

# Doublin' Literature

by Greg Macon

*The reason of reason – the reasons for reason – the reason for reasons.*

Reading Aristotle. An introduction in Random House edition of *Basic Works*, paragraph on rhetoric. That rhetoric (like dialectic) is not a science.

Rhetoric is defined in terms of its end or final cause, persuasion. Like dialectic it is not a science, and therefore it has no specific subject matter, no single method, and no proper set of principles. [p. xxx]

Familiar by now, arguments about the distinction between truth and rhetoric, their opposition, etc. Perhaps I will only rehearse this, here. But once again we have the problem of constative together with adequation – how shall we even properly state this issue – and the indexicological paradox (the parindex?) of heading and *grouping*. Pertinent to Aristotelian analysis, which according to one formulation, would be analysis proper, or itself, Aristotelian being here redundant, since it names the same thing. (Aristotle as a specific use of analysis, as the founder, developer, initiator, discoverer, etc., or simply a necessary formality of historical designation of analysis, the historic coincidence of these – Aristotle and analysis.)

Reason, rhetoric, jealousy.

Reason as the jealousy of rhetoric.

Jealousy as the rhetoric of reason.

Rhetoric as the reason of jealousy.

Reason × jealousy.

Reason × rhetoric.

Rhetoric × jealousy.

Dia-grammatics. (General.) Open file.

Recombinant logic.

Science fiction: very loose, abrupt interplay of thoughts, occurring during reading of passage on poetry, tragedy, rhetoric, etc. Had in mind Nietzsche, Husserl's discussion of the imagination of possibility, the general idea of imagining *all possible*, imaginary of all, all of the imaginary, possibility of either, etc. Same as graphs above for these three. Science fiction and its project, projection. Now, the result or juncture: could it be stated as the problem of fiction in general? As per P. Lacoue-Labarthe in *Typography* essay on Heidegger?

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*Grouping*. Gathering, assembly, array. Spreading out. Cf. the analogous problem of the differentiated and the undifferentiated with respect to Lacan.

Categorization, taxonomy, resolution, summation. To allow for the *variation*, to imagine such, the recombining aspect of corroboration. Hierarchies and schema which equivocate at the same time they privilege. The thought of “revolution” in either politics or knowledge.

Science fiction: from science to fiction and back again. A fictional science and scientific fiction. The science of fiction: the way fiction poses as a science, and the science proper to this fiction. Simultaneously utilizing here the putative understanding, the conventional or ordinary sense of the genre of science fiction – sci-fi – *and an as if* (since we’re playing by the rules of science fiction) new or mutated sense in which the term comes to lift itself to a more general signifier, signification, problematic, etc. Nevertheless, one would go *there* to get it. To retrieve, at once in the same gesture, this sense *from* sci-fi, and sci-fi *from* this sense. Already doing at the level of the sign what the sign will signify.

Generalization of *duction*. Conduct, tra-duction, reduction, production, etc. (Note specific turn for induction/deduction.) How these figure each other. Diverse complications. To be un/raveled.

The problem of *when* a science occurs. What its topos is, but how this topos is shot through with a temporal complication of orientation. One could say how, if this how could presume or subsume these peculiar considerations. Does a science occur before or after the fact?

So much for banal consideration of facts, such as with Camille Paglia, for example that without them houses would fall down. When would this be a *fact*? A *fait*? The literality of it: a thing made, done, accomplished? Is this a *fact*? What about this striated, staggered sense of factuality? Is it a “fact” that without facts houses would fall down? But then what accounts for the *actual* falling down of houses? What fact(s)? What, fact(s)? In a world where all houses fall down (which world – where – there? – where?) wouldn’t it be the fact that all houses fall down?

Without facts there, would they stand up? And, in fact, aren't houses falling down even in the act of standing up, the force of gravity at work in the engineering, and the inertia frame for that, in which they are actually speeding through space? Or does this work as *modus tollens*, presuming the necessity of the premise, working causality to the letter, so that where a house falls down it follows there are no facts?

Like the idea of conduct – what is the sense of it trafficking between a moral or ethical imperative and a physical or actual constraint – the science must function together and apart from this fiction. Thus, for Aristotle, for Aristotelian analysis, the principle of something without a principle. A fold, Möbius-like, in logic. That which lacks the principle of something else has *this* as its principle. Thus, it must have its peculiar principle, being principally non-principled.

Rhetoric.

How this played out: ever-widening circle or loops of the gathering. The cosmos, mundos, universe.

Plato, *The Republic* (ed. Hamilton and Cairns, Princeton, 1973), p. 640 [395c]: the link of mimesis to pedagogical concern. What is important to give to be “imitated.”

On the previous page (639 [394b]): “Understand then, said *I*, that the opposite of this arises when one removes the words of the poet between and leaves the alternation of speeches.” Emphasis of “*I*” added. If one hasn't already thought of the reflexive problem in the preceding

passage on Homer and diction, in which “Socrates”<sup>1</sup> expounds on the difference between simple narration and “imitation,” then this quote ought to make it quite explicit. The very thing Socrates says about assimilating one’s speech as closely as possible to one of the subjects of the narrative, is this not Plato’s task “behind” the dialogues, the text, the dialogues of Socrates, the dialogues of Plato?

The passage also works out the extent of the principle of devotion to a single task when it comes to mimesis, imitation or narrative craft or art. And an amazing result, a proposition (639 [394e]): “And does not the same rule hold for imitation, that the same man is not able to imitate many things well as he can one?”

Really? *Real-ly*? But what is a “mimic”? What is the trait, attribute or feature of mimicry? Is it itself a zero degree of trait, deferring only to what others it takes on? But if it is also itself a quality, an ability, a craft, then comes the complication of the two ends of the representation, the source and the imitator, making use of the same, or similar traits, for the resemblance.

It seems more than possible (but am I really doing it here or merely suggesting it) to think of a precisely opposite ideal, or perhaps, a result opposite of an ideal. If a mimic is to be good at imitating, then s/he is to be good at masking or disguising features as well as taking on others, by virtue of taking on others, or there is a transference of traits such that another set comes to be

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation marks calling attention to this matter of portrayal, here, to fidelity and to the matter of the “I” that by the very intent, attempt, even effort of reduction to the utmost proper and faithful singularity of reference, necessarily involves all the layers of its differentiation, even its duplicity. The layers of citation involved in this apparently most simple, direct, immediate *self*-reference Plato cannot escape, because he cannot do without them, not even to make such an argument of unity, fidelity, control.

presented. This would seem to lead to the idea that an imitator is good at suppressing or submerging personal traits, for if one's own traits show through the imitation, too much, one doesn't "imitate."

More than this, if mimicry itself is to be generalized, a larger phenomenon, as it no doubt must be for every speaker to learn a language, no matter how idiomatic s/he ends up, and what's more, for gesture, carriage, disposition, facial expression, habits, customs, etc., then it would seem everyone, every source of an imitation as well as those who imitate them, is a matter of the reduction or attrition of this imitate-ability, of this resemblance and copying each other, through time, aging, growing into more specific and delimiting features, or from simply less and less use of this mimicking that one necessarily does as a child, learning. This point is no doubt already presupposed, crucial, to the concern of cultivation or control, with pedagogy, here in the discussion of Socrates, as carefully reported, if not mimicked, by Plato.

Thus, an imitator, a mimic, would seem to have the ability to imitate, or at least, this would be possible to formalize as a distinct attribute apart from *all value lying with the object or trait imitated*.

If this general ability to mimic were to be demonstrated, would we be led to the strict conclusion that imitation, *like any other* capability, craft, pursuit, art, works *best* when it concentrates on just one object? And what is one object, what constitutes a sole object, when it comes to this ability to mimic? Could we say that this would perpetually break down, so that if an imitator were to be best (will we know this beforehand) when she imitates *one* subject, then will s/he be best when she concentrates on *one* trait of that subject, say the diction rather than the kind of things the subject speaks about, or the carriage?

This is without pretending to deny that certainly the more a mimic practices on one subject, object of the reference, the better s/he can be at mimicking that relative to others less practiced. And the particular features of the one who mimics will be more or less suitable to any particular feature of the object of the mimicry. But there still must be this generalized, potential ability of the mimic, to set her sights on whatever target, in order to even discover which one(s) s/he can do best.

Again, p. 650:

*But if they imitate they should from childhood up imitate what is appropriate to them – men, that is, who are brave, sober, pious, free, and all things of that kind – but things unbecoming the free man they should neither do nor be clever at imitating, nor yet any other shameful thing, lest from the imitation they imbibe the reality.*

“If” they imitate – again seeming to distinguish here a more specific act from the general one by which language is learned, manners, thinking, opinions, mores, prejudices, etc. The entire matter of “appropriate” ought to rattle here, even if not from this side of whatever modern understanding of representation could really prove to be not linked to the history of this conception. It already shows the conundrum: get from another what is proper for the self, introducing this very process and direction and reference in the self. But if none were clever at imitating the unbecoming, the shameful, would that not be the loss of a pedagogical tool (tragic actors, for example, examples to learn from what not to do, how not to be)? Ah, but that’s because, once again, the paradox of this which has no value of its own, which is by no rights a proper thing of its own (as Derrida has analyzed for the notion of writing, and representation in general), but merely a kind of empty or transparent deference to other things, nonetheless has the power to appropriate so utterly what it is *merely* imitating, and thus transform the one who would have been merely an imitator.

The same paragraph goes on to include the term “second nature” (in the Paul Shorey translation). This “second nature” might do well to express the whole problematic. Now, then, some remark about “how” we are to assimilate these remarks of “Socrates”/Plato. In order to seize on these comments *here*, now, at this point along the way in the reading, one might prove to be too hasty, especially as one is dealing with “Socrates.” For even if one had no other knowledge of Socrates’ wiles from the other dialogues, what has gone before in this dialogue has already demonstrated how Socrates will make ironic repetition of statements in order to open them up to further conjecture. (Another pedagogical use and type of citation. Repetition. Mimicry? Self-mimicry? When would irony end?)

And thus, having “taken up” such propositions, Socrates will add to them, follow them out, take them on further, dialectically. These suspensions seem to produce a kind of anticipation in an interlocutor/reader, that Socrates may utilize a line of thinking in order to turn on it or demonstrate the erroneous or preposterous extent of it. This conditioning to, of and by the Socratic method is supposed to be in the service of the “truth,” even a kind of proto-Cartesian, if we can reverse the historical sense of derivation, method of trying out everything so as to see what will work with the criteria for truth. Descartes’ own radical doubt, the philosophical equivalent of seeing what will stick, is no doubt Socratic, indebted to this method of questioning and testing, but to the extent Descartes founded something distinct in his gesture (does he, for example, prove that Socrates does not know nothing, since he knows that he’s thinking), he may express all the better the *petitio principii* involved in this supposedly most radical of negations, which is this criteria, what is left to assess with when supposedly one knows nothing or doubts everything. (This no doubt leads also to Kant’s *a priori*.)



But it is possible to read Socrates this way: to surmount him at his own behest. As if we were some psychological or behavioral effect (defect, even) of the Socratic method, we would have shorn off our certainty in any putative understanding, commonly held beliefs, but only to never quit, and thus never have known when Socrates had arrived. Had come. Had gotten there – at a non-ironic formulation. (This is indeed similar to some of the famous interlocutors, like Thrasymachus.)

Related matter: Socrates himself is fond of saying that he knows nothing and that he wants to see where the argument will take him/them. Can one doubt this as a ruse, in the name of truth? How would one know what (not) to imitate if one knew nothing or what direction for argument, the dialectic itself to lead? Is this Socratic method really just a pedagogical tool, thus the use of ruse, thus feigning in the service of truth?

To make this uncertainty pervasive, this ironic suspension, might lead to the famous “but there has to be some truth” sort of plea or resort that ushers certainty back in abstractly, like anthropologization. Analogous to the view of mythology being necessary to any culture and thus simultaneously imploring its use, but this argument itself outside of, and indifferent to, insofar as it makes them equal in abstraction, any particular mythology.

So it would be possible to prevent ourselves from drawing conclusions on this view of imitation as it is not *the last word*, yet of Socrates, of Plato, nor of course, of anyone. What, then, are the consequences?

We could also qualify the argument here by suggesting that Socrates is speaking specifically of one class of men, the city’s guardians, and that he might be implying a kind of selective censorship in the sense of making sure that only certain kinds of discourse or art be

directed at certain “classes” or occupational subjects. Nonetheless, this involves imitation in another kind of problem, analogous to what we said of imitation being like any other craft.

“Yes, he said, it would be absurd that a guardian should need a guard.” (P. 648 [403e].)

“Wealth and poverty, said I, since the one brings luxury, idleness and *innovation*, and the other illiberality and the evil of bad workmanship in addition to *innovation*.” (P. 663 [422a], emphasis added. What is the Greek translated by “innovation”?)

And the paragraph (p. 665 [424b]), which speaks of this innovation with respect to the difference between “new songs” and “new way of song.” Finally, this paragraph says at its end: “For the modes of music are never disturbed without unsettling of the most fundamental political and social conventions, as Damon affirms and I am convinced.”

The long paragraph just after the beginning of Book IV about the part and whole of a work of art. Here are many cross-currents, linkages, correspondences, corollaries, etc., with respect to Socrates, Plato, the Greek notion of unity. Among other things, Aristotelian analysis has a prefigure in Plato, as demonstrated by the Socratic method when it refines, forces specifications, etc. Almost two poles: one tending toward the restitutive, reductive, the other making a kind of analytical circumference of the same presumptions. The essential and the contingent.

That each part has a particular function for the good of the whole, but that the “whole” is also there for these particular functions, is also very teleological. Society is given this simultaneous concretion and abstraction, as an entity that exists prior to any of the relations or instances that make it up. There is room here for a Marxist critique, and indeed, this is much of

what Marx brings to the whole tradition with the historical, the history of Western abstraction of social relations, thus the abstraction of history.

The analogy of unities: little unities making up big ones. Completion of functions which metonymically serve the whole. No doubt an important tropic function also made in Plato. What else will this unity be, would it be? False? True? "Expedient" or not? Imperious? Humble? And how. And an "innovation": that variation would not be a part of the process itself of *conservation*. From where, then, does this company (Socrates/Plato, etc.), this agency or organization, derive its sense of permanence, stability and unity? The audacity of believing that which does not exist to be the *real*.

But this would be tantamount as well to a characterization, if it left alone the Greeks with, by or to a commentary issued from the ground(s) of a perspective of, or a retrospective, surety. Something like a contemporary view, or the truth as we know it.

Tracing the movements of a passage (p. 671 [429c]): "The conservation of a conviction . . . . And I may illustrate it by a similitude, if you please."

Socrates has let himself in for some trouble, here, of a now familiar sort. Not of the kind reason would call upon him. For that he is infallible. No? Shall we deign to use reason *against* Socrates? Find another "good"?

Socrates goes on to speak about colorfast dyes, in a longer paragraph introducing the similitude. As with simile or metaphor, one must work out or work from a presumption of what the describing term's value is. If we are to speak of A in terms of B, then we must (first? – B before A, chrono- or simply logical) make sure there is an understanding of the value of B, what sense of it we are seeking to import to A. (Cf., general metaphoricity.) Wisdom, bravery, sobriety and justice.

Next long paragraph, beginning “By this analogy”: the soldiers are to receive the sense of the colorfast dye. Now, we are setting this down here to follow a movement subsuming several smaller movements leading to p. 677 [435b], and although continuing, we stop here for some significance, thus leading also to a discussion of the larger and the smaller, as well, explicitly. In fact, I want to cast what is said about the larger and smaller back over this movement of the Socratic text and judge whether it might apply to the text itself.

This passage itself should be enlarged, to go back to p. 669 [427d], the beginning of an examination and what is said about looking for four qualities which should be found together. And at [428e, 429]: “Then it is by virtue of its smallest class and minutest part therein . . . .”

By the similitude of dye, Socrates passes into the making out, or discernment of bravery in that city. There is a question here of an operation, whether Socrates is not laying down a kind of extra instruction in *determining*, or *finding* bravery; but also this description. Is this, then, “merely” a similitude, as far as the extent of its operation or function?

For soberness, we come to a passage that includes the comment on the phrase or term “master of himself.” There are two paragraphs, one stating this as an absurdity *because* the “same person is spoken of in all these expressions,” the other resolving the apparent absurdity into a matter of the components or parts of man’s constitution, the multitudinous, bigger, baser, worse part, and the smaller, naturally better part. (This will be comparable to the motley appetites of children, women, slaves and base rabble of free men four paragraphs later.) The few being superior, etc. This mastery of the many by the few is defined as sober, is on the way to or serves as a definition of “sober.” However, soberness will serve finally to resolve the apparent contradiction, as most proper to its logic, because if the sober *rules*, then it rules over this weak multitudinous aspect. It will run the gamut.

Obviously, then [432b], the *remainder* is justice. (Cf. Derrida's lectures on remains at Irvine.)

Justice is given a prelude about hunters searching it out. Would it be impertinent or even impudent to suppose that a similitude of justice and its seekers to a hunter and its prey would be involved in a kind of tangle, since it would be possible to suggest that if justice is superior, then whereas it is prey it would thus elude the hunter? But then Socrates says as much when he exclaims that justice eludes then because it is right at their feet. A superior ruse of justice and the hunted. (Not to mention the rather marked similarity to the exposition of Heidegger on the presencing of the present.)

Redo: the discovery of the wisdom of the city is the extended passage: that the knowledge and science of the city as a whole is to be found in the rulers, or guardians, who are then to be found as the smallest class. Notice how "wisdom" is discovered. Is this even a proper syllogism? Socrates himself says, "I know not how" he discovered this in the foregoing. Nor do we. It's conjured up, and easily enough so, as the whole city has been. The whole republic, as the *Republic*.

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General: homology, homologous, homogeneity. The thought of a way, a right way, among other possible ways. Going astray. Also, the anthropomorphic understanding of this synecdochal projection. The gods created in man's image; the idea of finality, etc. Similar to the problem of the "sign" as I have stated it. Where the sign must simultaneously fail to show the truth by itself, and allow it to be known that it does this. The sign is deprived of any power and

yet rendered all the more powerful, uncanny. Adorno's critique in *Negative Dialectics*; Nietzsche's, Heidegger's critique.

There is the entire aporia of the organic, of organicism, and of organ-ization. The double movement of the law, as the representation of a natural order, but at the same time as a necessary good nurture, a guideline, an imperative, which draws its force from this other concept of a mimesis of the natural order. No doubt it becomes explicit, here, that "health" is a key component or element or concept of the entire explanation. An organizational principle. Not only a principle to use for organizing, but the very principle of organization in general. Economy – keeping the house in order.

Health, well(ness), well-being, welfare, etc.

Socrates has at least given us what could pass for the Greek notion or sense of understanding of "health." Its various similarities and differences with respective notions of any other "age," "epoch," "culture," "people," etc., would no more be able to finalize the transaction of terms that is necessary, here. Even a movement of going back, such as the Heideggerean or Husserlian, to uncover all the genealogical layers, would eventually have to encounter the discursiveness of the deposit, deposition, as well as enter it. We could even dare to say that the well-being of any explication or illumination or expression of well-being, would depend on this "activity," this lively circuit, this sort of thriving.

Seems that the Platonic discourse is susceptible to the criticism of immanentism, and of course this is somewhat redundant, since Plato is considered this explicit, the founding of, this immanentism. From a sociopolitical standpoint, however, it is a symptomatic as a founding gesture and vice versa, since the quality or state of health, well-being or sickness, unhealth and

lack of well-being is to be treated as the very sign of the existence of the good. Cf. Nietzsche with regard to everything on sickness, strength, health, etc. Especially as does or does not make explicit this as a parallel concern.

Book VIII – exposition of the “four” (five) types of government. It is recalled to Socrates that he had previously mentioned that there are four types of government. He has used this to go off onto a discourse on the ideal state (“aristocracy”). Now he is called back to these other four and he names them and offers an analysis of how they change into each other. To be sure, he states that there would be other kinds as well. Note remarks on intermediate stages, only actually suggested between oligarchy and democracy.

Timocracy, or timarchy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny.

Socratic political analysis – cf. Lacoue-Labarthe’s *Typography on dike*, etc. Rectitude. Unity, evenness, integrity, etc. Note the “descriptiveness” utilized for democracy. The problem of exemplarity (at least as suggested by Lacoue-Labarthe). Transformations into each other. As Socrates supposes of the democratic “son” who is influenced away from oligarchy, there will be times when the influence works back in the other direction. Limitation (formal) of a system? One must line it out. Not to preclude reverse developments? Well?

A democracy seems primarily bound, once it has reached its prime, to tip into tyranny. Is this necessarily the case? What does such an analysis represent? Knowledge? Wisdom? How does Socrates, or the dialectic, “logos,” “reason,” or such systematic analysis absolve itself of its part – its part in its object(s)?

Reminded me of Crane Brinton's *The Anatomy of Revolution*, also much Marxist historiography. The four revolutions analyzed in Brinton and their parallels. Does one attest to a law with formalization, or simply to the law of formalization?

The fractal operation of considering the type of society and the type of individual of that society. Somewhat tautological, redundant. And certainly from the standpoint of a framing discourse, or supposition. Will such societies "exist"? Where? Examples, i.e., samples, appear to have been in existence. Socrates uses a few "real" ones, Sparta, Crete, and the level of generalization presupposes well-circulated referents, or at least reference.

The necessarily ephemeral quality of "what is," at least here, in this sphere. By principle, in relation to the changeless, without generation, of the ideal.

Part for whole, or whole for part?

When we see our own actions in others, we often don't like the way "they" behave. If my id were always on the make, I might find it to be enervating, annoying, a source of much distress, or perhaps sad, dejected, etc. However, I realize that I'm always open to the flattery or pleasure of an apparent interest in or by someone else, no matter how slight, incidental.

Are these contradictory? A maxim, or proverb, such as was formulated above, has the sense of constating, or referring to a thing, to a timeless truth. The existence or incidence or occurrence – or desistance – of this proverb or maxim has as much to do with any experience or involvement. But the clumping, direction that also occurs. This is why we take (repeating the form of the maxim's presumptuous "we") recourse with the "x", the xs, the times, the rounds. How can one state an incommensurability? How can any statement avoid it? (Cf. Plato.)



Thus, a new entry – maxim. (The index is linked, here, as well, grafted, stitched.) Where does the “maxim” take place? Where does it have its place?

The rounds – the spiral raising the bet. If the action of another comes as a corrective or adjustment or inferential self-knowledge (how I must “seem” to someone else because of how someone else seems to me), then whether this is assimilated as a real suspension of self-assuredness or rather only serves the function of a kind of purely instrumental egoism.

deduction      ×      induction  
greater than    ×      less than

And which would be “truly” more narcissistic? One who is “blind” about their own “appearance,” “presentation,” etc., or one who is self-conscious, an image-jockey who fetishizes this self-knowledge? (Don’t forget, Blanchot’s reading on Narcissus.) Even here, we can only have recourse to a splitting of formulations in order to derive the sense of either of these accomplishments of a certain banal, pejorative or naïve ideal of self-ism, solipsism.

How to reduce the “behavior” according to the maxim? According to the practical interest of any ethics, theory, supervision, character assessment, etc., the promotional interest, such “observations” would have to be able to pro-duce (cf. Baudrillard; this is not here a rejoinder, strictly, but has something of that sense, a tightening or tensing of a sense of “production” for the sake of Baudrillard’s “sentiment” in *Mirror of Production*<sup>2</sup>), either some possibility for effect of this kind of knowledge, or the very slim order of the representation, or the very thing they spoke of to begin with.

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<sup>2</sup> This suggestion works in both directions. It is necessary to address the *reverse* force of Baudrillard’s explication, and this “theory” or axiomatic of production – is it strictly avoidable? Is there another, something else than production, and how to express it without “production,” and production without *producing* it.

The maxim and itself. Raising to the next power. Does the maxim include itself? Does it exempt, exonerate, exclude itself? The maxim of, “we dislike the appearance in others of the very way we ourselves behave,” behaves in a remarkable way, diverse readjustments, annulments, etc. Perversions. If this is true, then how about the behavior of the maxim itself? How to even sketch out or grasp this situation. Would it be true, wouldn't it then be entirely possible, that if I heard *someone else* say this, then I would disparage it, refuse it or be annoyed by it? Who is left to say it?

This maxim also sets down a situation of gathering up or assembling by virtue of a contrast. But the surety involved cannot stop, must go on, must leave off or over, must carry over (in the language of science, be reproducible). It cannot remain unless it remains, from, of, by way of, etc.

Thus, the rather smug higher resolution, realization, “awareness” (i.e., “human nature”) is itself already built on a double demand, or let's say a fault, conflating the already otherwise duplicitous senses of necessary structural flaws, whether the ethical connotation of human foible, fallibility, original sin, and the geographical notion of the fracture and displacement of strata. (No doubt these already have an entire historical “linkage,” a massive tension of cross-investment and derivation, allowing the circulation between the hypothesis of a figurative derivation from some literal, empirical, sensual occurrence, and the hypothesis of a derivation from an ideological disposition [redundant], a belief-system toward the empirical. This is what allows for the persistent confusion that occurs when general errance, drift, given the inflection of Nietzsche, Lacan, Derrida, or others [here used as examples because of their differences as much as anything in common], is actually *accepted* before the fact, already prepared for in advance to fall into the most contented maintenance of this idea as coefficient of the very idea or ideal.)

Flux and fluxion (fixion – stammer, stutter). The pun and Mallarmé (Joyce, cf. Avital Ronnel and other works on this). Poetics or poetry as a stammering.

To write as if the writing were *acting*, acting out, being dramatized – that would be literature. And to get actors to act, as if they were written, as if they were words on a page, with the same sense of relations – that would be a *drama*, that would, after all, be theatre, be *acting*.

Doesn't anyone see this when they make these declarations: "After all, this isn't the theatre." "After all, this is the theatre, not literature." Sometimes the attempt to be true to the nature of the art, or the medium, makes for the worst, most unfaithful and contrived performance. For even if we could hold, hold for, and hold to, a strict or banal or naïve notion of mimesis, of simple "representation," we would forget even there that one performs something else.

The two faiths: if one then must act out something else, then how does one simply remain true to *acting*? Whose acting? And who's acting?

For the theatre to behave as if it were literature, wouldn't that be a theatrical task?

The faith of theatre *not to have* a theatre. Not to be theatrical. And this problem is not resolved by the introspection, the self-knowledge and integrity of a theatrical art.

On Beckett: *Molly, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (Three Novels by Samuel Beckett, Grove Press, 1965). Bataille and Blanchot essays in *On Beckett* (ed. S.E. Gontarski, Grove Press, 1986): “Molloy’s Silence” and “Where Now? Who Now?” Both use the terms “vagrant” or “vagrance” (the translations). “Moribund” used by Blanchot.

Immolation and emulation. Withering and whither – wither and whither. Winding away. This is not a chance description, as the winding is used within the stories. Whose writing and who’s writing?

The incarceration, circumlocution of the “I” – the inscription.

The diegesis plays out what also goes on between the text and the author, the act of writing. The allegorical allegorical – allegory as allegory.

The sniveling, the drivel. Someone in one of the essays speaks of Beckett “perfecting” futile dialogue. Eric P. Levy, in “*Mercier and Camier: Narration, Dante and the Couple,*” says:

Indeed, the novel is clearly a kind of pivotal exercise, for here we can see Beckett stressing the type of futile dialogue he was to perfect a few years later in *Waiting for Godot*.

Perfecting futility. Is it just that the work of Beckett seems to stand even classical or conventional assessment – biographical, historiographical, literary or artistic account of development – on its head? Does it make teleology seem that much more smug? Or perhaps smugness more teleological? Doubtless there’s an arc of development, at the very least a temporality by which to compare Beckett pieces, one as later than another, and even a regress of renunciation, a minimalist aesthetic (or even a Buddhist one), is a progression aspiring to a standard of simplicity or economy. The conundrum that results from the attempt at a complete negation, contradiction, or renunciation, an anti-art aesthetic, like the person who, wiping the pieces off the playing board, thinks he’s negating the game but is betraying its much greater

effect, is something Beckett was aware of explicitly, as also implicitly in virtually every “futile” line.

That any piece by Beckett would stand to another as an exercise to a kind of finished or a perfected work – thus would *Mercier and Camier* be a futile futility, a failure to exactly render futile dialogue? But failing that futility, one (a Beckett?) nevertheless remains faithful to futility, achieves it and thus succeeds. Once it is perfected, so much for futility.

Which is why proclamations about Beckett, the man, the writer, the work, etc., must always meet a kind of suspension, to resist or leave undone the accomplishment of such as “great works,” masterpieces, the essential or definitive, whether it be 20th century or something resuming all the rest into that teleology. In some ways, the very fragmenting, vagrancy, erring, paltriness that is not just in the work, the subject or topic, but of the work, the way Beckett’s work works, is not just an outbidding, of, for example, the Joycean comprehensive, by the opposite tack of emptying or reduction, but a sidestepping of the very pertinence of that sort of superlative. When the inevitable entropy is a state of each person trapped with his echoes in his own head, and whatever sense or lucidity having no less to beat itself against that wall in the same infernal time, is it any less tragic, or even anguishing (not to forget the humor involved even in this, the ragged edge of humor that makes the dire more affecting), that even some paramount conception would be such a reduction? Even the fact that Beckett’s plays alone, not to mention the other works since at least the trilogy, all repeat this like an obsession, however long, however short, suggest the inevitability *for* this representation itself, as well as what it represents, and the iteration of it in each and everyone, as much as any definitive art form or statement.

Unless one were to disjoin a heritage, or reclaim by casting backwards a Beckettian gesture that would sound previous works with his “insights.” What of Shakespeare, Dante (a

favorite of Beckett's), Sophocles, as far as such futility? (No doubt there are already ways to assume *Hamlet* or *Oedipus* into this kind of spectacle.) What of Sterne?

To reclaim, then. And all manner of comments about how symbolic these Beckett figures are for modernity, as if, for one thing, modern man were somehow more astonished at the idea of dying. I guess in a way, the definition of "modern" could be the awareness that the dead are in the past and thus cause anxiety about one's own fate. Beckett's own famous reluctance to pontificate, elaborate on his own works. As he said of Joyce, he doesn't want to write about something, he wants to write something.

But there is a trap, here, too, lying in wait for any assurance that an evasion of such sweeping gestures, indeed of gesture in general, can succeed, similar to the trap of wanting to not have an image, wanting not to be seen, or to avoid fame as assiduously as one could seek it. Like the famous story of Kafka wanting to have his manuscripts burned, expressing this sentiment, and the trick of holding it against him because he didn't burn them himself. In fact, we only know of this in relation to the publication of Kafka, or, perhaps conversely, it was the very demand which made such works famous, which compelled them to be published.

This can't be commensurate, however, with the idea that any writer is not also compelled by his/her own immolation, effacement, ruin or failure. Otherwise, one risks the all too easy speculation (which, in turn, is not quite a risk, nevertheless this non-risk would be risked) that fame, or that any such objective as a creative success, production, etc., bearing, offspring, fruit, is self-evidently desirable and controls the interpretation of any figure or person, a kind of gross psychologism, simplistic behaviorism, a mechanical and reductive rather than poetic carrot before the ass. Here, populism and some noble, "high," integral value would trade off, complement each other, like Marx's uncritical idealism and uncritical materialism.

To begin, then, what cannot be begun. The writing of a decimation becomes the decimation of writing. Across the successive works, three novels in a series (and how so), but also at the same time already, even reversibly, within each novel, with the project, already before the project, as the project's trajectory or completion, but also as its *unraveling*. And all three novels are resolved into such a formulation as would allow them to lose their distinction: three parts of a larger work. This is already figured within the first of the three, *Molloy*: an apparent break in the narrative in which it switches from one character to another, from one first person account to the other.

How does a novel work itself out? Work against itself? Implicates, imbricates, involves. Turns in on itself. Enfolds and unfolds, the wandering and wondering spirals of the trilogy's figures.

I woke, as if starting from sleep. Not suddenly or abruptly but still this describes the kind of strange awakening. One slowly comes to, and yet continues to think as one does so, gradually reformulating what is occurring. It seems as if I followed myself, during this strange awakening. I don't know how to tell the succession of this dream, as each of the parts of the waking, up till now, seem to be linked together in some uncanny way. But here is the best I can make of it.

I recovered the sense of a plodding and wondering about in some wilderness, very arid and uneven, like the Painted Desert with its mounds and folds. Strange floating and interposing snatches as of a kind of cycle of this wandering. Finally, "I" seemed to be in some kind of gully or canyon, at the bottom of a steep incline of very reddish gray-brown gravel-like stuff. I "remembered" as if I had somehow wandered down this slope and now was trying to go back up.

This slope began to lean very heavily against me, as if it were so steep that it was actually tilting or tipping over onto me, by virtue of this sense. A sense, here rebus-like, of slithering up it on stomach, but as if it were pressing against me, bearing down on me, a combination of the two opposite orientations: that I was clinging to it and it was weighing, as if falling, on me.

Somehow I had an understanding of some point from which I had departed that I was perhaps seeking out. But I was lost. And then, there was the sense that these thoughts were going on as some kind of muttering and as if another awareness were trying to pull through all of it. Somehow came the odd premonition of others, of other people “knowing” and speaking about the lost one, that this other was delirious, either from this wandering, or that was why this other had wandered. But somehow the thought came to me that this realization had been made known to “me,” as if after the fact, almost as if my awaking were from this delirium of which I had retained enough of a dim perception as to now perceive again what it was that had occurred.

There occurred, somewhere in this, something about language – about Spanish or French, but merely a shard, a fleeting suggestion, that somehow some detached aspect of all this had to do with a strange attempt to speak in another language. As I actually woke, I was overcome with the idea that I had just dreamed that I had been lost in such a way as if it had been delirium, that I must have dreamed that I was so utterly lost and alone that all perception had begun to swim in my head like some syrup of sensations, and that making my way up some hill had become the last groping, exhaustive movement, perhaps the fatal one. But my waking had been incorporated into the dream as if I had been saved – and vice versa? – the dream into my waking.

Lying awake, I was so struck by the transference of the perceptual ground, but I also began to remember very strange things. There was an erotic cast to it, and this seemed to be involved with the flushing out of memories I hadn't had in a long time, and these in turn were



striking with all the more squalid and embarrassing sense, like an unexpected scandalous revelation. The next conscious thought was that I must've dreamed a cryptic version of being utterly alone, so receded into myself, as to make me even disoriented with respect to what it is to be, or how one is, alone. This left me with such a strong, terrible impression, I had the sudden desperate impulse to call someone, and just as easily thought of the person from the embarrassing far-off memory, as if no matter what association were a path to someone else, no matter how remote that person in actuality. I also noticed that I had indigestion, needed to go to the bathroom and was feeling the onset of an allergy attack.

Then I thought of Beckett. The trilogy. I thought of the whole formation of *Molloy*, then all three. Moran who "follows" Molloy into utter desolation. I even thought that I had just dreamed that, that my dream had been a staging not just of Molloy, Moran or the others in their solitude, or mental wandering, but also in the way that any two of them and all of them "sensed" each other.

I remember thinking that in my dream, my landscape seemed vaster, more foreboding, than some impression I got of an Irish or English countryside in *Molloy*. It was more like the Arizona desert. But it was also because I was the inhabitant of the experience – just as I try to remember a task, the task of a place, and perhaps how cold or arduous a progression it is, and then when I'm really there, I have a kind of ongoing amending or shifting sense of the proportions, the *time* that it takes, laid out before me, that nevertheless seems as much the horizon, open, arid as the minute of inexact memory – which I then, again, here, remember.

Thus, I followed myself. And the whole thing, which continues with this writing, was a progression strongly infused with paradoxical retrieval by a backwards-staggering consciousness or awaking, still half-blinkered and influenced by the supposedly previous perception. The

difference between a me now and a me then – me in my past and me now, and the me of my dream and the me of my waking life, and the past of my dream and the me of me now, and the past of my dream and the past of my waking life, and the various persons, tenses or inflections of me in my dream and now they seem to incorporate the waking ones; between the dream me and the fiction of Beckett, etc.

Part of the formula of Beckett's that the dream seemed to fulfill was the sense of being the inhabitant of this wandering so much that one has wandered away from a sense of wandering. To have so completely turned perception inside out as if by virtue of another('s) perception, delimiting but confounding one's own – one. Yet this provokes so much, about the apparent limit or distinction *between* other, between ones, between identities, I and any of my others, including these other me's, which others are also.

To be the one to whom I lost! And yet I am. For I that one is lost to me. Perpetually *there*.

Culture has already happened. Even the building of a culture has this orientation. But for a certain predication of this as a factor or attribute, property or even essence, of a generation, of an epoch or an era, as of or if *this* one, ours, etc., the sliding of this proposition towards its own cancellation also occurs.

The "Monster" dream treatment.

This dream was a process, a very fluidly developing montage, something of the movement or tempo of time-elapse photography. It unfolded or unfurled, much like the rolling

visual metaphorization of some animation which has occupied me as a model for fiction – part of the idea of fiction.

First, very vague. A sense of movement provided by developing forms, a kind of skeletal material which was recombining and reforming and growing all on itself, then flopping out, teetering and spilling over into further developments. The material was a kind of dark slats, but had the character of crystallization. Meshing and intertwining. It kept flickering between the sense of mechanical and organic. Then, as some part of it began to amass into a particular form and as I would begin to recognize this form, I began to notice this as the matter of my perspective. At first, or rather as projected backwards as previous to this later realization (as happens in dreams), “I” seemed to be located – that is, my point of view seemed to be located somewhere amongst all this development as if of a human scale surrounded by these formulations of fairly monumental proportions.

Then as this grand formation began to take shape, I was “above,” set off from, all of it, and this sense grew in proportion to the formation of this shape and as I “recognized” it. This positioning of “me,” this situation of this point of view, seemed to be made only in relation to a trace of some sense of having been otherwise situated previously, only known as a change in perspective. The shape took form against the background of continuing formulations, but projected itself emphatically, above and away from the rest. It folded out with very precise jutting and jaggging motions, nonetheless fluid.

It was recognized as gigantic even before it was “identified.” It was austere and dense, stone-like. It seemed to have a density and consistency, but this was also produced by its being made up of innumerable crossing slats, vaguely understood as worked together in all sorts of

angles. Then it assumed a very marked triangular shape, which I then recognized as the head of an alligator snapping turtle.

At once on this identification, the entire movement acquired the sense of this creature's, but on a grand scale, as if I were high above a planet as this leviathan slowly and vastly protruded its head, which extended from the rest of the mass on its own. I had the dual impression of being on two scales: the planetary, in which case this creature was as big and also was forming the sense of being this entire planet; and in some scale which afforded this proportion, as if so small that this creature was the entire horizon. But there was also this horizon effect, a kind of receding limit to the metamorphosing mass beyond which was a darkness that had a vague and allusive but impenetrable sense, rather like the field out of focus in a telescopic shot, but also as that would serve as a kind of "beyond," like space in general or outer space.

Almost as soon as this sense of one organism was struck, there was another transformation, or transition, and as only dreams can do, it seemed to be without duration, as of a sudden jump or change of scene or thought, but to bear up the sense of whatever duration transition would imply. The "body" resolved itself into another mass with a whole range of movements and activity, suggesting gurgling swamp, various sorts of revolutions relative to each other, and the frenetic scurrying about of microbes or bacteria or organisms seen through a microscope. All this as one swirling mass, with the sweep and arc of the spherical as in views of planets seen partially as if from orbit, in real space photos or science fiction films.

This mass maintained its sense of relation to the previous ones, the "turtle" and all. And it was as if the transformation was also a change in perspective or scale, as if I were in some other relation to the same mass.

Just as I thought when I was fully awake not long after this dream, doubtless the similarity with the scene in “The Empire Strikes Back,” where the cavity of an asteroid turns out to be the innards of a giant creature, was significant enough in the dreamwork, after the fact if not the source. But even that would have been a sieve for all the rumination on leviathan, in the Hobbes sense, on the Gargantua of Rabelais, that I had been accumulating for a monster project of my own already for several years. There was, however, one other thing brought to mind, a story that could have only more fabulous significance for being so anecdotal, removed, vague in attribution.

I seemed to recall hearing it at a lecture by Jürgen Habermas I attended at Berkeley, but some other, unknown speaker comes to mind as telling it. Was he someone who introduced Habermas, or introduced John Searle who introduced Habermas? Or was he someone at an entirely different lecture altogether? And this speaker in turn, I think I recall, removed it further, attributed it as something that occurred to even another speaker after the latter’s lecture. So, however second-hand, or however you express the further degree of that, however anecdotal, and poorly located by my memory, this is the tale that shines through:

After a guest lecturer on astrophysics – or metaphysics, the cosmos or cosmology – I don’t recall which – had finished his special presentation, an old lady from the audience went up to him and said that all that was nonsense, for she knew full well the world is supported by an elephant, who holds it up on his back, and the elephant stands on the back of a turtle. The distinguished speaker said, trying to be both gentle and insistent, “But, madam, what is the turtle standing on?” The old woman replied, “Oh don’t think you can get around me like that. It’s turtles from there on out.”

Ritual as writing. (*Mitra-Varuna* of Georges Dumézil, especially his introduction, in which he describes the importance of the sociological method, but then again in the first chapter where the rules for the flamen and Brahmin are explicated.) This has already been understood to a certain degree. But there is a sliver, here, a certain angle which produces a coordination, or an epiphany, that I would try to reconstruct. To rehearse. Repetition itself already in the act, action, before something that has only a literal or explicit recording value comes along. (Partly to bring in why the *law* was *written* – laid down.)

Returning to another topos of oneself.

What is the topology of the self – a self? What is the place of the self? What is it “like”? Sense. The sense of place, and the place of sense. Emplacement. When I return to my doorway after being away, for the day or longer on a trip, I am suddenly flooded with the sense of this place as a certain set of running themes. That I have returned to a sort of residue of myself. In this coming and going, my own situation is “sent” to me, and there is simultaneously a sense of estrangement and a sense of propriety. But this has implications for even the physical topology.

To have this sense of familiarity retrieve me, to have this sense, to feel that I belong to a place, is also to have the certain outside – the insides of a place, a building, the shelter, the place *in* which I reside, but which nonetheless I encounter as outside myself, especially if I’m to have any self proper, in the classical logical sense, to be a thing separate from that other thing, even if that thing is also my home, my dwelling, my property in that other sense, for no two *things* can occupy the same *place* – be inside me, where precisely the *sense* of this place is. But precisely?

How? *In*? Is there, is this, an *in* me? This homing that occurs seems a perpetual transfer of this inside/outside, across a threshold even of person, of identity. (All the furniture is outside the house – all the property is out of the proper, all the things are out of place.)

Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minnesota, p. 77).

Is it just by accident, or by a matter of a concentration or emphasis, that Nancy in “Literary Communism” (but also in the preceding essay) keeps referring to “gods, men and animals” and that he does so in relation to the example of a “stone never occup[ying] the space of another stone”? It would be too hasty to take issue, here, with Nancy for concentrating the matter(s), indeed any matter, on animate, humanoid, or anthropo- forms. Hasty because this is the case precisely historically that he is dealing with and himself calling into question. And he does refer to the “stone” as if to a species of “being.”

But provisionally, to utilize the possibility of this emphasis, I would add that a “stone” could not strictly belong outside the series of either conceptual individuals, metaphysically primed entities, nor outside the series of “singularization.” For if we must be exposed to the risk of changing identity, as Nancy goes on to say, then it could not be “limited” to the range of only humanoid modalities, else there really would be a distinction, and a limit to the extent of this risk. “Neither gods, nor human beings, nor animals are assured of their identity.” I add, nor stones. This has to do as much with the very argument that no two things occupy the same space.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Precisely because of the problem of the distinction of any thing, anything, *and* place. Idealism – Plato, Locke, Kant – could be precisely measured by this idea of the place *for* a thing. But materialism, through its own developments

(footnote continued)

As I am sure Nancy is aware, the problematic of Heideggerean distinction between man and animal(s) can be analogous and co-implicated with the entire explication of man and objects, most famously or schematically (at least by now) in the distinction Being-for-itself and Being-in-itself. One would have to ask of Nancy, is this being-in-common exclusive of “objects,” stones, etc.?

Even formalizing the terms of this distinction draws out the matter from a metaphysical standpoint. “Object” as a generic term, a genus of which other things are species; or a “inanimate”; or as that which stands apart from (and face or is faced by) subjectivity – and this is not or cannot be a subject. All this perhaps forms only a sidebar to Nancy’s elaboration, but it also risks being left over, and this, too, needs to be just as rigorously deconstructed.

Any of these singularities, including “man,” “god,” “animal,” “singularity,” “being-in-common,” etc., is also an object, can also be an object, must also have this same elaboration inasmuch as they are “objects” (or, what, there is something, some thing, which is not – in common – the verso of this explication, the underwriting, the reverse side). Objects because they

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in physics as well as metaphysics, would have to show us that things and place are merely matters of scale, since rock is energy congealed, which was already mass compressed, and all life – humans, animal, plant, single-celled, bacteria – comes from the same molecules. Perhaps, then, god is this place without a thing. Place and not thing.

This is the complication that remains within the frame of this literal-mindedness of *ob-ject*, what would lie over against something remaining to hold it, comprehend it. The greater complication is this frame, and, as if it could be distinct, the matter of metaphor. Matter precisely metaphor. For what sense is there to any “thing,” even for this comprehending subject that exempts itself, if not the sense that is already a matter of all these things, all this material, all this matter? We find ourselves already infused with, confounded with, the sense of stones, trees, wind, clouds; heat, water, air, earth – and this works both ways, what we just as much have to separate out in this belated consciousness, as what “we” or our projection, the personification of things, all the surroundings.



are the repositories not merely of all the subject's definition of object-ness, but also of this distinction. Just as Nancy spoke of the "myth of myth," there is also the object of the subject, at the very least in the grammatical sense. Where objects are tools, we can say there is the utilization of "utilization" in general, the tool of the theoretical elaboration of tools, the conceptualization, which is engendered in the same swoop as a tending subject that manipulates (everything Heidegger does with the hand, by way of "hand" – his legerdemain, however heavy-handed).

We must even pay attention to this extent of saying that being-in-common is literature, writing or spacing. For even by way of these, "we" are also objects. Or, what? Do we leave some object over from even the critique of production? Do we produce objects more assuredly by virtue of seeing some un-producible clump pre-existing any productive conceptuality or being somehow impertinent to such an analysis? Because in order to speak of this spacing, we must also include or involve (as if we had a choice) the spacing of objects, and the spacing that is objects. Writing would not then be strictly object, "thing," etc., because "thing" or "object" would then also be writing.

Which is also to bring forward or invoke or trace the archi-writing and the more general writing that is not merely the diegetic "content" of the activity of writing. Everything that has been said about the "text" is not limited to the strictly textual. This is even what Nancy is saying with regard to myth. That there can be the *object* of representation, understood at least as the material medium by which representation occurs – the canvas, parchment, paint, ink, photosensitive paper and chemicals, magnetic tape, etc., and not the least doubly emphasized here, *stone*, which retains a certain paradigm of writing, however much no longer to the letter – and not just the object of what the representation refers to, means also at another point that there

is the general representation *matter* of any or all objects (we can even venture that this is what is meant by “material,” analogous [only] with what Nancy says about the dual register of “myth,” especially with regards to one of these registers being the poetic-fictive, operational).

*It's raining.*

*Il pleut.*

*Es regnet.*

Etc.

It persists.

This form, “it rains,” that is primarily verbal, a verbal construction making a sort of reflexive subject. What subject? This note even for something like Nancy’s “Of Divine Places.” Mimic an anthropological explanation of divinity, to propose that even this would be part of a derivation of general force, of some general subject – avatars, personification or attribute of intent or will of natural forces.

Does the rain itself rain? Tautology, expression, such as the constative (with its onto-theological weight), “it is,” “there is,” etc. “I am.”

Or does the subject formation result incidentally owing to grammatical requirement? (There is nothing before writing – Blanchot on the Kabbalah.)

*The Infinite Conversation (L'Entretien infini)*, translator Sue Hanson’s forward.

The image of the elegant woman of philosophy, with whom one could have a conversation, as rare, infrequent, desirable in that sense. Whatever would be her features. Which is not to say that “elegant” is simply drawn to the “fact” like the classic attribute; perhaps better to say, “The woman of philosophy elegance.”

There’s the nomadic, drifting tendency, wanting to be drawn away by the features, but then one is drawn from somewhere.

This is to presume a kind of classic, even pathetic scene, but also not to presume a specific form for its “correction.”

Hanson was discussing Blanchot’s thought regarding “man,” and as much as Blanchot takes up this term as convention, but also citing it, then is the echo in Hanson’s own words of the “woman” who is other there. She scarcely mentions that specifically (mentions “woman” once). And as if looming there, the specific feminist argument, even if it amounts to nothing but a quibble on the form of this term: “man.”

And thinking of an interlocution with someone other, perhaps on the very subject of the dialogue in Blanchot, in the Blanchot sense, the thought of the image of the other that has the form of a scandalous banality, maybe we should say a carnal banality.

“Murderous strangeness.”

You can feel yourself foreign in the presence of a stranger. This might even constitute the invasion of the strange, the uneasiness that the strange(r) causes. That what is most personal, or nearest, can be lifted up, suddenly made conspicuous to myself. This has to be examined even in contemporary debates about “exoticism.” Because the clarification, admonishment or calling to question of the mastering view can also be issued from a proprietary position, if tacit. I can retort the naiveté and astonishment of the other concerning my features with the fact that they are not

extraordinary to me, but this can also be my refusal of the fact of my own formality, my lifting or floating.

This has everything to do (an enigmatic expression in its own right) with the erotic form of the encounter, what we could provisionally call the eroticisation of it, as if to supply some sense to the discussion. This, in turn, calls for another, as if, more general term to subsume – to subtend, perhaps to mediate, to gloss – *between*. Already spoken of in terms of Blanchot. But an enigmatic “between” – as always (which is, of course, what Blanchot would be “saying”).

× – The doubled inversion (“double chiasmatic invagination”) of a specific with a general. This is the general metaphoricity, of “senses,” of qualitative, qualifiers, of quality in general, as if distinct from metaphors as specific form. (Features, attributes.) Also, “supplementarity.” The «erotic» would come in as a specific example of attraction in general, but what “other” attraction there would be can then be seen as a special case of the erotic in general. (Consequences for Freud, certainly for specific applications, either by or of him by others – consequences for the sexual reductive operation, the reading of crypto-sexual, etc.)

Blanchot, of course, already complicates this in other ways. What he says of Narcissus, of the seduction of the image (the cadaver, for instance) that comes from “absence,” from the “lack” of adequation, immediacy, “actuality” – from the hole or blindness of the thing-in-itself, the thing there, the absence of “being” (here meant in a technical sense, i.e., outside the terms of categories of the subject/object relationship).

Freud. *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud* (ed. Rickman, 1957, Doubleday, p. 49-50 in “A Note on the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis”).

Freud says here that he cannot admit of a further splitting of the consciousness.

This in direct relation to a theory of consciousness that refuses an “unconscious.”

I venture to urge against this theory that it is a gratuitous assumption, based on the abuse of the word “conscious.” We have no right to extend the meaning of the word so far as to make it include a consciousness of which its owner is not aware. If philosophers find difficulty in accepting the existence of unconscious ideas, the existence of an unconscious consciousness seems to me even more objectionable.

Using the already introduced example of a Dr. Azam – a case of splitting of consciousness – Freud goes on to prefer a shifting of consciousness. “[T]hat function – or whatever it be – oscillating between two different psychical complexes which become conscious and unconscious in alternation.”

Now what is at stake, here? Is this a semantic issue? On the one hand, we could read Freud to say, applying a logic – a terminological or lexical one, but then that may be redundant – of descriptive specificity, that there is no use in denying the existence of “unconscious” material if you are then to simply describe such phenomena (or similar) as merely more than one consciousness. Here the very splitting itself seems to admit of the division of otherwise unified ideality, as if to assign different degrees of thought to various consciousnesses. Freud then says (according to this reading) the very point is that the phenomenon of different degrees of presence or access of mental material has the sense of not being conscious, thus unconscious, even by virtue of assigning them to simply another consciousness. If something is present to consciousness A, then it is unconscious to B. So, in methodological rigor, he is suggesting that there must be an account of this non-conscious material. But, and this takes us to the other hand, if the very notion of “conscious” is of this presence, thus applied strictly, why say that something is conscious when it is not, by simply saying it is another consciousness. But then to what extent is Freud dependent on just such a “philosophical” determination, the law of non-contradiction?

On the other hand, then, we can read this same passage as the thingifying, the reification of attribution. The attributive sense is taken over, inasmuch as already guided by, a nominative or constative logic that tends to station or objectify such a relation as conscious-unconscious. The very thrust of the decision to designate an unconscious is then a respect for the logical rigor of “conscious,” as he says in the first two sentences above. Thus, the “discovery” of the unconscious, the launching of the exploration of some new thing or domain, presumes as much the existence of that which it might also most radically qualify, delimit, question. The question, then, is to what extent Freud – and the whole matter of “unconscious” itself he may refer to – respects the notion of consciousness.

A formal note? By the end of this same essay, but signaling a change, unconscious has achieved the status of a capitalized noun.

General notes on *Primitive Passions* by Rey Chow.

Definite error in attributing to Derrida the location of presence in the voice. Corroborates herself with Kaja Silverman’s similar criticism (cf. footnote-endnote that refers to this). Tends to fall into a kind of broad iconic value projection along another axis, even as she criticizes others for this. This comes across to me as uneasy, but as too certain in her, of the value of oppositions she sets up.

The force of Derrida’s comment on the location of presence with speech and voice in the Western philosophical tradition is precisely that the degradation of writing as a corresponding gesture produces another possible interpretation, that speech is structured like a writing. (His formulation here is “archi-writing,” a “third term,” to use a formulation that Chow borrows.)

Chow then seems to fall into a position similar to Foucault's, which is to distrust, but thus to attribute, the primacy of the written, the literary, and as such the philosophical. But as Derrida argued in *Writing and Difference*, along several lines this amounts to ignoring the founding argument of Western *written* philosophy in favor of speech over writing. Why bypass this, since it serves Chow's purposes even better?

There is no doubt that there are modes of literary privilege, and that even within the framework of the metaphysical, writing can come to stand as a dominant form. But this is also the metaphysical project of the proper, mastery of a tool, an agency, a *techne*, thus Derrida's frequent admonitions about thinking that one can simply escape metaphysics. Also, in the general attribution of negativity to deconstruction, Chow seems not to have read much else in Derrida about affirmation, the "yes," the gift, etc., perhaps the whole discourse on spectrality, the phantom, of his more recent works. Chow could be rebutted then with the particular technical point that this partial appropriation of Derridean terms conditions her own work. There are other comments she has not taken into account, but also, there is another aspect to those things she has acquired that would qualify her or condition her argument with respect to Derrida.

But more generally we could read this qualification across her work as projective. The notions of "fidelity" and "original" are pertinent here. Even what touches on mediation, the third, the testamentary, something De Man also discusses at length, which could have provided another "source," or route, than the one she quotes. Derrida discusses this in his essay on Benjamin's "Task of the Translator."

Reflection on the reflection of the “animal.” (What more general term could one use for this? To imply, or gather it together in implication, with the impassivity of the other, the object, etc. This simultaneously calls for the specificity of the animal, again back in the other direction.)

This was sparked by reading of this in Lou Salomé:

He (abstracted human) needed to do that (merge himself with the powers of the outside world) as soon as consciousness forced him to recognize his distance from the outside world, so much more than the animals, which remain in instinctive union with it.

See also the section in *The Freud Journal*, “Wed. Discussion: The Personal Element in Philosophy” (p. 69) for remarks of Salomé on the difference between the psychoanalytic view and philosophy. Here the whole problematic of trumping “metaphysics,” or philosophy. Strands taken over and operated by psychoanalytic, etc. “Know Thyself,” etc.

But what is the debt that psychoanalysis owes to *adequatio*: the conception itself of the adequacy of conception? What is reflection a reflection of? Does “recognition” introduce this fact outside of itself, or is not recognition this division itself?

The jealous leap. In the economy of masochism.

Discovery, invention and envy. The “drive” of desire, custom, habit. Repetition compulsion and creative variance. What is it that “produces” the instance of discovery? (Using the form of this question.)

*The Phenomenology of Spirit (The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated J.B. Baillie, Harper's 1967, p. 33).



The problem of the prime mover again, this time in philosophy as explication of itself. Once again, the evidence is that everything has a cause, from which follows that there is something which doesn't – outside itself!

Philosophy alone must try to justify its own conception, because it is and claims to be the most comprehensive type of knowledge; and without such a justification from itself it would require a still higher form of knowledge to justify it, and so on *ad infinitum*.

What justifies this? Is this condition, demand, requirement, properly philosophical in and of itself? In which case it is also a tautology, an *ipse dixit*, which can have a formal truth, both absolute and provisional. Let  $x$  equal . . . All right. Let's. Good thing he wasn't around for Gödel's theorem.

Hegel's preface (p. 68) where he speaks of the bud, the blossom and the fruit. The whole in its seed: the preface as the germinal form of the work, even given off by it, left over after.

Derrida's reading of the preface and supplementarity.

Definitely Hegel's strength, his contribution, to account for process, for these stages as not mere contradictions of each other. Note also this remark (p. 69):

For the real subject-matter is not exhausted in its purpose, but in working the matter out; nor is the mere result attained the concrete whole itself, but the result along with the process of arriving at it. The purpose by itself is a lifeless universal, just as the general drift is a mere activity in a certain direction, which is still without its concrete realization; and the naked result is the corpse of the system which has left its guiding tendency behind it.

Here already is the issue of simplifications of Hegel, either by him or by others, and whether the subtleties or nuances do not amount to the same precepts (as the reductions or simplifications). Check this:

To help to bring philosophy nearer to the form of science – that goal where it can lay aside the name of *love* of knowledge and be actual *knowledge* – that is what I have set before me.

Is this Hegel's task? Does this make him truly un-Greek? What sort of endeavor is this? The fruit without the blossom perhaps? Everything that could be said here about desire, Hegelian desire in the general sense, but also in the sense of Hegel himself, of Lacan inasmuch as he was also Hegelian. This makes it also too easy to give a Freudian/Lacanian or even Derridean reading: the *desire to be*, the conflict or paradox of this, since one is projecting, enacting a project or acting as a project, an anticipatory "state" or act that has in mind an end but that then precisely reads in the absolute by virtue of this end, and as a result is not then adequate to a current or preceding state.

Note also the repeat here of the Kantian scheme of the technocratic goal of knowledge, with philosophy presiding at the top, over all the rest, its presumptions in the hands of a few. A kind of intellectual aristocracy, if not patrician state.

Hegel's commentary on the Romantics, criticism of empty depth, of perhaps pat truths, too easily had. Sacrosanct and not to be reasoned. Compare Kant's preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Then also, Hegel situates himself between Kant and, for example, Schelling. The "night in which all cows are black," etc. Hegel distinguishes himself, on the one hand, from Kant's rational reduction to subjectivity, which amounts to abstract substantiality. This is Hegel's proposition here – watch for follow-up on this (in the main text). And on the other hand, Schelling (perhaps) may combine itself with the being of substance, but then the method itself may fall into the same bare absolute. Hegel's difference? Mediation (p. 82).

Notice there how this becomes the issue – but in the name of what? Perhaps too easy now to characterize this as a dispute on *how* to explicate the Absolute, and not as any essential critique or questioning of that presumption. See particularly the end of this paragraph, beginning with:

While the embryo is certainly in itself, implicitly a human being (*für sich*); man is explicitly man only in the form of developed and cultivated reason, which has made itself to be what it is implicitly.

The last sentence then states this matter in terms of the selfsame *and its* opposition.

“[H]as not set aside the opposition it *involves*.” (My emphasis.)

This is the parallax of Hegel. The gist of his statements can be made from a certain angle, a certain context, a worthy or even necessary critique. But what is this making? In the example of the embryo, is there not a teleology at work that is all the more *certain*, instated, ensconced, and tacit, for being more refined? Isn't the force of the enterprise to take back in everything that was left over in those other accounts (Kant, Schelling, etc.)?

*P* and not-*p*. (Or the ontotheological problem.)

Hegel – Spinoza – Anselm.

Or, of course, God and not-god. The ontological argument is always a stipulation about *nothing*. About “nothing,” as such. We know this too well to even hear what I'm getting at. Nonexistence is supposed to be absurd, to be the absolute not of the already presumed what. The argument is rhetorically deficient, or null, since it *negates, a priori* one of the options of the argument. If “not-*p*” is to have any force whatsoever, it must be granted the barest possibility beyond mere supposition. Even if the latter were not the case, then suddenly the entire argument is reversible with the force that bears it, for then there is this:

Let  $p = \text{not-}p$

Then, it is just as true that there is the idea, mere supposition, conception, etc., of this nonexistence, and the entire ontological argument is just as good again for the opposite proposition. In some ways, then, absurd as this may be to those faithful of so little faith, “not-*p*”

is more inclusive, is exemplary, is the term which contains the consciousness of the other and itself, of both, like Hegel's "slave consciousness."

God, in effect, to encompass everything, would also have to encompass "nothing," even the existence of a purely absurd formality of doubt. (There was, of course, the void, itself "negated," as Hegel is keen to express, by God, which raises again the entire problem and paradox – ontological? – of something/nothing in any absolute sense, the problem of totality and supplementarity, of comprehension, again of completeness.) As Weber argues (in the intro to Anselm, Open Court Classics, 1962), God cannot be said to have justice, to be just, not even can we say then, "God is justice." Justice is more correctly coextensive with God. Then why not also doubt? Injustice? Falsehood? *Nonexistence*? The void? Or are there some things, once again *alien* to God? Outside of him? And any less so as conceptions? A something outside of his *comprehension*, what he encompasses, something outside of everything? Which is more incomprehensible, this remainder of totality, universe, absolute – or nothing?

From a certain standpoint, positively stated (as perhaps Hegel did) this very perfection and non-temporal relatedness of God, not being contingent on any contingency, is "nothing." What could describe "nothing" as well. Exponentialization of the argument: following Hegel commenting on Kant. Of Kant's argument, "If we think of a hundred dollars, this conception does not involve existence," Hegel says this:

That is certainly true: what is only a conception does not exist, but it is likewise not a true content, for what does not exist, is merely an untrue conception.

It doesn't suffice to guaranty conception or existence with each other, since conceiving something as necessarily existent is only as much again dependent on conception.

Anselm, *Proslogium*: "I began to ask myself whether there might be found a single argument which would require no other for its proof than itself alone . . ." The history of the ontological dream (the story of my life, as they say).

See the next paragraph. A story of resistance and it's devices? Check the language. Once he left off the search, it kept forcing itself on him like an "importunity." The return of the repressed? Obsessive compulsive? Tempting to read a lateral jump here. Can't find a solution? Then make something of the situation.

Statement – form – truth (assertion or position).

It's always posed as a question of the constative, of the pure effacement, in favor of what is referred to: this is the sense (traditional/ordinary) of *reference*. So the naïve, presumptive, unsolicited form of the assertion (a solution, or product) is always posed against any denial. (This in itself provides an axis of deconstruction.) But the complication here, what complicates this opposition of truth to falsehood, of fact to non-fact, is that the *form* of the false assertion is also assertion (all this, looking way ahead now, complicates even ethics). The critique of falsehood, then, must involve not merely the declaration of the lack of the value of truth, but also of assertion of truth, of the very form of assertion, something which then is generalizable to include within its purvey (and it's not merely a question of results) the form of any assertion. Otherwise, there is nothing but the contest of assertions. The possibility of counterfeit, duplicity, must be accounted for, which is then corruption, which does not merely occur *outside* of truth. This could be expressed as qualification, in a kind of viciously generalizing way – not

qualification as the absolute condition, as the arrest or final station, or as fixed attribute or property, but as the perpetual situating.

The very act or gesture of reduction, to one, must make a division, must refer to something other. (Even if that something is the sort of generalized or abstracted remainder, “nothing.”) This is the space of representation. If nothing else, the absolute would require this frame larger than itself by which, if not in which, to present or produce, to demonstrate, itself. This “fall,” as it were, always into division in the very act of resolution or reduction, is also statement, figure, play, thus how even the truth requires a mode of representation, which further entails all the cast involved for all the intricacies of context of perception. The truth requires literature as much as, if not more than literature requires the truth. But these/this will always involve this spiral of the frame, scope, scale.