism. ...it suggests much about the transformation of naturalism (a city of things and goods, of arcades and consumption) into a structured corporate vision.

....

I suspect there is a vulgar Marxism lurking here given the split into the haves and havenots, the classes of producer and bureaucrat. Revolutionary potential, perhaps, but a recognition of the static nature of social relations. ... An idealized vision of creation over control.

Sorry I don't have time to offer much else, but these ruminations tend to become disturbingly circular. ...

(Paul Hansom, LA, CA)

Reader's "Add-A-Link":

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