Title of Thesis:
Thus, saith the Serpent:
Eight flesholds on a descent into word

Name:
Susie Lingham

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This thesis is presented for the degree of MA (Honours) Writing at
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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
I declare that this thesis, 'Thus saith the Serpent: Eight flesholds on a descent into word' is the product of my own research and has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

Susie Lingham
1998
ABSTRACT

_Thus, saith the Serpent_ is a fictocritical and interdisciplinary speculation on the signification of engendered subjectivities - engaging with concepts from art history, critical theory, philosophy, religious philosophy and iconography, science, visual art, fiction and poetry.

The ‘actions’ in the work are mental processes involving durational perception in time. Narrative, if it appears at all, does not arrive, derive or result - rather it accumulates as consciousness.

Operating as a zoetrope, the work revolves around eight ‘openings’ in the body - chosen for their visceral, metaphysical and ideological permeabilities - which act as ‘Doors’ into each chapter:

- **Cleavage**: the tiniest mappable distance in cell division;
- **Hymen**: controversial site of female ‘virginity’;
- **Larynx**: cleft ‘lips’ vulnerable to colonization and ‘possession’;
- **Ear**: the unclosable organ, always open to suggestion;
- **Blindspot**: the gap in vision that allows vision to be processed;
- **Synapse**: the tiny impulse-sensitive interval between neurons in the brain;
- **Navel**: the point of absolute memory of uroboric continuity with the mother, a vampire’s memory, blood-permeable;
- **Cloaca**: non-function specific passage, viscerally absent in humans, but ‘fissured’ into existence through desire.

Each opening is ‘cloacal’ - functioning simultaneously as both entry and exit point of/for experience. Linking the intervals of the ‘zoetrope’ are passages of ‘Descent’ interspersed between openings.

The descent into word is a continuum: a fall into hermaphroditic being. There is no arrival because word, being always flesh-held, is always only ever beginning.
Contents

Door One: (Cleavage)
"It suffices to Abridge an Evolution."

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Door Three: [Larynx]
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"When Blackholes Resonate Together or Inhibitions
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Door Six: ≅Synapse≅
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LIST OF IMAGES
In sequential order of appearance:

Title page
M.C. Escher Snakes, woodcut in three colours, July 1969.
Escher: The Complete Graphic Work, eds. F. H. Bool, Bruno Ernst, J.R.
Kist, J.L. Locher & F. Wierda, trans. from the Dutch Leven en Werk, van
M.C.Escher by Tony Langham & Plym Peters, The Netherlands,

Start of Descent
M.C. Escher, Covered Alley in Arrani, wood engraving, November 1931.
Escher: The Complete Graphic Work, p 223

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Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912, Louise &
Walter Arensberg Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
Duchamp: Passim, a Marcel Duchamp Anthology, ed. Anthony Hill,
Australia, G+B Arts International Limited, 1994, p 44.

Door Before Each Chapter
Gateway to Khorsabad, Assyria. (image in negative and slightly
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Place, two-human-headed bulls still grace one of the gateways to Khorsabad
in [this] 1853 photograph[...]
pp 112-121: "Only one of the two bulls was destined to reach the Louvre;
the other fell from its raft into the Tigris, never to be retrieved. "In the
Louvre now there are "two bull colossi guarding a mock doorway - the one
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but once vertical, it exhibits left-right symmetry.)

Cover 2
D. Stolcius von Stolcenberg, Viridarium chymicum, Frankfurt, 1642.
Alexander Roob, Alchemy and Mysticism, Bonn, Taschen, 1997, p 435:
"The eternal war between the 'eagle's blazing' (binding agent) and the 'lion's
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*Theatrum chemicum Britannicum*, London, 1652. (Roob, p 408)

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Van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*. (detail.)

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Judy Chicago, *“Virginia Woolf” Plate*, *The Dinner Party*.

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Van Eyck, *The Madonna with Canon Joris (George) van der Puele, St. Donatian and St. George* (detail). Bruges, Municipal Museums.
Dhanens, p 224.
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*Time and Space*, USA, Time-Life Books, p. 48-49.

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*Escher: The Complete Graphic Works*, p. 293.

**Door Five : Blindspot**
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A. Kircher, *Ars magna lucis*, Amsterdam, 1671. “Chart for the calculation of solar and lunar eclipses. According to ancient legends, these were due to a dragon swallowing the heavenly bodies and spewing them out again.”  
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Albrecht Dürer, *Der Zeichner des liegenden Weibes*. c. 1525.  

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A. Kircher, *Ars magna lucis*, Amsterdam, 1671. “Chart for the calculation of the daily rising and setting of the moon and the degree of its waxing and waning. In the outer circle: the 28 phases of the moon.”  
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*Escher : The Complete Graphic Work*, p 70.

Descent

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Cover 2
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'Time!', *Colors*, April-May '98, p 23.

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Isometric diagram of *États Donnés* by Jean-Francois Lyotard.


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Thus, saith the Serpent
eight flesholds on a descent into word

Susie Lingham
Preface

- Frame: Shape & Rhythm
Speculative and fictocritical, Thus, saith the Serpent operates as a zootrope - as a rotation, a revolution of framed 'viewfound' perceptions which stem from bodily experience: that is, sensory perceptions at focussed sites in the body. Each chapter is a door or opening focused on a 'bodily' site: Cleavage; Hymen; Larynx; Ear; Blindsight; Synapse; Navel, & Cloaca - and each functions simultaneously as both an exit and an entry point off/for experience. The intervals of the zootrope are linked by 'Descents' which are interspersed between the openings of each Door and serve to weave the "gaps in the retinal impressions" and fill them out "by a projection of memories" - so that a continuous flow of conscious, unconscious and subconscious is set up and fiction, memory and critical theory interfere and engage with one another. There are, in the rhythm of the texts, gaps - and the reader is invited to take pleasure in these gaps: to linger over, pick up clues and invent bridges. Personal memories, dreams and the mythic past co-exist with the present self - a 'possession' crowding within, sharing real space and time.

Using dialogue between real (living and nonliving) and fictitious characters within a poetic context, Thus, saith the Serpent de/constructs a continuum of shifting realities and intersubjectivities to develop a hypothesis of 'myriadly sexed' Being. A singularity that contains and is contained by the multiplicities of sexual differences. This hypothesis is a process of working towards a sense of the intersubjectivity of Being.

Overarching the work is the voice of the waxing and waning Moon - whose utterances are inserted into the 'main' texts between 'lunalac' (punctuation marks on the page and in the sky) - as parentheses which change symbolically through the chapters. As an 'entity', or character, the unchangingly changing Moon also undergoes metamorphosis. It is a witness and eavesdropper of Earth's history, whose memories weave familiar stories/histories and geographies experienced through the timescale of elusive palaeontology. This is the changing (and perhaps unreliable) voice of reason as well as the self-effacing voice of illusion, of 'lunacy', urging the destruction and reconstruction of the Self.

Technology, as an extension of Being, does not figure as subject or content, but as strategy. It functions to 'frame' moments. There is a film camera zooming in, panning out, fluidly changing perspectives and 'jumpcutting' in the construction of certain Doors. In other Doors, there is a textual and auditory approach to this 'occularity' - so that the 'scenes' in each Door are 'framed' by a different apparatus. These devices
(visual, auditory, textual) conjure a mythic space that can only be 'detoured' as it is configured as haptic, and not of a socio-temporal 'reality'.

The various images that appear 'text-wrapped' within the chapters operate within the zootrope's gaps - as a conjunction, not explanation, to the texts. Similarly, the texts do not 'explain' the images - the images 'speak' for themselves and through their own device - visuality. There is no hierarchy of forms - neither text nor image are privileged.

As imagination is crucial to any understanding of speculative thought, a 'critical' fiction becomes the natural medium within which to work. Thus, saith the Serpent seems to 'be' a shifting between meditation, reflection, speculation, analyses and fantasies on the nature of nature, the nature of art, the nature of belief, the nature of sex/sexuality, the nature of thought, the nature of perception of experience and the nature of the need to translate experience. It is a disembodied text in orbit around the magnetic pull of 'enfleshings'.

**Key: Concepts & References**

*Thus, saith the Serpent* is a ficctocritical and interdisciplinary speculation on the signification of engendered subjectivities - engaging with concepts from:

- *[Art history and critical theory](#)* (Rosalind Krauss, Foucault.)
- *[Psychoanalysis](#)* (Freud, Kristeva, Irigaray.)
- *[‘Engrafted’ philosophy](#)* (Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari.)
- *[Religious philosophy and iconography](#)* (images of multiplicity in Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism and ancient European religions.)
- *[Concepts from the astrophysical and biological/biochemical sciences](#)* (Kepler and the ellipse; Barbara Mcintosh's discovery of the 'crossing-over' of chromosomes during cellular division; Charles Pellegrino's palaeontological and archaeological assessments of human history; Richard Dawkin's close analysis of evolution in nature; and the recurrent theme of the 'evolution' of reptilian scaled dinosaurs and mythical serpents into warm-blooded feathered birds.)
- *[Visual art](#)* (each chapter is accompanied by relevant images including the work of Van Eyck, Duchamp, Escher, Chicago, Durer. See 'List of Images' p 10.)
- *[Poetry and fiction](#)* (Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, Michael Ondaatje etc.)

The 'actions' in the work are processes - mental processes that involve perception in time - durational - but a collection of instants, and every
moment present. Therefore narrative, if it appears at all, does not arrive, derive, or result - rather, it accumulates as consciousness. The processes are of retrievals of memory, voices from the past; reconstructions; conjurings of hallucinations, demons, angels; erasures of speech through speech or silence; and flight. And against these acts, in counterpoint, the constant motif of descent into intensities of experience; desire; deaths and 'rebirths'. There are no motives; only motifs.

• Hinge : Motifs

- ‘Doors’/Openings
  "And at each threshold or door, a new pact?"³

With this question from Deleuze and Guattari, I use - and abuse - the metaphor of the 'Door' to mark entry into this textual journey. I use the Door as my viewing, vanishing and virtual points - into states, between states and over states. Like Escher, when he showed that "zenith, nadir and distance point" are 'interchangeable'.⁴

This exploration is very much a haptically conceived/perceived 'body' with multiple openings mapped through curved, tangential lines of connection. Again - the gaps are not only the slits, but the intervals between the slits of the zoetrope - and operate as a poetics of 'curvature' for the work.

Why Doors? Doors, as objects, are intrinsically dual - entry and exit points - and, as metaphors, are multiple - thresholds, borders, edges. As a motif, the Door, like double-headed Janus, the Roman Door god, is an ambiguous threshold where one can, in the midst of the present, look back at the past and ahead into the future. The symbolism of the Door appears in esoteric Buddhist/Indian writings - The Sun Door - both the "Gate of Life" and the "Portal of Death" - with Agni as the "Door God", a Guardian of the same Door at which the Buddhas are said to "stand and knock".⁵ Reminiscent of Jesus' 'Behold I stand at the door and knock'. Dionysus too, was 'born through two doors, one female, one male [...] the name of his ritual song: di thura" - has been translated as the "double door."⁶ - referring to his having been 'born again'.

The Door is a "border metaphor [...] holographic in that [it] recreate[s] the whole social order, but this is merely to say the "whole" in its fragmentation, as would Deleuze and Guattari."⁷

Standing at the point of fragmentation between social orders, the Door is a zone of intensity, a threshold which transforms and is transformed with every crossing,
But perhaps more than 'entry' or 'exit', the motif that is expanded upon is the degree of permeability between states, as in the hypnagogic and hypnapompic thresholds of dreams.

- The Number 8
Why eight Doors? The 'rotation' of the zootrope motif is one that maps a Fall, echoing the 'descent' process - from the Vertical to the Horizontal, the Tree of Life to the Deleuzian Rhizome of Intensity. This is marked in the choice of the figure 8, a significant number in many cultures and areas of life - from music to religion.

The significance of 8 as a numerical unit comes from a variety of sources - the 8 by 8 squares on the chessboard (8 white and 8 black); the connection with the Buddhist 8-Fold Path to Nirvana; the Gnostic (Paracelsian) idea of Creation - that Adam was an "Eighthness"; the Eight Immortals of Taoism; the Octave in Music - the eighth note being the 'Door' point of exit from one scale and entry into the next. And, most particularly, 8 is also the symbol of Infinity, standing on its feet. Or its head - depending on one's choice of perspective. From the vertical and finite, 8 falls, and transforms into the infinite horizon.

- The Bodily Thresholds
The eight bodily orifices are 'openings' into each chapter and chosen for their visceral, metaphysical and ideological permeabilities:

The Cleavage: the tiniest 'mappable' distance in cell division - the 'splicing' that generates new life; the Hymen: controversial site of female 'virginity' - 'penetrable' spectral membrane through which womanhood is supposedly attained; the Larynx: cleft 'lips' vulnerable to sexual initiation, colonisation through language and 'possession' through xenolalia and glossolalia; the Ear: the uncloseable organ - always open to suggestion and prey to seductive resonances; the Blindsight: the gap in vision that allows vision to be processed - the point of physical unseeing that makes cognition and recognition possible; the Synapse: the tiny impulse-sensitive interval between neurons in the brain - readily susceptible to surrogate chemical influences; the Navel: the point of absolute memory of uroboric continuity with the mother, a vampire's memory, blood-permeable; and finally the Cloaca: ambiguous, non-function specific passage of birth and waste, ingestion and excretion, viscerally absent in humans, but 'fissured' into existence through desire - desire that exceeds and rewrites bodily functions, orifices and appetites.

Art, language and experience are produced, consumed and processed in an unending cloacal cycle: a cycle that renders cloacal all our permeabilities, so that perceptions interface with each other and become layered, of many stratas.
- **Serpent and Bird**/ The ‘Descents’ and Flight

A metamorphosis - or ‘metaphormorphism’ - describes the textual encroachments that take place between groundhugging serpentine meanderings and gravity-defying winged flight. There is a constant play on the states between these two extremes - shifting between ‘fusion’ and ‘splitting’ that has occurred over millenia. While in ‘sequential’ prehistory, the pterosaurs achieved flight without feathers, (as does the bat), it is the image of the Archaeopteryx fossil that is used here - evidence of dinosaurs at a point of evolutionary change - the point where they contemplated on the possibility, and achieved feathered flight.

The always already diabolical image of the Serpent appears in the text as a constantly metamorphosing entity - from the ‘upright beast’ of the Garden of Eden (later cursed and cast down to fall on its belly to eat ‘dust’) - to other mythical creatures, winged and unwinged - from Angel to Demon to Basilisk to the Kundalini (coiled energy at the base of the spine in ‘chakra’ theory). So it is protean - changing forms endlessly. But always with desire and potential to step, ‘descend’, into flight.

The ‘Descents’ are intervals between the Doors and each flight down the stairs is a meditation on yielding to the inexorable pull of gravity.

- **Parenthesis**

The Moon literally (as a grammatical device) and figuratively (as a metaphorical device), performs as parenthesis and within parentheses. The symbol of the parenthetical device changes with each chapter - moving from the basic ‘lunae’ form (round brackets) which takes its name from the crescent-shaped Moon, to square and curly brackets [ ] & { } - to the less orthodox pairs of ‘holding devices’: ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ ★☆ - ornaments that clasp, grasp, fork, pierce, and dovetail together Lunar interruptions and asides.

- **Gardens**

Each Door opens into a metaphorical garden - a space through which Nature and Art link hands and dance. We begin our wanderings at the Garden of Eden; walk through an ancient Theran room blooming with the yellow lilies; wander at Flon - the subterranean navel of the world; wander the rainy, musical gardenscape of Debussy; meditate on the Lotus Pond in India where the scions of the Bo tree under which Buddha reached enlightenment still grows; dream in the synaptic gardens in the brain, where the thousand-petalled lotus blossoms; wait in the ‘Garden Inclosed’ - an image of the womb as a labyrinth of pleasure, sexuality and fecundity and finally, we take a turn in the mythical Gardens of - perhaps - Babylon, hanging somewhere between space and time.
- Ships
There is an allusion to the 'ships of theory' - being theoretical constructions, text and paper foldings. These ships in miniature can carry only thoughts and disembodied abstractions out to drift on seas in which we, as densely 'fleshed' physical bodies, would immediately sink; drown. So, we sail dangerous oceans by disembodied proxy.

- The Ellipse
Thus, saith the Serpent operates elliptically. Beside's Kepler's embrace of the ellipse - the 'imperfect' circle - as the orbital path taken by celestial bodies around the Sun, there is emphasis on the non-containment of human 'androgyous' form within that 'ideal' circle - as imaged in the Hindu icon: Nataraja, the Dancing Shiva. The work starts off with a 'splitting' from an apparently 'heterosexual perspective', dwells within the differences of sexed and gendered experience, and comes to a 're-fusing' of the split. This reassemblage does not occur at the same point of the initial split. There are two foci. And their trajectories are not symmetrical. It is a constant spiral. The work traces this elliptical orbit of distance and difference between subjects that is mediated - however transiently - by a constant transformation of sexuality and desire.

- Images
The 'dual' images (translucence over colour) at the start of each Door superimpose each other, performing as visual palimpsests - both with each other and the following texts. Again, there is no privileging of text over image - visual meanings remain pervasive in the strata and substrata of the text, 'suggesting' connections into being.

- Threshold : In Closing

"All so called initiatory journeys include thresholds and doors where becoming itself becomes."

So we are already on the thresholds of other doors, eternally recurring, endlessly morphing. To blur the distinctions between human and animal, human and divine, male and female, death and life, food and waste - produces a rupture, an implosion of the signification of thresholds and categories. Thus, saith the Serpent is an attempt to trace the lines of cleavage; of rupture; of the thin dividing lines that mark thresholds which inch forward or backward when we are not aware. On our journeyings, we are subject to a hastening or delay of inevitable transgression. Of unavoidable crossings. So even if we will not cross, standing still does not guarantee any maintenance of comfortable distance from the edge.
Perhaps we are already falling - and until forced to catch escaping breath, think ourselves firmly on the ground, looking down, and only remembering a dream of falling - from the vertical to the horizontal, from the risings of phototropism to the spreadings of the earthy rhizome.

Eastern religious philosophy (in this context, the variations of Hinduism & Buddhism - in principle and not necessarily in practice) has always been simultaneously arboreal and rhizomatic. From the hedonism of the many-armed many-headed becoming-human and becoming-animal of the myriad Hindu gods/goddesses - to the headlessness, godlessness and becoming-imperceptible of Indian Buddhism. (And then, of course, the amazing magnetized swing back into the multiplicities of being/s of Tibetan Buddhism.) The existence of the rhizome does not negate the existence of the tap root, the tree. In the natural world, the banyan tree (fig-related) - aerially rooted, occupies both the terrain and subterranean space in its spreadings. But unlike the ‘proper’ rhizome, whose genesis or point of origin cannot be traced, the banyan has a mappable history. But then, there is the aspen - which behaves with the inscrutable manners of the ‘proper’ rhizome, yet ‘appears’ as an individual tree. Some room, we plead, for the anomaly!

So - perhaps - nursing a mild disenchantment of the very recently radical Deleuze and Guattari, we turn to a re-contemplation of the many-armed Sitting Buddha - the vertigo-inspiring wisdom of the Middle Way - head and torso vertical, arms in readiness for flight, legs folded into the horizon - a body configured within both x and y axes - and meditate on, rather than participate in, the fall into homogenization and ”becoming-crash machines [...] for the end of the world.”

And so, into the beginning of the word - which, because always flesh-held, is always only ever beginning.

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Susie Limbaey
MA (Honours) Writing Thesis
University of Western Sydney, Nepean
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NOTES TO THE PREFACE


2. MacAlisterJones, Mary, *Gaston Bachelard, Subversive Humanist*, USA, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991, p 37: "For us, consciousness of time is always consciousness that instants are being used, it is always active, never passive; in short, consciousness of our own duration is consciousness of progress in our innermost being, whether this progress be real or counterfeit, or even simply dreamed."


7. Hicks, D. Emily, *Deterritorialization and Border Writing* San Diego State University, p 54. (*Narrative Theory and Contemporary Writing*, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, Course Reader, 1996)

8. Deleuze and Guattari, p 156: “Pleasure is an affection of a person or a subject; it is the only way for persons to “find themselves” in the process of desire that exceeds them; pleasures, even the most artificial, are reterritorializations.”

9. Deleuze and Guattari, p 249

Land on your feet and the descent begins. I am always descending. In particular staircases; steep flights of them - not because I seek the exercise - you burn more energy ascending. This is what it is to fly, to be feathered, winged - the endless descent. And the stairs never stop descending, endless they descend after what seems some time (when seamless, time seems) my feet ache; I long for pause, look up and see how pointless it is to regret descent and start ascent as ascent seems endless now; the light above and beyond - only a painted dot. Not that there aren't landings - I seem to have descended past three - seemingly at rhythmically equidistant intervals. And the landings were distinctly different from the stairs. Made the distinction between stairs.

The descent according to Rilke: "... is quite dissolved and distributed inside me: here one room, there another, and here a bit of corridor which, however, does not connect the two rooms [...] [t]hus the whole thing is scattered about inside me, the stairs that descended with such ceremonious slowness, others, narrow cages that mounted in a spiral movement, in the darkness of which we advanced like the blood in our veins."

Like blood. I wonder about clean delineations and how intervals interrupt things. Interval as measured in music - the perfect fifth, the major seventh, the minor third, the augmented something or - and - the diminished other. (The other diminished, the other, other augments. Its only natural.) Thus measured, a system of values and degrees adhere to these gaps - gaps which give rise to, arouse sensations; intimations of sensations; emotions; thrill-and-terror inspired shudderings. Distinct, these intervals. Distinctive. Before the advent - rather, the recognition of the already-advent microtone. That means black keys, white keys and all uncharted inbetween cracks. That means the fretless fingerboard. Like Adorno’s “smallest link”, it is “enigma in transit” - an “imperceptible inching.” Like bloodflow in the veins.


The descent according to Cixious “I say ascent downward because we ordinarily believe the descent is easy [...] Descending is deceptive.”

These landings. Becoming more elaborate, destinations almost. Tempted to linger and pause indefinitely at some but
then comes the longing. But this one is familiar. A snug cinema. Plush seats for only thirteen viewers set out in a gentle semicircle. Grotowski would be satisfied with that. No one behind the other, no hierarchy of height. I sit on the outermost left seat marked 13 in glow-in-the-dark paint. The film seems to have started without any one being there. Who knows how far into it's gone. Sort of black and white, greypink and flickering. Silent except for the sound of the projector whirring. A woman - can’t be sure - could perhaps be a mutant - a monster - with a memory of being or having been woman perhaps - coming down, descending - time-lapse cinematography, a zoetrope spinning at inconsistently changed speeds - so fast and inconsistent you saw the decomposition of the images - the breakdown, the coming apart rather than the coming together. So woman, mutant, monster - or was it women, mutants, monsters? All coming apart and descending together? (Coming apart because descending or descending because coming apart?) Descending is deceptive.

(Effects and causes racing each other. To be precedent. The first to descend. Bottoms up.)

Well, so much for a little diversion to vary the experience of descending - I mean actually descending stairs - what does that mean - actually? - the ‘act’ of descending? How did that word come to mean ‘in truth’; ‘really’? As you descend, you experience variations on that theme. You do it. Then you watch other people (nonpeople, mutants, monsters) do it on celluloid. So many enactments on celluloid. Cell is an apt abbreviation. Our cells defined as ‘live’ by sheer activity. Reenactments. You question your dimensionality. Framed and trapped and put on loop. Every microtonal movement stilled and strung together. A rosary. For others to finger in contemplation.

I descend to one of a multitude of possible beginnings. Or a possible end. I descend to Eden.
One
(CLEAVAGE)

"It Suffices to Abridge an Evolution."

The 'Cleavage' - tiniest mappable intercellular distance which splices open to allow for the regeneration of new life.

_in the Garden of Eden. The Hermaphroditic 'Eightness' of 'Adam/Eve' is split asunder, at their own request, by the Hermaphroditic Serpent. We witness the opening into being through cleavage, a widening of the 'infra-thin' gap that is always already present in intercellular relationships._

The heterosexual, the homosexual and the bisexual hermaphrodite as thesis, antithesis and synthesis. And as a tangent to this triangle, the hypothesis - that all desire is hermaphroditic. A look through the magnifying glass \footnote{At the process of the 'cross-over' in meiosis - the hermaphroditic beginnings of human life from the point when the egg and sperm cells 'unite', cell division occurs and chromosomes split to reunite into a new being - which comes into existence with both male and female gametes.}

With references to the Biblical 'Adam and Eve' and the Gnostic principles that the first human being was created androgynous - symbolically indicated by the "Eightness" - four female and four male elements - of its Being.

**KEY PERSONAE**
Hermaphroditic Adam/Eve, (S)(He): unitalicized
Serpent, S/He: italicized
Moón: (italicized)
“It Suffices to Abridge an Evolution.”

"[T]he hermaphrodite lacks nothing, even though it cannot be characterized as a totality. It contains the different sexes within itself, but also the enormous distances that separate and isolate those sexes." 2

In the beginning was the Eightness. 3 As two parts of four elements, they enjoyed many hours of permutations - as only well-tuned assemblages do.

Weary of wandering the garden - after marvelling at the story the figtree told of its cultivated relationship with the wasp; smiling at the orchid and its wasp and their mutual seduction of each other; and musing on themself and the Serpent and their wonderful late afternoon conversations on these relationships - the Eightness of (S)(He) - slept.

And while (S)(He) slept, a dream unfolded in their fused brain - unfolded between the hemispheres like the blue lotus on the pond in the wild, mutably fertile garden; unfolded like rightcurled young fernfronds clustering in circular secret conference under the trees; unfolded like the coiled millipede suddenly straightening and finding its myriad feet.

And (S)(He) dreamt of the enormous distances separating, isolating, estranging their sexes. It was a familiar and yet disturbing dream. (S)(He) journeyed across vast arid deserts, vastly unlike the verdant garden they so delighted in. They journeyed over bogs and rivers and oceans - so lost they could not find a single albatross to ask for directions. Nor a single Archaeopteryx. Nor a single forty-foot wingspanned Quetzalcoatlus 4 neither.


3. Pagel, Walter. Religion and Neoplatonism in Renaissance Medicine, ‘The Eightness of Adam and Related “Gnostic” Ideas in the Paracelsian Corpus’, (in collaboration with Marianne Winder) London, Variorum Reprints, 1985, p 119 - 139. “The story of the eight components of which Adam was created [...] is regarded as part of the Gnostic tradition [...] Adam is created androgynous and at the same time embodies all the components of the universe. This is symbolically indicated by the figure: Eight.”

4. Quetzalcoatlus, like the Pteranodon, is a pterosaur - closely related to dinosaurs - and had leathery wings, and unlike the Archaeopteryx, it had no feathers, but was covered by fine fur. (Dinosaurs, CD ROM, Microsoft Corporation, 1993.)
Never had ever such loneliness been known.
Never had ever such loneliness been sown within the vast isolating
distances of theirself.
Never had they ever felt so distant. So different. Their Eightness weighed
multiple and taciturn, like a group of paranoids in a consultation room,
allowing themselves only peripheral glimpses of each other.

They heard Dream-’T’s say ‘T’ in two voices, speaking at once, not saying
the same things, in different timbres, but in complete synchronicity. And
they dreamt of a memory of death: which was strange as they had never
died before. At least not in this present lifetime.

Thus the dream unfolded:
It is the back of the house. There someone - she - is buried. I move
toward the grave and realize her arm is visible, lying on the fresh dug
earth, as one does in bed, over tossed blankets. I find myself kneeling,
curious. I observe her arm is sheathed in a sleeve of heavy fabric clinging
tight and runched generously, low, around the wrist. Her hand white,
bloodless.

I find myself reaching my left hand towards the motionless arm and am
surprised when the hand grasps mine and pulls the body attached to it
upward on my drawn strength, drawn without my will.
I cannot remember seeing her face. Only her bloodlessness.

(And you thought did you not: I have slain the Red
Dragon. It lies bloodless at my feet. I have stripped - you
said, sipping tea that did, did it not? burn your tongue -
off its wings. It stares at nothing and will not taunt me,
will not haunt me with its eternal unwelcome return.
Buried, its wings cannot fly. Buried but it flaps,
struggles, unsettling the earth, breaks loose dirt above
and thrusts out, flapping in slow motion, shaking the
cloths off and returns home - home?)

I - and I too - think in horror - how did we come to
bury a living being - was she then not really dead?
And why so shallow a grave? In such a familiar and
yet neglected site - prone to erosion?

I find we have gathered around another site in the field and we dig
another grave, having marked the rectangle. We dig her grave while she
stands around us, pale, bloodless in a long black dress. She wants to get
to me - I am thankfully on the other side - we have the open grave
between us. As the digging continues I am horrified to see big fat
squirming maggoty worms in the fresh soil of the earth just dug - how has decay been displaced? She is on the other side, the narrow grave between us, and she wants to get at me.

Help! Very loudly in my brain but nothing is uttered. Horror climbs into my scalp crawling snakelike in my hair. We awaken.

- Where are we going to?
- We appear to be going to each other but cannot.
- Was that you? The bloodless one? Trying to get me?
- It was you too! We are one! We carry each other within.
- And we carry within what makes us different. It was a 'She'. You're more she than me.
- I'm as (S)(He) as you! Oh it is unbearable this distance between us! Its that 'grave' of space between! Where is Serpent to talk with us?
- Let us dream you in Serpent.

That expressed, what to do but wait? "Like desire, the love letter waits for an answer, it implicitly enjoins the other to reply, for without a reply the other's image changes, becomes other." Elliptical strategies, conjured to delay the vertiginous intervals of yet "another waiting" - the abyss hypothetically strung with supposed rope bridges, never there enough to cross.

And they dreamt of the longest bridge of meaning that hung between the abyss.
And they dreamt of the spanner of that drop.
And they dreamt of the curved, thin Moon, slowly slicing the light that bridged them, and eager to insert parentheses between utterances.

- You summoned?

- Tell us why this vast loneliness comes between us now in sleep.

- Between? Ah - you've felt the fissure.

The Moon suggests: (You've felt the parenthesis.)

- Why are we lonely when we have each other?

- You don't have each other - you are each other.

- How can one body carry so much distance within? So much space? So much difference? Why this \textit{clef}t between us?

- \textit{Let's think about the word: “Cleave.”} An intense, magnetically bipolarized, enigmatic, ambiguous word; a paradox incarnate in fleshly, sexualized text. A word made flesh. A hermaphroditic word.

("\textit{Eclipses - Suns - imply}" \textit{And Moons. And Earths. And Matter. And Shadowmatter.})

- This word, three in one, a synthesis, contains the polarities as equal and opposing forces as well as the attraction of the opposing forces. This hollow between breasts, breasts imply; this division, union imply; this tendency-to-fuse, tendency-to-split imply. \textit{Cleave} as a word, bristles with sheer ‘will to power’, to use a Nietzschean phrase. This is the word that’s been coming between you.

In embryology, we begin as a zygote - a one, a single cell, product of a fusion between egg cell and spermatozoon. And it is this paradoxical twoness of this oneness that spins us out on our endless journeys, eternal beginnings towards increasing multiplicity.

The 'crossing-over', a biological term for the phenomena of the recombination of genes of the same chromosome, occurs during meiosis - which is the breakage of two chromosomes and reunion after an exchange of parts.

"The frequency with which two characteristics recombine, known as their 'cross-over value' is an increasing function of the physical distance between the corresponding genes on the chromosome; this fact is used in 'mapping' the genes on a chromosome."

- What is this terrain, microscopic - with physical distance that can be mapped? How do we 'cross-over'?

- It is a terrain vast in its infinite smallness. Let's try mapping this marriage of forty-six chromosomes through a million-times magnified/multiplied phenomena that is the marriage of two hearts, heads, minds, mouths; four eyes, arms, legs; twenty fingers, toes, tropisms -


- We are not only doubly sexed in a psychological, Freudian ‘covetous’ way, and/or a Jungian ‘healing’ Anima/Animus way, or a conceptual Yin/Yang way - we are hermaphroditic from birth and prebirth, born of a pair of hermaphrodites. We are hermaphroditic in our biological blueprint. We are an alloy of the sexes.

- So the seemingly controversial statement “All desire is homosexual”8 made by Deleuze is controversial. In that there is no such thing as ‘homosexual desire.’ Neither is there such a thing as heterosexual desire. All desire is hermaphroditic. Masturbation is a manifestation of hermaphroditic love. Homosexual and heterosexual love are the products of the ‘shrinking, diminishing’ of - not the strata, (the shrinking of the strata being necessary according to Deleuze & Guattari for the making and maintenance of the Body without Organs”) - but the very plane on which the hermaphrodite is spawned. They are the maimed products of the small murders - the socially orchestrated dismemberment of the hermaphrodite - that lead to the separation of the sexes.

- But we are not separate.

- You and your separation are one. The separation/categorization of the sexual organs - organised and cultivated as a Culture - (the pun is intended - in the lab, culture is the medium for the ‘cultivation’ of separations/ extractions). They are Bodies with ‘cultivated’, extracted Organs. They are the halved bodies with singularly sexed organs - cultured as the cultivated aesthetics of African scarifications and elongated necks, cultured and cultivated as the shaved then drawn in eyebrow; the pronouncement of “man and wife” at a wedding; the drag Queen. All heterosexual and homosexual desire is cultivated. All heterosexual and homosexual desire is cultural.

- What are you proposing?

- This - admittedly very paradoxical - ‘Dialectic Triad - the heterosexual, the homosexual and the hermaphrodite are thesis, antithesis and synthesis. But what of hypothesis?


9. Deleuze and Guattari, ‘How Do You Make Yourself a Body without Organs?’, A Thousand Plateaus; USA, The University of Minnesota Press, (fourth printing) 1993, p 160-163. “[Y]ou have to keep small rations of subjectivity[...] to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. Mimic the strata. Don’t reach the Body [...] by wildly demystifying.” The difference between the “tonal” and the “nagual”! The “tonal” being the “everything” that leads to the “organization of the organism” in the strata; the “nagual” being the “everything” that “dismantles the strata [...] the important thing is not to dismantle the tonal by destroying it all of a sudden. You have to diminish it, shrink it, clean it, and that only at certain moments.”
The Serpent uncrossed and recrossed Her legs and smoked deeply from a licorice-rolled cigarette.

- *The heterosexual and homosexual oscillate between the Symbolic and the Imaginary - in that singular sexes are Imaginary and their separate singularities as halves of the whole - are Symbols of the separation.*

This therefore makes the only reality a paradoxical one. The hermaphrodite is the Real. That, to use a Lacanian phrase - 'sexual difference cannot be contained in any essential symbolic form' - is *true*. How does one contain a gap? But to suggest as Lacan does *that woman does not exist* because 'sexual difference cannot be contained in any essential symbolic form' is *untrue*. As it is untrue that the phallus is the sole signifier of difference - the Symbol - because it would not be a signifier if woman does not exist. If woman does not exist, there would be no difference for there would be only one, singular, sex.

- Therefore both male and female in this hypothesis are oscillations between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, oscillating between the Real 'middle'.

- *Exactly.*

*(As always, two hermaphrodites are better than one.)*

- For sexual difference is a void. A gap. This Cleavage as Distance, Absence, Eclipse, and of which Desire is constituted - is not a symbol. It can only be implied.

- Is this why we cannot seem to grasp our differences? Why we dream we travel far but there is no destination?

- *Marriage,* said the Serpent with another drag on her smoke, *- is the implication of this cleavage, and the Wedding a symbolic union of the sexes. 'And they twain shall be one flesh'.* A simulacrum of the hermaphrodite. But because each sex thus becomes a Symbol of itself, their 'auras' create even more distance between each other. More histories, more time, more memories, more culture. As Rachel Blau Du Plessis says in *Modifications of Romance*

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in Woolf**: it is "heterosexuality that ruptures the couple by elaborating the sexes." The Gap is Real. The gap widens. And because Marriage itself is an implication, a 'hint', it does not close the Real Gap - it strains to close the gap against the will of the equal and opposite Symbolic/Imaginary Sexes - and, in trying to pull two cultivated worlds together, a third world is created - the world of Desiring.

The Serpent offers (S)(He) a licorice paper and tobacco. Need a light?

(The cauterization begins!)

- Now let's propose an analysis of the concept of Marriage as implied in the ritual of a typical Wedding, the symbolic moment of union. Marriage as a desire-producing machine constituted by the assemblage of:

And the Serpent, with one long, very elegant finger, writes on water:

- **The Multiplicity.** 'Possessed' individual that each Symbolic Sex is. Woman with her multiple-personae 'Anima' multiplied by a multitude, Man with his multiple-personae 'Animus' multiplied by a multitude. Exponential. To the power of. "We are Legion".

- **The Contract.** Text, hence a Symbol/Sign. The 'expression' of Desire - which is the sheer breakability of the Promise. The Egg.

- **The Signature.** Two signatures. The nature of sign. Symbol of a Symbol. Absence Incarnate. Willed acknowledgment of the nature of words and names by the two Desiring Worlds. The desire to mark/make this moment 'Real'.

- **The Wedding.** Symbol Supreme with its entourage of attendant symbols - and note the necessity of a 'priest' or 'minister' to construct, through language, the bridge of union. And of course the very important witnesses - at least four pairs of eyes.

- **The Bride.** In veiled-virgin-white. Hymen as personae. The girl. The not-yet Woman. The Rose among the Lilies. Flowers in her hair, in her hands, at her feet. She is the 'fairest' flower of them all. Maimed and unwhole. Awaiting her deflowering union. It is time.

- **The Groom.** In black or in varying degrees of black. An eclipsed half. A walking castration-phobia. A victim of social surgery. Awaiting his devouring union. It is time.


- The Kiss. Two worlds touch, collide, crash, explode on Each Other. And always between, the third world who ‘marries’ them - the Agent, the Nectar seeking-Insect.33 The Accomplice-Witness to the brief connection, and the undisturbed ‘Difference’ which remains. Which always remains.

- The Cake & Champagne. Let us eat cake. For this is the Body. Sweet consumption. Sweet consummation. Leavened & sweetened - it is - some could say - a perversion of a symbol of the Sacrament - ‘ye shall be as gods.’14 White, effervescent blood - the symbol of the ‘Life’ of the Marriage. This is the Symbol of Desired Hermaphroditism. Restless spirit bottle/body-defying. Colourless, explosive, already evaporating. Already ‘becoming-imperceptible.’


- The Threshold. The new ‘state’. The crossing. The Bride, lifted across - thus she never enters - the Groom walks in in her stead - only one pair of legs - but two bodies - ‘And they twain shall be one flesh.’15 Deceiving the dogs that lie buried at the threshold.16

- The Bed. The plane of exchanging, interchanging intensities. The desiring-production machine. You show me your difference and I’ll show you mine. Make me more different from you than I already am. Make me feel All Woman. Am I Man Enough?

13. Shavrin, p 78.9: “The insect, [...] extrinsic to the parts of the plant it puts into contact, follows and records their divergences, affirms their disjunctions.”


16. Green, Tatuma M., The City of the Moon God, The Netherlands, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1992, p 72: “[A]t Harran [...] are images in relief of dogs, dating from the 11th century, and it is possible that they serve ...an apotropaic function (of guardians). [...] In a much earlier period, the Assyrians would bury figures of dogs under the threshold, so that their spirits might repel the attacks of evil demons trying to enter the house.”
S/He watches as the writing ripples out to the edges of the pond, breaking at the bank.

- This is Marriage. A Phantom Hermaphroditic Body. A Hyperbolic Enfleshing. An unfulfillable narcissistic longing haunting haptic space.

- So what's the point? We are supposedly the Real Ideal embodied and still we feel our loneliness. Can text do what marriage cannot?

- Depends on where you locate the 'Ideal'. As Rachel Blau Du Plessis says of Virginia Woolf's Orlando: “Because Orlando male and Orlando female are nearly the same, so Orlando loving Shel means at once, men loving men, women loving women, and women and men loving each other.”

A textual hermaphrodite, born in haptic space. Written on water. As much a haunting as haunted - a being of an "ontological slipperiness".

- So we have been written. So we have been done in. So perhaps we could just dive in and swim.

(Or have a bath. Or sink. Or drift.)

- The Real Hermaphrodit is elusive, spun on a cobwebbed wind - a "haecceity" with neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination. It is always in the middle. It is within, not without. It is diabolical, this: "naked, hermaphroditic body, hands and feet prolonged into talons[... I am the angel who dwells in the point where lines fork. Whoever traces the way of divided things encounters me, whoever descends to the bottom of contradictions runs into me, whoever mingles again what was separated feels my membraned wing brush his cheek!"

And the Serpent, with a swift elegant stretch of the wings, flies up to the broad leafy branch of the figtree and slowly uncoils, tongue forking impeccably.

- You're our Angel! In the middle is madness! Come divide us! We will understand this distance! We must see this space to map it!


18. Bersani, Leo, ‘Desire and Metamorphosis’, A Future For Aspasia, New York, Columbia University Press, Morningside Edition, 1984, pp 197 - 198. "It is almost as difficult to locate and define human identity in Wuthering Heights as it is in Maldoror. Both works have a kind of ontological slipperiness; being is always someplace else."

19. Interpretation of the 'Devil' card of the tarot. from Italo Calvino’s, 'The Waverer’s Tale,' The Castle of Crossed Destinies, Picador Books, p 58.
(Let's play a game of forfeit, of penalty, of things surrendered as lost.)

- And then we will seek what we have lost and find what we forfeit.

(Forfeit your sexuality. Your tongue, your voice as forfeit. An experiment in hyperbolic enfleshing.)

- Never let it be said that I did not warn you that when the deed is done, you will suffer desire most diabolical at the point where your legs fork, between your two brain hemispheres, between, between, between - and you will always reel from the depths between you - as we all have in the past and will in the future. You will suffer:

  “Infinite passion and the pain
   Of finite hearts that yearn.” 20

(Oh! But a most exquisite suffering!)

- Cleave! Let the twain be “un-fleshed”!

(We wade the “eternal war between the ‘eagle’s blazing’ (binding agent) and the ‘lion’s blood’ (solvent).” 21 The eternal bedding of ‘burning desire and breaking of bloody divorce. Constant transmutation between the splitting and fusing of elementals. Now present at the division, we await the time when we will be witness to yet another coniunctio - the sacred marriage - yet another ‘alchemical’ con-fusion.)

This is you. Your dream. Dreaming you - and me - into metamorphosis. Said the Serpent/Angel with the Flaming Sword.

And into the dream I plunge:
I hold you, caught, in my arms, arching my neck to ambush your lips to kiss - barely touching them when your lips an alligator’s snout becomes - and you turn your alligator head away.

A crawling reptile? Have you no use for my wings? Said the Serpent/Angel.

(Some reptiles have wings and use them too.)

Then I try to catch you - play catch with you - no game for me, I intend capture without negotiation and with barely one arm around your waist you drop on all fours, transformed, into a werelion, maned, and with a baneful eye you watch me.

Then I swallow you whole - in what form I cannot say - perhaps I freeze your lifeblood into a pomergranate and eat the fruity gems one by precious one. And then you were within - or did someone else eat your seeds? Somehow you were born - again - I hold out my arms and you were placed within; and I hold you close; thrill to your suckling, honey.

(I'll get you yet my headturning longsnout alligator, maned braggart, I'll push my nipple oh so gently, into your infant toothlessness and feed your need.)

The door, the secret passage never open before and the other door at the end of the passage - swing open. I cannot turn back now. I hurtle down exhilarated - thinking: having willed me out of your blood and into your arms - now what are your plans?

(I can promise you salvation from the void - give you gifts from the unlaoded cargo of those tiny theoretical ships you cannot sail. Desire, for instance. It will keep you occupied.)


She, Eve, awoke first - for what is her name but the pre-state? The day that precedes the event, Creation - the Eve of the knowledge of division. Of vision. So, she, Eve felt first the desire. On the eve of the wedding.

And Eve awoke.

(Neither of you have navels. With nothing to mark your separation, how will you remember this Beginning?) And the Moon with tiny parenthetical pincers, pinched and impressed upon them their very own navels.

- Have an orange, Eve said. - They're not the only fruit I know but hey - they're juicier by far than the apple.
- I like your voice, said he, Adam. And because he was thirsty (they both having travelled great distances), he drank his orange.

- Now that you're emptied of each other and contain your separations like canopic jars, Adam remember you did not sire Eve, said the Serpent from the tree. - You desire her. You are Bodies without each other's organs. But blueprinted with the memory of initial occupations - 'pre-occupations' - your desire will be hermaphroditic. May desire gird both your loins. And by the way, have you tried fresh figs?

As Adam gazed at the Moon and felt monstrous urgings to metamorphose, Eve imagined what it would be like to desire some being other than Adam. Her eyes fell on the Serpent. But the Serpent vanished.

- My desire, she pronounced impulsively, - is toward all things epicene.

- But we mutually agreed to specialize - and so soon you crave neutral undifferentiation. Anyway to multiply, we need first to divide. When we know the difference between us, then we can add to our Being.

- My desire, she repeated, - has nothing to do with Mathematics. And with that, Eve, with a fig in her mouth, turned and wandered after ideals.

- And where do you think you're going? Cried Adam, alarmed. - How will I find you?

- We possess only our distances! Mark your distance and remember mine! 22

And the Serpent slides between them, its body snaking a trail in the long grass which slowly disappears back into the shivering sea of blades. Critical distance thus marked, the Moon rose with the wind, a glowing scimitar over Eden.

22. Deleuze and Guattari, '1837: Of The Refrain', pp 319-20: "The territory is first of all the critical distance between two beings of the same species: Mark your distance. What is mine is first of all my distance; I possess only distances."

And then what of distances - territories that cannot be possessed or marked with any more permanence than a fleeting microsecond because they exist only between constantly shifting beings or within the body - between Being and Becoming?
Distance is depth when you are on the descent. And the deeper I go, the less I desire to mark my distance. If that is at all possible. For the landings are getting less regularly spaced - quite unpredictable. It seems, quite suddenly, I've come in through Van Eyck's Anunciation unannounced. Already behind the door - so gossamer its threshold. So transparent. Even stripped bare, the Bride is impossible to spot. The Bachelors use their every mapping, fingerprint-collecting, chocolate fossilizing devices and the Bride is still beyond reach. Beyond the gaze (because?) stripped bare. Willfully obscure. Unobserved and unobservable. Now. Are you naked if no one can see you? Yes. If they are aware of your absence, clothed or unclothed, you are naked. Naked because absent. Absent because unseen. So perhaps naked because unseen. Because the moment something naked pops up, we clothe it with allegory - to recognize it - wrestle with language, and then with a mortar and pestle, grind down meanings to a quantum infinity and confound speculari. So it becomes, once again, beyond recognition. Naked.

["Like Art it sits upon the shelf, an Immaculate Virgin Machine. Inconceivable.""]

The door, the secret passage never open before and the other door at the end of the passage - swing open. I cannot turn back now. I will, can only, hurlle down, exhilarated.
Two

{ HYMEN }

"The Assumption of the Virgin."

The 'Hymen' - controversial site of female 'virginity' - the 'penetrable' spectral membrane through which womanhood is supposedly attained.

In a room frescoed with tromp l'oeil lilies on the island of Thera. Here in Thera, a garden of earthly delights, we come upon Thera the Virgin, as she contemplates her deflation. This is also the moment before the catastrophic eruption when the entire island is blown up into the sky. The island whose destruction was so total that it was later mythized as the lost 'Atlantis'. Here, mysterious SnakeGoddess images abound - evidence perhaps of a very likely female-centered society: Goddess-worshippers. A society whose Goddess 'failure' to protect the island from being shattered and redistributed all over the world - as ash in glacier layers and rings in ancient bristlecone cores - may have paved the way for superstition and fear, ushering in the superimposition of a supreme male God to tower over the Goddess-worshippers' utter misfortune. A misfortune which was perhaps read as a 'punishment' - the same 'curse' on female existence reiterated over the centuries - delivered by an Angel brandishing a flaming sword.

Having one of its roots in the Eden story that it was 'the Woman' who sinned and should therefore now 'serve' Man, the 'backlash' on feminism is hardly surprising. What 'constitutes' Woman? If a woman must also 'become-woman', of what sex is her corporeal womanness?

Of what gender is the 'girl'? Is woman already a 'Body without Organs'? How do mystical/subtle 'bodies' relate to the 'signlessness' of silence imposed on women's existence for centuries?

Criss-crossing themes and notions of virginity, deflation, and desire, we look at Elizabeth Grosz's analysis of Deleuze & Guattari's theories of 'becoming-woman'.

As a counter-site to Thera, we zoom into Jan Van Eyck's eight-panelled painting, the Ghent Altarpiece - focussing on the two characters in the 'Annunciation' scene. Also with references to the function of ancient female 'Fertility' figures and Duchamp's Large Glass and Nude Desvending.

KEY PERSONAE
Thera/Virgin: unitalicized
Angel(Serpent): italicized
Moon: italicized
"[T]he decisive factor is the amount of sexual resistance that is overcome and in addition to the fact that the process of overcoming the resistance is concentrated and happens only once[...] therefore defloration is a significant act."  

So where does this situate the virgin, so ripe she is ready to be fruit, desirous for the scattering of her petalled virginity? And where does this situate rape, if sexual resistance only happens this once?

In the garden grows row upon row of graven images, specifically of the sort forbidden by the Yahweh of Old. 'Fertility' Goddesses. But this was before Yahweh's creation. Row upon row of deflowering dildoes, stimulators, initiators of desire in the image of Woman - big-hipped, arms across the ample chest 'action-women.' In the garden, row upon row of dildoes, flowering heads, flowering bodies, blossoming to deflower and fructify female desire. The Angel picks one, appraises its sensuous form, and feels in it the promise of a wild night of pleasurable overcoming for the defloration of the chosen one.

The Angel sniffs the air. Prime fertility in the wind - the Angel can smell estrus - hers. So fertile this chosen one she could bear God both in the circle of her embrace and in the parenthesis of her womb.

She lies naked beneath the thin sheet, stretched tight over shoulders, thighs, hips. She moves, spasms in sleep and the bed rocks.

Girl with the name of an island city - lost in time, tenuous in space.

The Moon remembers.[Thera.]

Look at the map of the world - now, and past, - names of the winds and deserts and oceans and coasts and cities. Things have changed. The phantom city travels and hovers or dives, acclimatizes or doesn't. Seven winds weave a map and you perhaps can feel the city's webs faintly - if

you can remember. A desert’s memory of fertility. But she is wet is Thera. Rosered in her bed and wet.

And soon will be drowned. In the sea. In fiction.

But now the sun casts a square of amberyellow on the far end of the wall and brushes the single stalk of sunflower in its long vase of glass, bright amongst the painted lilies -

And then the Moon replaces the sunsquare with a white sliver dividing the room into land and sea - sea where she drifts upon a bed -

{Drowning in an ocean of fiction; spy the little boats of theory full-sailed go by in miniature - you cannot board these papery vessels on papery tides, your flesh too attached to bone - I’ll read you your salvation if you like -}
The Virgin responds with a bird of her own dreamhovering. The Angel beckons her with a languid gesture of a long white right hand - and what does that lily-white right hand not know? That the left hand waves a long Dionysiac stalk of white [s]trumpeting lilies.

{Lily of the valley, my garden enclosed.}

The Virgin covers her breast in modesty and raises her eyes at the hovering white bird above her. Between them the city is framed in the arched windows. She lies hedged in the room full of lilies tall and towering and the light comes in the stained glass window - neither sunlight nor moonshine - a stain upon the floor.

The Angel clears Her throat and begins the Annunciation.

- Let's play a game of forfeit; of penalty; of things surrendered as lost. Said the Angel. - Forfeit your sexuality. Your tongue as forfeit. Your voice as forfeit. Let's experiment with hyperbolic enfleshing.

Like a gradually foreplayed into arousal vulva, the turgid Moon, sliding open its rossette doors, apertures wide.

- How like a bronzed lotus with hinged petals your eyes are, fringed heavily, as if to veil what I am unveiling at this very moment, opening doors MaxwellSmart fashion -

The Angel almost smiles. Then slowly moves the hand holding the lilies out of sight behind Her back.

- And if you win, I will give the gift of everlasting virginity. Your very own Hymen. This is you. Your dream. Dreaming me into metamorphosis. You are the Bride. You are my desire. My desiring-producing machine. On the glass and cloudy with absences. From Van Eyck to Duchamp to rooms frescoed with lilies - I will announce myself. To you. In your Ear.²


- You mean to wright pregnancy upon me with your words? Asks the Virgin, unsurprised. - Woman has, since the advent of the sentence pronounced on her by the Logos, been allocated the invisible space within the parenthesis that follows the word Man. Mankind. And how kind to woman!

². A 'legend' tells that Gabriel filtered God's semen through a lily into Mary's ear and thus impregnated her while leaving her virginity intact. (See Barbara Walker's Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets, London, Pandora-HarperCollins, 1995, p.543.)
- Ah, who understands the warp, woof and weave of desire?

She widens her thighs and the Angel’s wand of lilies transform into a speculum.

- That won’t do.
- I need to watch too. Said the Angel. - Let me see -

She shakes her head and puts out her palm. - Where’s my garden-grown graven image, apple of my eye?

- You need to watch too. We both need to watch. Said the Angel.

- And I need to feel as I watch myself enter into the mirror.

The speculum transforms into the full figure of the graven image of a woman - fertile, voluptuous, shaped and smooth. 3

The Virgin takes the image and holds it in her hand, feeling its sensuous heft.

- I am a Virgin, she says. - And I know virginity is not an impenetrable state. On the contrary, this state exists because of its penetrability. Immaculate in the way of its taintability, this hermetically sealed body is the secret, the blank canvas, the unwritten page, the empty, yet already haunted room. A menstrual haunting of phantom foetuses. Your promised gift of the Hymen marks this penetrability.

- I meant the ‘gift’ in irony. The Hymen is a book of tales told on membraned pages.

{And from those pages stretched so tight it is translucent - I will read you a tale of Virgin Brides and their secrets behind the silence -}

- Silence is egg-like in its inner and outer perfection, in its potential for inner and outer explosion - shatter-potential. In Deleuze/Guattari’s terms,

3. Stonehouse, Julia, Idols to Incubators, London, Scarlet Press, 1994, p 166: on the female images of objects of defloration, objects from about 20,000 years ago:

“Having a female shape attached to the phallic ritual defloration object could, perhaps, have signified the young girl’s transition into potential motherhood; the female form of the phallic object representing the initiate’s own fecundity. Or perhaps the female form represented the goddess - she who facilitated all fecundity.”
[Body without Organs] is the egg. Silence and the egg have a shared fragility. The vulnerability, breakability of silence - its 'becoming-fragment' potential where the voice - speaking, singing, whispering, shouting, screaming - can pass as intensity. Silence is desirable, constructed to perpetuate denial of satisfaction - hence, to perpetuate desire.

[Yes - you remember: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak."

- An ironic requirement as the 'Bride' is the Symbol of the Church - the 'Body' to Christ's 'Head.' Perhaps there is a clue to this insistence on silence (based on fear) in Umberto Eco's question: "Who spoke first? Adam or Eve? Dante seems to mumble disapproval that it was probably Eve[...] who was first to have dialogue with the 'serpent.'" Hence to prevent further 'intercourse' with the Serpent, the body of woman, her 'corporeality', her tongue, has to be silenced - to be worked upon, not working, the object subject to desire, herself desireless, silent and penetrable.

[Off with his head!]

- It is a silence to which women are forced, threatened, blackmailed, coaxed, cajoled, seduced, enticed to re-enter. Sometimes they never leave it and sometimes they re-enter out of their so-called own free-will. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the most 'privileged mode of all becomings' - "becoming-woman", serves to "neutralize women's sexual specificity", and it nips in the bud women's struggle from her "subsumption of two sexual symmetries under a single norm." This becoming is a silencer.


5. I Corinthians, 14: 34, The Holy Bible, King James Version.

6. Eco, Umberto, The Search For the Perfect Language, Blackwell Publishers, Great Britain, Padstow, Cornwall, T.J. Press Ltd, 1995, p 37. This is on the assumption that God spoke to Adam through the "language of interior illumination".


8. Grosz, p 163.

We will speak of seeming 'symmetries' later - but don't you see - 'becoming' is not about coporeality -

The Virgin ignores this. - For women - an undermining. And for men - an inoculation, a gained resistance through adoption, a 'becoming', a tactic of camouflage-personae. "Deleuze claims to conceptualize difference beyond the four great "illusions" of representation - identity, opposition, analogy and resemblance." He posits women again in the state of "penis envy" but in reversing the situation where man 'becomes-woman', it appears as a declaration along these lines: 'It is a fact you can't become one of us - but don't fret, there is no need to be envious, we'll become you. Or at least who we think you are. And we don't think you are you - but we sort of know who you should be - no way out, you've got to join us in this becoming-who-we-think-you-should-be.'

{Touche!}

- But if the Body without Organs is "a body without psychical or secret interior" - that is, a plane - it renders women's gendered bodies non-existent. For the corporeality of women's bodies are interior and secret. What is "becoming-woman" without the experienced bodily 'intensities' of a woman?

- Just that - it is not bodily - not bodily organized -

{An operation for metaphysicians - or metamagicians if you prefer.}

- If a woman must also become-woman (implying her corporeality as already woman not quintessentially 'woman' - but part of 'Man') the so-called "production" of a molecular woman "is a robbing" of the body of woman's girl's "specificity" - "The girl's specificity, her body, is once again robbed[...] this time by Deleuze and Guattari." "The girl is like the block of becoming that remains contemporaneous to each opposable

11. Deleuze & Guattari, 'Treatise on Nomadology', p 378. This is my perception of their statement: "[T]he becoming-woman of the thinker, the becoming-thought of the woman[...]."
13. Grosz, p 175.
term, man, woman, child, adult. It is not the girl who becomes-woman, it is becoming-woman that produces the universal girl.”

- Don’t you see - it is for the larger - if less tangible - metaphysical cause that we make ‘becoming-woman’ neuter - this is how we make woman = human - thus finally replacing the lost Eve - for what is her name but the pre-state? What precedes creation - the Eve of creation - get the transitional ‘queen’ with false breasts out from ‘representing’ women and present true womanhood -

The Virgin is unimpressed. She juggles her graven image with a stalk of imaginary lilies and an imaginary speculum. And while she juggles, she says - I quote: “If all becomings are “molecular, minoritarian” - then “it is woman’s subordinated or minoritarian status in patriarchal power relations that dictates the significance of the movements of becoming-woman, nothing else - not inherent qualities of women per se or their metaphoric resonances.”

- Well that’s what I’d like to dwell on - metaphoric resonances -

- To compare this to what Deleuze and Guattari say: “There is no becoming-man because man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular.”

- See - it is discussing being in a different dimension - requires a radically different perspective - another instrument altogether - like this two-way speculum I (and you) are inserting through this door -

Blood racing to flood all the nerve endings she thrusts again and again and again -

- No. The graven image seems more poetic somehow. The speculum I just imagined for fun. But back to what I was saying - you get the picture of the uni-directional, one-way streetness of “progress” - the paradoxical image of the Deleuzian taboo: “Evolution” - that power supposedly does not lie in the resistant, but the subversive. But at the same time, this means that it is not possible to construct identity for the subsumed - only to deconstruct the identity of that which subsumes.

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15. Grosz, p 177.

Whilst this may be seen as revolutionary, and therefore anarchic, it is also an acceptance of hierarchy - an acceptance that sexual identity is hierarchical (cultural/social) and therefore everything should collapse into 'neutrality' - but the fact that this is not a 'coming together' but rather a moving from the 'Man' point, it is still hierarchical - becoming-girl as a 'devouring' girl. An affirmation of the non-existence of woman, her nothingness, her imperceptibility, her silence.

- Let's discuss affirmation -

{Let's discuss imperceptibility - }

- This is an inverse making 'other' of the already 'other' as it puts 'man' in a position of 'Being' - 'unbecomeable' - privileged state - again 'Man' is the only thing in the universe (as a 'sexed' creature) that is 'apart', particularized as a point of departure. The Reality from which all Possibility leaps - the Fact from which "lines of flight are established". 17 Man as Truth. Seems like only God can "become-man."

{Even if truth is not venerated above 'Other-than- truth' - the Lie?}

- Not venerated by whom? In the breaking-down of 'femininity' for assimilation - in 'sexing' the molecule into a 'micro-femininity' - (this time a woman's body isn't used, but her 'femaleness'-in-relation-to-Man is consumed, partaken of, assimilated and therefore appropriated - in fact, it is man appropriating himself - for it is his construction of the feminine that he 'devours' - a narcissistic cannibalism) at which point do these 'particles' cease to be feminine and move into the animal and thence into the 'imperceptible'?

{So you ask in acrid irony: Like the minoritarian races, do animals too have no sex?}


{Some would call you incubus. Or, depending on the sex of the addressed, succubus.}

The Virgin laughs. - The best of all four 'sexes': female corporeal; female incorporeal; male corporeal; male incorporeal. But this denial of

17. A recurrent theme in Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus.
woman's interiority is the silence slapped upon her existence - as literal as the medieval notion of 'Woman as "The Devil's Door" and as literal as the chastity belt used to 'seal' her - to make her virgin, surface, silent - a very diabolical Body without Organs. Men - "might be away for years on Crusade; the wife was to remain inviolate" - and the "iron girdle of chastity fitted onto the young wife's pelvic basin."  

[In the Name of Chastity I was privy to rotted flesh - it is enough to make earth a hell for women - then came the witch-flesh burning - it does seem like women have been in hell on earth a long long time - ]

- And if wishes could come true, and if these poor women wished for it - would you not grant them Bodies without Organs - subtle, incorporeal, non-gender-organized bodies that will not chase and tear?

- But they were burned for living in their imaginations when earth became too much hell! They were accused of having subtle bodies! So how on earth to live on earth with bodies and very female organs? "Woman - earthly actual woman, that is awakened to her nature was the 'devil's door'" - and thus this door had to be locked with a contraption of chastity, belted like a punishment, a mockery of the already ludicrous Hymen, an iron membrane of exaggerated impenetrability. As Derrida said: "How can one then attribute the existence of the hymen properly to woman?" Thus. It is a 're-closing' of an already open door.

{Just another surface to be inscribed upon. With a chisel and hammer.}

- And if the hymen is imaginary, how does this "specular hymen" as Irigaray puts it - parallel - or otherwise - that other imagined thing -


19. Campbell, citing Church Father Tertullian, p 53.


21. Sissa, Giulia, Greek Virginity, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, USA, Harvard University Press, 1990, pp 106-168. The existence of the hymen had been called into question by Soranus a teacher of medicine in Rome during Trajan and Hadrian's time, and by Diderot in Les Bijoux indiscrets as well as by Galen. "The description of the female genital apparatus as an oral cavity is a point of similarity between Diderot and Galen, who compared the clitoris to the uvula and assigned it the function of protecting the uterus from the cold, just as the uvula protects the trachea. Thus if there was a guardian organ analogous to the veil of the palate, it was the clitoris. Galen had absolutely no idea that another "gate" was ever thinkable."

22. Irigaray, Luce, "Plato's Hystera", Speculum of the Other Woman, trans. Gillian C. Gill,
the phallus? Here's an interesting relation to the ritual of the “becoming-woman” of primitive cultures - an example is the Australian tribal practice of the “sub-incision” - a coming-of-age rite where amidst much ritual, the "boy" is [...] placed full length, face upward [...] while the operator, appearing suddenly, slits the whole length of the urethra from below. "And this "wound" is frequently referred to as "penis womb" or vagina. "[A]nd as Dr. Roheim has observed [...] the blood that is drawn from the subincision wounds [...] corresponds in the men's imagination to the menstrual blood of the woman." 23

- This is a reverse process of hacking open, slicing, open-wounding doors where none existed before. A mimicry of the wound that never heals.

- But the key word is "in the men's imagination." What woman did the boy become? An imagined one, with imagined 'menstruation'. What do they desire these strange creatures 'becoming-woman'? Do they want to become "Marilyn Monroe" who held the spongy promise of maximum bruisability? 24 Which woman from the myriad do they dare be? The very smallest micro-female, the minutely-sexed molecule. Even under the microscope there is no scope for woman here, thin volume of diluted poetry held in a suspension of unincorporable weakly interfering moving particles! WIMP not woman! 25

But in this ritual - the actual pain involved takes it one step further than the minutely imagined metaphysical woman of Deleuze and Guattari -

Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1974, p 332: "Ex-tasy of a primal scene in which two reflections of sameness come together and then give birth to Being itself [...an] ideal copula [...once the angle of incidence of the two foci, the points of convergence at which the rays of light fuse, has been found, once this specular hymen has been achieved in which, now the same, now the other, he assembles and unites the two faces of his being, then he can reiterate indefinitely the procreation of HimSelf."

I speculate that this 'seeming' symmetry is what creates the insistent images of the iconic Androgyne as dominated by the 'male' principle. Please see Door 8 of this thesis, 'Cloaca', on the splitting and fusing androgyne.


24. Burchill, Julie, 'Sex Zombies', *Sex & Sensibility*, Grafton, p 86. (Narrative Theory and Contemporary Writing, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, Course Reader, 1996)

the “molecular woman” - which is not parallel to the total-being-in-miniature that is the imagined “homunculus.”

- Ah you hang your flesh too close the bone - see how I affirm your womanliness without flesh or bone?

{Succubus!}

Blood racing to flood all the nerve endings she thrusts again and again and again -

- What is interesting is this effort - a very painful one - towards a ‘representation’, a ‘reproduction’ of womanhood. Why? “There are religious meanings to all female impersonations, in nightclub or bedroom. A ‘woman putting on men’s clothes merely steals social power. But a man putting on women’s clothes is searching for God.”

So is Man [what he thinks he is] a construct and Woman [what he thinks she should be] that which he constructed himself against? Is this again, a recurrence of the idea of her body as the door to the ‘godhead’, divinity?

- Immaculate conception.

She widens her thighs and thrusts again and again and again -

- Yet this contrasts with the ‘becoming-woman’ of the Japanese puppet theatre - Bunraku, as discussed by Roland Barthes: “[T]he transvestite[...]actor, in his face, neither plays at being a woman nor copies her, but only signifies her; if as Mallarme says, writing is made of the ‘gestures of the idea,” the transvestite is here the gesture of femininity, not its plagiarism.”

And interestingly enough:

“[I]t is not at all remarkable[...]to see a fifty-year-old actor[...]playing the role of a shy young woman in love, because youth, like femininity, is not a natural essence here, (the verity of which one madly pursues) [...]the refinement of the code, its precision - which is indifferent to any related copy of an organic type[...]results in, or is justified by, absorbing and

26. Grosz, p.34 &p.200: “The homuncloc, the tiny inverted “manikin” registered in the cerebral cortex” [men’s capacity to regard their sexual organs as] “a little man within the man, with a quasi-autonomy of its own.”


fading all feminine reality, through a subtle diffraction of the signifier. Signified, not represented, Woman is an idea (not a nature) [...] The Western transvestite wants to be a woman; the Oriental actor seeks only to combine Woman’s signs.  


- You believe there is no Art in Nature, don’t you? What of the stones which imitate male organs...  

- And the stones which imitate female organs  

- Let’s just mortar and pestle it. Grind rock sexuality to powder. Grind ourselves a lens through which to speculate on desire.  

- The nature of my desire is reflected in the art of my graven image - this image is my speculum - it is this reflection of womanhood which deflowers virginity, the pestle to my mortar.  

Blood racing to flood all the nerve endings she thrusts again and again and again -  

She lies on her side hedged in a room full of frescoed lilies tall, towering ... just room enough for her exploratory fingers’ galavant, wasp entering orchid, entering fig ... the insistances of touched and touching... eyes shut, tongue rising to the upper roof of her mouth ... widening deepening swallowing -  


30. Bachelard, Gaston, The Poetics of Space, trans. from the French by Maria Jolas, Boston, Beacon Press, 1994, (first published 1958), pp 112 -114. On J.B. Robinet’s (Amsterdam, 1768) evolutionary tables of the gradations of forms in stones that ‘imitate’ organs - e.g. Palloids (male organs) and Histerapetia (female organs). In the Doors ‘Hymen’ and ‘Ear’, these ‘objects’ of desire stand in proxy for the fleshy organs - in the ‘Hymen’ it is the ‘Fertility’ image that performs as ‘phallic’ - and in the ‘Ear’ the crafted quartz ‘shell’ performs as an ‘invagination.’ They occupy ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ space.
Girl with the name of a city - lost in time, tenous in space. Thera, in the Autumn of 1628 B.C. -
touched and touching...
Look at the map of the world - now, and past - names of the winds and
deserts and oceans and coasts and cities. The phantom city travels and
hovers or dives, acclimatizes or doesn't. Or explodes -
in a room full of frescoed tiles tall, towering...
Seven winds weave a map and you perhaps can feel the city's webs faintly
- if you can remember. A desert's memory. Memory of an eruption.
widening deepening swallowing...
Rape. Rapture. Rupture. But she is wet is Thera. Rosered in her bed and
wet.

Blood racing to flood all the nerve endings she thrusts again and again and again -

And at the peak, the volcano Strongyle explodes and Thera is no more - where - oh where are the traces of girl or island? As molten rock bleeds
down the side of Strongyle, melting the garden of graven images in its
wake, Thera is sent flying hundreds and thousands of miles up, and in time
comes to lie, layer upon layer in minute molecular ash fragments in polar ice,
and embeds deep within seafloors. The Therans who could, escaped, sailing
to safety into the open oceans of fiction and myth, reassembling elsewhere
beyond perceptibility.

however potent, could protect the Thera's from the catastrophe that destroyed their island."
The impression - since nothing has been proved for certain - is that Theran and Minoan
civilization was probably "woman-centered." - images of female figures being found to
always be larger in context to every other figure.

palaeontological findings on the Theran explosion of 1628 BC.
had seen when she was part of Gondwanaland - huge - till she went adrift - but we're all drifters, we, - wandering ten miles every million or so years - But this she whom you will summon by the name - 'Atlantis' - this I saw - now, just now, a paradise island rent asunder and in one day - a jiffy really - disappear in a cloud of smoke and volcanic ash which blocked the sun. And all who will see me over the next few nights - and it will be all night, there will be no day - will say: The moon has turned to blood. Because I wept for Thera. I bled for Thera. And I heard the trees sing in rings, laments, singeing rings in their barks of the tale of one more earthen silence-swallowing -

Rosered and in her bed and in one moment the Bride was invisible. Stripped. Bare. Now they peel her frescoed lilies off like skin for restoration, the re-assembly of the day the virgin deconstructed her assumed hymen. The day Maid and Mountain were assumed into the heavens. The day the dove of Aphrodite died and assumed the state of the Holy Ghost. Incorporeal. Imperceptible.

33. Which took place nowhere - as Foucault says - ('Of Other Spaces', Diacritics, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring 1986, p 22.) the honeymoon trip - where the traditional deflowering of the bride took place - is a "crisis heterotopia" - which he describes as a space that is "privileged, sacred, forbidden". Because, perhaps, as Freud says in 'The Taboo of Virginity', that the act of deflation has to be done by other than the husband - as it was seen as a kind of "blood-crime" - and to prevent the bride from exacting revenge for this crime against her on her husband, the act needed to be ritualised as 'first fruits' to the gods - the traditional honeymoon trip could be seen similarly as the need to 'unlocate' (rather than dislocate) the scene of the 'crime' and so the marital home could be free of the taint of this blood sacrifice.
The Angel sighs as S/He sees centuries of mortar-and-pestle-ground speculations clouding the air with dust, and takes off on gaudy parrot wings, re-entering Her image in the painting of the Ghent Altarpiece. And there, on the other panel, in the other room, with the framed city between them, is the Virgin, assymetrical reflection, an alt(a)red mirror image. Imagination still in flight.
Some say it was unannounced. But the panel in the
Altarpiece is ‘The Annunciation’. I notice the Angel looks like
the Virgin. A reflection of femininity. Perhaps each sex lies in
the other’s imagination as opposite. And her words - oh but
she is far from silent - appear in cryptic script - reversed and
upside down - both a left-right and an up-down reversal -
for only her dreamhoverer to read. I use a mirror to read her
mirrored words. It was announced - but not loud enough.

Because descent is constant, each step follows unerringly or
erringly (sometimes you miss steps, or they vanish beneath
your hovering foot and you find you have to leap somewhat
- and then there are the ones that snap in the middle when
you pause indefinitely - and it dawns on you bow death can
be felt as this pause, longed for; welcome; prompted) by the
next. But here we go again.

I take a step down, and, as if fulfilling a prophecy, the
entire flight cracks in the middle, each step turns inward,
snaps like a row of crackers - and three thousand six hundred
years later, they greet me again from a black and white
photograph in a book on the discovery of what was very
probably Plato’s Atlantis. And I relive my stumble.
Restumble my life.
Three
[ LARYNX ]

"Oracular fixations."

The 'Larynx' - cleft 'lips' vulnerable to sexual initiation, colonisation through language, and 'possession' through xenolalia and glossolalia.

The Oracle at Delphi. Into the mountains and the omphalos of the ancient world to the cave of possession and displacement, where we experience the auditory hallucination of the pure enunciation of Pythia, Seers at Delphi. Snake-woman incarnate.
We enter states of vulnerable permeability where long 'lost' voices seep into our consciousness.

Our voices become hosts, a medium through which other consciousnesses than our own operate, creating a simultaneity and density of Being. What is the 'medium'? What is the 'medium's attributes? The larynx, with its uncanny resemblance to the female vulva/vagina, 'genders' speech and the voice. The voice carries the pitch and print of sexuality. Transgression of this sexual identification? The 'falsetto' for a man and 'unnatural bass' for a woman. A man's voice is described as 'deep', (ironic when depth describes the interiority of female sexual organs) and a woman's as 'shrill' - especially if she is 'vocal'. Banshee-like, she skims and screams on surfaces.
Yet it is the boy's voice that breaks him into manhood; he has to 'shed' the potential femininity of his voice - a physical parallel to the girl's 'defloration' or initiation into womanhood.

KEY PERSONAE
You: unitalicized
Pythia (Serpent): italicized
Parrot: unitalicized
Multiplicity of Voices: italicized, bold italicized & named
Moon: [ italicized ]
"Because of the hymenless representation of virginity, the analogy between mouth and genitals, between sexuality and speech, could be deployed without limit."  

In 1985, Becoming-Hawk caught pneumonia just after his first flight into 'A Brief History of Time', and had to have a tracheostomy which removed his ability to speak. But Subtil Science cheated Nature of its perverse tendency to chastise all truth-seeking-sayers - those who touch truths, hold truths, mold truths: Nature's tendency being to fold truths, fold within fold within fold. Whether divine inflections or 'divinely'-inspired punishments - truth-seekers should not be surprised to find themselves marred into positions where others find it almost impossible to believe them - but Becoming-Hawk was readied for his subsequent flights into the past and would fly past the looped-time point into the future - with a speech synthesizer. Becoming-Hawk took a bite of the apple Science offered, and through a synthesis of each particle of speech, byte by byte, Science gave him his voice back.

["Effects precede causes.""]

Gravity. Without which we'd all be sent spinning off into space, directionless.

[Ooooh ha ha ha ha!]

Without which we'd all be laughing our heads off, and weightless, fly off to the Moon on our individual lunacies.

2. Hawking, Stephen, A Brief History of Time, USA, Bantam Books, 1988, p 151-3: "Imaginary time is indistinguishable from directions in space [...] if one can go forward in imaginary time, one ought to be able to turn around and go backward [...] On the other hand, when one looks at real time, there's a very big difference between the forward and backward directions [...] Where does this difference between the past and the future come from? Why do we remember the past but not the future?" (See footnote 9 for more on 'imaginary time'.) For effects to precede causes, one must use imaginary language.
Without which Newton’s apple, regardless of his contemplative mood, would not have made him wise. Without which, after her apple, Eve’s multiple conceivabilities would not flow, and Adam’s apple would get dislodged.

_He bears the traces of gravity in the throat of his language; She in her ariless (natural) discharge._

Without which this Apple would not sit scribeline upon your table and facilitate your inscriptions upon its memory.

According to Newton’s law, which was “occasioned by the fall of an apple”, we have come to understand that “gravity causes the moon to move in an elliptical orbit around the earth and the earth and planets to follow elliptical paths around the sun.”

More vertigo [and long lonely stretched out elliptical routes] - but spoken, not written; of the air; of breath not text; a spinning in a cobwebbed wind; a semiotics of illusion; scaffoldings spoken into precarious existence, rising in vast nothingness; a craving to be understood through the rupture of parenthesis, the rupture of the sentence and its linearity. Through ellipses.

_“Never to close the parenthesis is very specifically: to drift -” _

Soapbubbles, smoke, speech, silence - leaves your flesh-lined throat in clouds, drifting, _[impossible to direct]_ they send signals with or without intention - for with speech, one cannot edit out “contradictions, obscurities, ambiguities, incoherence, discontinuities, ellipses, interruptions, repetitions and[...]everything that, in a signified-based theory of meaning, would constitute “noise”. “The “rigorous unreliability” of analysis - psychoanalysis -

_“If somebody’s lips are silent, he watters with his finger tips: betrayal oozes out of him at every pore.”_?

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3. Hawking, p 5.


The disaster of parapraxis. So [what to do but wait when] even your silence speaks.

[Parenthesis: word/clause/sentence inserted as explanation or afterthought into a passage which is grammatically complete without it - usually complete (complete!) without (within!) it - usually marked off by brackets or dashes or commas; pair of round brackets () used for this; (or brackets pinched to hold on tight to your ever-diminishing grand idea ()]; or tentacles ⇈ ⇧ coiling in choking symmetry around your words; or bayonet ends ♂ that pierce the flesh into place♂ or bookends ♂ that skewer your loose-leaf thoughts between pages♂... (or; or; or) like a figurative interlude, ♂ interval. ♂ Par - en - thesis. Beside. ♂ Encapsulated hesitations. ♂ Perhapses.]

You have been seeking the parenthesized space of your speech - the space where you can taste other voices - familiar and unfamiliar - of ghosts, and of long lost particles of poetry. But tongue burnt furry from a hasty sip of hot tea, you cannot taste anything but the tips of shocked tastebuds shrieking in silenced A♯ & C♯ beyond the 88th key.

And here you are now, at Delphi - the space where time warps and effects precede causes - the Navel of the Earth,⁸ pillars fluted and tapering; rising in a circle; here you are balanced precariously over the chasm that plunges endlessly into Earth’s molten core, mother of volcanoes.

And there she is.

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⁸ Christie-Murray, David, *Voices From the Gods*, London & Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, p 63. This reference to the Navel of the World - the Oracle of Delphi - has an interesting parallel to the “voices” that precede from the “epigastic region” which reflects the Greek term “belly-talker” as Christie-Murray brings up - that “is used to describe a certain type of supernatural speech, better known in its Latin form which gives the English ‘ventriloquism’.”

Ventriloquism, or belly-talking, seems like a poetic parallel of the Oracle at Delphi which being located at the omphalos of the earth, could be metaphorically sited on the belly. In Valentine Vox’s book *I Can See Your Lips Moving* on the history and art of ventriloquism (Kaye & Ward Ltd, The Windmill Press, 1981, p 17) there is mention that sometimes “belly prophets” engaged in ventriloquism. “The enquirer was led to believe that the voices heard came from the diviner’s stomach where the departed spirit was thought to dwell.”

One wonders if the reading of entrails in divination was somehow linked to this notion of truth residing in the depths of the belly.
- Cup of tea? she asks.
  Wish I could, you do not say, and wince.
- Don't drink tea then? Coffee?
- Coffee I don't drink, you say quickly, the word leaving a sour stain on your voice.

Like an oyster holding its baroque pearl, your mouth holds its sore tongue wet and close.

[When its hot, I shut up.] Said the Moon remaining horned and smiling.
[Your eyes are rapidly moving. And so are your vocal cords. Swallow a poem and dream on.]

Everything is poetry - process is poetry - universe, traverse, perverse, inverse, reverse, traverse, converse, subverse, diverse - elliptically poetic if not very rhythmically reliably verse. Sometimes blank. Like all allegory. Like all oracles. Like imagination - more important than knowledge - and Becoming-Hawk must have remembered this in thinking up the concept of "imaginary time." 9

[I wait for the right poem to kiss into your mouth, push under your tongue for your slow savouring and take the words you cannot speak, lodged in your vocal folds like a clitoral secret. I will drink them in their surrender and quench your thirst for the future. This won't hurt. Breathe through your left nostril. Hold for as long as possible. Now release the warmed breath out the right. Breathe thus, ad infinitum. And while you breathe, I'll just insert this.]

An endoscope crawls up your left nostril. You feel your vocal folds suddenly being observed, pierced with light. Your larynx feels vulnerable and your voice trembles like the petals of a flower. You feel you are on the brink of defloration.

[And if you received these words, these wounds - will you "filter fire"? 10 Will they burn your fingers as your mouth has been burnt speaking them under your breath?]

9. Hawking, pp 141-2: "If we take any ordinary (or "real") number and multiply it by itself, the result is a positive number[2 times 2 is 4, and so is -2 times -2]. There are, however, special numbers(called imaginary) that give negative numbers when multiplied by themselves[. . .] To avoid [... technical difficulties[. . .] one must measure time using imaginary numbers, rather than real ones. This has an interesting effect on space-time; the distinction between time and space disappears completely." Effects and causes become interchangeable.

Your thoughts read, you ask aloud in slow-building panic. - Will I be scarred? Will I betray myself as so many have been betrayed?

[Will I send out flaying of fray'd 'perhaps', 'possibly maybe?', to whip you into bliss? Perhaps; maybe.]

You vow you will under no circumstances betray your sense of self. Your id-entity. Then the light from the endoscope pierces your uvula and your voice breaks, like a speculated-upon, spectral hymen and your body is marked by a passage of change, from child to adolescent. You stagger at this sudden descent into timbred sexuality, pitch by pitch.

She smiles. - Betrayal of self is the act that allows one access to the other side.

Now you are on the 'other side'. There are three of you. A seance, a circle, spinning energies between all. A windmill and all lost voices, including yours by another pitch, would be grist to the mill. Her; you; and another presence just a little behind her in the darker dark. You strain through the density of the air to make out who it is but feel overwhelmed by the almost tangible spongy blackness invading your eyes.

- I am not only instrument but wielder of my instrumentality. Call me Pythia.

- Not another snake.

- It is my words - your future - that will coil around you. My word is a snake. Listen -


13. Sissa, 'The Art of Madness', p 21: "In his tales of consultations at Delphi, Herodotus makes the Pythia into a pure subject of enunciation[...] Like the Sibyl, whose slow metamorphosis is narrated by Ovid, the Pythia lost her body and "invisible to all", was recognized only by her voice. This invisibility is significant in that the priestess who became the mouthpiece of Apollo was named Pythia, after the serpent-killed by Apollo."
So you sit and listen. And from her throat, deep in her throat - you hear slitherings as she slowly sticks out her tongue - and if you are stunned to see that it is forked - you show no evidence of this, having been split yourself a moment ago.

"Which is I why I speak two languages at once. Sometimes more, depending on the density of the shadows attending."

So she has a gift of tongues.

Legs wide apart, she inhales deeply the vapiduous wisps emerging from beneath her, where she sits over the cleft on the earth beneath her, cleft to cleft. You notice her eyes are all pupil. Black. They must have let in so much light that it blinded her. A Sun-worshipper living in a cave underground - what a penalty for worship!

"No not blinded. Enlightened."

Was she listening to your thoughts?

"Sort of. Your thoughts - they slither in my throat."

As she speaks, darkness gets darker and both your eyes' apertures open wide, seeking light. You hear inside your head a low sad voice speaking - you can't be sure if it was to you or through you - to who?

"How you haunt me as the hushing rain - your eyes - bare branches in an uncoloured forest, stark; lyrical; your voice - bells fingered by the wind; your hair - the luxuriant aura of sunset. How your name sits; runs; dances the length of my tongue like a song aching to be sung. Set me free. Speak my name."

You search Pythia's face for a name. Only the darkness answers.

"She will not yet be named."

Feel the tide in abstract. If I could only surround myself with it. Waiting for the change is a painful pleasure. Like waiting for a sign from you. Like waiting for a change in you. A sign to signal change. Siren, you have wound your strings around my wrists tightly tightly lightly. Winding them tighter round my heart and blighting its futile beating - who does it beat for now but for you and if you dance only the dance of distancing before me and will not go around and will not surround me, my heart will race to its standstill and pause indefinitely - the pause of a facade unable to stem the fall from within of insideness - the within that is betrayed by the without - there is
nothing for you to hold onto and you do not anyway hold out your hand - I think of your wrists and there is this want-to-grasp, to wind my fingers, my temple-dancing-bend-over-backwards-for-you-fingers tight around your wrist so you will dance a little closer.

- Who are you?

A long, long silence. You; her; the third presence - but it seems that you are the only one breathing. You begin to feel weary and wish you could shut out the voice trembling in your mind like a cigarette paper whistled edgily through teeth and comb. Just as you - resigned to the hot night and smarting eyes, decide to give in and be coaxed to sleep and allow silence to swallow your perceptions in darkness - the darkness not exactly silent - being zipped through thinly and at high speeds by insects athirst for blood - flies - verb becoming noun - in the night finding secret beds of joy - she comes.

They all - you all - have access to the flesh and you can think through skin and your skins will so sing so speak respond. All I feel is a within without skin and sense mocking flights of fireflies dance behind me - they are behind me so come around come around and a little closer -

- Who are you?

This knowing I want you to grasp instantly I cannot explain - you must grasp me - I cannot explain. Sip at the meniscus only sip - you do not drink will not allow but do not drink me [drink me] only sip at the meniscus it is all meniscus with me - the tension will not break you will not drain me. More meniscus forming even now rising and the underlay is still liquid and it attempts solidity but it is still liquid and its only hope is gaseous sublimation and then what hope have I that you can grasp - sip me - the fireflies you cannot see but they dance behind me for you - lighting futile darkness you will not in your dancing distance let me light your darkness - your darkness I want to come into - the fireflies they will not bring light they will not illuminate me to you or you to you but they want to fly into your darkness to dimly glow and have your darkness osmosis their light so we will swill twilight together -

So familiar yet so strange. That voice. And your desire.
The moon gives you a thick bittersweet parenthesized sentence to drink that tears your thoughts into tiny pieces of illogic. You feel like you have been through the act of defloration twice, - subincision and now, re-incision.

[Subcutaneous discoveries you make as you exccorate, revealing skin beneath skin beneath skin. How transparent you have become! Their words go through you, slide, slip, seep right through you in wisps, twisting out, cockscrewing out and drawing nothing. You have shed it all, fears, tears, blood; now you shed laughter, thinning. Now you shed. Let me in.]

Then she laughs. No slippery flickerings of the tongue or bead-webbed flowery lyricism. She laughs.

- You are not you.
- Who am I?

[Listening? since you’re all - all of you - so tuned up - Who am I you ask? I’m you - don’t you recognize you?]

- Together we are both critical mirror and critiqued reflection, arising simultaneously, each shaping the other, each beginning the other. In three parts; three acts; a triptych. This can easily multiply.

You nearly say - fiercely - that there is a definite distinction between the three or more of you - for a start you are sexed differently - but only a low growl emerges -

[Don’t you see? I’m not saying you should have said it. Say it say it! But you’ve got to live it too. Leave it. Saying it doesn’t magically decode the buzzing running loose and amok in around under over through the brain - its a foreign language that organ understands - but doesn’t speak. So next what do you expect? A conversation? Dialogue? Impossible.]

I am Nameless - reconstructed from the silence, madness and suicide dealt me by text. With a song I begin if I could sing. Alas my voice! My voice! Swallowed in the intertextual hysterectomy I performed upon me. I cannot sing. I scream my lullaby - all pain is bittersweet and to be drunk like peace-inducing poison, deathly and full and tender and carressing - a lullaby to put one gently to death. Its cold. I am tra-versed with authorial intent. Now I intend. Pretend - can you hear me hear myself? Thus raised I began with my end in sight. If you wish I could be a portrait. The first of the triptych - even though uninged. Or a still-life sculpture of a plateful of vulva?14 How do you picture me? Pale? Frail? Far from bale?

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14. See ‘List of Images’ for Judy Chicago’s Virginia Woolf plate (part of the work The Dinner Party.)
You lean forward in agony as your head throbs with a constant castanet ache. You find yourself almost screaming: - I cannot see you. I only hear you speak - and that faintly -

Enough. I’ve held my breath long enough. I will exhale and watch the bubbles escape my mouth seeking surfaces to burst free upon.

Could it be? This seemed like another voice altogether.

The last time I remember seeing myself on the surface of the pond reflected critically, the surface broke and sent the image rippling out to sea. Then I recognized headlessness and the seduction of suicide and desiring to know the edge of this displaced madness, dived.

Plunging in, I caught pieces of conversations filling every orifice, suggestions, criticisms, descriptions, the sound of my listening to myself -

- Am I imagining this? You ask bewildered. But Pythia is still. Her lips unmoving, A belly-talker?

[Perhaps.]

Yes there is a smile in the portrait. You’re not imagining it. Well maybe you are - and your imagination sits, a palimpsest on my lips, like lipstick. Motionless Mona Lisa smiles, more unnerving without the moustache. For all her enigmatic mouth and panopticon eyes - she is framed. Read my lips! With your reading, I escape. You carry my smile cheshire catless on a stick.

The room seems suddenly crowded. Hot. Filled. A conversation hangs over the room - at least through your head out into the room - voices almost overlaying each other so that, like the concept of breathfree angels in plainchant and Gregorian chant, they seem to be linked - all the voices running gently into each other without pause. Waves of gentle voices. You listen carefully to attempt differentiation. There is one who both answers and questions ‘themself’ - there is the General Questioner mode - whom you will, for convenience, abbreviate to G.Q. - in a somewhat wry, dry female voice; and the Evasive Answerer mode - abbreviated from here on as E.A. - in a falsetto that could be either male or female. And then there are the ‘referents’ that the G.Q and the E.A seem to ‘conjure’ into conversation. Philosophers, poets, semioticians - some with whom you are familiar and some not. Your eyes discern the dim shape a little behind and beyond Pythia who still sits still, lids half-closed. You cannot not tell if she is watching you. But the shape - that third presence who thus far only seems to have laughed - like a head
with no body sitting on a clothesrack - that is where the voices of the G.Q. and the E.A. seem to be coming from - although you can't be sure:

E.A
I'd say impossible to exfoliate gently. There has been some fusion in the strata. Tissue upon tissue of quotations as Barthes puts it.

G.Q
Peel away. Scrape away. Let the language bleed.

Barthes
"[And it will if its a] language lined with flesh." 15

GQ
That's how you line language with flesh, with carnality, capillarize it, forcefeed it. Up for dismemberment are various entities in the texts - it's a stretching. Elasticize language and write at the limit, at snapping point.

Barthes
"[W]hat matters is not the discovery; in a reading of the world and of the self, of certain oppositions but of encroachments, overflows, leaks, skids, shifts, slips." 16

GQ
Let's pause at that sinister word: 'encroachments'

EA
I think of metamorphoses, Kafka -

GQ
How the word treads ever so lightly, insidious like the cockroach, silent, moving through cracks, under closed doors - to encroach, the way text encroaches into thought -

The hairs on your arms prickle involuntarily.

"Would you like a lunarpinch to check on your sensitivity to 'reality'?"
A small red mark appears on your forearm. You feel no pain.


EA
And thought into text - yes, its not the text as 'means of expression' of thought but rather thought manifesting itself as text. Its like the paranormal phenomena of possession - an occupation, a displacement. Well, a displacement that does not 'put-out', just shifts, burrows beneath and co-dwells. Like scabies. Makes its presence felt by the itch.

GQ
Not parasitic though. But not quite symbiotic either. There is transgression. Encroachment is transgressive - there is some invasion, some struggle, some theft, some loss - but only possible because there is some allowance, weakness, yielding - a seduction - an unawareness that one has been invaded -

You wonder about the invasion in your head - are you thinking this, or listening or speaking or growling this? Or is she - the half-awake Pythia? Her lips do not seem to move at all.

EA
I think Barthes you did say something about speech being uneraseable. You can't erase thought either. Memory being a very sensitive mould, both thought and speech groove in, 'impressing' -

GQ
Depressing. And to erase, you can't subtract. You add, build on the slip, like a prosthesis. So you get this strata upon strata of intentions and non-intentions, presences, taking the place of desired absences. Really we're just being retrieved here - focussed and as I said earlier - peeled away. We don't even know in what sequence!

EA
Well we are framed in a 'conversation' which is inevitably discursive, that's the nature of conversation. Conversations are full of encroachments! I wish we had a mirror to see what we're doing to ourselves -

A mirror! No. You need a stethoscope to hear how many hearts are now beating at full speed arhythmically in the cage of your torso.

EA
As Foucault says, the mirror is a counter-site. We are producing the mirror as we reflect.
GQ
He called it "a sort of mixed, joint experience" 17 - between the utopia and the heterotopia. "We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed," 18 quoeth he.

EA
While we're at Foucault I'd like to bring up the third principle of the 'heterotopia'. It is "capable of juxtaposing in a single real space several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible." 19 Can you call text 'real space'?

GQ
Yes - it does classify text as a heterotopia. Text occupies paper, pages, which bound into a book, occupies this real space on the coffee table next to the ashtray and yet opens out to multiple fictional sites -

And what about speech? What about my voice now occupying your larynx? My language now occupying your voice?

You swallow saliva building up in your occupied mouth to keep from tumbling into speech. Who are you? This little membranous fold in your throat - its entire space possessed by another's desire to speak and be heard - raped, you feel raped - if you at least knew who it was -

EA
I don't know. Has a ring of the metaphoric - about opening out to fiction as other 'sites'. You're thinking of text sexually, Foucault was talking about real space.

GQ
Real, virtually real - that in-between space of the mirror. Text is like the mirror. Reflective.

[Speech! Speech!]

Foucault (via Air)
"[About heterotopias,] their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory[...]." 20


18. Foucault, p 25.

19&20. Foucault, p 27.
EA
The “heterotopia of compension” - 21

Foucault (via Air)
“There are others [...] that seem to be pure and simple openings, but generally hide curious exclusions.” 22

Curious indeed. You feel excluded from your own mouth, throat, tongue, larynx. Where am I? Who asks? In the body, there is no such thing as a ‘pure and simple opening’ -

GQ
You realize Foucault, we’re putting somewhat edited text in your mouth as speech. There are even some erased sentences!

Foucault (via Air)
I thought it was just static.

EA
I see you Foucault, on a flying carpet - you talked about the Persian carpet being a reproduction of the Persian garden - and you call the garden a classic heterotopia - how did you put it - “the rug is a sort of garden that can move across space” 23 -

GQ
He’s off the air now. Flew off! Taking his text with him. The text itself is in flight -

At this point, you notice the dim ‘head’-shape sprouts wings and flaps momentarily.

Deleuze
“A flight is a sort of delirium [...] there is something demoniacal or demonic in a line of flight [...] what demons do is jump across intervals and from one interval to another.” 24

Possession. That's what I do when your voice speak my words.

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23 Foucault, pp 25/26.

[Speak! Speak!]

You shiver uncontrollably.

[Very eloquent. (Said the Moon, yawning.)]

EA
Talk about demons! Again the concept of co-existence we were discussing earlier - possessions within the 'textual body'. Tempted by flying demons, one does desire possession does one not - to possess wings and to be possessed by flight when reading, or if you like, co-writing the text, partaking of the text.

GQ
Yes - there seems to be an allusion to the gesture of writing, the writing-as-it-is-being-written - the quill, plucked off a bird to be used as inscriber - generating words with winged memories. Such gyroscopic desire!

EA
The gesture betrays the writing, and the writer is betrayed by the gesture, the desire.

Deleuze
"There is always betrayal in a line of flight. We betray the fixed powers which try to hold us back, the established powers of the earth."^{25}

G.Q
Interesting that you should use the word 'betrayal' - but I would have thought defiance a better word. Actually resistance is better. To resist - is that a line of flight?

You remember that word. Betrayal.

EA
To resist - I imagine so. Defy, deny, resist - gravity requires those words for any flight to take place. But 'betrayal' bristles with failure, disappointment with the self, inspite of one's self -

Deleuze
"It is difficult to be a traitor; it is to create. One has to lose one's identity, one's face in it, one has to disappear, to become unknown."^{26}

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Conjunctive action. You and I. Your larynx and my voice. When I speak through you, of what sex are you?

Deleuze/Parnet
"Substitute AND for IS." 27

My language and your emotion.

[My rupture of your thought and my containment of that rupture.]

EA
I can't resist quoting you: "The AND as extra-being, inter-being" 28
Again, possession.

That almost familiar voice drifts in again -

Maybe once, lifetimes ago -

Who are you now? The Thinker? Or the Thought? Your tongue - or thought - slithers in crazy directions, like worn tyres on a wet road: All time is relative. Therefore all frogs are relatives. All images are relative. Therefore all Hallucinations are relatives. Once - you had seven tentacles on the head while I had eight -

[Once, lifetimes ago, you slept stony sleep and fossilized while you dreamt. Once, lifetimes ago, we danced to the sound of trees singeing rings - and trumpets snarled and walls came tumbling down - ]

Once lifetimes ago - you thought you had a lifetime - All you had was thinktime and that may soon run out. -

[ Catch the last expiring memories as they twist - ]

remembering remembering remembering your dismemberment -

[ Linger too long and lifetimes later you shatter - I'll catch you then if I can - in pieces - ]

Who am I you ask? I'm you - don't you recognize you?

27. Deleuze and Parnet, p 57.

[Again the inexorable remembering of past projected into future... let it slowly wisp away dear - you know the way things go - softly, gently, disappear.]

Again, again the words, in a letter to you, call for small thin skin, secret selfsealed - wait - listen - as the ashes go from my breathspace into yours - thus we share the kiss of loss - thus we meet in scarlet rims, hellfire and brimstone. Again. Again. Again. A loss. Again and again -

Now you shed.

You will excise all, grind down all scratched thoughts of those who rendered you transparent, go-throughable. Without textuality, without material. You will decide now. You. Excise all the whys. Little betrayals while you lie awake with a myriad whys seeping from your mouth, in blue streaks curling cloudily. The room chokes with the monosyllabic question - a refrain, circular, endless, uroboric stranglings. You cannot breathe, your mouth, nostrils, ears bleeding whys. No philosophy will guide you through the haze - you know its time you confront them, de-congest your consciousness into a zone of unknowing - between sleep and waking.

What are you now? What are you going through; what is going through you? Laughter? Loud bright red and green laughter from just beyond.

[Either a joker or a lover be. Love is its own intoxication. Laughter is prescriptive and treats you but leaves you with a terrible consciousness.]

You know now the seduction of suicide, the bliss, the escape from the slow transparentizing of illusion. You feel ill. They can't see you, you are absent.

But still their words go through you, drawing no blood, but consciousness of memory - sharp, bitter, present and passing. Too quiet isn't it as you hear the panic pacing non-stop - listening listening listening. What does that thing want - that organ? That brain? You ask me? It's so easy for some to take it in their stride and make it all march in time.

[You're so syncopated it's just out of time.]

So you go on hearing it all distinctly, separately one by one by multiple monologue. The bloody music ends too soon - as you sink into one mode, grooving in - then you realize it's gone on to another.
[Is your timing your timing!]

listening? since you’re all - all of you - so tuned up - Who am I you ask?
I’m you - don’t you recognize you?

[Well who can blame you - so many out of time things going on simultaneously.]

Again the sentences zip by in mad traffic: 12,000 frogs all leaping as
they please - some singing, some not... Club ‘em I tell you. But do you
listen? No, no. You’re listening for something else. The frogs too they
sing in vain.
All time is relative.
All frogs are relatives.

[You think you have a lifetime? All you have is thinktime and that may soon
run out. The future is only History’s variation on a theme - countless voices
have uttered what has already come to pass and continues to be a possibility:
“And, lo there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth
of hair, and the moon became as blood.”29 How many times I have bled!]

The voices become less coherent and less sequential, the various
individual grains sounding like a chorus of trees; a woodland of voices; a
babel of lisps; whispers; groans - and squawks.
Tearing your eardrum with the furious beating of white wings. You give up trying to follow the odd
word, uncertain of your own voice.

Pythia pouts out her arm and the third presence, a
chain around its left foot, climbs awkwardly on and
digs in. A parrot! 30 She brings the parrot between
the two of you and lifts the lid on a trapdoor in the
centre of the table. The scratches on her forearm
began to rise in weals and ooze thick red blood.
Foam froths in the corners of her mouth. You watch

30. Schwartz, Hilloc, Culture of the Copy, New York, Zone Books, 1996, p 143:
“Humans talk through the larynx, shaping speech with teeth and tongue; parrots talk with the
syrinx, farther down the windpipe, as if ventriloquists[...]. Until this century, Europeans slit
parrots tongues to render speech more fluent.”

Fascinating that this surgically forked tongue of the bird then parallels that of the serpent,
that creature so often portrayed in mythology as wise, oracular and able to beguile. This is
another link to the other connections between birds and snakes - mythologically (the
feathered serpent etc) and in natural evolutionary theory (dinosaurs being ancestors of birds,
the archeopteryx fossil etc).
intently as the parrot dips its beak into the shallow 'built-in' box. It promptly pops its head out again and rasps: - No seeing no seeing! Close your eyes close your eyes!

You close your eyes. Red and green dance behind your lids. Then white creeps from the outer edges of your closed eyes slowly covering lidvision then seeping down the nasal passages and foaming at the corners of your mouth.

And the walls, the floor, the ceiling - speak in strobe, retinal afterimages, as the stretched elliptical halos of larynxprints; voiced, lisped, throbbed and trembled. Aural memories of songs. Secrets. Desire. Beginning with a single afterimage they appear one by one and set up a babble of voices. Then, slowly, they evaporate away.

You feel, too suddenly, lightheaded. Weightless. Ready for flight.

- Now then, now then, we'll pick you won't we won't we we'll pick you a little key so you can get out of here - another key another key! We'll pick you - put out your left palm your left your left palm -

You extend your palm faceup on the table. A flutter of feathers and you feel the smooth curved tip of a beak in your palm and a cold smallish object is dropped into it. You close your palm into fist. Tightly. Like you were receiving a memory you were afraid you might lose.

- Open your eyes! Open your eyes! Shut up shut the door and open your ears!

You bring your clenched fist close to your face and are surprised to find your hand trembling. The object feels almost familiar. You relax your grasp. On your palm is an iridescent, cloud-shaped baroque pearl. With a tiny drilled hole in one end. What must have been an earring - its clasps lost centuries ago. An earring.

You look up to say an uncertain thank you to Pythia and the parrot but are greeted only by the sound of loud bright white sulphur-crested laughter and instantly feel the endoscope forced out of one nostril - as the Moon prys open, with an urgent need to reinsert, to parenthesize and splice open your larynx - and then, a sudden prismatic release of a multiplicity of voices shriek out - and flying out, throw their echoes on unseen walls in the darkness which come back as swishing swallows-then rapidly twisting into bats and as swiftly becoming rebounding echoes again.
Still of course on the descent. Someone sings in a pleasant alto of death in life and there seems to be echoes of the thought everywhere. (The abyss afterall is destination to quite a few synchronized thought patterns.) It's endless, this downturn, and seems to spiral. Fire escape they call it. Suppose I'm lucky to escape with only a burnt tongue. (You are. Give up the drinking of tea, why don't you? That comforting brew will stain you with ideas of home and leave you burning for the forever absent -)

An echo wings its way up and down my line of descent, bending its pitch, reverberating with an almost audible sense but shifting quickly - too fast for my ears to discern meaning. The landing ahead veers off into a desert plain - flat, dry and stretching for many blinding miles. A flurry of increasingly louder echos enlarge into pterodactyls and disappear around the veering left bend. I seem to have descended into prehuman history. The history of time as Becoming-Hawk described. I close my eyes from the sheer pain at the encounter with so much light and time. And space.

And then my ears ring.
Four

"When Blackholes Resonate Together or Inhibitions Conjugate and Echo Each Other."

The 'Ear' - the uncloseable organ, always open to suggestion and prey to seductive resonances.

Debussy's *Jardin sous la pluie*. 'Garden under the rain.' In the labyrinth of unfulfillable desire, we follow hollows; catch the echoes of the conjugation between desire and absence; eavesdrop on the sound of a heart breaking and listen while the gardens shiver in the rain of a Debussy 'Image'.

Sound intimates secret spaces; reverberates and maps space; objects; objects in space. How to map the converse yielding of negative into positive space and image into anti-image? How is the image of the Virgin's object of defloration (in 'Hymen') converse with the anti-image of the hollows of a shell, 'image' of the ear?

This is a geometric conjugation between Fernand Hallyn's 'poetics' of the ellipse and the circle, Derrida's study of the ear's 'oblique tympan' and Bachelard's image of the 'shell' and the desire to inhabit hollows.

**KEY PERSONAE**

You: unitalicized
She: unitalicized
Moon: *italicized*
“When black holes resonate together or inhibitions conjugate and echo each other.”

“That sound which remains or seems to remain in the bell after it has received the stroke is not in the bell itself but in the ear of the listener, and the ear retains within itself the image of the stroke of the bell which it has heard, and loses it by slow degrees, like that which the impression of the sun creates in the eye, which only by slow degrees becomes lost and is no longer seen.”

“If the aforesaid proposition were true, you would not be able to cause the sound of the bell to cease abruptly by touching it with the palm of the hand, especially at the beginning of its strength, for surely if it were touched it would not happen that at you touched the bell with the hand the ear would simultaneously withhold the sound; whereas we see that after the stroke has taken place the hand is placed upon the thing which is struck the sound suddenly ceases.”

So the ringing remains if you will it to. Pitch this! Fret that! Control, the reverberations! Yet the ear would and could simultaneously withhold the sound. And often rings with the sound of another bell that you cannot touch with the hand to still. Rings with another's image of the stroke.

Earth. A listening Ear with held brea-th. What do we say that you love so to listen to? The sound of our own burning? Or our discourse on yours?

You know your burning will go on. Fed on your every breath. You breathe thus, ad infinitum. And so will the ringing in your heart, the bell repeatedly struck with intent to drown out her rain. Hearts and ears they keep each other company. They both beat time. An inner Ear in every Heart. If you knew how the beat began, with what stroke, will you know how it would end?

1. Deleuze and Guattari, ‘1837: ‘Of The Refrain’, A Thousand Plateaus, USA. The University of Minnesota Press, (fourth printing) 1993, p. 334: “’[W]hen black holes resonate together or inhibitions conjugate and echo each other, instead of opening onto consiseny, we see a closure of the assemblage, as though it were deterritorialized into the void[...]’”


3. Leonardo, p 140.
“Dream this umbilicus: it has you by the ear.”

That the Moon does - spin and thread your raw desire with string to dream by - then tie your unconsciousness into knots inextricably umbilical. You can hear her blood crashing against the tympan stretched taut in your ear. To her absence you say: You have captured my heart - what use is my heart unless you keep it close to you under your ears, sleep on it as on a pillow, print your sleeping lids lips lashes on its beating lullaby.

Her absence says nothing in reply.

Dreams are the stuff pillows are made of. Feathered and flighty earteesers. What do you do? Stuff your ears with more pillow. But Sleep has taken flight and you are bound. Still on the ground.

- I collect rainy days, she says, and points to a row of cassette tapes sitting in their cases in the wooden box by the window. Each marked in her hand with titles like “10 December, 1830.”

- 1830? But surely that’s impossible, you protest.

- The rain always returns. Like people. The day Emily Dickinson was born I imagine it rained.

Headphones plugged snug into the ears, she listens to the sound of rain, hushing wetness - pulls open the transparent umbrella and steps out into the hot yellow day.

- This is how to deal with hot dry weather when the heart yearns for rain. Thunder at the touch of a button. Thunder at each touch repeats the refrain. Apt that your gift is of an umbrella and a transparent one so the distance between me and my eternal obsession is minimal, skin-thin.

You give her a transparent umbrella and she carries it. Rain or shine. I collect rainy days she says and suddenly you want to be the one who finds each and every singularly rainy day for her. Gifts of rain. So you could be in each and every rainy day in her collection that sits in her room by the window; by the bed. You watch the rainbeaded telephone wires and long to be the drops that slide into her ear when she picks up the phone so they collect in the shell-like whorls of her ear. Your drops. Your rain.

Instead you sit down and dream up an earring. One single one for her left ear, a multiple singularity. Sun in rose gold, platinum moon crescented, crystal rainbeads in constant fallings, and in the midst of that a little baroque cloudpearl - she would wear the weather in her ear. Your weather.

She lets you listen to another rainy day as she gently slides the earring into her pierced ear.

- I like that its singular, she says. - Just because ears do, who says earrings have to come in pairs?

You agree. - Symmetry is not natural. Nature's organicity elasticizes space into a semblance of symmetry and Art takes the credit for 'perfecting' Nature. As if understanding Nature's 'desire' for symmetry.

You pause. - What is the significance of this day?

She tells you this is the day of her drawing when as children they were to depict the 'Save Water. Water Is Precious.' campaign at school. And every child picks up a fat oily crayon dripping with colour to draw on white sheets the images they remember - mostly from the posters of the Save Water Campaign - endless crayoned papers of taps with a surrealistic slow-motion static drip of a drop emerging from the tap, drops round and big enough to carry the words; the meaning; the message; the command: Save Water. Water Is Precious.

Her voice gets more distant. She says she never uses crayons. On this day, she takes a 2B lead pencil and in stern, austere lines, divides the paper - all sky and very little land upon which a line of tiny people, all in profile, raise bowls and containers to the heavens. Then she proceeds to painstakingly stud the allsky of the heavens with dots and dashes - falling dots and dashes at a 45 degree angle slant. Each and every drop, dot and dash. Rain.

She puts in another cassette. 2 December 1968. Years before that last rainy day, she fiddles in her mother's room, seeks out the bag of makeup, rejects the red and pink lipsticks and finding the soft yield of the eyeliner appealing, picks it up and draws brownish purple marks on the lacquer side of the cupboard. The heavens, unbounded by line or paper edges - and below, at ground level, people all facing front walking, with umbrellas rising like trees from the top of their heads, umbrellas needing no hand to hold - and studding the cupboard-sky, in dots and dashes, myriad dots and needly dashes, all at a 45 degree angle - rain. Drops and drops of rain.
- So you see. I started at three. Collecting rainy days. That should count as an obsession I suppose. I’m moving from the image now to the sound.

- When sound moves, it changes pitch. Consistency. (You fiddle with your thumbs.) Doppler’s effect.\(^5\) Sound changes colour.

- Isn’t it amazing you can tell an infant’s sex and development through ultrasound? Sounds pitched higher than the human ear can perceive amplified and translated into image so you can see, through the sound it makes but doesn’t want you to hear, the curled up human bud, all folded into itself and freely floating. Giving its secret hideout away because it breathed.
She laughs lightly. Embarrassedly. Like she had told you too much. Too soon.

\(\text{Anchored in Mother. Her secrets she never gives away. But no one hears you like you hear yourself - voice to the accompaniment of skullbones. Lone hymn sung in the cranial vaults. Every whisper has an echo in Skull Cathedral. Sepulchre.} \)

It was the sound. The sound of rain. Not just the jewelled rainbeads on a string. Sound of rain. Like her laughter. Rippling on the surface of an overflowing pond.

She lends you a rainy day to take home with you. Walking home with headphones in your ears, you wish you had a stethoscope on her heart to hear how she burns.

You think about rain all the time now. You think of the earth in the absence of rain. In drought. The desert dreams of rain as any other deserted lover dreams, forced to sleep with absence. Forsaken, left, the desert blooms with the cactus who wears its betrayals as a skin of thorns, needled on the outside to bruise, to pierce presence if it should happen to drop by. Top to toe in thorns the desert signs the cactus across the sands with a stiff flourish: “Touch me not!” For it holds the memory of rain precious and private. Inside.

\(^5\) Gribbin, John, ‘Doppler Effect’, Companion to the Cosmos, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996, pp 121-2: “A change in the frequency of light, or in the pitch of a sound, caused by the motion of the object emitting the light or making the sound.” The Doppler effect was predicted by Christian Johann Doppler in 1842 and this prediction “was tested and confirmed in 1845 in Holland, using a steam locomotive to haul an open carriage carrying several trumpeters.”
And so along comes you, another lover missing wet, missing her, and you cut the cactus, dry out its jealous retention of moisture, drive its needles of prickly desire into itself and plant rain in little seeds within where they whisper - through tiny clenched teeth - metaphors of rain as they brush past the thin long needlelines of pain trapped within the cactus’ skin like a poem. Private pleasurepain. Trapped in a stick. Another gift of rain for her.

She rattles it. Tips it up and then down again. The seeds rush back and forth. Little roars of anguish. Brief and frugal.

- Pity it can't just go on forever. Would be lovely to sleep to, she says. And the earring you made her tumbles forever in her thick hair. The baroque cloud threatens thunder in your heart.

You realize she cannot bear silence. You talk about bells and ringing in the ears and poor Schumann who went mad from it. - What if you craved silence? What if you wanted it to stop?

- The ringing? she says. - I would want it to stop. It would drown out my rain. As would silence.

You laugh to drown the urge to drown with her. In her.

» She sighs for rain and you bring her oceans. Floods. Control your tides! Fret them! «

You are an engraver. An inlayer, a maker of things. Not a writer of songs or a dancer of rhythms. A Wrighter. You grind philosophy on a whetstone to “gradually refine hypotheses”, sharpen the tip of what Bertrand Russell calls the “the progress of metaphysics” to plunge further into the hearts of things. You sit at home alone in your workroom that serves as bedroom when you can sleep. A room painted in Thor Purple and A Winter's Day. A room painted in thunder. Still no rain outside the window. How like an absent lover the nonrain impresses loss - of her - upon you. A paper ship rides its own patch of papery ocean toss’d in the room full of painted thunder, billowing in pre-assembled curves in the storm. An unseaworthy model you made of a possible escape - from her - across your rising ocean.

» Drowning in an ocean of fiction; spy the little boats of theory full-sailed go by in miniature - you cannot board these papery vessels on papery tides, your flesh too attached to bone. «
You will write it to scale or you listen and it will write you. It writes on the tympanic membrane within, stretched paper-taut. The tale cannot be told in sequence. Unless it rained everyday. You earmark the day to come back to later.

With the changing pitch of each receding storm, you inlay thunder. The thunder of your throbbing heart. Hammering, forging, welding, beating, grooving. The physics first. The metaphysics will descend like the dove to tongue the thing into fire. The inlaying. Pitch your shrine, engrave your worship and then invite your idolatory.

Hammering, forging, welding, beating, grooving. This little image of the music of the spheres and hum of the sun. A zootrope. The fretted, intervaled frames that when moved fast enough, give the semblance of continuity. The stage of the eight-slitted zootrope in place, the shrine is ready for its dismembered god/dess. Carefully you place parts on each stage and rivet each act down fast. First the ring of fire. Frame within frame. Then the two-armed Shiva/Shakti. The Nataraja. Ardhanaarisvara. The 'lord' who is half woman. One profile male, the other female. One earring male. One female. Then four arms. The knee lifting by degree with each turn. The anklets and bracelets and endless bells on fingers and toes. One of the four arms holds a drum. A miniature tympanum. Then copper wires twisted into wild hair spreading its halo, each tendril curled tight to the ring’s edge. So the circle only seemingly frames the unframeable - for if S/he straightened or stood up S/he’d be too big for His circle. Too much music for the box. A rhythm that occupied all melody’s space. Unlike Leonardo’s fully stretched perfect human, contained, static, circle-conscious. This was the racing pulse, breaking its own heart. Dancer of the burning ground.

Dance till the heart burns.

6. Derrida, Jacques, 'The Tympan', The Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p xii: "Is there any true not belonging to reason to prevent philosophy from still speaking of itself, from borrowing its categories from the logos of the other, by affecting itself without delay, on the domestic page of its own tympanum (still the muffled drum, the tympanum, the cloth stretched taut in order to take its beating, to amortize impressions, to make the types typoi resonate, to balance the resonating pressure of the types, between the inside and the outside), with heterogeneous percussion?"


8. Coomaraswamy, Dance of Siva, p 61: “Siva is a destroyer and loves the burning ground.”
You fall asleep and into a dream.

I bring rain, said one of the long line of serpent kings. S/He scratches at the window long splinters of rain. His earrings, formed of serpents, writhe above His bare shoulders. You let Him in and S/he dances at the foot of your bed. Then, still dancing, climbs onto your pillow, through your ear and into your heart, dancing faster and faster till your ventricles hurt from its inexorable beating as it fills your hollows tight with resonances against your chest. You wake, your heart still hammering at the anvil of your dream.

-Thunder. You hear the rain come, tap, teasing, upon the glass, announce itself in whispers, entice you to wakefulness mushrooming in the promise of damp upon the roof and gutters. It slip-slides; it bittersweet dips your moments - every moment sluiced - sharp with the anticipated disappointment of silence - that it will be called away just as suddenly as it came. Why is it, you wonder, rain, like love, cannot fully give - generously in passion, full and manic lullabies in chorus? You watch the sodium light in ambery brushed highlights on the unslated edge of the roof. Bluntly smudging the wet street. Wrestling with the leafy silhouettes for right of figure and ground.

Already with Keatsian melancholy you hear the anticipated non-sound of rain gone elsewhere, dried before your time.

Still it lingers. It comes and runs down the glasspane, beckoning for your attention. Like your dream. Like a familiar, eavesdropping on your thoughts.

You walk to her in the rain. It will rain all night.

She opens the door and is surprised to see you.

- Are you collecting this very rainy night? You ask as you enter her door.

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But what does He destroy? Not merely the heavens and earth at the close of a world-cycle, but the fetters that bind each separate soul. Where and what is the burning ground? It is not the place where our earthly bodies are cremated, but the hearts of His lovers, laid waste and desolate... the burning ground where 'Sri Nataraja dances, and whence he is named Sudalaiyadi, Dancer of the burning-ground.'

9. Snodgrass, Adrian, Symbolism of the Stupa, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 1992, p 293: "[N]agas[serpents] inhabit sub-aquatic paradises in rivers, lakes and seas; they control the rain, granting or withholding it; they change into rain clouds and produce rivers."
- No. Not tonight.
- But why? It's a fine specimen.

She smiles. - I'm with a friend. - Another fine specimen.

You want to turn and stride out before you betray yourself. - I'll come back another day then.

- It's alright. She'll enjoy your thoughts on sound.

You nearly sigh with relief. She. Friend then.

You talk about ellipses and contrast them with circles. Copernicus - who maintained the circular form as divine and therefore insisted that the round would be Nature's orbit of choice. Yet Kepler, eccentric - some might say lunatic - he had such lunar dreams - showed the single centre didn't work in actuality. That orbits were elliptical and had two points of focus. That the music of the spheres was only possible because of the discrepancies between circle and ellipse.10 Her friend who plays guitar charmingly sings a little ditty about the circle being a frigid little ellipse but snapped tight won't - or can't - do the interesting detour of elasticity.

You bring the topic back. They are laughing. The first time you hear her laugh unabashedly. Her friend is funny. You converse. You, her, her friend and the rain raining beyond the black window frame into the street below; the frame catches the triple crucifix of the telegraph pole/streetlight of telephone wires; the strong black and thinner grey lines dividing the window view - the sky luminous and orange. You bead these lines. The streetlight whitens each drop. You say in your beaddrippedthought I love you and remember ee cummings' line:

"nobody, not even the rain has such small hands"

and think there is no truth in that, only beauty - for you have just felt a flurry of the tiniest pinprick fingers descend through the window onto your cheek and arm and dance away again with the capricious wind, a shoal of shivery tiny silverfish in the air.

You notice her spirits revive as if rehydrated. Plumped up, moist, almost

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turgid with an exhilaration of pure pleasedness. Yet sadness.

- I think I'd better live in a rainier city.

- But you don't need to. You've got whole centuries of rainy days in your collection. If you released them they would flood the earth many times over.

- Heaven keep them magnetized on tape! said her friend, shuddering. Something was magnetizing them into orbit with each other.

- But I don't just want to remember rain. I want to live it. In it.

- But why? It is only in the absence of rain that rain becomes precious.

- Do not, said her friend, linger with anyone who rationalizes their processes entirely.

You let her go. The string unravels at once and you thread it to your ear quickly, suddenly finding yourself at the apex of an elliptical orbit of desire. You have been captured into the circling - which becomes a metaphor of approximation for your elliptical tour around her, your 'encircling'. The cars, they schuschush through the wet streets in remembrance of her.

- I spied your raindance once - worshipper of the worshipper of rain. Said the Moon, winking. Mother and Father gone out, the house left to you children who spy a storm in the open courtyard entrenched by a broken bottle-topped wall, the little open cemented yard owned by a square of sky - into the bathroom all receiving your ration of sudsy soapbubbles on bare bodies, then racing out as the rain came crashing through the square sky. Soapsuds persuaded off varieties of brown skins through the needling runs of the rain, streaking paths through the soap slowly. And thus rain-cleansed, towel-dried and powdered, you thrilled to not allow the neighbours' kids, who suspect the fun, in. But I spied. You tell her this wonderful little anecdote - all true and I'll be your witness - and she'll pluck those headphones out and lay her ears on your heart to hear how you rain.

11. Hallyn, p. 213.
No you’re not into fictionalizing fact into the entertaining anecdote. Stories will not wander under your fence of sound theory. Hammering, forging, welding, beating, grooving. This little image of the music of the spheres and hum of the sun. Hammering, forging, welding, beating, grooving - you ponder Kepler’s ideas on form and the geometrics of harmony.

There exist two opposite boundaries, the Circle and the straight line; here the pure curve, there straightness. The Hyperbola, the Parabola, and the Ellipse are intermediate and participate in both the straight line and the curve; the Parabola participates equally; the Hyperbola participates more in straightness, the Ellipse more in the curve. From this fact, the Hyperbola resembles more and more a straight line, i.e., its Asymptote, the further it extends. The Ellipse tends toward circularity to the degree that it extends beyond its middle and finishes by turning in on itself.  

Your zootrope is finished. You swing it on its pedestal and it runs smoothly. A perfect circle. The Nataraja dances jerkily. Perhaps a circle tending towards perfection. The skeleton formed, the flesh clothed. The physics works. What remains? Your heart. Which you now proceed to inlay.

You leave this in a wooden box you made to fit the gift. You wonder if she will allow your translation of a rain metaphor this wide-arching Hyperbola. Almost straight off its course. You wonder if she’ll wait for your heart to come around with each swing. You wonder if she can hear how you burn.

We know that the membrane of the tympanum, a thin and transparent partition separating the auditory canal from the middle ear (cavity), is stretched obliquely[...] one of the effects of this obliqueness is to increase the surface of impression and hence the capacity of vibration. It has been observed, particularly in birds, that precision of hearing is in direct proportion to the obliqueness of the tympanum[... ] The tympanum squints.

So you will present an oblique offering.

- Is this a kind of demonstration of the Ellipse and the harmony of the spheres you spoke of? A visual image of it? It's quite magical, she says, spinning it around and peering through the slits.

Before you can explain she thanks you with a kiss meant for your cheek but you alter its course by bringing your lips in line for the collision. She is a little startled and recoils imperceptibly. You hate yourself.

She chooses now to tell you of her impending departure. She leaves for cloudier skies in a few weeks. Home, she designates it.

» You await the arrival of her friendship, friend, to push the pause-button on your freefall into love. «

Too much too soon. Thin line of foam - desire - left breathless and in a far from straight line traces and, perhaps or, divides the mutual stepback. You try to pick up the right words not singly but like paint, load the brush with relationships. But you're no painter. An engraver. An inlayer. A maker of things. Perhaps words pick you up.

» Perhaps I pick up your words for you. Let me. «

You pick up your instruments. Hammer, anvil, stirrup. Doubt dancing forever in the heart of your ear as you hammer, forge, weld, beat. Faster faster faster! Inlay, inlay, inlay! Once, you tell her, lifetimes ago, she slept on a stony bed and dreamt she was deaf. She forgot to wake because of the silence and all that was left was an impression of her left ear fossilized in quartz. Was this what Emily Dickinson meant by a 'Quartz contentment'? Hammer, anvil, stirrup. You polish the little whorls of the ear. It funnels lily-like into the deepest, most silent abyss you can shape out of quartz. Translucent. A shell. Her hollow, depth and distance. Your image, her ventricular slipcast, feeds your "dream of inhabiting all the hollow objects of the world."14 Large as your desire. You are the lily-brandishing Angel, funneling sweet nothings into her ear till she conceives of her sexuality and remembers her lust. And yours.


The shell, 'feminine' repository, is hardness: the hardest manifestation of the skin of the "limp, sticky, "slimy" creatures that inhabit them. This shell you have here is of the inversed sexual characteristics of female and male 'space'. The inverse, converse, anti-image of the deflation object. Her hollow; your initiation.

Hypertrophy of your theory, her fiction.

You spit theory out like a swallow and back bounces fiction like a bat echolocating obstacles. Feedback.

Nurturing, nourishing desire. Feedback was all you wanted. Resonance of your peaks and her valleys; complete, ear shattering harmony; the combined rhythms of input and output to exponentially overwhelm the instrumentality of your desire's amplification; distortion; Chaos! You yield. Now, initiated into her image, sheathed, you cannot believe her constancy - or your belief in this ritual. You cannot map your 'till death do us part'. Your enlarged desire inlaid, ensheathed, shaped in her memory. Always at your window. Always by your bed. You thunder, storm and rain in her ear each and every single day. And night. Careful. She hears all the words you left unstrung in stereo, words left on your tastebuds slowly singeing; words hid in pockets, which now like magic - the blackest, intentionally heartbreaking magic - are being teased, pulled, spun out in endless replay; your sentences unfold, a ribbon of gossamer, to strangle the first whisper of denial, nonrecognition that vibrates in your throat. In endless replay she catches them in both hands and they vanish with a ping into her skin. You think you have a way of eluding alluding and tightroping between the drops you suggested into vertiginous existence, tightroping thin lines of all-illusions you think you walk alone confident of having spun tenuous tenacity sufficient for your tread. But ping! your carelessly blown bubbles daintily, you feel her weight behind you, treading treading just behind you - now how is it possible, you wonder, on your thin hypothetical threads spun for one she walks behind you or is it before?

You ask if she knows something you don't and ping! soapbubbles she looks knowing. Only - what have you yet let slip?

Every breath uttered they push out from between your teeth a thousand tiny accidents, iridescent, promise-secret-ridden, rising ripe for the ping! And if you suggested them, and its likely you did - made by you for you

15. Bachelard, p 127.
- you'll be the falling one soon - into your own dug suggestions plunge - and flailing, you look up to see the thousand tiny accidents pinging! above while she treads treads treads the righthread between suggestions, because she did not believe in deaths between the lines. You did. And died many times.

You thunder, storm and rain in her ear each and every single day. And at night, you play Debussy's *Jardin sous la pluie* - through which labyrinths of desire you wander, listening to the gardens shiver in the rain. When asked where you'd been, you will reply: Recovering from an ellipse.
Falling, I touch disillusion's bottom. Only several steps down the descent. I have been deceived. Nothing! I suggested nothing! She made it all up!

"Liar." Said the Moon, smiling.

To have one's thought read is not very pleasant. Worse to have one's thoughts performed. But bewilderin g to have one's voice replaced and thoughts built over, like a thing of the past. The beginning and the end at its thinnest, silveriest, sharpest - the lunulae of the moon picks up the thoughts I whisper through my parenthesized lips, which slip out inspite of myself; slipping out and being picked carefully by moonpincers; pincer-picked deftly and meticulously; picked from between my lips and pitched higher toward silence. Plucked out and held against my ear, an auditory hallucination resonates:

This cannot be the end.

I watch the Moon picking my curiously shattered remains with a delicately silver tweez er. In shards and slivers I am dropped meticulously into a bottle, pinging déjávuly as each bit hits the bottom.

"You'll be blown again." Said the Moon to the pieces being picked. "All out of proportion."

So I head down again. Down my staggered descent, staggering.
Descent

Am I watched? Am I being heard? Overheard? Translated? Surveilled? Here? In the abyss?

I take the inevitable step downward.

My conscience - the science of (the lack of) confidence before an act - monitors each intended gesture, word and thought, from within. Trace that ‘gaze’ moving from shadowmaster (ghosts of remembering matter), to the literary foreshadow, to the investigative-tread-on-your-prey’s shadow, to the panopticon, the radar plotting device, the ‘bug’, the overhead satellite, the ‘identity’ card, the smartcard, the silicon implant. We get smaller. “The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it”. And all that ‘foreshadowed’ by the conscience. This pre-state, this sense of expectation; of something sinister; thrilling and terrifying at the same time: this is the feeling of all eschatological religions that drive beliefs. This is that feeling of ‘What happens in the end?’ This is the feeling that sends apocalyptic spasms down the spine. This is the feeling we take to bed with us.

What if we reverse cause and effect? How?

Foretell. The gaze beyond the present. Foresight. Uninterrupted. Focus, and stare long into a dark pool of liquid or a highly reflective surface, a mirror, or a crystal ball and you have a lens with which to view the future. In ancient Rome, mirror readers - ‘specularii’ - read the future. The tool of a scryer? The speculum.

But it is the lid that negotiates the nature of the gaze. The choice of to look or not to look lies in this door that can shut tight and open wide. It closes up and we see the after images of our lives dance within the brain in sleep. And sometimes foreimages.

The lens focuses. On microhistory. Telehistory. Specular history. What would the experience be like if one made a pact - gave up seeing the past and present so as to be able to see into the future? Like being armed with a periscope to see around bends but not recognize the bend when one is going around it. And what about the superstition of the 'I Ching' - that if consulted overmuch, you pay for seeing too much into the future by losing your sight? What about the kaleidoscope - what if one had such vision, cursed with the fate of repeating images and patterns in everything one sees? And what of the microscope, the telescope and the binoculars - where distance is negotiated? Bridged? So that things get brought closer together. Like Eve and Adam looking through each other’s eyes. What of the blindspot? And peripheral
vision? And the third eye? Is foresight faster than the speed of light? The 'optical unconscious'? Consciousness as an organ of sight? Unconsciousness as an organ of insight?

What awaits in these depths? I take yet another inevitable step downward.

These stairs. I'm climbing down the vertebrae of a dragon. The chakras of my body's spine. The folds of a gene. (Which is never yours.) And down the vertebrae of the sleeping kundalini I wander, bone by winged bone. A precarious balancing act on flying buttresses holding flesh to nerve to bone by winged bone. Where will it take me but to its den where it remembers its phantom tail? Is - all tail. I - all torso. Both headless till nudged into mutual awareness.
Five

BLINDSPOT

"But Everything Conspires."

The 'Blindspot' - the gap in vision that allows vision to be processed; the point of physical unseeing that makes cognition and recognition possible.

The Lotus Pond at Bihar. On the night of a lunar eclipse, the Seeker intends to record the Earth's shadow in transit across the Moon on film - to mark, in real time, his disembodying journey into his 'Other'. We are witnesses of the Seeker's desire to develop foresight. Not just to be able to reflect on the past, but to scry into the future with the opening of the Third Eye. But the thousand-petalled lotus remains in bud. A closed dream. Enlightenment and Shadow dance a dance of illusion, reflected on the water, while the Moon undergoes an eclipse.

Why is it that, both in Eastern and Western religious philosophy, all of nature and the world is seen as 'female' to the 'maleness' of 'God'? So that, in ever-decreasing circles, man 'parallels' god but woman still does not 'parallel' humanity? How to account for this gap between desire and experience, this syncopation of subject and subjectivity? Can consciousness disembode? Is disembodied 'consciousness' sexed? Can disembodied 'consciousness' be transgendersed?

With references to Irigaray's 'Kore' and Derrida's 'Khôra' in relation to the 'Kundalini' of yogic meditational practice.

The motif on 'reflection' is continued into the references on passages from Ondaatje's 'Coming Through Slaughter'.

KEY PERSONAE
You: unitalicized
'Consciousness': italicized
Kundalini(Serpent): italicized
Moon: italicized
"But everything conspires."

"The iris diaphragm is no more an impenetrable evolutionary barrier than is the anal spincter."

What is it that 'penetrates' evolution? The mutant gene. The Monster-maker. It is not maleness that penetrates with penis or gaze. It is not femaleness that is barrier penetrable by penis or gaze. It is difference, deviance, the anomaly that, the moment perceived, penetrates - or rather permeates barriers - retinal; anal; oedipal; societal; natural; judgemental. It this momentus movement that punishes, peruses or pleasures membranes. The 'gaze' that grazes.

But let's put the gaze under scrutiny: "Science interprets the gaze in three (combinable) ways: in terms of information (the gaze informs), in terms of relation (gazes are exchanged), in terms of possession (by the gaze, I touch, I attain, I seize, I am seized): three functions: optical, linguistic, haptic."

Optical - all the scopes that negotiate distance, correct or distort corneas; cameras that 'capture' in photons - still or moving images. And radiosopes that translates rhythm and pulse into image. And of course the eye. To see - into, through, with. Point of view.

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1. Boundas, Constantin V., and Dorothea Olkowski. eds., Gilles Deleuze and The Theatre of Philosophy, New York, Routledge, 1994, p 75: "[N]othing is separable or separated, but everything conspires."


4. Experiments in perspective drawing often took the form of Dürer's print. (see Cover 2 image of 'Blindspot'). The male artist uses the female model to map space and its recession through a grid. A measuring of 'depth'. This Dürer print finds resonance in Duchamp's three-dimensional installation of Étant Donnés - where the viewer is forced to assume 'voyeur' position in order to 'peep' into the ever receding 'orifices' - first the cracks in the door, then through the hole in the 'inner' brick wall, and finally, these two 'holes align with the 'object' being voyeur - another, fleshtly, gap - the vagina. (See 'Cloaca' for further references.)

Haptic - after the image. The afterimage. During imaging. Imagination. Changing perspectives while one remains in the same position. Imaginary viewpoints. All worlds interpenetrate, all dimensions are permeable to each other. Do we perceive these ‘crossings’? How?

You embark on your theory of permeability, and will attempt to chart a course on the reflective waters of receptacles of thought, nutshells included.

And because it rained and your tears flooded all the hollow objects in the world, a meniscus formed on all surfaces. So tense and taut it could be read if one was patient enough. Here at the Lotus Pond in Bihar, you feel the weight of centuries of contemplation sink into your consciousness and drench you. The pond in the garden brims full and the stone eight-pillared stupa in the once dry centre seems to have risen afloat on the meniscus - smooth as oil, rippleless as a mirror. You have walked around the eight-fold path, turning right at every turn and now at last, you stand at the mirror’s bank. It is the night of the lunar eclipse. You have your camera and tripod with you. You will record on film every fleeting second. Each sequential frame will map your journey into yourself. You will frame real time in real time and chart it against your imaginary time.

5. An instance of this interpenetration of worlds can be seen in Michael Ondaatje’s Coming Through Slaughter - where Buddy Bolden, returning to play his cornet on the streets for the last time, met his ‘death angel’ dancing on the self same street, dancing opposite, through the crowds and as the noise of his instrument passed through her, her energy passed through his - “[L]etting in the light and the girl is alone now mirroring my throat in her lonely tired dance[…] She hitting each note with her body before it is even out so I know what I do through her. God this is what I wanted to play for, if no one else I always guessed there would be this, this mirror somewhere.

And thereafter, Buddy slipped through the permeable membrane between sanity and insanity into his private world where madness and music became one. Crossed into the mirror. So into the mirror that his reality became reflections, as he went around ‘touching things’ in a ritual of wordless reconnection.

6. On the banks of the River Niranjana in Bodhgaya, India - the spot where Buddha was said to have been enlightened - is the ancient Mahabodhi Temple (1st century AD) where the Lotus Pond reflects a life sized statue of the Buddha. The Jewel Walk is where the Buddha paced over the decision to ‘reveal his newfound wisdom to the world.’ (See The World’s Most Mysterious Places, Reader’s Digest, 1995, p 87-8.)
**Catch me if you can! I spy, I traveller in the sky, you spying me.**

Should I; will I; can I; am I? Plagued with uncertainty you note how close to catatonia you come when trying to make decisions without consultative aids - that is anything from tarot cards to coin-tossing and petal-pulling and synchronicity of events as simple as traffic lights changing colours at the right time. So you stand still. No one ever took the adage "Look Before You Leap" more literally. Now all you do is look. Leaping just seems too risky altogether and safer left out of the picture. You keep walking to the edge of the green lawn where the pond begins, tripod under the arm, camera swinging heavily from its strap just below your chest.

You have questions that may have to be answered without words. Many questions - Who will you be in the next life? What changes will you undergo at each threshold? You have waited long for this moment. To come to the realization that knowing oneself is not a long slow lifelong process but one instant - brief and blinding. The instant of crossing. What will you be constituted by in the future? What will permeate you? What will you permeate? Perhaps the past and the present will permeate to make up the composite future.

It will be worth it. For sure. Nothing here to anchor you down- soon, soon will be established powers of foresight within. To stare past what light permits into blinding darkness. To be enfolded within new folds as they form.7 Foresight - faster than the speed of light!

"It can be a terrible burden, foresight," said Deleuze, "before having committed a fault, to cry before having pricked oneself, to serve before having divided up the servings." He calls this "the reversal of cause and effect."8 Remember Oedipus. His father was forewarned and acted upon it. Pricked his son in the foot, and left him to die, yet he returned to fulfill his destiny as had been foretold. Even his own mother did not recognize him - perhaps she married him because he reminded her so much of her dead...

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7. Crary, Jonathan, *The Camera Obscura and Its Subject*, *Techniques of the Observer*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, an October Book, MIT Press, 1990, p 51. "To increase this resemblance [between observer and the dark room] we should have to postulate that there is a screen in this dark room...that is not uniform but is diversified by folds representing items of innate knowledge...that this screen or membrane, being under tension, has a kind of elasticity or active force, and indeed that it acts (or reacts) in ways which are adapted both to past folds and to new ones."

husband. His father whom he had just murdered. Because neither recognized the other. So having foresight does not necessarily bring recognition of what has been predicted when it actually arrives.

Since all time is cyclical, let’s dispense with the cause/effect sequence. You’re after the afterimage. As Crary says “it has been known for at least two thousand years that when light passes through a small hole into a dark, enclosed interior, an inverted image will appear on the wall opposite the hole.” But Goethe advises the abandoning of observer status by sealing off the hole. Only then can one see that which “arises from an image which now belongs to the eyes.” So that distinctions between inner and outer space “dissolves”. This body, all orifices and orifice-potentialities sealed off, will be your dark screen. Your permeable membrane. As dark as is necessary. And your camera will see and record each moment for your re-cognition later.

At the edge of the pond, you take the first tentative step on the stepping stones shaped like lotus leaves floating on the pond. You are reminded of the first steps of the newborn Buddha - a lotus springing at each step. He must have been walking on water. You raise the camera to your eye and frame one stone leaf against the dark, moonflecked water. Your finger depresses the trigger. It clicks.

You want the afterimage before the image. You want to perceive within - you are uncertain if its retinal or supraretinal - but the wheels will, as they are set in motion, rise - and raise you through them.


11. Kapferer, Bruce, The Feast of the Sorcerer: Chicago & London, University of Chicago Press. 1997, p 319: “[The seven steps of the hatadiya] (a rite of sorcery that performs as a mirror to deflect negative energies sent by an enemy) “are always displayed in the shape of the curved body of the snake.” These lotus steps also relate to the seven chakra points on the spinal column which are also imaged as ‘lotuses’ with differing numbers of petals as well as the architectural points - interpreted vertically, as steps upward - of the stupa. (See Snodgrass on ‘Ascent’, Symbolism of the Stupa, 1992, pp 274-279. “The seven lotuses that mark the footsteps of the Buddha are to be thought of as strings like beads upon the line that marks the axis of the cosmos so as to form a series of superimposed worlds.”)

12. The chakras, as points/doorways on the subtle body are described as whirring, whirling lotuses of variously numbered petals. Wheels through which one must pierce, as one meditates on each nexus, to attain higher Consciousness.

Yes - there She is. Right on the edge of the lingering memory of a once present tail, the Serpent, coiled tight at the base of your spine. You focus on the Moon and keep walking.

She is watching you from within like a holographic eye shutting and opening as one walks by. Its your position that allows you to see it open or shut. With each step you take on the stone lotus leaves snaking up to the centre of the lake, you catch a glimpse of Her flitting gaze that strikes you like a lance in the depths of your heart. But you never catch the process. The opening and shutting of the holographic eye.

You stare at the afterimage of the Sun - the Moon in all its borrowed glory - and frame it in the viewfinder of your camera.

- No one ever went blind staring at the moon. Mad maybe but never blind. And what is madness if not the opening up of previously blind spots?

You thrill to her words - strangely inaudible - but felt. A rhythmic vibration through your bones. Your spine tingles.

The blindspot- where the optic nerves slip through to inform and be informed.14 This gap in vision enables vision. The blindspot - the gap that allows your imagination to suture unseeables. I’ve got another side you know that you don’t see as long as you’re down there.

- The ‘suture’. Derived from ‘sutra’ - Sanskrit for thread. 15 Better wind it tight around your wrists or you’ll lose track soon. Is it the suture or the future you seek?

13. Irigaray, Luce, Speculum of the Other Woman, trans. Gillian G. Gill, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1985, p 147-151 and 327-8. Writing on ‘Kore’, with reference to Plato, that ‘other’ of Man that cannot be directly looked upon, Irigaray notes that besides “the inversion that mirrors effects...”, [the concave mirror’s potential for setting things afire is not mentioned.”

14. Crary, p 75: And if the blindspot is located at “the exact point of entrance of the optic nerve on the retina”, this point of physical unseeing is what makes all seeing, re-seeing and recognition possible.

- The truth, you reply. - And into the blindspot I'll crawl if that is where it lurks. You press the camera trigger, click, and catch the Moon.

The coil at the base of your spine tightens.

- Here's the truth. No one ever saw the basilisk. That dreaded serpent who blinds with its look. There it lives in endless replay mode within the blindspot. Forever imagined blinding. A suture lets flesh grow over all cuts, separated skins and muscles. Wounds. So you must unpick, un-wind sutured flesh to dig at the truth.

- The basilisk is mythical. I want the truth behind the mythology! The reason behind philosophy! Neither simply logos nor mythos!

» The truths I've been witness to you'd call almost mythical. I saw the continents coalesce, crush up then break and drift apart. If you took a deep deep dive under the ocean aons ago - you'd have seen Halluceningia. And perhaps still wouldn't have believed your eyes. Yes that's what they call them - and they've only seen their fossils! They've surfaced now, the Halluceningia. The sea has sent them up - messages from the deep past fast asleep on stony deathbeds - but when they walked on ocean floors, - and they did walk - I saw them - seven stiltslike legs, seven tentacles on the head, each end mouthed - they were beautiful - beautiful. I come and go and yes I can - revolution is my state of being - but all they can do is leave stony memories pressed hard in rock - «

- Remember Blake: 'Everything to be believed is an image of truth.' After the image usually follows doubt.

You appreciate the warning but your determination hardens. Already staring at the afterimage of the Sun. You point your camera's lens at the bright disc in the sky. It stares back. And now you await the eclipse to reveal the earth's own dark mirror of itself.

- A question for you. Where do you think light goes?

You do not understand the silly question. - Light goes wherever it goes -


- *Like thought?*

How thought travels you'd like to know. Maybe faster than light.
- *Light hits things - on the surface - and just stays there - gets absorbed or reflected until the source of light or the thing it hits shifts. Depends on the source of light of course. There are, you say, different kinds of light. And filters.

*Degrees of intensities - yes. Moments of light variously focussed or un.*

*Shadows touch*
*But Selves do not.*
*If, at a certain time*
*In a certain place*
*There is light,*
*Shadows taper into fraternity*
*Hold hands. Kiss. Make love.*

*But Selves do not.*

*Then the moment passes.*
*The light falters.*
*Shifting Selves*
*scissor off shadow attachments*
*And shadows return*
*To their solitary service.*
*Shadows touch -*
*But Selves?*
*Then the Moment passes.*
*Everything alters.*

- *Light has an entourage of shadows.*

It is foresight you seek. Light and the moment is now, present. You want to be free of deceptive shadows.

- *Light may seem arbitrary, transient - but it can be sought - through discipline and openness.*

- *How? By staring at the sun? Light seeks us, we need not seek it. Sometimes we run from it. Look at our building of houses, and shelters and -*
Tell all the Truth but tell it slant -
Success in Circuits lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise
As Lightning to the children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind -  

The rules, you imagine, apply to every woman as well. The coil loosens and something seems to be slowly climbing up your vertebrae. Bone by winged bone.

- Look at the cathedrals in Europe in the 12th and 13th and later centuries. The stained glass window is the filter - the transformer that somehow delays and aestheticizes light for the experiencer. The delay is inevitable and essential - it implies the 'infrathin' gap and the minute degrees of differentiation between individual fingerprints, larynxprints, gene imprints.

You wait for revelation - like a translation perhaps. As you will be needing for this experience. Somethings will get lost - and there will be gains too.

- A kind of displacement, not evaporation. It's not to keep light out, but allow it in on our own terms.

The slow rising ceased.

You will not wait. You've waited long enough. You will not need a filter.

- Rise! Rise!

- And I offer you a lovely selection of precautionary, cautionary and postcautionary parentheses - pairs of them! - but no. You laugh and pronounce: I do not need filters.

You feel parenthesized by the moon and Her. What do they hold of you?

- Look at the tree and in experience of light. It is imprinted with a phototropic map. It drinks in light like rain - quite a lovely experience one can imagine - light pouring down the throat, searing like a spirit -

- Photosynthesis, you say promptly.

They have words for every kind of experience don't they - well - so to our question - light goes into the tree through its leaves which synthesizes it and releases the energy into the tree's system - giving it life. Light transforms and is transformed.

Light, light, light - but what about heat? Isn't light always married to heat?

Imagine Heat telling Light - you shall never travel anywhere without me! Well there are means of separating them - in the tropics it would be impossible to believe you can have sunshine and yet shiver. An appearance of light without heat - yet look at the laser and the hologram - look at a so-called 'sunny' day in the Antarctic. Fire is an excellent embodiment of heat and light - consider volcanic eruptions - yet look at the Moon - such heatless light - yet she illuminates the night! Light is a hypertraveller and sometimes loses patience with the passion of Heat -

Waxing metaphorical gain - how does one glean the truth from so much clutter?

Truth is not a distillation of essence from clutter - Truth just is - metaphorical clutter and all.

Light - what use is light - physical, particularized, wavelike - in my quest? Yes, necessary for my photography. But my quest is for foresight! What happens next, the Next that sits in darkness, without shadow, before the spotlight of the present swings around to it?

The metaphors transubstantiate into light - physical, particularized, wavelike - and so your quest will again be to be enlightened and to trace the source of light from the shadows cast.

You are running counter to the eclipse. The Moon will be your guide. You reach the last stone leaf that leads you up two steps to the pavilion. Stone worn so smooth the moonlight bounces off each curve of the pillars which wind like lotus stems up towards the roof where they spread out and meet. You set up your camera equipment at the edge. It is the night of the eclipse and your camera's eye, poised at the Moon, will register each shift. Timed to very slowly blink in response to every passing second. To mark in real time your journey away from time. The blink that splices the microsecond and traps, captures its skin-thin cross-section on film. The blink - the opening and shutting off. A trapdoor to trick light and ensnare shadows.
Then you sit, crosslegged under the dome, your crowded spine held straight. Your breath thickly moving through your body like blood, viscous.

Moon Enters Edge of Penumbra

The moon throws an arc of itself and sends it skidding like a skipping pebble onto the skin of the taut pond surface and its afterimage shatters the surface like glass and you watch while it dances, dissolves, coalesces and slivers again. Water and wind already constantly breaking it up, you cannot tell which is the missing piece. Your iris you have fully tightened. Your lids are tight shut. The fluids in your eyeballs rise in tidal response -

- You look like you're drowning in your own eyes. -

There is a slight heave amidst the coiling.

Soon the awakening begins. She, Serpent will rise and take you with Her. Now your body quiets. With the soon to be naked inner eye, you observe the moon, a surface witness of the earth, slowly dilate into total eclipse; all aperture; to capture the photons of the full earth.

- We only see when what we're seeing is what we've never seen before. Otherwise all seeing is recognition. You recognize yourself in the mirror. You recognize the face of your friend. You recognize the Moon. Its eclipse by the Earth. You'll recognize Halley's comet when it comes around again (if you're still around) from histories' tapestries and countless recollections of those who saw and those who recognized. What of Anticipation? To expect to recognize? Do you expect to recognize me? How? "The field of an individual's attention includes a penumbra as well as a focus; penumbral items of experience can be combined and elaborated upon while remaining within the penumbra, and thus when the focus of attention shifts to them, can appear as ready made."

Perhaps you weave me from attendant shadows.

Concentrate, you tell yourself, ignore the shadows, concentrate to register any tiny movement in the coils - awareness is all -

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“All consciousness is a matter of threshold.”

Moon Wholly Enters Penumbra

- We are entering darkness. Do you hope to see me in the dark? Or are you awaiting enlightenment?

You do not want tangibilities. You seek the truth. Disembodied and beyond human desire. You seek Khora - that 'genre of being' as discussed in Plato's Timaeus - neither "sensible" nor "intelligible", that which belongs to a "third genus"- Khora as Derrida defined elliptically that which has no 'self', only 'attributes' -

- Loss of self results in perpetual seeing. Seeing everything. Recognising nothing. The question is then: how to forget? How to de-impress, erase the trace of the burning? How not to retain on the retina knowledge of having seen? Did Oedipus cease to remember what he had seen and what his father had foreseen when he dug out his eyes by the entrails and dripped blood over the finely moulded cheeks of his maid? Did he erase the living memory of the ancient goddess religions where the symbolic, because long murdered, haunts even more horrifically in the aftermath - millennia after her murder? Did he not remember how his unconscious acts skewed all concept of the 'idea' of cyclical Nature - that goddess incarnates into queen into mother into wife, and son into husband and only then - king?

It is the cycle - you understand the moon in its cycle transsexuals. And without organs. It was not murder. It was a change in social order.

But you find you cannot keep track of your thoughts. You are a child again, and can see yourself: carefully, with tiny fingers, folding a paperboat.

- You worship the largest thing in the sky, the most perceptible. Yet the thing you live on is four times larger. And still you cannot see its form until it sweeps past the thing you worship. You recognize the Earth by its shadow. Earth rises on the Moon's horizon four times larger than the Moon upon ours. And many times brighter. And what lies between the eye of the Moon and the eye of the Sun during a lunar eclipse? The Earth. The third Eye.


22. Allen, David & Carol, Eclipse, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1987, p 17. The stages of the eclipse used in this ‘door’ are as found on p 26 of this reference.
The camera clicks. Somewhere a frog dives off a lilypad with a 'plop!' You have set the folded paperboat onto the surface of the pond and it sails off in the small breeze. You notice it has eyes - drawn in with coloured pencils on either side of its hull.

- You can dream me in come on - I'm woven in the landscape past present future - you'll recognize me - the body may not be human but you'll recognize me -

You hear the camera clicking. It helps locate you in time - because space seems to be looming up inside you, swallowing you into unfamiliar memory. She rises within and forces your nerve-tendrils through a tropism you are not familiar with. You cannot recognize, having never yet seen, the source towards which you head.

Moon Touches Umbra; Partial Phase Begins
- The concave mirror - the "burning glass" irigancy speaks of - turns slowly - oh ever so slowly - towards your inner eye - let it smoulder -

The camera blinks, clicks again. More unwinding within the heavy coils inside. Hisssings.

- Bite me then since you can - bite me then as usual - catch and eat my plump crabs all - bite bite bite snap snap snap chunks off me with your eyes - unsex me then, vex me then in your concavities -

- The burning mirror, you repeat. - A complex designed nothingness, it is more than the sum of its reflections. It is also projects its reflections. The mirror becomes its reflections and that which it reflects become mirror. Point of view is crucial to any perception as can be seen in the phenomena of parallax that unifies two verisimilitudes, making two objects appear as one, without negating the distance between them.23

- The distance will not be negated. But your consciousness will be lost, dissipated in the vast distances of aeons and ellipses so stretched it feels linear. You will never be one with your female side if that's what you perceive me to

23. A pictorial example of this would be the lithograph by Escher: 'Still Life With Mirror' (1934), where different realities "interpenetrate." See Bruno Ernst, 'The Vision of a Mathematician', Escher: The Complete Graphic Work, ed. F.H. Bool, Bruno Ernst, J.R. Kist, J.L. Locher, F. Wienda, trans. from the Dutch 'Lene Werk van M.C. Escher' by Tony Langham and Plym Peters, The Netherlands, Thames and Hudson, 1992, p 136: "Escher...I was particularly fascinated by the mixture of the one reality (the mirror itself and everything surrounding it) with the other reality (the reflection in the mirror)[...] the reality of the room and that of the street are combined in an ingenious way."
be. I am serpentine but I am not only She. Linguistically so perhaps. In Sanskrit I am called kundalini, relative to the male seeker's expectations of religious 'sexual' union with a linguistically gendered male god. I - and 'he' - have been spelt into fixed gender; 'he' into Heavenly Father, and I into the Eternal Feminine. But I am S/He.

Moon Wholly Enters Umbra; Total Eclipse Begins

So the enlightenment begins. Eyes shut or open?

- That you are aware of your uncertainty says you and your self are somewhat syncopated. Your pineal eye is flattering and too aware of lids, the protection lids offer, to close, to shut, to keep out - lids which should be peeled, peeled back -

You see your little paperboat bobbing in the distance. The domed pavilion opens up, creaking on its radial hinges. You are uncoiling with the Serpent in embrace, up and out - no longer on stone but dancing weightless on the green carpet of a lotus leaf, froglike.

You are afraid to be afraid. Little betrayals of this fear releases a myriad whys seeping from your mouth, in blue streaks curling cloudily. You cannot breathe, your mouth, nostrils, ears bleeding whys.

- But still we kiss. No philosophy will guide you through the haze between sleep and waking - where are they now? What are you now? What are you going through; what is going through you?

Towering, its winged hood spread, the Serpent within swallows the Moon -

Eclipse!

The new Moon, turgid, sliding its rosette doors, apertures wide. It is all aperture. All doorway. Reflecting the shadow of Earth. You are caught,

24. Campbell, The Mythic Image, p 331, on the kundalini system of yoga: "The long terminal i added to the Sanskrit adjective kundalin, meaning "circular, spiral, coiling, winding" makes a feminine noun signifying "snake", the reference in the present context being to the figure of a coiled female serpent a serpent goddess not of "gross" but of "subtle" substance."
captured like a photon into the aperture. Somehow transported to the blackhole that is the Moon at this moment. On a ship full sailed by theory, like in Kepler's dream. Your little paperboat with Innocent Eyes. A child again. You are in a high-ceilinged study full of optical instruments. But there is one especially impressive telescope trained at the large shining globe below. Then you hear voices. The Cow who had jumped hey! diddle diddle over the Moon and whose generous swinging udders were responsible for the Milky Spurted Way was talking to a Peacock, preening and prancing, raised tail all-eyes.

'There is nothing lovelier than the sight of the Full Earth. And, said the Cow, pausing dramatically to engage the attention of the Peacock, I've just spotted it. Its there alright. The basilisk fossil. 'Everything possible to be believed', said Blake, is an image of truth. 'And the image is there!'

The peacock lifts its full-fanned myriad-eyed tail through the telescope and sees a kaleidoscope of basilisk fossils.

'Multiple images of truth,' said the Peacock and shut its tail with a snap.

'Exponential,' said the Cow and leapt out the window.

'You might like to know, there're multiple eyes staring really hard in our direction - ' said the Peacock.

The Cow crawls back in over the sill.

'Eyes? Staring? Let's see - one pair of eyes. Your tail is a little too prismatic! Always breaking singularities down! Technically it shouldn't be able to see us at all - we're at 'All-Aperture' stage. I wonder if its third-eyed and senses us from within. Its been watching our eclipse. Shadousthtre it must appear to them down there. Forgive them Aerial-Arse. Afterall its a display 'solely for the eyes of folk[...]on earth.'

- I am here - you mouth and wave your arms, - tell me about the basilisk!

25. Manheim Steamroller, Fresh Aire V, CD sleeve notes on Johannes Kepler. In his work The Dream, he describes the voyage to Levania (the Moon) and how, sailing through the air, the main character and selected adventurers reach Levania and observe the habits of the Levanians whose "nature is generally like a snake's[... a strange love for basking in the noon-day Sun."

But they do not hear you or see you. You move closer. The Cow inserts an ‘R’ in its ontology and flies out the window again. The peacock arcs into an iridescent rainbow and then becomes a point of light. They vanish.

- Jammed in the jamb, you are framed. Parenthesized: “Up too close,” said the wise Blau, “we can’t see. Too far back, we can’t feel[…] Distance which gives perspective, blurs; intimacy, if it doesn’t breed contempt, blinds.” 27 Blau was talking theatre - and here you are. Right in the middle of your private prosenium arch. We await your performance! Squeeze in an aside!

Parenthesize!

You cannot see your audience. You cannot see anything. You cannot say anything - or find you have said them already before you say them. Like the view from the wrong end of a telescope, your words speedily incline away from you and italicize ……

...I recognize nothing but everything seems somehow familiar - you need words to describe this - this nothingness……

- Framed. Parenthesized. No escape. You cannot escape your thoughts even though words escape you.

…talk of blindness. The mythical basilisk, the fatal strand of hair off Medusa’s head! The lock that locks you out of Sight! One look at it looking at you and you are blinded!

...into the sea pushing pushing and where your eyes began the sea ends and you cannot see for all is sea -

- “Nothing to be seen”, says Irigaray - in irony mind you, - “is equivalent to having no thing. No being, and no truth.” 28 Are you still seeking an Image? The Image: What you find is the Mirror. All surface. A mirror untouched by any reflection, like a pupil - a hole - dilated to encompass the whole field of vision, and mirroring itself: Reflecting nothing (but) its own void, that hole through which one looks.” 29 There is no content; only process. Not what penetrates but penetrability. Permeability.


29. Irigaray, p 328.
Moon Begins to Leave Umbra; Totality Ends

- Stop looking at me, I'm drowning!

...breath caught and held, surfacing upon the caving sands and arising see all the moon withholds - O sad soul with eyes of salt sea!

- Remind yourself: “Every perception is hallucinatory because perception has no object.”

Defy, deny, resist - gravity requires those words for any flight to take place.

...straddle straddle straddle me lonesome shadow shrieks itself upon the sea without form without substance - desire-wrought entity warped in absence of light - running desire-rings on wet surfaces - exhuming mollusc appetites from the deep -

...eyes of sea drags sky and constellations down but the moon rides high upon your poisoned poisoned will and draws hard the ache of tidal liquid breaths -

... This is incredible! There they are the monstrous bastards! Cartilaginous flexibilities flapping all over the place, featherless! I don't like this! It's too clear! I see too many too many monsters. God! The sets of teeth!

Moon Leaves Umbra; Partial Phase Ends

...the ache the ache planted deep and growing longings, long tentacles desperate gropers sucking sucking sucking - whipped back! whipped back into the arms of sea - no - don't let me go -

Moon Begins to Leave Penumbra

- Waxing moon they call me - delight in my underbelly filling with the skies of my spiralling galactic histories - time soon to make crabs' flesh fill fat against their shell-skins - time soon to summon the tides - time soon to raise the howlings - witches and bitches - Listen! Can you hear the future? Or would you rather watch?

...pushing breath after breath and then darkness slowly closes the lids.
Lizardward like stone - it arises darker than the darkness - bats across....
Shadow companion ignored, - pouring, into-between-over the rocks .....  
Spilling, rippling, shivering out to sea -

They call me moon, wawwalk upon me with taloned thoughts, dive into
my pools - brave contagious madness. Remember me? Recognize me? Obvious
common impossibility? Traversed and traversing the horned wind - recognize
me? Hung at the threshold you think I go nowhere, listen! I don't and won't
'Begone!' I become at your sill, your threshold all and everything at once
upon a time -

Moon Leaves Penumbra

"The moon is born and dies in its masculine form, but it is as female that
it reaches its fullness." 31 But it never stays, being always on a continuum.

You are in the air - not flying, but spinning. Like a time-lapsed film of
the Moon's revolution around the Earth. Who can say for sure how the
Moon came about? Hypothesize - yes - captured by the earth; fission
through collision; a binary planet; Sister Moon; precipitation, accretion
of planetesimal. 32 You remember St John describing the moment
preceding revelation: "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand,
and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I
had eaten it, my belly was bitter." 33 Words go through you, drawing no
blood, but consciousness of memory - sharp, bitter, present and passing.
The moment coming and going. You come down slowly. Yet you live.
Who is this you still breathing?

Who am I you ask? I'm you - don't you recognize you?

Maybe once, lifetimes ago - or lifetimes ahead - all time is relative. All
reality is relative. All images are relative. All hallucinations are relatives.

Once - you had seven tentacles on the head and a while later I had
eight -

31. Green, Tamara M., The City of the Moon God, The Netherlands, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1992, p 26: "If the crescent moon is the symbol of male virility and sexual power, " (in reference to the horns of the 'Bull') "the full moon may be seen to portray the gravity of a woman about to give birth; thus within the moon's periodic nature there is a constant cycle of alternation between male and female."


- Once, lifetimes ago, you slept stony sleep and fossilized while you dreamt.

- Once, lifetimes ago, we danced to the sound of trees singing rings - and trumpets snarled and walls came tumbling down.

Yet you live.

- "Nobody," said Nietzsche, "dies nowadays of fatal truths: there are too many antidotes to them."34

The Serpent - only one moment ago merged with you, or who - or what you think you remember your consciousness to be - now slides swiftly down, through all the pierced doors of your body. You are left feeling bruised and confused. You have come tumbling down endless terraces of thought. Captured, fissured, bound and precipitated, you feel like an alchemical experiment - what did you witness? What witnessed you? Please! You! Can you hear me? You - you leaving without a word -you - whom I imagine wild, you are the rift, the tear, the stand-in. You force me to linger in dangerous gaps where your brevity flies past without punctuation. Missing pieces of your gestures jigsaw nebulously, but between the gesture and my imaginings are only blanks, your smile wears nothing between the lines. Your kiss burns still. But it is I who am naked. Out to sea in a paperboat you have sent me, out to the wild wild sea. I have you in sight, in memory, but you get smaller, soon a speck upon the shore. My longing to see you concatenates like a telescope - but again, I view from the wrong end. Sending you this message in the folds of my boat - but you vanish. I long to cut your wet shadow out from under you, where we danced on the leaf of a lotus - and cup it in my hands, tasting, touching, hearing you, drop by drop by drop.

- You thought you were promised no more individuation to keep in and up; to hold together to be sealed and non-porous; to stand away from the sand and evade the shedding of solid devoted shadows to be danced upon. You thought you were promised non-existence upon some other's waking. You were promised Nothingness. Nothing occupies space and the gap remains.

- You seek the shadows now? It is too late. You have made the exchange. You asked for light. Or maybe light sought you. Who can say? Let it slowly wisp away.

- You with the wild imagination - in pieces you think you'll read me -

- let it slowly wisp away dear.
Yes. You know the way things go - softly gently disappear. - wait - listen -
as the ashes go from your breathspace into Hers - thus you share the kiss
of loss - thus you meet in scarlet rims. Again. Again! Again. Again.

Moon Leaves Penumbra.

behold the petalled sun yellow with longing
remembering yellow lovesongs
in chrome ribbons
tied around banana submarines
will it plough the ochre river Time
till it finds you?

amused - you peek and peer
night after night
until curiosity disrobes you and you stare
naked from the sky -
but as always you see it closed and dejected,
a blue vegetable too blue for you.

and then you go away
and then your lover comes and floods cadmium
the fields and the petalled sun
revives its yellow longing
hanging heavy as it scans the blue
for sight of you.

once - once! It was nearly evening
as prodigal day returned to the arms of night
you showed yourself faintly -
then how the petalled sun danced mad for you!
but your silver rendezvous was with your evening lover
Star Sun, calling for reassurance
over the millennia of syncopated desire you both tango to.

quiet, the petalled sun
shed length upon jaundiced length of ochre
dropping chrome powdered love
crushed ground and useless
on the earth it is bound to
wishing its roots aerial, wind-wrapped,
wishing itself a sky traveller like you and him whom you love
curling its wish into its lemon self sour for you.
the petalled sun will rise again
like any ordinary Sun -
and maybe in a millennium or two
deep in a Prussian dream of blue -
find one petalled moon like you.

- into the winds vanish - dis-appearintegrate members dissolve - dis-tant -

Full Moon

The eclipse passed over like a blink of an eyelid, now you stare at the Full Moon again. But you cannot see - being blinded by an idea so bright it casts no shadows.³⁵

But what you can see out on the mirroring pond is the Moon on the oceans of thought, and the little paperboat of theory you folded as a child - alight. Burning in the magnified light of fictional concave mirrors. And with it, burnt reality.³⁶ As you rise, kicking your legs into circulation, your camera and its tripod slips on the smooth stone floor down the stairs, and soundlessly disappears into the mirrored surface of the pond with a barely perceptible ripple.

³⁵. Hillman, James, A Blue Fire, Selected Writings, Ed.Thomas Moore, New York, Harper & Row, 1989, p 53: “Ideas give us eyes. Our word idea comes from the Greek ‘eidos’[…] both that which one sees and that by means of which one sees.”


“[T]he sun, in its incandescence, joins with a burning glass (whose fiction the sun sustains[…]”) “
I plunge. "Every monad [...] expresses the entire world, but obscurely and dimly because it is finite and the world is infinite. That is why the lower depths of the monad are so dark [...] It is as if the depths of every monad were made from an infinity of tiny folds (inflexions) endlessly furling and unfurling in every direction, so that a monad's spontaneity resembles that of agitated sleepers who twist and turn on their mattresses."  

I twist and turn on my mattress when without warning, the bed gives way and I plunge, trapdoors crashing open downward and I find I am in the depths of myself and totally un-at-home. Reward for contemplating infinity.  

How to get out? Descend further down the stairs and believe - ah the underestimation of the power of blind faith - that things will swing around. Zenith and nadir may exchange positions and the horizon, equating height with depth, will betray no one.  

And through the still-swinging open concatenation of trapdoors, shining like a bursting-point-ripe mania, the Fullblown, Shining Moon.
Six
SYNAPSE
"The Thousand-Petalled Lotus."

The ‘Synapse’ - the tiny impulse-sensitive interval between neurons in the brain - readily susceptible to surrogate chemical influences.

Between synapses, tiny fertile gardens thrive, gardens in the Brain. On the threshold of sleep, we roam the secret convolution of gardens where the rare thousand-petalled lotus is thought into bloom: the brainscape where possibility and impossibility flower. Books flutter open as a moonlit breeze dances by and thoughts are released. We witness a conjuring of Escher’s ‘Drawing Hands’, they discuss coming-into-existence while Deleuze & Guattari - playing chess - enter into a conversation with a hologram.

Using the peculiarities of the chess game, (eg. the Pawn’s capacity, at a certain point, to be ‘transfigured’ into any other chess piece that has been ‘captured’) discussions on gaps in perception; imperceptibility; the anomaly; and the parallel concepts of ‘becoming’ between Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘A Thousand Plateaus’ and Buddhism’s ‘Thousand-Petalled Lotus’ are raised.

KEY PERSONAE
- Left hand: named, unitalicized
- Right hand: named, unitalicized
- Gilles Deleuze: named, unitalicized
- Felix Guattari: named, unitalicized
- Headless Buddha Hologram: ‘named’, unitalicized
- Other ‘hands’ in the game (quotations): named, unitalicized
- Moon: italicized
"The right hand is controlled by the left side of the brain and the left hand by the right side of the brain, so right-handedness is actually a phenomenon of left-brainedness."

**A Two-part Invention for Left & Right Hands.**

«In the furrows of your frown, in the folds of your asymmetrical brain, let me plant ideas. For the lotus of a thousand petalings needs no sunlight, does not photosynthesize - it blossoms at night when the Moon is Full; it synthesizes thought - captured through gaps, synapses, the stomata of pages. Leafed thought. Responding to a lunar tropism, leafed thought transforms into petals and the lotus emerges between synapses. On such a night as this, while you frown and I souse, let us call upon a pair of pageturners - »

1. Gardner, Martin, *The Ambitious Universe*, Great Britain, Pelican Books, second edition, 1982, p 67-76. Gardner mentions Plato's views on handedness from Book Seven of the Laws: "In the use of the hand we are, as it were, maimed by the folly of our nurses and mothers...for although our several limbs are by nature balanced, we create a difference in them by bad habit." Gardner explains that Plato "was badly mistaken." Apparently, "as far back as history provides reliable evidence" the human race has "inherited" the "tendency for most people to favor the right hand." Whilst, "monkeys and apes, our closest cousins among the primates, are ambidiexous", humans developed along a bias. "At some time in the geologic past, when primates began the great transition to human types, something started them off on this asymmetric habit." Gardner also points out that our organs have "grossly asymmetric placing" - from the location of the heart to the twists and turns of the intestines. Especially important is the human umbilical cord, which he describes as "a magnificent triple-helix of two veins and one artery," which "invariably coils counterclockwise."
A small gust of wind sweeps through the open door and onto the table, then gently flips the pages of densely illustrated book and lingers over an image of Escher’s lithograph - Drawing Hands.

≪ And now, let the Right hand sing its part. ≫

Left
Please - hurry up and have done with it!

Right
Please - this takes time. If I do a slipshod job, you’ll be the one with an unconvincing cuff!

Left
Unconvincing? Who are you trying to convince? I happen to like clean lines. All this chiaroscuro, shading and highlights - its too terribly earnest. Why try to be ‘like’ life when you’re obviously not - I mean you’re just two-dimensional - you’re a flat piece of paper!

Right
So you mean to say this pencil I’m drawing with on this paper with leaf-and-bark memories is not three-dimensional and so we are not ‘alive’?

Left
There is no pencil. There’s only paper - your pencil is paper too. Sure the paper may have once upon a time been part of a living tree - but all that processing has taken the life out of it.

Right
So because the instrument and material are processed, the drawing is dead.

Left
No. The drawing can never die because it never lived. It’s just art. Who was that fellow who said art was a pale imitation of life?

Right
How the hell do I know? I’m not into philosophy. I’m into art. You tell me, why don’t you like fleshed-out chiaroscuro drawings - or better yet - paintings? You don’t think they ‘capture’ flesh?

Left
Spare me the embodiment metaphor. There’s no flesh in it. Its just paper and lead! Paper and lead is what you’ve - as you so quaintly put it -
“captured”. It was Burgess wasn’t it who wrote: “[T]he organicity of art is pure metaphor. There is no blood in it, there is no motion.”

Surely there is blood in thought. No blood, no motion; no motion no thought; no thought, no art.

Right
Left, I notice you keep saying ‘its’. You do realize you’re talking about yourself and the state you’re in. Just a paper and lead existence and you manage to sneer so well.

Left
You know. I do believe you have a hyperactive imagination. Too much art one supposes. How can I sneer when I have no mouth? I’m just one hand, for God’s sake!

Right
Oh, you’re just one mouthless hand calling on God’s behalf? If you have no mouth how come you’re talking in that pompous tone of voice so irritatingly in my ear?

Left
Tone of voice! Really! And what ear? I don’t see any ear on you!

Right
Well, you hear me, don’t you?

Left
Yes - but that doesn’t prove I have vocal cords or that you have ears. Its just the vibration of pencil on paper, sonic waves, friction. Fiction. The rub.

Moonlight brushes against the spines of several other unopened books on the table.

Right
Vibrations! So what are you saying - that we are making meaning - whole meanings based on a complex language structure - out of this ‘action’ - this ‘act’ of drawing?

Left
You’ve just said something very important.

Right
I didn’t ‘say’ anything remember? I just - how did you put it - ‘vibrated’.

Left
Yes yes, whatever. Don’t you see?

Right
No. Can’t see. See? No eyes!

Left
Don’t get literal on me! Try and understand this - its the ‘act of drawing’ - its the ‘act’ you see, the gesture - that’s what gives us life!

Right
I thought you ‘vibrated’ that we were just pencil and paper - just art. That we should stop ‘imitating’ life because we’ll never be alive. ‘There is no motion’ you said.

Left
Don’t be so rigid in your thought process, Right. I think it’s you and me - we give each other our lives -

It’s both of you - and plenty of Moonlight.

Left
Well - we give each other a kind of mutual birth - by gesturing each other into existence! Sleight of hand!

Right
One moment ago you said we were just art - just two-dimensional paper. You even declared that this pencil - which I can feel so truly in my hand - wasn’t a pencil at all but just paper. You were advocating line-drawing as being more truthful, less ‘pretentious’, no need for ‘fullness’, light and shade - that art is fleshless, that metaphor is all, et cetera - and now you talk of ‘life’ - of ‘birth’! Birth! The fleshliest act of them all! And the bloodiest! I’m not getting literal. You’re getting paradoxical!

Lunatical.

Left
Perhaps - but don’t you see? It doesn’t matter now how supposedly life-like we rendered each other - if we were a richly coloured realist oil-painting - or even if we were just lines - or dots even, with no light or shade - we’d still be alive! Its the act!
Of thinking.

Right
Alright Left, - you're vibrating a little too loud - I can't hear myself think. Please, would you mind terribly if I requested you hurry up and finish that cuff of mine?

Left
Its finished! I might even erase the cuff altogether! Think about it, friction making fiction out of your cuff! The rub! The act of erasing -

Right
You do any such thing and I'll rub out your fingers - then see how you act 'eraser'! You talk about 'process' taking the life out of things - isn't the gesture a 'process'? Isn't erasing a 'process'? And chew on this - if we can 'gesture' in the first place, then aren't we already alive? Without the act? How did we begin gesturing? And how do I draw you into existence if what I'm holding is no pencil but just paper? And how did I come about?

Left
'Ay, there's the rub.' I do love Hamlet, don't you - I should say Shakespeare of course - for what is Hamlet without Shakespeare? I might also say what is Shakespeare without Hamlet - but 'the rub' - just one word to describe all the complexities of pause as friction as fear as obstacle as erasable obstacle - you've got to love one chap or the other! Or both! But what I was going to say before this Shakespearean interlude was - I'm proud of you Right, you're actually thinking! I'll venture an answer - maybe we never ended - so, we never began.

Right
Patronising pig's trotter! What about visual art - material, real - material - not just words, words, words! Don't tell me - I've just uttered something Shakespearean, haven't I? He seems to have said it all! I implore you - could you add some detail while you're finishing my cuff - I'd like it long and lacy - frothing with lace!

Left
It was Hamlet's words actually - and as for lace - can't do that. Against my principles. I'm a postmodernist. I could not deal with that definite 18th Century Rococo look. It's too much of one thing, and too frivolous. We should be multiple-personaed, we should be exponential! Lace is too - well lace is just that - lace.
Right
Just *draw* me some *fake* lace - and you don't have to deal with *your* principles - it’s *my* cuff!

Left
You forget we're on the same drawing. What you look like will cast aspersions on me - so no. The cuff looks nice and open ended to me. It is finished.

Right
Fine! *I'm* going to drip lace all over *your* cuff!

Left
Technically, that would be a mistake. But as mistakes are part of the postmodern structure/nonstructure, especially when one is aware of them as mistakes, it could be quite interesting. Such a structure has a kind of inbuilt fallibility. Look at Michael Jackson. A walking postmodern restructure - is he making a mistake about his "change" or did Nature make a mistake that he’s correcting? Perhaps his motivation may be 'perfection' to his own ideal - but that's pretty postmodernist too - an imperfect perfection - you know - with all the seams showing - I think we'd be mistaken to think there was a 'real' Michael Jackson and a 'made'one - they're both Michael Jackson! In fact, he is 'becoming-Michael Jackson' even as we speak.³

Right
No mistake about it! Just like you are now 'becoming-lacy cuff'? Very *becoming* lace too! - Isn’t paper magical? Such a very malleable thing!

≡ Isn't metaphor too, magical and malleable? ≡

Left
Right - you notice nothing's happening? I'm afraid you may have 'lace' intentions but the Will (and I don't mean good old Hamlet's Will) that brought us this far has decided - it is finished. No more additions. We are finished. THE END.

Right
I'm *not* letting you have the last word.

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"Michael Jackson's nose is collapsing [...] as the surgically implanted cartilage wilts under the pressure of earthly gravitation. [...] The collapsing nose, then, as a postmodern version of Freud's return of the repressed."
Perhaps it’s time for some more Moonlight Magic - adjust your cuffs. Hands, we will conduct a conversation with other modes of thought.

Moonlight is carried in on a slight breeze through the window. Several other books on the table flip open like a flurry of disturbed birds. The Two-part Invention multiplies its parts as if it is transposed for the Moog synthesizer. The Left hand appears faintly in the shaft of a moonbeam, gesturing for attention. Then the Right emerges and signals a commencement. And from the first volume:

Deleuze

“Syntax and experimentation, syntactics and pragmatics, a matter of speed.”

Left

Yes - and at such a rate it is transgressive. The gaps/intervals betray the gestures and the speed. Betrayal is an act of transgression.

Pages in another book start flipping.

Foucault

“Transgression is an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin; it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses.”

Right

Doesn’t the transgression continue, rechalking its crossed line with every step forward -

Left

Or backward. Transgression is not necessarily ‘linear’ in its progression - like Dawkins said: “[M]utation in either direction is equally probable.” But in some genes, there is that tendency toward a particular direction, a tropism that he calls “mutation pressure”.

The Left hand gestures for emphasis from Foucault.


Foucault

"[I'm not done...] does transgression not exhaust its nature when it crosses the limit, knowing no other life beyond this point in time? And this point, this curious intersection of beings that have no other life beyond this moment where they totally exchange their beings, is it not also everything within which overflows from it on all sides?" 7

Moonlight slips off the turning pages and spills on the table and onto the floor.

Left

I suppose with any displacement there is overflow. Intersecting beings reach the point of total exchange - but then at the crucial point, there is a kind of congealing, a kind of friction between the parts exchanged - because its not all disembodied exchanges: the materialities engage, an assemblage ensues and the possibility of the totality of the exchange is short-circuited. The 'interbeings' stay at/on/in the narrow zone of transgression. But intentions overflow.

Right

Are you saying that the act of transgression is not just necessary but inevitable? No where to go but across. Forward or backward or a 360 degree kaleidoscoped direction - depends on which side and of what 'symmetry' you are. But there is always friction. One expects it. One expects to be thwarted.

< One needs to know the extent of the thwart. >

The Right hand snaps its fingers and the breeze frenziedly flips the pages of another book.

Merleau-Ponty

"Knowledge thus appears as a system of substitutes in which one impression announces others without ever justifying the announcement, in which words lead one to expect sensations as evening leads one to to expect night." 8

Left

And the thwart is when you expect night but dawn dawns on you< After 4 million years, one craves a thwart. One full thwart. I need another orbit. Next time you expect Full Moon - you'll be dropped 'Farewell! Gone to Jupiter!' leaflets instead. >

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7. Foucault, p 34.

More pages of the book rustle.

Right
And so more on this system of substitutes - how do we fill in the gaps between the word and the sensation? Between the thwarts?

Merleau-Ponty
"It is shown that in the reading of a book the speed of the eye leaves gaps in the retinal impressions, therefore the sense-data must be filled out by a projection of memories."

Left
Well, it's the gap that allows for the synaptic activity which I'd describe as metonymic. While knowledge is a system of substitutes - that is, a system of the metaphor - the 'projection' between gaps, the process of assemblage is metonymic. AND.

⇐ Up AND down, Male AND Female, Left AND Right, Deleuze AND Guattari ... there is no end... ⇒

Merleau Ponty
"If we abandon the empiricist postulate of the priority of contents[...]"10

The Right hand gestures for a pause.

Right
I'm not inclined to abandon the empiricist postulate...

The Moon shifts position, and a patch of moonlight climbs the wall and stains a DeKooning 'Woman' painting.

DeKooning
"It's very tiny, content."

Then falls on a thick volume on American poetry - which blooms open at a page deep into the book.

Bernstein
"[I envision a writing where] mode itself is explored as content, its possibilities of meaning are investigated and presented, and that process is itself recognized as a method."11


Right
The process that is now already recognized as content in the the visual arts - in fact the end product is held in skepticism now. Nothing but process counts. Backstage work is performance.

And the Right hand thumbs through a previous volume to a particular page and gestures: 'Resume'.

Merleau-Ponty
"[Allow me to continue - if we re-prioritize content], [w]e are free to recognize the strange mode of existence enjoyed by the object behind our back. "12

Right
You refer to content not listed on the content page. Content nonetheless? And I object to the word "object".

Left
Do the metaphorical thing then. Substitute the word "the object" for another word - "the subject"? "Fiction"? "The reader"?

Right
"Strange modes of existence."

¬ ¬ Maybe once, lifetimes ago - you enjoyed a strange mode of existence and didn't think it strange. Perhaps couldn't. A strange mode of existence enjoying a strange mode of existence - enjoyable because strange or because not recognized as strange? How would you anything strange without knowing of its existence, strange or otherwise? ¬ ¬

Left
I like the word "recognize" - not just seeing - (since the existing is going on behind our backs where our eyes are not) it implies insight - "feeling" the dance behind, the act, within the bones, under the skin, in language, between words and gestures - the gaps -

Now the wind dances in with the Moon, and the leaves of yet another volume rustle open.

Johnson
"It would seem that the theoretical frame of reference which governs recognition is a constitutive element in the blindness of any

interpretative insight. That frame of reference allows the analyst to frame the author of the text he is reading for practices whose locus is simultaneously beyond the letter of the text and behind the vision of its reader. 13

Left
So that the text and its textuality /intertextuality can escape the 'frame' but the writer stands accusable of the 'effects' of the text's 'being', betrayed by the practice, betrayed by the act of writing. Framed. No escape. Unless s/he escapes into the text? Between texts, lines, letters?

« On that note, we should end the conversation now, while the dancing continues behind our backs. Thank you all. »

All the open books on the table snap shut.

Right
No. Not Left with the last word again. How about another textual escapade? What say you to a game of chess?

« Excellent idea! I'd like to open another book - unwritten - a book of blank pages - “Deleuze and Guattari's Conversations & Confessions with Buddha” - and let's think Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari into your game of chess - »

Left
Let the game begin!

« Not just yet - first, Left and Right, a little engrafting procedure is necessary. Here we go: Left hand to Gilles and Right to.... »

Felix
Me. That feels great! Was expecting it to feel a bit two-dimensional but it works. How does your Left feel Gilles?

Gilles
Well I’m trying very hard indeed to keep this one from doodling right hands everywhere - and from the urge it seems to have to want to scratch your itch -

Felix
What itch? Don’t have one -

Gilles
Well this appendage seems to be convinced you do - ouch!

Felix
Stop that!

Gilles
Don’t hit me! It’s that fiddly hand!

Felix
Gilles. Seriously. I just want to get on with our game. We’ve been here on the Border, doing our 888 mantras by remote on our 8 computers, chanting chanting chanting these past seven hours and fifty-two minutes and there’s still no sign of the bloody Buddha!

Gilles
Please Felix - patience - and do a little editing on that passionate tone and language - it’ll set us back to our 222nd mantra! Haven’t you heard of the Karmic Principle?

Felix
I don’t get it! How can you live without passion? And why is it taking so long?

Gilles
Felix - you can be as passionate as you like - just not now. You know its difficult enough imaging a hologram of a Being with form - but a hologram of the already imperceptible is nothing short of miraculous.

Felix
Are you saying we can’t do it?

Gilles
I’m saying it has to do with imaginary time and space - we must be vigilant for the moment we arrive at the eighth hour - which in imaginary terms is unpredictable.
Felix
True. Actually, I’m a little apprehensive about this - not that I’m not itching to get on with our game - you know my opinion on chess - or was that yours? And I’ve just thought of a brilliant move -

Gilles
See! That Lefty was right! You did have an itch!

Felix
Well you must have had a desire to scratch and as a result I developed the itch to gratify your desire. Or, on the other hand, it could just as well have been the other way around. Effects and causes. Interchangeable really. But about my apprehension - we have, you know, committed some serious secularizations against the Buddha’s precepts.

Gilles
Secularizations? You mean about our concepts of becoming - the goal of which is ‘becoming-imperceptible’? And the non-corporeal Fullness of the Void? And the Three Bodies on different planes of consciousness? 14

Felix
Yes - it’s a little bothersome - everything ‘smells like Nirvana’. Buddhism after all “is a process of becoming and admits no conceivable end.” 15 But what’s a little more obvious is the title of our book - “A Thousand

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There is a distinct correspondence of ‘subtle bodies’ that exhibit their ‘being’ on the ‘planes’ or ‘stratas’ of consciousness. The three bodies (Trikaya) of a Buddha are: Truth Body (Dharmakaya) in the innermost circle with eight arms; Bliss Body (Sambhogakaya) in the next circle with forty arms bearing tokens of power; and Manifest (also called ‘Measured Out,’ ‘Temporal’ or ‘Personalized’) Body (Nirmanakaya) in the remaining five circles with 952 arms. This is a ”Mahayana tenet which matches the three planes of Buddha consciousness[... in the Tibetan Book of the Dead.” (Campbell, p 321) In Huntington’s book, Dharmakaya is the peace of the body at the point of “no production and no cessation”; Sambhogakaya is the point where the body, complete with its previously acquired virues, “abides” without the need to expend effort”; and Nirmanakaya is the point when “all previous circumstances of previous lives” are “displayed in the pores of the body” and leads to the ability to “perceive the world in a dust particle.”


Gilles
Well, like the Buddhist concept, ours is a book of ‘becomings’. Nothing wrong with admitting that even the Rhizome has a history. And I’m positive the Buddha will like how we’ve allowed it to reincarnate into twentieth century philosophy. As far as secularizations go, Buddhism’s rather ‘godless’ principles of ‘mind’ are a radical secularization of the very god-populated Hindu beliefs. So we’re all on a continuum of secularization - god becoming-man. Now - let’s look at your one brilliant move. That’s the best you’ve got? I’ve got four alternative moves in mind already. Really, its all too mappable. I’d much rather play poker.

Felix
Just like you to brag. I’ve seen through all your moves. My brilliant move is the product of great distillation - quintessential -

Gilles
Felix - I hate to cut you in the midst of the flowering of your eloquence just now - but we need at this moment to concentrate in preparation for the mantra of the Sun - to open the Sun Door. Chess has to wait.

Felix
Oh alright. All hologram devices ready - we’re all ‘turned-on’ and await Enlightenment -

Gilles
Felix - a little reverence please. We are approaching the presence of Imperceptibility.

A spluttering and fizzing sound is heard. The blank pages of the book flip wildly. The lasers are focussed at one point above the blank book and this is instantly followed by a manic spider-webbing of the laser threads. Suddenly the spinning takes on form in midair.

Felix
Gilles! Gilles! Do you see -?

16. See ‘Hymen’.

17. Snodgrass, Adrian, Symbolism of the Stupa, Motilal Barnarsidass Publishers Pte Ltd, Delhi, 1992, p 268: “Liberation, in both the Brahmanic and Buddhist traditions, is symbolically expressed as a passage through a Sun Door.” See pp 268-273 for the parallel between the metaphysical, cosmological and meteorological symbolisms of the Sun as a threshold through which one who seeks Nirvana must pass.
Gilles
There's no need to whisper Felix - adjust the re-focussing lenses - quick!

_The hologram appears - a croslegged levitating human form in lotus position, hazy but definitely headless. And whirring like wings, a multiplicity of hands fan out from behind the shoulder blades._

Felix
The lenses are at their sharpest - he's headless! How do we know its him?

_Something like laughter ripples from the hologram._

Headless Hologram
Him? Who? Its me - as much as I can possibly be me. Which is not much. Which I am this I? Its up to which You is You. Its what's called, in evolutionary terms, 'mutual conditioning'.

Gilles
But this headlessness - I don't comprehend - you believed in 'Mind-Only', not body, and here you hover, all body and no head!

Felix
And far too many hands!

Headless Hologram
'I [have] lost a head and gained a world.' To quote a philosopher you may know. Besides now that you've got all your computers going full blast - what's that you call it? Artificial intelligence! Yes - you've got most of my brain in your 'Buddha' programme - virtual, but it's there. And I think there are some hauntings (full, empty and cancerous organless bodies; ghosts) of Buddhist concepts in your 'Plateaus' book - I think as a poetic image though, the 'Petalled-Lotus' is more - shall we say - visual?

_And faintly, the hologram's headlessness is replaced with a lotus of numerous translucent petals, opening rapidly in a time-lapsed sequence. Then Moonlight bleaches the lotus away, and the hologram is headless once again. Felix and Gilles look a little disconcerted, stare at each other and then at their chess game._

Felix
I'm speechless.

---

Gilles
No you're not. You just spoke.

**Headless Hologram**
What's this you got here? Chess! And in the midst of a brilliant game too! Critical juncture! And speaking of critical - I was under the impression one or both of you were somewhat critical of this - what you call 'striated' game. But someone once said: 'Chess is a sea in which a gnat may drink and an elephant may bathe.' And the sea handles striations very smoothly. All her hightides and her lowtides, her storms and her calm, her living creatures and her dead - she weaves into a textured, crazy quilt. Afterall wasn't it one of you - or both - who reiterated that "we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture"? Coming back to the chess pieces you play with - I see the gnats - swarms of them - captured on both sides - but where are the elephants?

**Felix**
Ah - referring to the original game naturally. Chess has come a long way since then, elephants have sort of gone out of fashion - you know how context can constrain accessibility, Buddha - can I call you that? And yes, about your earlier comment - "smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space." "

**(Now called) Buddha**
You can call me anything - or nothing. Buddha is not a name and can mean any one of us. As you say - god becoming-man. It'll do. So you were about to explain the missing elephants -

**Felix**
The Rook is still in *name* elephant - but in form, it is now a building - a castle. Some people call it the 'Castle' too.


22. Deleuze & Guattari, p 352.
Buddha
How intriguing! Next you'll be telling me the Queen is really the King in drag!

Gilles
Actually, I think the King is a drag. Why the Queen has all the moves and zips across the board while he inches along one square at a time is beyond me. And this is presumably a product of a patriarchal culture. I regard Chess as war. And with war's constraints. The State is in charge. Everyone is ranked. "Chess pieces are coded; they have an internal nature and intrinsic properties from which their movements, situations, and confrontations derive. They have qualities; a knight remains a knight, a pawn a pawn, a bishop a bishop."

Buddha
The Pawn does not necessarily remain a Pawn. It was the Gnat once. But besides that - personally, (which is impersonally, on account of my headlessness) I like the Pawn. A pawn can, in the right conditions and with tenacity, translate itself. As an element of 'fluidity' in the rule-ridden game of Chess, the pawn has an escape hatch inbuilt into its 'role'. It has 'potential' - and having trudged to the critical point, can redeem - and thus be redeemed. Here, let me read you a quote from this book I've been reading:

*A breeze skirts in and flips open the book. The Buddha reads.*

Buddha
"The Pawn is the foot-soldier of the chess army. Like any soldier, he plods slowly along while the calvary and artillery charge ahead on wheels and the generals move overhead in jets. He is limited to moving straight ahead (not being allowed to retreat), except when he encounters the enemy. And except for his first move, he can travel only one square at a time.

The Pawn, unlike the other pieces, does not capture the same way it moves. Though he moves straight ahead, he captures diagonally.

Though the Pawn's lot seems a weary one, the end of its journey can mean glory. If it reaches its last rank - the one on which the enemy's principal pieces stood at the start of the game - it becomes a Knight, a Bishop, a Rook, or even a Queen. For this reason, the "lowly" Pawn has the power to throw the generals of the opposing army into confusion." 23

Felix
Well, it's no wonder really, changing social positions - not to mention sex.

The Buddha laughs.

Buddha
The pawn. The radical. As Duchamp said: "Beauty in chess is closer to beauty in poetry; the chess pieces are the block alphabet which shapes thoughts; and these thoughts, although making a visual design on the chess board express their beauty abstractly, like a poem." 24 Which is the state of the game you two are playing now -

On the Board - the diagram expresses itself as a poem.

Crossing the blackwhiteblackwhite
Camouflage
Polar difference
Camouflage
Polar indifference
Camouflage
Polar resistpersistexistinsistansantindifference
Across the perilous squares
Of fortune misfortunefortune misfortune
Tolitaken, secreted, pilfered
In the name of a
A pawnshop redemption

Hope and Fear
Tiptoe on the threshold
Edged epistemophobia
Pawnsized

Outside -
Unused to colour -
An arc in chorus intones
And you shall be the
And you shall be the
And you shall
And you shall not
you shall
And you shall not
you shall?

Crossing as figure on ground on ground figure on ground
And with what figure and on what grounds
The exchange?

Outside -
Base to base, no square to call their own
An arc in chorus laments
And we shall be
And we shall not
And we shall
shall we not, shall be?
Captured snared waylaid erased
Pacing, Time, Rhythm, Rhyme
Context! We want context!
Rescue the Boardsick!

Crossing the miles of realunrealrealunrealreal
HopeFear
HopeFear
Becoming-syncopated
in wordless lipsynch

Outside -
Eaten aside -
An arc in chorus refrains
And what barter?
And what price?
And what value?
For what life?

And what alchemy?

We'll live again
We'll play again
see if you can
repeat that refrain
see if you dare be slain again!

Outside -
Boardsick,
The arc, in chorus, groans
This key is too low
We need to sea, sharp
This pace is too slow,
So slow it warps
We need another race
We need another ace
This game too long drawn
This pawn too pawn

Let's pawn. Let's time-lapse this game - Left and Right, we'll request Gilles
and Felix unhand you - and now Hands, with haste, play on!

While the Buddha remains in lotus position and otherwise absolutely
expressionless on account of his headlessness, Gilles and Felix withdraw and
vanish and the Hands take over the game. Left's pawn sneaks into Right's
territory and makes it to the last square. Right watches helplessly, unable to
prevent the relentless trudge of Left's pawn.

This is where the interesting 'anomalous' element of the pawn unravels,
metamorphoses - this pawn which comes in a 'pack'. It is the singular,
anomalous pawn that, at the margins of the pack, can become 'other', and be
'transfigured' into any other chess piece on the board that has been 'eaten'.
Well done Hands, an excellent game - Left's pawn would like to become -

Left
Wait - I sense a haunting.

Right
By what?

Left
By Art. I sense Escher -

Right
Well that's obvious isn't it?

Left
And Duchamp.

And Buddha.

Right
We're both off the page of an Escher print ourselves! And inadvertent
readymades like the toilet bowl and this hatrack here - 'haunt' if you will
- almost any house.
Left
No really. Whatever your admiration for these artists are, our creator including - the depth or intensity - is transmitting - infecting - wrong word - I'll say as I said before. It's a haunting. Haunting these objects. See how they glow?

Right
No. I can't. We've been through this!

Left
Alright - 'sense' then. Its the afterimage of each original. Hovering at the other end of the spectrum of its being.

Moonlight.

Right
I wonder. Are you saying its the negative of the originals' 'aura' that Benjamin refers to as being lost in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction? You mean we've found it afterall?

Left
Yes. Or its found us. And with the Escher you could say its obvious. We're from the probably 10,000th reprint of an image of the actual print - even then, which print did Escher choose? The drawing does not have the multiplicity of the print - which receives its potentiality for change in its etched plate or maybe on stone. I forget - are we an engraving or a lithograph?

Right
Never mind - more pressing matters at hand. You'd have thought Duchamp deliberately chose ubiquitous nondescript objects to 'perform' as art - imitate it so there should not be any aura in the first place. Or perhaps the moment you pick something up, your choice, or choosing imbues it and naming conjures and seals in the aura.

Left
So everything returns. Coils back on itself. All consciousness - left, right and in the cleavage - returns, like fungi suddenly sprouting because the spores are always already there in suspended flight and wait only the gentle call of gravity. Manifestation of its potential to return.

Manifestation of the return can be a problem. Especially if it occurs in other than the 'natural' world. Because what if the toilet, remembering Duchamp, doesn't just flush when you expect it to - or even when you did not - but gurgles and spits and grows into a fountain - glowing blue with the
toilet auto-cleaner and green with the ‘glow’ of returning aura? And then what if the shaving cream, just for the devilish heck of it gives the self-portrait poster of Van Eyck in the bathroom horns? And if the hat rack keeps trying to climb up to the ceiling so it can get in front of the light and cast its shadow upon the wall? A very dangerous thing, the return. It manifests in ways one cannot predict. And now, speaking of returns, let’s get back to our Pawn’s transfiguration - Left’s Pawn would like to become - Queen of Vampires. All Hail! The Queen returns from the ranks of the dead!

The hands applaud themselves and a fine cloud of dust peppers the moonlit air.

So, as I conjured, so I shall constrain thee Pair of Drawing Hands - withdraw into your printed page!

The book of illustrations flutters open and the hands slowly descend, still applauding, into the print on the page. Then a gentle puff of moonlit breeze shuts the book. At the same moment, the unwritten book and the hovering hologram vanishes.

The game over, the chessboard disassembles and step by step, builds itself into a spiral staircase of black and white squares. The pieces queue up and began to ascend up the stairs - and as each reaches the last step, transforms into a dove or a crow - depending on their black or whiteness - and in this way, cooing and croaking in discord, the entire chess set lifts up into a flock of birds and takes off to sit on the window sill while the staircase of boardsquares slide like vertebral scales into each other, slithering out into the garden.

Your frown eased, descend deep into sleep, where an infinity of thousand-petalled lotuses blossom between your innumerable synapses. When you wake, you will forget the path to this garden until you need to return again.


143
And in the midst of the garden, the thousand petalled lotus blossomed, casting all neurons into the shade. Consciousness blossoming from seeds of ideas. Yes - not within but between the cleft brain, left and right, and not within neurons but between them does this synaptic phenomenon of gravity-defiance occur. Enlightenment. Before it disintegrates.

And what if, while disintegrating, we slip into the language of “a dreamed person? “ The programme of “an ant?” The bodilessness of “the head of a guillotined person?” The responses of “the pleasure centre of a rat?” The perpetual explosions of “a galaxy?” The death of “God?”

I slipped off that last neuron. But of course there is no slipping off neurons. There is no escape. There is always another neuron next door. There is always another step down the descent.

A shower of lotus petals fall one by precious one around me as I descend. So slowly that I can count them as they fall into the darkness below. A luminous lilac shower of translucent lotus petals. As the last one comes sailing past my ear, I articulate its numbered sequence of fall. The one-thousandth petal. I raise my left hand to catch it but it vanishes before making contact with my open palm.
If the universe is a stairwell, as it was in the Neoplatonic tradition, then I should be arriving at the bottom of the universe soon. But I won't. There is no telling which way I descend - up or down or radially - in this still-exploding universe.

I come finally to a landing and before me is a door, riddled with cracks and crevices. I peer through one and see Duchamp's three-dimensional interpretation of 'perspective' drawings complete with chessboard floor - perhaps also an interpretation of Courbet's 'Origin of the World.' The crack through the door shows me another opening - the dark sanctum between a woman's thighs. Or, between a represented-as-woman's thighs. She holds a light aloft to guide you through the dark but still, secrets remain secrets. *Etant Donnés.* She who Gives Being, is Being Given.

I descend into rebirth, and slip like a silverfish between the pages of histories, philosophies and myths, eating through words, eating through the origins of one world and the end of another, which still expand with each other's waste. Origins and ends, causes and effects, in constant re-polarising orbits around each other.
Seven

THE NAVE

"The Mark of a Vampire."

The 'Navel' - the point of absolute memory of uroboric continuity with the mother: a vampire's memory, blood-permeable.

In the garden enclosed. Having crossed the threshold into dreaming, we return to the womb - a garden of perpetual succour and bloodroses. Here, at the double-centre of the womb with child, is the fountain filled with blood. We are present at a conjured dinner, with conjured guests, who partake of the issue of this fountain of the uroborous: a dinner presided over by the umbilical Serpent, endlessly spouting, regurgitating and swallowing its own blood; hermaphroditic blood, human blood - the blood of vampires, saviours and mothers.

How does mysticism differ from religions that locate belief in iconography? Why is there a persistent need to embody ideas of 'god'? What if the Navel replaces the phallus as signifier? What of the importance of mitochondria and the mother's role in its dispensation? How is the navel related to creation myths? How do we trace the umbilical connections between humanity and divinity and how does this relate to themes of reincarnation, rebirth and 'return'?

With references to Christian/Buddhist/Hindu writings; Kristeva's 'Stabat Mater'; Derrida's 'Khora'; Foucault's notion of heterotopic spaces and Pelligrino's understanding of the role of mitochondria.

KEY PERSONAE

Mary (Virgin, Madonna, Maya, Isis, Ishtar etc): unitalicized
Serpent, S/He: italicized
The Foetus Jesus: in small point, unitalicized
Other conjured guests: named, unitalicized
Moon: * italicized


“The Mark Of a Vampire.”

“Not only by our large brains and our bipedal gaits but by our umbilicals, our stomachs, and our wide pelvises did we set forth toward a civilized existence, following a line of destiny set in motion by woman.”

Lingering over each page, reading discriminately, daintily partaking of words, building its city - the City of Gems - all arches and doorways in the architecture of dust and dust-covered books on the ancient library shelf, the silverfish releases a spell of consumed words in hieroglyphic wastetrails on each page.

The Serpent, thus summoned from within the dream, dusts a speck off Her shoulders, checks with Her wristwatch and knows the time is at hand.

- The Goddesses should die, suggests Kristeva. Don’t mind her. Becoming a mother is a damned responsibility. Takes a while for the imagination to recover. But rejoice! It is the anniversary of your departure from the flesh into the word! And, reader, beware! She is an effigy, barely visible, materializing when I summon her through a life-wish - constructed through witchcraft and Art. Already dead a thousand times and this time bringing you with her - through the dismembering portals of desire you are led, - an accomplice in her murder - to her dismemberment and your consumption of her parts. Having eaten the fruit thereof, you shall surely die. And die and die again, haunted even in the throes of death, always hungering, thirsting in vampiric bloodlust, enslaved by her seduction - your unnatural desire - far from the fields of Nature you die night after night, a solitary walker in the streets of Art.

- She sleeps the dangerous sleep of the soon-to-be-fossilized.

- I will awaken her.


2. In the Chakra system of meditation, the navel chakra is referred to as the City of Gems. Belly dancers often wear a jewel in their navels.

Maya! Isis! Astarte! Ishtar! Aphrodite! You of the numerous nameables and unnameables! Awake!

And from the iconic representation on the wall she dimensionalizes. A vision of grace and beauty, her bloodred cloak encrusted with jewels of self-reflexivity.

 justo call me Mary for now.

Quite the contrary. Nothing just about calling you Mary. You know the endless spiralling lineage from which you descend, Woman with Many Names, many not your own. I call upon you now to raise the dead and pull them all back by the umbilicals here because its time for a roundtable discussion of certain issues - broadly - and there is no pun intended here, although the way to hell is paved with good intentions - about femininity.

She laughs, bells of pealing appealings ripple through the air.

Haven't you heard - it's not fashionable anymore to talk of feminist issues. The term is Gender issues. Include, include, we must include!

The Serpent smiles.

A glittering dust falls out of nowhere and the ancient library is transformed into an elliptical dining table resplendently laid out. It has overtones of Judy Chicago's Dinner Party and Leonardo's Last Supper despite the different configuration. A feast to behold: delicate foods, honeyed fruits and red wine held in fineblown glasses, set off by a wickedly full moon framed in the window. A vase of moonstained lilies rise from a vase on the sill. The hall dances gently in candlelit shadows.

Mary gasps slightly and then returns the smile. - You charmer you.

You are my guest of honour. You and all your aspects. Named and Unnamed. Visible and Invisible. It is after all your feast day.

The Serpent picks up one stalk of a single lily from the vase. - Deja vu, S/he says and sends sweet nothings filtering down her ear. As ever, open to suggestion, she laughs and her jouissance fills her with child.

Jesus again?

Seems appropriate for this occasion.

Since I've taken the liberty to conjure dinner, I'll stretch our imaginations a little further and conjure our other guests, shall I?
A smoke descends, hovers and disappears leaving in its wake, the Angel Gabriel, who eyes the Serpent suspiciously, John the Divine, eyes still glazed from excessive revelatory mushroom intake, and St Francis, still stigmatic (formerly of Assisi, now of the Heavenly Realms of the Imaginary).

The Mother claps her hands in delight. Immediately the Holy Ghost (as popularly conceived) drapes itself like a halo over her head.

The Serpent raises elegant fingers and from their tips exudes the sound of a celestial choir and Kristeva (the linguist), St Catherine of Siena, Freud (father of psychoanalysis), Deleuze and Guattari (creative philosophers extraordinaire) materialize in their seats.

The Mother sighs. - It's no dinner. It's a battle. She sighs again.

- Two sighs in one breath, notes the Serpent. - Shouldn't have done that.

Lacan (psychiatrist who denies the 'existence' of Woman) appears.

- No, no. Send him away! Mary says with an almost imperceptible gesture of dismissal.

- As you wish, replies the Serpent unquestioning. S/He reflects the Mother's gesture. Lacan frowns in protest but slowly evaporates against his will. - Thing is though, once conjured, the chap will contrive for his ideas to linger in other people's mouths.

- He does leave a bad taste on the tongue as I'm sure Kristeva can attest to but won't. An acquired taste, phallogropism, shall we say? The Mother smiles benignly at Kristeva. Kristeva squirms. - Well, who's next?

Trumpets from nowhere round out and flare into sound seven times, and on the first sounding, Derrida (philosopher of poetics) comes in. On the second, Barbara Johnston (critical theorist), and Ophelia (a composite feminity of Shakespeare's imagination). On the third, Barthes (semiotician) and Foucault (another fascinating theorist). On the fourth through the sixth sounding, the witchhunting co-authors of the Malleus Maleficarum - Kramer and Sprenger, and several 'Early Fathers' of the Church namely St Augustine, Tertullian, and Bernard of Clairvaux. On the seventh and last, amidst loud cymbal crashings, the Nameless Cretan goddess (excavated from history and now on its pages) glides in with two live snakes entwining round her arms.

The Serpent grins. - Ah, my favourite.
The Moon rings a tiny silver bell and announces:

Ξ Well then, Dinner is served! Take, eat! For this is flesh made word! Have
you noticed that there is active appetite in the words 'Death' and 'Breath?
The fact that mitochondria drives every organ in your bodies tells you the
drive to eat is solely inherited from Mother. As Pelligrino says: "Though the
mitochondria infiltrate both sperm and egg[...] it is the mother’s
mitochondria, and hers alone, that ride down to the first diploid cell of the
newborn, dispensing their progeny through cleavage into succeeding
generations of Homo Sapiens." ³⁴ She bred desire to taste into you. Her blood.
This you do in remembrance of Mother. Ξ

As the Moon finishes speaking, they partake, contemplating on their
appetites, and only when their bellies are filled and the table replenished
with wine, turkish delights, figs, dates, pomegranates and boxes of
excellent tobaco and rolling papers, does conversation really swing
around toward the issues at hand.

The Virgin starts the ball rolling. - I've been hymenless all along but
suddenly through translational error and a most chaotic misconception,
I find I've been 'literally' implanted with an artificial membrane that
strikes me as dubious, and a little like the cello-wrap around new goods
in a shop. Of course it isn't comfortable. You know how psychosomatic
words can be -

- Or rather, try a new word - logosomatic.⁵

- New currency. I like that. It took a while to realize it was so only in the
mirrors of their imaginations. As Butler says, we are vulnerable to
linguistic injury. They've written in my hymen and thereafter the hymen
afflicts the female principle - as you put it - logosomatically.

- Like what they did with the womb, says Guattari. - Declared it
somehow 'wandered', and voila! Hysteria appears like a rash.

- The womb as nomadic, agrees Deleuze. - Wombs leaving for new
partners, new fathers, wombs as heterotopic gardens⁶ - their biggest fear.

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⁴ Pelligrino, p 70.

⁵ An invented composite of the words and meanings of 'logos' and 'somatic': bodily illness
made manifest through the suggestion in/of language.

⁶ An application of Foucault's third principle of 'heterotopia'. ('Of Other Spaces',
Discritics, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring, 1986, pp 25-26) Remembering the fabulous flying carpet,
a link can be made between Deleuze & Guattari's concept on nomadology (Deleuze and
Foucault nods in agreement and is about to add to this observation but is interrupted.

St Augustine clears his throat. - Who's this 'they' you refer to?

Deleuze looks at Freud and Freud points his beard at the Fathers, who in turn point their beards back at him. Freud hangs his beard in defeat.

Foucault continues. - Yes my third principle on heterotopias is the space “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible. The garden is the oldest example of a space that contains contradictory sites.” In particular, the Persian garden is a “microcosm of the world” and has at its centre the umbilicus, the navel of the world - as symbolized by the fountain. “Persian carpets were reproductions of gardens[and] the garden is a rug onto which the whole world comes to enact its symbolic perfection.[T]he rug is a sort of garden that can move across space.”

- Yes the fabulous flying carpet - a wandering oasis. Perhaps its easier to believe in mirages. The thing is, the virgin conception was another logosomatism.

The Serpent raises a hand to request silence. - Listen! Can you hear the Foetus Jesus? Deep and bloodsucking in the Room behind - pardon, but I'll just repeat what you call 'woman', Father Tertullian - the 'janua diaboli' - the Devil's Door.

Father Tertullian nods and seems pleased with this reference. Mary, smiling, shakes her head.

- Yes. Earthly woman - but I'm written as a parthenogenic woman, a type of 'Mother Superior', and that is why Kristeva thinks I don't understand the reality of motherhood. Apparently, I haven't been 'tainted'.

- Well, I suggest Kristeva was working to establish the opposite to the phallus - so that maternity was the "abject", neither male (subject) nor female (object), the "underside of the symbolic" - or, to use a more Lacanian mode

Guattari, p 351-423) and the equally fabulous idea of 'hysteria' - the wandering womb - to bring into question the possible reasons for women's lack of liberty in a patriarchal, 'cuckold-phobic' society.

- a reflection of the phallus. And the Serpent drags a finger through spilt wine, drawing the wine into a diagram on the wooden surface of the table.

Everyone strains to look at it. It begins at once to slowly evaporate.

- Whilst this take reinforces the polarities of phallocentric language, it is radical in placing the "Queen of Heaven" in Hell. Neither male nor female. Abiect. And immediately we must note this casts the phallus as also neither male nor female, but the opposite to the abject - let's call it the "project." So we have here extractions, quintessentials, not just essentials, of the male and female principles.

The Moon interrupts: » With the full understanding of how the word "subject" can be larded over, made nearly abject; and how the abject can terrorize the subject into neutral objectivity; and how the project immediately renders itself vulnerable and inherently prone to failure the moment the object stands in the way and casts shadows; and how the object can be worshipped as well as be subject to kicks like a football, we've tied ourselves into knots with miles of ambiguous webbing. Inextricable. «

The Serpent laughs. » No wonder subjects who regard you as their object of worship invariably project their abjection to all around. Lunatics. «

» I'm only the reminder that no theory comes unattended by the need to not consider an 'other' theory. «

- Well, it is the unconscious that contains and is contained by simultaneous meanings - uncertainty and ambiguity and potential lunacy, said St John with divine certainty. - Because unconscioness is highly permeable. And so is consciousness. Our 'conceptions' and perceptions alter with various - substances. Who we become is the substantiation of our alterations.
Just like what God becomes is the transubstantiation of our altar offerings, volunteers someone.

As it is the substance of religion and superstition: to render us permeable to belief. It has been humanity's 'project' to - if not understand - to code and categorize in order to rationalize the unconscious. That is, the abject, says Mary. - I know. I'm simultaneously project, object, subject and oh-so-abject.

Everyone turns to her with new understanding.

- Wow, says Kristeva. - That's a very difficult positioning.

- It is. You were just anxious to make maternity the opposite of the 'phallus', an 'underside' of the phallus - a kind of abhorrently Lacanian reflection of the notion that even at the level of concepts, the female is only a reflection of the male.

Kristeva bites her lip.

- But I don't hate you. It makes for an interesting argument. As the Moon suggests, we all wrestle with theory.

- Thank you.

- If I may intervene at this point with a proposal? A hypothesis.

Just as the Serpent crosses Her legs and lights Her cigarette, Derrida clears his throat and, unexpectedly, says: - Woman does not exist.

Everyone turns around in horror. - You did not say that!

Derrida looks horrified too. - No. I did not say that!

- It's alright, says the Serpent, blowing smoke rings. - Its only Lacan putting words in people's mouths again. He sees himself as a bit of phallus incarnate. Forces you to commit speech acts; oral transgressions. You know, the phallus was his project. Here, have a cigarette.

- On what tight slit does his envy sit? *

The Madonna smiles teasingly at Derrida. - Take him to where your skin nipples then. Go on.
Derrida frowns.

**Say to his absence: Let me. Will you let me see your body; memory of Mother? Can I taste? Can I scar you scarlet? Will you let me scar? Can I bite you?**

- Neither your flesh, Derrida, nor mine, will assuage his eternal hunger to be devoured. Shipwright of theory, let him sail his own course. The Madonna holds a lighter up for Derrida.

Derrida looks astounded at this evidence of his Lacan-induced invaginated state, his permeability. He rolls himself a smoke and Mary lights it.

Deleuze says deliberately as he bites into a powdery turkish delight: - I bet you feel like you've just become-woman.

- That's your project, Derrida retorts. - Mine is invagination. Which does not belong to woman. And neither does the hymen.

- Hear hear! Says the Virgin Mother, putting jewelled pomegranate seeds into her mouth. - You can have your bloody hymen back.

Derrida meditatively places each finger of each hand carefully against the other and continues in earnest. - It is my aim to resexualize philosophical theoretical discourse.

- At whose expense? Whose sexuality is forfeit to this engrafting you intend? Asks Kristeva, concerned.

- His imagined other's of course, says the Mother, her mouth full of pomegranate. - I quote you: "How can one [...]attribute the existence of the hymen to woman?"

- Alright, let's discuss your theory of invagination. This too, you say, is not a "representation of woman."

**Ah he does frighten the virgins so - first he takes away their 'hymenity' (which they've come to believe is what their virginity is solely constituted of) and now he wants to remove their vaginas - so they not only cannot become-woman they cannot become-mother either. (Although there's always the Caesarian section.) He says to the virgins: You think hymens will protect your vaginas? And if I take them both away, how will you bleed to prove your purity? Your virginity, if there's such a thing? White roses? You think you'll be**

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safe in your whitewashed houses surrounded by your fence of white-rosed bushes?  

The Serpent raises an elegant hand. - Listen - the child sits in the garden enclosed and wonders why Mama plants only red roses.

♫ Blood roses. Like the blood in everybody's veins regardless of the flavour of their skin - vanilla, strawberry, banana, malt, tea, toffee, coffee. Bloody is how we all taste. We all taste of blood. Ask any vampire. ♫

- Within my garden enclosed, whispers the Mother to her unborn, - we (the Serpent and I) have planted you, where you grow on the blood of red roses. My little mooncalf as baroque as they come - my wrought pearl of great price, son of a witch, child of a vampire.

my foetal finger form to touch you
it is your blood sweet Mother Mary
which feeds me
- shhh not in front of Freud and the Fathers. They'll think you pagan.
Oedipal.
when Angel what's his name made the annunciation in the garden
did you guess it was me come for the visit?
♫ Sweet, the angel wasn't a 'he'. S/He was of my imagination. And so are you darling. And so am I.

The Angel Gabriel makes as if to protest but stops short.

and so imagined Mother of your/my imagination?
♫ I know it's confusing sweetheart - it confuses me sometimes -

♫ Ah - the wondrous enfoldings of fiction. ♫

♫ Are you talking to someone - in there? Asks Father Tertullian.

♫ Not talking. Language hasn't come into the picture yet at this stage. Just 'female' intuition. Ask Kristeva.

your human woman blood

♫ so rich and thick and sweet and liquid ♫

sweetdripped to the red walls of your growing chamber through my friend -
the one you wrought me with your body
the Serpent umbilical, who in love
♫ also the serpent biblical - selfsame and truly yours - just left-hand spiralling -
bites this hole in my belly
with what great serpent love it lays down its life for me!
no greater love than this!
I will remember the mark of the beastbite on my belly
as it, in love to your mothering walls of blood -
connects me

- connects me too -

- and me -

- and all of us to Mother, all of them intone involuntarily.

Sounds like we're all connected.

this is the Blood which builds my body
it is your blood that I will shed as you have shed
it is your body Bread to mine
men will break and eat as I have eaten
- shhh I told you child. The Fathers will have you refashioned into
another project if you go on like this - you know how I've been
refashioned. (She sings to soothe the child to sleep.)

I can hear you singing -
Mother Sweet Mary I wish I were my father
- You have no 'father' darling. You're the son of a God-project.
to see and hold kiss and bite suck and love
- shhh told you the Fathers are here.
as my father wishes he were me
- You're right. They all want to be Sons of the GodFather project.
I wish I were your mother
- Yes. There's proof of that. All your stigmata and endless bleedings.
They think they can represent Death somehow - and as 'phallic' first and foremost - but capable of 'invagination'. Another one of their projects. The 'traditional' you is a projection, an extension of their imagination.

- But I did bleed. Actually bleed. Just like Jesus. I did not imagine it. I can prove it, says St Francis and promptly puts up his palms for all to view.

The dark wounds in his palms stare like eyes weeping tears of blood.

- Another victim of logosomatism. They'll make women of us all!

- Or perhaps they're trying to make men hermaphroditic but keep women cleaved.
- But I'm a stigmatic too! Says St Catherine. - I can prove it. And she shows her scars.

- Algebraically, add one negative to another negative (- + = +) and you get a positive, says Derrida.

- There, says the Serpent in sympathy to St Catherine. - You have yet another cross to bear.

- Yes, but the sign of the positive - the cross - is the sign of the female - you know, the little + at the bottom of the circle -

- Yes, agrees Derrida, - but if she bears one cross within her and yet another without - she becomes Christ-like, Supermale - or is that, in this case, Mary-like - Superfemale?

- Well - to be more precise - how about Hermaphroditic with somewhat 'Supermale' leanings?

- No. I'm Christ's Bride! Virgin Bride! Female! Says St Catherine emphatically. - And I had a vision that He gave me His Holy Prepuce to prove He intended marriage. 9

- Perhaps 'he' wanted you to put it on. You know. Cross-dress.

- Is that how you wish to claim kinship with me? As daughter-in-law? The Madonna shakes her head. - Wouldn't you rather I be your Mother than your mother-in-law?

- Laws tend to operate as 'Supernature.' Which is somehow more reassuring than unpredictable nature.

But I'm the first stigmatic, Mother -
what does that make me?
- I made you darling. Ask the Serpent.

- You received your first stigmata - or should I say stigma - when you were born. Just look at your navel child!

9. Schneiderman, Stuart, An Angel Passes, USA, New York University Press, 1988, pp 193 - 194. A quote from a version of St. Catherine's 'mystical marriage' to Christ where she, "in a transport of overwhelming love called the mother of Christ[...] asked her to give to her in marriage her son Jesus[...] there appeared to her the Virgin Mary with her son in her arms[...] giving the young girl a ring[...]". And apparently, "according to Leo Steinberg, Catherine claimed that her wedding ring was the foreskin of Jesus, the relic of relics, which was supposed to exist in several churches in Europe."

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- I’d like to be a part of your conversation with your imagination if you don’t mind, says Derrida.

- Me too, says Deleuze.

- And so say all of us, say all of them.

- Darling— you can speak up. They want to hear you.
  I’m in a hell of desire and loving it. -

- No, no! We sent you to Hell so you could conquer desire on behalf of us! Said Bernard of Clairvaux, agitated.
  when in hell, we do as devils do -
  we vampires with thirsts unquenchable
  Queen of the Menstrual Eternal -
  with your desiring desirous desirable body -

- Ha! We have you on record as saying “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” says St. Augustine.

  *flesh of your flesh, bone of your bone, blood of your blood, mind of your mind, madness of your madness* -

- Say child, urged the Fathers in unison. - “Woman, what have I to do with thee?”

  everything Mother, everything!
  behold thy daughter!

- Daughter? You’re the Son of God! Son! Son! Say in unison! Worthy vessel of God’s Spirit! God’s Word! Your maleness is your birthright!

The fathers, furious, were conferring with their beards on this twist in the state of affairs. Kramer and Sprenger, the witch-hunters, immediately suspicious, add their beards to the conference and then finally, voice their suspicions. Sprenger rises and thrusts a finger in the air.

- Could it be - our Lord’s member has been witchcrafted away from his body? For we have here, in Part One, Chapter IX of our *Malleus Maleficarum* - and Sprenger flips to the page. - “Whether Witches may work some Prestidigitatory Illusion so that the Male Organ appears to be entirely removed and separate from the Body:” He pauses to engage everyone’s full attention. - “There is no doubt that certain witches can do marvellous things with regard to male organs[...] it may be said that there is a true abstraction of the member in imagination, although not in fact.”  

- How is this possible you ask? Continues Kramer, picking up from Sprenger. - The Answer : Part Two, Chapter VII: "How, as it were, they Deprive Man of his Virile Member[: N]ot indeed by actually despoiling the human body of it, but by concealing it with some glamour.”

- "Concealing" their sex with some "glamour" indeed - sounds like a drag queen performance, says the Queen of Heaven, mildly interested.

Both Sprenger and Kramer frown at this.

- *His mother has already given him his birthright.* The Serpent's tongue forks in a flash around a date. - *Just look at your navel, child!*

behold thy desire!
My virgin Mother!
into my tongue You have bred
such taste! Such thirst!

- The child talks too much. Let's make of him a man. Then we can see how our project grows, says St Augustine, licking his fingers of sugar crumbs gleaned from his beard.

- Oh yes! The Erection Project. And soon to be elaborated into the Resurrection Project, says the Madonna, with a dramatic gesturing of hands.

- *Then there is also an invagination project - remember? Stigmata, crucifixion and endless bleeding.*

- There is a deep need to "become-woman" in any culture, says Deleuze as Guattari violently nods. - More men desire to 'be' women than the other way around. We're Anti-Oedipus. Guattari keeps up the nodding despite Freud's glare. - But woman too, must first "become-woman."

- There is no need for a woman to "become-woman" - as you suggest Deleuze - says Mary, with a quick nod in his direction - in order to subvert the 'molarity' of man. As much as Man could arbitrarily be

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Permission to Bad Angels, can affect the actual removal of the male organ: "God allows more power of witchcraft over the genital functions, on account of the first corruption of sin which came to us from the act of generation, so He also allows greater power over the actual genital organ, even to its total removal." (A Jealous God indeed.) And this is contrasted to what witches can effect - only by 'illusion' and some 'glamour'.

11. Kramer and Sprenger, pp.118-122. Anecdotal evidence is offered as proof of this practice in witchcraft - the spiritting away of male organs.
concluded and cultured as the Sign, the Symbol, because of this very castratable thing called the 'penis', Woman can have her own Sign based on biology and anatomy. And she can, if she desires, subvert her own Sign.

- For a start, says a full, rich melodious voice from a so-far quiet corner of the table, - the lack of breasts must surely be the first thing a child, even an infant, 'notices' about its father.

Everyone turns to the stunning woman with one live snake draped around her smooth ornamented arm while the other reptile slinks off to meander amongst the dishes on the table. Everyone notices she, indeed, does not lack breasts.

- This is the torso from whom it cannot suckle, continues the Cretan Goddess, her full firm breasts becoming an unbearable distraction for all. Her voice flowed like milk and viscous honey into all the labyrinths of their throbbing ears and awoke the various minotaurs, sacred cows and golden calfs coiled deep in sleep in the depths of their being.

- And the wonder is - why this great and very noticeable lack could not lead to a fear of mastectomy? (as probable a fear as the fear of castration) Afterall, it is a slicing procedure that 'unsexes' a woman as castration 'unsexes' a man. And this lack both male and female child - and father - suffers from. What is this lack?

She pauses. Everyone clings in desperation to the edge of the table with the words "Don't stop" trembling all over their lips.

She smiles. - Breastlessness.

This last word slithers into their ears, leaving all breathless.

The Serpent looks in admiration at her. - *I'm sure we all can't wait to decipher Linear A.*

12. *What a conspiracy the mysteries of Woman weave!*

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12. The script of Minoan civilization - (evidence suggests it was a woman-centered civilization) 'Linear A' - as yet undeciphered.
Mary nods. ~ That’s the thing. Everytime you capitalize the letter in front of a noun - it becomes the “over” or “super” arching that “encompasses” the non-capitalized. ‘Woman’. Incidentally, Eve - that’s me as well - is not the ‘Wife’ or the ‘Daughter’ of all living - but the ‘Mother’. Breasts do figure in that Creation configuration.

The Moon inserts its parentheses here. ※ Note the word “encompass”. The parenthesizing, the enveloping, the enfolding - ※

~ Say invagination! says Derrida, distracted at his distraction by breasts.

The Moon continues without pause. ※ the eclipsing ‘shadow’ falling over - to render “out-of-sight” - ※

~ That’s what I meant when I said Mary as a construct overshadows earthly “woman-mother”, says Kristeva.

Kramer and Sprenger, sensing heresy, point their beards accusingly at her. ~ So you think to be rid of the only pure woman in humanity - you think: “Kill the Mother of God”!!! We’ll burn you at the stake for this, you witch!

Kristeva remains unalarmed.

~ Calm down, witch-hunters. Betraying your desires again - bloodlust written over all your bodies. Let’s get back to breasts.

Yes lets, says Mary and everyone’s gaze alight like butterflies on the Cretan Snakewoman’s nipples, which seem suddenly erect. ~ We all do in the end and the beginning.

~ Twin signifiers, symbols, markers on Nature’s landscape of mountains on the plain/plane visible even under garments. In the case of the maybe mythical Amazonian, her self-inflicted mastectomy and one-breastedness is surely a very interesting phenomenon of a fearless double. Of the mastectomied and simultaneously breasted woman. She demonstrates no fear of mastectomy. Perhaps a mythical creature. Hermaphroditic. But feminine.

~ Feminine we insist - one who inflicts monstrosity on herself before we do - and lives with her monstoristy can only be feminine. Feminine!!!
Kramer says, preparing to quote again from his and Sprenger’s ode to misogyny. ~ The way feminine desire is ‘monstrous’ because it devours! We can prove how such illusory deformations can be performed - because females are earthly and full of devouring desires!
The Serpent gestures for peace. — Thank you, but that won’t be necessary. “Let’s trope” to twist a David Bowie lyric. The male homosexual obsession with the “but” and its “cleavage” could well be a sublimated desire for the breasts of his mother. Think of the Buttocks as nippleless breasts. Perhaps they remember Mother.

— Nonsense. We remember Father and his gentle love. It is for love of the Father. In his Image he made us. Why do you think we say — “why can’t a woman be more like a man?” Also, paradoxically, we do it to defy the Phallus — the not-so-gentle side of Father — who insists our desire must be toward the ‘other’.

This comes from Foucault who had been trying to intervene a while back.

A pair-of-dogs, a pair-of-dogs, a most convincing paradox! — And the Full Moon causes the dogs outside to howl in accompaniment.

— Yes indeed — a paradox. Here’s Ellen M. Ross in her description of God in the form of his son, the Breasted One: “The feeding motif in situations in which Christ’s blood seems to flow from his breast, and in the contexts in which he is described as mother nourishing child, links the flesh of Jesus with the flesh of woman, the flesh of mothers. At times, this connection is made explicit, but generally it is portrayed with the same ambiguity and anxiety about ‘flesh’ we see reflected in Mary’s identity as simultaneously virgin and mother.”

Mary leans forward, takes another pomegranate from the table and breaks it between her palms. — The anxieties of the flesh, that makes fleshless immortality tremble.

— Alright we’re moving on here, says the Serpent, accepting jewels of pomegranate from Mary. — Menstruation. As much as an ‘object’ is a signifier, so can a process be — as long as it is repeatable. Take the cycle of the Menstrual Eternal. Repeated, in full colour — a process continuously repeated — so it is never able to be fully present. Therefore a woman is already on a continuum, both her own history and her own future in one present. She need not “become-woman”. She is already always “becoming-woman.”

— Why don’t you stop referring to this “becoming-woman” thing — let’s try instead “invagination”, says Derrida. — To neutralize philosophy, we need to abstract organicity and resexualize it.


“[...] the common use of cross-gendered symbolism to understand the figure of Christ [...] highlights the issues of feeding and nourishing so crucial to medieval understandings of the Eucharist and of the relationship between God and humanity.”
- Woman must become-woman, disagrees Deleuze. - Why? Because Woman does not exist. He seems to have spat the last sentence out with his cigarette smoke.

He turns in horror to all - and gags. - I did not say that!

- So did I hear someone say, after all we've been discussing - "Woman does not exist?" Well I say, let's all do a groupie thing and roll up or down - as the case may be - our garments and expose our bellies, behind which lurk our guts, the seat of courage.

Slowly, everyone does this, some more hesitant than others.

- Now as I said to the child - look! And what do you see? The Navel. If Woman does not exist, where did your navel come from? For mark you - it is only a Woman's body that can 'wright' the serpent from within and bite you there. Always only there. We bear the mark of our mothers' bodies. We are branded. She has imprinted her sign upon our bellies. Male or female mediated she us - above our genitals - male or female - is the mark of the Mother - it is the mark of Woman. The Mark of our Vampiricism. The Navel.

The Moon interjects. ➕ The Navel makes you human. Makes God become-man become-child. Makes woman become-Goddess, become-mother and child. Makes fiction become-flesh and flesh become-art. You notice also the importance and the need to observe "birthdays". What is your birthday? The day your umbilical attachment was severed and your 'wound' tended to. The day your scar was formed. The day you were marked for the rest of your life. Vampire! ➕

- It is the Navel as the door within door, 'Devil's' or otherwise, the point of the mother's entry into the child and the child's entry into the mother. Surely noticed by the child. Surely of interest to the child - with all the double-edged fascination of fear and curiosity - "What is this pit in the middle of my body? What is its meaning? What does it symbolize and how did it get here?"

The Serpent uncoils, stretching out on Her couch. The Cretan Snake-Goddess makes eyes at Her.

- Once born, the navel remains as a mark on the body, a reminder of its once single most important function it had in the development of life. It becomes Absolute Memory. Its only function is as reminder. And perhaps a point of attraction on others' bodies. Both male and female. 'The eternal recurrence' - to use a Nietzschean phrase - is marked on the human body.
through the navel. It means once you were dependent on your mother’s survival for your survival. It means once you were a Vampire. How did you, or did you, successfully separate from your mother? Are you not still bloodthirsty?

The Snake Goddess pours the Serpent a fine blown-glass of red wine. – As a child, you ask – what did she do to your father’s breasts? It is Mother you fear. It is Father you run to for protection from Mother. He might help you. Or you might be of help. He might use you as his shield against her. Force you to reflect him so you can stand in proxy for him. Son or daughter. Female or male.

– So it could be said, Deleuze proposes, – that the navel is the sign that marks a perpetual break with the past, a perpetual separation from Mother – for both male and female child. Guattari nods. Freud is singularly uncomfortable.

Kristeva, intently observing the dregs of her wine glass, adds – As Anthony Burgess says of Joyce’s hero in Ulysses: “If we are to turn Stephen into a kind of Christ we have to remember that the word can only be made flesh through the mediacy of a mother.”

« Man mediates God through an imagined Mother of God. As Burgess also says: “The merging of one character into another, the simultaneous identification of the actual with the historical with the mythical cannot in fact, be achieved without fleshlessness.”

Mary helps herself to more pomegranate. – So I am both fleshed and fleshless.

The Serpent uncoils again. – The navel is ‘as-signed’. It is the memory of mother. Such an erotic sign. The navel is a site of detachment (and the memory of attachment) – itself a curious exclusion – once being an opening into the anatomical space of the mother, an encroachment, and the mother’s space encroaching into the child’s through it. Then the closing up and closing in upon separation, the exclusion/expulsion of birth.

– I’d like to dance, says the Cretan Goddess almost in a whisper to the Serpent.

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15. Burgess, p 269.
As you wish, says the Serpent with a smile and snaps Her fingers. At once a low sensuous drumming is heard and felt. It builds slowly.

So, in the beginning was the navel, says the Cretan Goddess, her snakes winding themselves around her hips as she moves out to dance barefoot on the carpet. – Let’s remember the vampiric Christ. It’s the site of eternal recurrence isn’t it – denying Christ his eschatological Second Coming? He’ll keep coming back like the rest of us, hinged on his humanity, a blood addict. A navel on his belly for all the world to read. And I like the fact that the Navel becomes the Garden of Eden too, complete with Serpent.

I like the allusion to it as ‘stigmata’, marking ‘conception’. The Madonna nibbles at her jewelled fruit of choice. – To conceive - to think that - at a point on the body - bloodlust becomes readable - – Is there some other thing, ever, that may be legible? Derrida asks suddenly. – “Some other thing than the trace of a wound? Do you know another definition of event?”

Deleuze attempts an answer. – Marking an event - however small - is the most delicate thing in the world: the opposite of making a drama or making a story. […] Humour is an art of pure events.”

The Cretan laughs as she swings her hips. – So laughter is an event marker too. A laugh or a wound.

Ophelia speaks up for the first time from her dark brooding silence. – My full name is EpistemOphelia - but you can call me Ophelia. I’m one of those fictional composites mentioned about earlier - character-merged. Let’s talk about the openings that ‘hide curious exclusions’ - perhaps you do not know my story - I who excised my uterus - as space being displaced - and placed it in a jar.

That is a curious exclusion, says Mary, turning her full attention on Ophelia. – In removing your womb you removed the sign that is also the signifier - you removed the signifying capacity of the female body to mark other bodies with navels. The navel which is, in turn, both sign and signifier.


17. Deleuze & Parnet, p 68.


Barbara Johnson, also breaking with her observer status thus far, quickly inserts herself here. - "[A] signifier is thus not a thing or the absence of a thing, not a word or the absence of a word, not an organ or the absence of an organ, but a knot in a structure where words, things, organs can neither be definably separated nor combatibly combined."

» Knots, cords - all sounds pretty umbilical to me - «

- "It is not an interpretation or an insight, but an act", continues Johnson. - "The word analyze, in fact, etymologically means "untie"."

- That's the project of psychoanalysis - to untie the umbilical connection to bodies and minds and declare the unconscious inaccessible except by anything except the 'probing' acknowledgement of the Phallus. Mary smiles as she remembers Lacan's frown before his fading. His morphology which included withdrawal into flaccidity.

Maya, Mother of Buddha, catches her thought (because Mary was within her, and was her) and bursts into raucous laughter - And look at the Indian 'Creation' myth created by 'fathers' - that Vishnu dreams, via a long lotus stem from his Navel, and conceives (of) the Universe - again taking on Himself all the signs of maternity and calls the monstrously charming hermaphrodite he makes of himself 'Father'.

» And I ask again - on what tight slit does his envy sit? That he scripts his sole right to take the world to where his skin nipples? And does he also script in the striations that marks the mother's body? Does he stretch so far as to iconize onto his body the mother's stretched skin where she already bears the mark of her mother, the navel? «

At this point Mary responds. - Oh, the truth is infinitely stretchable - all you need is a tantric stretch to smooth out and erase striations that get in the way. And how do these scribes propose to show their 'creative' principle? That they can be born again. Why do you suppose the all-male discipleship of Jesus declared after Jesus 'died' and 'rose' again - "Ye must be born again."? Of the water and of the Spirit. Forget blood. Think ether to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

20. Johnson, Barbara, p 245.

21. Johnson, p 245

The Serpent sips Her wine. - Because materiality gets in the way, they need the symbolic ‘rebirth’ to erase the reminder on their belly of the debt owed to Mother - and seriously, no king would countenance that debt! It would only be a Queendom that receives all. Look how the crucifix appropriates woman’s signs? The Cross is none other than a re-symbolization of the symbol of potential motherhood in every woman’s body - the female reproductive organs. Consider this: Out of sight - the uterus - with the arms of the Fallopian tubes stretched out; its feathery fingers barely clasping an ovary in each ‘hand’; (what nails a woman to her ‘mother-potential’) each shedding a death and each death a renewal, a rebirth of potential. Her organs sign the Cross. A burden - yes Kristeva is right. A cross she already bears -

- Blasphemy! Anathema! Bernard of Clairvaux leaps to his feet, outraged, and points his beard at the Serpent. - Christ suffered on the Cross - because Woman sinned! Sinned!

- Yes - we know how you whipped Christ, flagellated him till his back tore ‘because Woman sinned’. There’s the inspiration for the ‘backlash’ deals to feminism - punishment for woman’s ‘sins’. Did Christ think it more exquisite to externalise his cross so that he could be ‘matyr/mater’? Probably not - but you poetic scribes certainly thought so. Ah, but you did, did you not, try very hard in the process not to make Mother cross. So you simpered up to her - with curtseys - bearing gifts of virginity, virgin motherhood and an escape from having to be crucified - a one-way ‘Assumption to Heaven’ ticket. Consigned her to ‘paradise’. A parody of motherhood. But you forget. You owe her plenty. You did not bear her cross for her. She bore her cross and yours.

The Moon comes in at this point with definitions. **Bearing. To hold. To gauge one’s position. To stand and withstand. To carry an unborn child in the body. Parenthesizing - the foetus held within the walls of the womb - occurs in the en-wombing of life - the womb which is in turn ‘parenthesized’ by the stretched arms of the tubes and the ovaries. Also, think about the word ‘concept’. To conceive. ‘To think’ ascribes a feminine ‘possibility’. There is another legend from the past - ‘Thought Woman’ of the American Indian story of creation. Yet ‘mind’ and thought has come to mean ‘masculine’ preoccupations.**

- Precisely - preoccupied because women are already occupied, says Mary. - Occupy women and preoccupy yourselves with putting a distance between her and you - to observe her better, exclude her.

- I can drift into that, says Barthes cool and poetic after his long silence. - “More than excluded: detached; forever assigned the place of the witness, whose discourse can only be, of course, subject to codes of
detachment: either narrative, or explicative, or challenging; or ironic: never lyrical, never homogenous with the pathos outside of which he/she must seek his/her place." 23 This I think is of particular relevance to the woman EpistemOphelia who excluded herself from her uterus - or was it the other way around?

- Either way it works, says Derrida. - The assigned (as-sign) place of the witness. She excluded herself from her 'Herness' and thereafter was assigned to be forever witness.

The Moon inserts itself again. "That's alright. There are Goddesses who can stand in the stead of her. Be Woman for her, the way Jesus can be God for you. Here's another legend: never forget Kuan Yin - Goddess of Mercy. She is the reincarnation of Prajnaparamita, 24 Perfect Wisdom, the Void - who removed her womb - and with excised womb-gourd in hand, she, as Bodisattva, returns herself; again and again, no dependence on a savior-son here - she returns, through sheer compassion, to save souls herself." 25

And the Moon with its little parentheticalforceps went around pinching and impressing navels; rosettes; little inversions of anal sphincters on all the fictional characters present at the table. Thus they were marked with humanity. X marks the spot. Where once we drowned. Yet breathed.

- "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." 26

The Serpent takes another sip of wine. - The navel functions as a cenotaph. 25 Not an epitaph. A cenotaph is a marked burial for a person whose body for one reason or another lies elsewhere. That is the navel - it


24. Hixon, Lex, Mother of the Buddhas, Quest Books, USA, 1993, p 70: "Mother Prajnaparamita is the mysterious womb of infinitude which gives birthless birth to Awakened Enlightenment."

Selflessness seems to be the core trait of the Bodhisattva - some transcendent 'perfections' being selfless goodness, selfless patience, selfless commitment and selfless meditation - and above all Perfect Wisdom. Qualities of the 'saviour' - willingness to sacrifice and be sacrificed. Kuan Yin is the transsexed reincarnation' of the male Bodisattva 'Avalokiteshvara'.

25. Fagan, Brian, M., Eyewitness to Discovery, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p 214. An example of a cenotaph is the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial (AD 650) in Britain. - a twenty-seven metre long ship dragged from a river one kilometer away. "It was seaworthy at the time of its burial."
marks of your birth out of the mother's invisible interior\textsuperscript{25} - the now empty tomb. And during birth, the Mother crowns - with her widening vagina - every child as she or he emerges headfirst into the world. She makes royal each birth.

\textsuperscript{25} Always, as usual, there are exceptions. There are those who fly by the seat of their pants, the breech case - and those forcibly extracted via Caesarian section. Then there are those who are induced by forces - crowning technology - \textsuperscript{24}

- But marked - everyone of them - with the memory of birth, eternal recurrence, rather than death.

- So we will all return, wanderers, blood-addicts - as you describe, says the Madonna to the Cretan Goddess. - Hinged on our humanity.

The Madonna holds out her arms to the snakes swaying on the Cretan's bare shoulders. They climb into her hair. She caresses the slight swell of her belly and whispers to her unborn: - Goodnight.

The Snake Goddess sways her hips sensuously past the admiring Serpent who lies uncoiled on Her couch, forked tongue flicking, taking slow sips of wine.

She bellydances her way around the table, eyes never leaving the Serpent's, and again dances past the couch where the S/He lounged. The Serpent succumbs and slithers up her tiered skirts, wraps Herself around her waist and nestles Her head between her breasts. Mother and Child.

Someone blows a smoke ring which wavers and widens above the Cretan Goddess' head, a blue halo, before fading.

\textsuperscript{24} Let's dance. \textsuperscript{25}

And the entire party explodes into a shower of fireworks and silvery dust, settling on the books and shelves of the ancient library. Outside, the heavy fragrance of red roses bleeds in through the open window.

\textsuperscript{25} Walker, Barbara G., \textit{The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets}, USA, Pandora-HarperCollins, 1995, p.1091-2: "Megalithic tombs and barrow-mounds were designed as "wombs" to give rebirth to the dead [...]. Tomb and womb were even related linguistically. [...] The parallel with barrow graves, Mycenaean tholos tombs, cave temples, and other such structures is now well known. Even a Christian cathedral centred on the space called \textit{nave}, originally meaning "belly"."
Tired of resisting the downward tropism of the descent and gravity, I give in on all fours, and find my descent surprisingly rapid - an unfamiliar pace - all legs on all fours multiplied by two and they kaleidoscopically symmetrize into all of eight limbs. I weave my descent with silk from within, winching silently downward, and now nearing the abyss where stairs do not stagger the drop, I hang, suspended on my own disbelief.

I hover in a 'threshold' like Gordon Matta-Clark's "anarchitectural" piece where, playing on the linguistic equation architecture = waste, he removed the thresholds of apartments on several floors in abandoned buildings in the Bronx, creating a "trash hole, a cloacal opening". And here I hang, ready for metamorphosis.

It feels like I am breathing the last moment of the utterance: And Time shall be no more.

Having paid in time, it now wants to occupy space. Newly-eight-limbed, my timed body forgets, and with newly evacuated space in consciousness, regenerates the desire for re-experience.

Hence we pray. Give us this day our daily breath. Every time the year breathes its penultimate breath, we send showers of fire into the sky, pop bottles of frothing desire into the air and entice it to draw yet another. And so the New Year begins. With dread, desire and forgetting.
The 'Cloaca' - ambiguous, non-function specific passage of birth and waste, of ingestion and excretion, viscerally absent in humans, but 'fissured' into existence through desire: desire that exceeds and reinscribes bodily functions, orifices and appetites.

The Hanging Gardens. We search for the mythical Persian gardens, hanging in the ravine of imaginary space and time. We follow the split hermaphrodite(s) - through different routes - enchanted forests and cultivated hothouse. They have a rendezvous to fuse. But unlike other Persian gardens with one centre, this garden has two foci, like the garden 'inclosed'; like the hermaphrodite; like the ellipse. Hence one can never 'tour' the garden - it is only possible to 'detour' on its ellipsis. We meet anomalies; of history and myth who gather at the edge of the ravine, the twin-centre of the garden, and together, witness yet another fall - but this time, it is a fall into hermaphroditic being.

Two separations, castrations, the X and the Y of the human species' existence - hinged on another X of Lunar emanation - are reenbodied: re-enfleshed into the hermaphroditic being, the assymetrical being-in-excess of two axes, two sexes. What is the distance between the finite and infinite - how far the fall from the vertical to the horizontal? Perhaps far enough for a 'transsexing'; a metamorphosis; a cloacal transgressing into other zones of experience? Is not the production, consumption and process of art, language and translational experience a desire-cycle - generating and regenerating these ever-evolving cloacal tendencies?

With references to homoerotic and 'pornographic' art and literature on the transsexualizing 'characterization' process including Duchamp's États D'onnés (as discussed in Rosalind Krauss' The Optical Unconscious) and Leo Bersani's analysis of 'waste' in The Death of Astyanax seen in relation to 'sacrifice'. References also to Dennis Cooper's Frisk and Bataille.

KEY PERSONAE
You: unitalcized (point of departure: 'hothouse')
You: unitalcized (point of departure: forest)
Tree(Serpent): italicized
Other voices, as named
Moon: italicized
"The Ellipse tends toward circularity to the degree that it extends beyond its middle and finishes by turning in on itself."  

And so, tending toward closure, we turn. We turn the page; we turn invisibly to confront our reflections, our mirroring, our left-right inversions; we turn into something else; we turncoat; we overturn our own decisions; we wait our turn - and things turn up.

We extend beyond mutual middles and turning back, we find ourselves at the navel of this garden, the ancient Persian garden, where the fountain is. The Hanging Gardens. Here, we turn on; into; around ourselves - remembering the uroboric fountain of blood.

And in what time and in what space hang these wonderously terraced gardens of Babylon? And in what time and in what space turns your other?

Here, in this haptic space, you both have a rendezvous to become we. Us. The fusion of the hitherto split androgyne. And while you approach fusion, you meet other two-in-ones, turning around invisible others. You wonder if they can see which way you turn; which way your absence tends.

In a clearing, edged with fern, you catch sight of Artemis with the silver arrows - who offers to let fly one arrow to pierce your two hearts (when you both come together) and so skew you both together, never to be parted again.

You say (on behalf of us) - Thank you Artemis, but no. Forgive my catching sight of you naked - but then so am I (without you). Please accept my nakedness as a reciprocal gift for yours. But skewed together renders both of us ready for the grilling. And you know there is no finality in fusion.


She whistles to her dogs and they, howling yelping, whining, barking and licking, arrive. And with her ever-increasing pack of dogs, and a crescendo-ing of volleys of howlings, barkings, yelpings and whinings, she turns on her sandalled heel and winks: As you wish.

Then she vanishes. You remember Devi, "stalking out" of the androgynic union with Shiva and leaving half his body "aching". You bear just such a splitting ache. And not just in your head.

Silence drips off the leaves of the trees. Hounded by desire, you yearn, in regret, for her quickfix crucifix silverarrows.

- Ah - but we never die once, cowards or valiants, we never just die once and for all.

You turn around at this voice to see Virginia Wo(o)lf. She who refused to be a part of the pack. She who heard the howling within her cleft brain and sought to erase the valley by flooding with water. But here she is again, a woman in wolf's clothing, furtive. And now the water screams with the memory of her drowning, rippling out to the edge, looking for another end, another edge.

Another ledge. Where Deleuze threw himself out the window and for a few brief seconds, flew, becoming-bird. We are left to pick up the pieces and reassemble the assemblage of man, bird and a dream of flight, and his escape from all three bodies. What man has put asunder, the rest of us attempt to put together.

The Wo(o)lf leaves without you knowing. You trash about the undergrowth and find nothing. No one.

- Where are you?

You cannot hear even an echo. You may have entered the garden by another door. A wrong turn perhaps.

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Also, in Elemire Zolla's, The Androgyn, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1981) p 74: Citing the Tamil Sangha Anthology on Ardhanarisvara, the united Shiva & Shakti (Devi):" Half his body enfolds the opposite sex, His form sucks it in and hides it up."
Another door - or same door, another dimension. And so you will wander
till you weave yourselves into each other, for everywhere you pass, you leave traces of yourselves, vestigial leavings, too subtle-bodied to enfossilize, which will mingle. The dogs they will help hunt you down.

You feel no free space between you. All space being preoccupied; space being steadily filled in like lost wax replaced by liquid metal. Every figure part of the ground and every ground figured. Like an Escher drawing - how crowded the plane with constantly dovetailing desirings and imaginings!

Your ache worsens. The entire half of your body is left benumbed. Aching slowly gives way to paralysis and you half walk, half drag yourself, offering a prayer to the lunar deity whose sex you cannot determine. The Moon, who pushes you toward each other from the middle \( x \) - the parenthesis that does not embrace, but mediates between the \( x \) and the \( y \) of the androgynous \( xxy \). The hermaphrodite: holder and withholding of desire.

We start in the middle - with the ever-splitting parenthetical \( x \) - with an \( x \) to the left and a \( y \) to the right. And because we start in the middle, we move with speed - both distances to end and beginning being halved. I accumulate you as you accumulate each other. Through the ages you shed, sediment, strata upon strata, into my being.

The heft of your other's consciousness pushes against yours; impinges on your sense of self. Your absense accommodates your other's 'presence'.

And so you both, my twin points of focus within the hemispheres, orbit, dance the ellipse, trace through the vast skies a graceful figure of eight.

You keep walking through the forest, leaving a trail-less path - lost in the dense scatterings of dried leaves. Through the branches, the Moon watches you.

And at the other centre of the garden, you stop to note your surroundings. The hedged labyrinth escaped, you have been wandering

4. The female androgyne - seldom encountered in myth and when encountered, seems always to be a negative figure, diabolical. See O'Flaherty, pp 294-295: On the difference between female and male androgynes: "It is perhaps significant that the one who is dismembered is male while the one who is reassembled is female."
through the cultivated garden, architectured into beds of flowers and rows of graven images. Everywhere order, design, harmony. Nowhere you fit. Then, as you part rich green waxy-leaved shrubbery, constellating with white jasmines which sing heavy dulcet notes of fragrance around your head, you see before you - a palace, winged and spired - entirely made of glass. And within - a cloud of varietal greens. Entranced, you walk across the lawn and onto the mosaiced path leading up to the door - a door hiding no secrets - panels of glass tower above you. Massive crystal doorknobs catch and throw ambery facets of sunlight into your eyes and you realize it is early evening.

- Welcome. A regular pilgrim's progress you have been making. Why not detour?

The door opens slightly and you enter. A huge many-armed fig-looking tree seems to be almost imperceptibly exploding around you, a gigantic manyarmed god/dess with a myriad fingers touching the glass walls of its palatial prison. Crowning various branches were huge ferns and trailing lichens. And all around, the tiny hum of wasps. You look for the Serpent although the voice is not familiar.

- No. The Serpent is not bodily here.

So the Tree speaks - without the aid of an entwining serpent.

- Occasionally, we speak on behalf of each other. In a sense, although we have our own strategies of seduction, we are extensions of each other. Just like the wasps and I are extensions of each other. We are on a continuum of mutual conditioning.

The pale Moon joins in. ★ Like I, though on the wane, am an extension and, if you like, a contraction, of myself and the Sun. ★

You have heard that “natural selection has favoured deceptive tactics by female figs, making them so like male figs that the wasps can’t tell the difference.” 5 You wonder about where you figure on this continuum of seduction. Somehow you find yourself walking further in and looking up at the marvellous, faceted ceiling held up by glass buttresses. The tree occupies all loftspace.

★ You seek the door of transsexing - the door of the anus becoming vagina becoming mouth. To enter is to be rendered gender unspecific. To make

cloacal all orifices - the mode of operations in Deleuze and Guattari's Body without Organs. The way Woolf's character, Mrs Dalloway is 'cloacal'. As Rachel Blau Du Plessis says of Mrs Dalloway: she is "a switching station for all sexualities, bringing all sorts of hot individual desires into humane networks."  

The Tree shivers slightly. - As Susan Howe says of Emily Dickinson: "Poetry leads past possession of self to transfiguration beyond gender."  

You must protest. - But I look for my equal and opposite other half. If I am 'transfigured' as you say, how will I fit? Will there be difference enough to allow the dovetailing of my half-present aching self into my absent other?

- There is no perfect symmetry in nature. Unless you speak of art? The art of nature is how things fit asymmetrically together - perfectly. Perfect asymmetry.  

You become aware of the wasps humming madly around the Tree.

- In art, literature and ritual initiations into sexed positions in society, there


9. Cooper, Dennis, Frisk, USA, Serpent's Tail, 1991. In the novel Frisk, there are hardly any 'actual women.' Initially it appears to be obsessively about the homosexual-male and yet there is a constant reconstruction - and deconstruction of the 'female'. It is about invented lust. There is a transsexing, a 'feminizing' of the victim: for example, the wounding/mutilating, enlarging of the anus, insertion/penetration in various orifices, and the desired object need not mutually desire to do, just being done to, (suggesting passivity) there need be no sign of the object's desire, no erection - and there is an emphasis on youth, suggesting presexual ambivalence. The more 'laconic' the object (in play-dead mode), the more desirable - the younger, the less 'will', the more 'toy'. The less desiring, the more desired. Thus desire is inflicted like a wounding, a maiming on the 'lifeless' bodies. Why? To enhance, even double and reinforce, the sense of power and strength. (brute violent strength being seen as the sign of a certain 'maldness') By making 'other' a person of one's own sex, it doubles the sense of power, creating a hallucination of desire/desirability. Projecting the violence of desire on this hallucination - over a person of one's own sex. - in this case male - makes one a 'Superman'. Man Over man.

This is a very elliptical route to any actual satisfaction of desire, a perpetual turgidity, the stuff desire is made of. The 'planting' of semen in 'wasteland' is a double becoming, purpose-defying - anus becoming-vagina, sperm becoming anal-waste. Saliva from the mouth becomes-vaginal lubricant, making the mouth another vagina. If pleasure is transient by nature, then to prevent, delay, and forestall the attainment of pleasure will prolong desire. This is a kind of suffering. The 'wait' and the delay is ascetic, for it is a perpetual state of denial.
is a constant reconstruction - and deconstruction of the sexes. Symmetry is hard to maintain in protean being, shape-shifters. There are many varying degrees of feminizations and masculinizations.  

And neutralizations -  

- So if all one is allowed or allows oneself to access is the ‘feminization’ and not the ‘female’ in a society/culture, that may seem ‘female’ enough. The trouble is, am I a ‘feminized’ male? Or vice versa? Or neutered? Perhaps I deceive myself? Either or? Neither nor?  

Or - perhaps ‘And?’  

- The ‘feminized’ male is an attempt at sublimation, an ‘image’ of the hermaphrodite. The cloacal process of hallucination and illusion.  

- And what of the ‘masculinized’ female 10 - like the female fig? And the ‘And’?  

“Girlboys may nothing more than boygirls need.” 11  

You take a turn in the hothouse, wondering where your other wanders.

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It generates a palimpsest of reality over unreality - ‘negative capability’ renders the desired object, desire itself and the violence of the desire ‘unreal’ - or at least - uncertain. This frustration is repeated in the collage of degrees of reality/unreality in the bluff/shift photographs of the opening/closing ‘doors’ of Frisk. Even the closing is not just an exit but a cloacal re-entry into the opening. Like the opening and closing ‘links’ in James Joyce’s Finnegan’s Wake .

10. To make a cross reference to Story of the Eye, (trans. Joachim Neugroschel, England, Penguin books, 1982) Bataille - and other writers of that particular genre of ‘pornographic literature’ - used ‘feminized’ male names for supposedly ‘female’ characters. They were female roles, not characters (inasmuch as text can create an ‘organically’ female character). “Marcelle” and “Simone”, in Story of the Eye and “Madam Edwarda” in the Story of O - were all in a state of ‘becoming-woman’ - hence the anarchic freedom with which each body uses and is used. There is no fear of pregnancy because they were never ‘real’ women. They were feminized, caricatures of feminity - all cunt and no bleeding. Like the drag queen. Animated with the comic resilience of the cartoon. (The cartoon, animation, is essentially a becoming. It is the line becoming form becoming expression; mouse becoming man etc.)

In the same way, the female roles in Elizabethan and Asian theatres and operas were all played by men - male actors acting as women, play within play creating the caricature of an exaggerated ‘womanness’, - also called ‘essence’ of femininity - a parade of the bawdy, the lewd and hyperbolically seductive. Breastlessly leaving one breathless.

In the forest, somewhere else altogether away from your other, you feel the numbness on your left side as you pause to watch the waxing Moon. Pale in the still evening sky through the darkening branches of the forest.

* Well, while you're in this contemplative mood, what say you I read you a little lunar tale from The Rhyme Report? It's called 'It Happened on the Hill':

"In the village of J. just before the village of I and after the village of K. in other words, the village between the villages of I and K, two witnesses, Jack aged 8 and Jill also aged 8 -(Incidentally, 8, although a number, has officially been declared by the Rhyme & Reason Council to be a perfect rhyme - in both tone and texture - of the word "ate").) say they saw the artist Quetzalcoatl - (Incidentally, Quetzalcoatl illustrated the event: 'Cow Jumped Over the Moon' which is a sight we take for granted now but is only a reality because of this artist's vision. The work is also called 'The Cow Flew High Over Her Reptiles, Even.') - at his self-ignition and swore they (i.e. Jack and Jill) saw at the final burst of flames, something shooting out of his (i.e. Quetzalcoatl's) body and flying to the Sun. Jill says it was the Heart, but Jack swears it was the Liver. As they are both aged 8, there is no way to determine which Organ it was. They were both atop the Hill fetching a pail of water when they witnessed this event. Jack fell down from the shock and broke his crown and Jill, although not shocked, came tumbling after. Jack's parents (who are also the parents of Jill) are suing the Hill for lack of concern for the children's safety as well as claiming insurance for Jack to have his broken crown replaced at the Village Dentist. Fortunately, Jill's teeth, which are all natural, are intact."

You cannot help but smile. A sort of allegory you presume. - So Moon, this is yet another twist in the ancient lore about your ever waxing and waning habit - Jack being Hjuki and Jill Bil in Nordic myth. Hjuki - from the verb jakka "to heap or pile together - Bil from bila "to break up or dissolve." They are the fragments of your duality, your increasing and decreasing. And Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, is another duality. Isn't he one of a long line of ever dying and resurrecting gods?

* Ah, you are familiar with the story. Let me weave more allegory about his - and my - cloacal tendencies - a tale from SPACETIME Magazine:

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12. Rev. Timothy Harley, Moon Lore, London, Swan Sonnenschen, Le Bas & Lowry, 1885. p 25 - 27. Apparently the nursery rhyme 'Jack and Jill' has its roots in Norse mythology. The water they carried "signifies the fact that the rainfall depends on the phases of the moon."
'Quetzalcoatl: Reptile, Bird or Both?'

"With the flight of Quetzalcoatl's Organ to the Sun witnessed by two children in the Village of J, speculation as to the nature of the event is rife. Was Quetzalcoatl's seeming suicide a performance-parody on his well-known work 'The Cow Flew High Over Her Reptiles, Even,' (otherwise also known as The Cow Jumped Over the Moon)? Or was it a totally unrelated new piece of work?"

- Wait - the title seems familiar - it reflects the rhythm of one of Duchamp's titles -

■ Yes - you can achieve a kind of artistic asymmetry with reflecting rhythm - resonance - some would call it parody - let me weave on - "Birds-eye view investigators have found what is believed to be a suicide note in a fresh Crop Circle in a field of sunflowers along the coasts of the Snake Islands. The translation of the symbols into 'Archaeopteryx' has been pieced together by palaeontologists working on the case and this has shed fresh light on the situation."

- Translate a 'symbol' of 'Archaeopteryx'? That would be a complex piece of deciphering to do!

■ Indeed. When you work with time on a paleontological scale, quite a lot of obscurities come to make sense. Anyway, Quetzalcoatl may have designed his performative suicide as a comment on the arbitrary nature of evolution, where reptiles, in the Deleuzian/Guattarian sense of 'becomings', are 'becoming-birds' so rapidly and yet, mammals like the Cow are only rapidly "becoming-milk", "becoming-butter" and "becoming-hamburger" - and it is only the highly anomalous Cow (as demonstrated in his famous work "The Cow Flew High") that can make the flight of "becoming-bird" and beat the birds at it. Bats as mammals, although featherless, can fly - ■

- Does he pose the question then that it is flight, not feathers that make the 'bird'?

■ He himself, both feathered and a serpent, was proof of the 'anomaly' in nature. He had once made a film based on the text: "I am at once my origin and evolution. The slither into flight and back again. I am the Ellipse-tending-toward-the-Circle. This is my Capture. This is my Retardation. After Bird, Reptile." The film itself was of an 8-hour duration consisting of a single moving image of - as he put it in an interview nine months before his suicide - "Desire-ring" - a continuous ripple, seamlessly increasing and decreasing, progressing and regressing, forwarding and reversing, beginning and ending and beginning again. The Institute of Archetypal Psychologists has linked and archived this work under the
categories of the phenomena “Resurrection” and “Metempsychosis.” I would replace the latter category with Metamorphosis. Leibniz certainly preferred it to metempsychosis - which is about “taking on a brand new personality” and which he disagreed with. As he says: “all bodies are in perpetual flux[...]the soul only changes its body bit by bit and by degrees, so that it is never despoiled of all its organs all together.”

- So it seems with this view of ‘reincarnation’, he predicted Darwin’s theory of evolution. That we do not ‘body-hop’, but bodily transform.

**Bit by bit, and by degrees.**

Like your imperceptible inchings. An endless ripple searching for another edge at which to break the rhythm. Like you. One half of a hermaphrodite with traces of another. Or was it one half of a bisexual? Or an androgyne? An anomaly amidst the already anomalous.

**While you enjoy the luxury of self-doubt, let me cap the story: “So, if Quetzalcoatl’s Heart, or Liver, (it will be almost impossible to determine as all the remains of the pyre have been scattered to the winds) has flown to the Sun, what can we expect next? Historians say that in the film “The 10 Commandments”, Ramses says at the deathbed of his father the Pharoah - “The Royal Falcon has flown to the Sun. “Was Quetzalcoatl’s Heart or Liver that of a Bird, or a Serpent or a fusion? Was his death, and therefore his ‘resurrection’ dual? In death, as in life, and most certainly in resurrection, Quetzalcoatl remains a mystery.**

Your self-doubt increases by the minute. You venture: - Another two-in-one. After Bird, Reptile. Quite against the grain of natural selection, one would have to say, judging from the 150 million year old Archaeopteryx fossil - whose anatomy follows a trajectory from theropod dinosaur arm to flexible wrists to flapping ability to flight feathers. How - why - after tasting flight with the tips of your wings, crashland and kiss the earth with the belly?

**Pluck your feathers off and you have quill enough to write - wright - yourself into flight. Only the protobirds - dinosaurs with wishbones - take to the skies millenia later. Besides being caught in rock in mid-flight, they still fly in your imagination - your ‘wishbone’ - there, they still fly, these dragons, winged serpents, basilisks.**

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Your 'wishbone' is weighed down with flight-inhibiting self-doubt. You miss the Serpent, witness of your cleavage. You feel the keen edge of Her warning forking, splicing, needling through every innermost cell.

And while your other roams forest floors with the Moon and self-doubt for company, you are within the glass palace, walking around the massive buttress roots of the Tree. A numbness creeps into the right side of your body. You sit down on a root and swing your legs to help circulation. Then you pick up the perplexing discussion on boygirls, girlboys - leading to notions of the interior and exterior, the projected image and introjected perception.

- What is the cast of my body's interior if my body's exterior is its interior?

- "The interior is only a selected exterior and the exterior, a projected interior." Textually speaking, and you are enfleshed of text, you are an imprint of cloacal thought.

- Cloacal? Of birth and excrement?

Excrement is the cast of the mould of passage of the rectum. "The imprint of your body." A visceral memory of passage, a memory of the phallus/penis as cast of the mould/vagina. Perception and the perceived represent each other. Touch and the touchable represent each other's existence.

You think about this before a rejoinder. - Artaud apparently said: "I refuse to admit that one can lose any excrement without acutely suffering from the simultaneous loss of one's soul."  

The Tree responds. - It seems that Artaud's antagonism with Freud knew no bounds. The constipated body appears to be a desirable state, not


16. Deleuze & Guattari, p 156.

debilitating or abnormal and definitely not, contrary to all common sense, in need of a laxative. Anal retention will save your soul. Relax your spincter and be damned.

You laugh. – For one who fiercely contested psychoanalysis, Artaud seems to have reiterated the anal retention theory with ardour. Repression not expression. Control not freedom. Artaud seems to exhibit the proverbial “fear of castration” – which is essentially a fear of loss of self – or sexuality. Psychoanalytically speaking anyway. Yet according to Deleuze, “psychoanalysis has produced everything – except exits.” 18 So Artaud would have been quite safely ensconced by psychoanalysis – if he managed to find an entrance. Maybe he objected to being analyly scrutinized in an enclosed room.

You all laugh. You, the Tree and the Moon.

- Artaud’s terror of defecation, the ‘terror at the separation of the self from itself’ as Bersani puts it, is reflected in his terror of language – another cast of the gap, another emanation.

The Moon adds: * There is also Bersani’s analogy of the excremental process and birth – and Artaud again, quite a psychological specimen – has a terror of the womb, the “uterus” – as he quaintly puts it: “[For which] I have no need of and I never had any need of even before, because that’s no way to be born.” A terror of having been born, of merely being a cast of the mould, mere memory. His is a fear of having been derived and the derivative. And his is a fear very much shared. *

- Perhaps he forgot that he had a navel!

- Perhaps. But in Bersani’s analogy of processes, of excrement and birth as a process of ‘waste’-elimination, he leaves out the very important ‘other’ waste. That monthly ‘waste’ of menstrual blood. For the analogy of the birthed infant as ‘waste’ is not entirely improbable – in that excrement can be recycled, reused, is fertile and therefore creative or at least re-creative – all attributes and potential of the infant – unlike menstrual waste which is an ‘excess’ – a sacrifice.

The Tree seems to suddenly be flowering rather rapidly. A large fig drops at your feet. You nibble cautiously at it, in case it is filled with wasps. It


19. Bataille, George, ‘Laws of General Economy’, The Accursed Share, USA, Vol. 1, Zone Books, 1988, p 31. He says of pressure and growth: ‘To waste it is obviously not to use it. And yet what we have is a draining-away, a pure and simple loss... The excess energy, if it cannot be used for growth, is lost.’
is sweet and heady. The roots rise a little and you are pushed slightly higher off the ground. Your feet now barely touch the ground.

- Unlike faeces, which - though originally 'food' which has been used, extracted of its 'foodness' and sent on a designated route of waste (the rectum) and out the designated door of waste (the anus), menstrual blood is built from food into food - a kind of transubstantiation - very tangentially, obtusely, imperceptibly, created in the designated chamber of life. It continues to anticipate its usefulness for the most part of this cycle, and then, once out of time, at the point of its too-ripeness, it deconstructs, implodes, and is shed.

More figs rain down from the Tree's branches.

* Just as Christ shed his blood - the symbolic sacrifice as opposed to the organic. Christ with the bleeding mouths in his palms and feet, Christ becoming-woman.*

The Moon seems to wane before your eyes.

- This waste is shed through the designated passage of 'birth'. A lifeblood sacrifice steadily sheds itself as death, through the biological memory-mould of the passage of birth. This waste is tragic, unrealized potential, excess. Unusable. To use the words of a poet:“Spending scarlet, like a woman.”

You spit out the last fragment of fig from your mouth. It is riddled with young wasps.

* * *

You walk down forking fernfringed forest paths, wondering if Wo(o)lf still stalks the woods, a shadow grey and ghostly like you seem to have become. No sign of your other. Where are you? Will you still recognize your other if you meet while either of you were in mid-change? In between shifting shapes?

The Moon picks up your questions. * Recognition is a strange process. Have you heard of Kuan Yin? She's another mysterious Moon Goddess. Buddhist. Revered by the Chinese. To the Japanese she is Kannon. Did you know though - shhhhhh - that prior to this change she was Indian - and a*  

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'he? Avalokitesvara. With eleven heads and - I lose count - eight arms? And who can tell who S/He was before being Avalokitesvara? Over several thousand years, the sex and race are irrelevant. What remains? Perhaps traits. Traces of consciousness. Compassion. Mercy. Bodhisattva tendencies. Everything changes - even slow-turning mitochondria.  Everything morphs. That's me, master-mistress of the morph. Witness the moonspawn werewolf shed snakelike its coat of Homo Sapien, Wolf, Homo Sapien, Wolf; the vampire - bat, human and bat again;

- Jackal and Hyde playing hide and seek with each other -

※ Jesus is god, god Jesus ※

※ Ishtar a mighty lion, the mighty lion a goddess ※

※ Priestess is goddess, then priest is son of priestess, then priest is goddess who then becomes god - I admit this last bit is confusing but that's the nature of it. The highest possible extremophile I am patron to has this ability - nay, need - to move - inevitable mutability. To be completely in any one state is, must be - tedious. Even impossible. So watch the transgendering from female to male, male to female. Watch Kuan Yin - as she races into hystery and in ecstasy cups her extracted wombboard of potentiality. And while she contemplates her newfound femininity - watched through peripheral vision - the long-stemmed lotus of consciousness winds round her waist before finally being caught between temple-dancing-bend-over-backwards-for-you fingers. Hers. ※

You cannot carry the weight of self-doubt anymore. It presses on your presence as if to displace it.

The Moon senses this. ※ A little longer. We are coming to a zone of change. A membrane permeable rather than penetrable. ※

- And the difference?

※ To permeate or be permeable implies multiple entries, an osmosis effect, interpenetration, a shuffling of cards - or gener. Nothing linear or forward about direction.※


- Like the exchange of genes in the crossing-over during meiosis -

Yes. And in contrast, to penetrate or be penetrable implies openness to a singular entry, one stab, one wounding. This zone of permeability is like a breathed "sandhyas" - which is Sanskrit for "prayer said at those times most pregnant with change - dawn, dusk, noon, midnight." It means "zone of change, the moment between one period and another."²³

- So Avalokitesvara "crossed-over" into Kuan Yin, and both slid into another sense of self, another existence -

You continue to wrestle with the ever-increasing sense of uncertainty crowding within.

 Pregnant with change, we give birth to new selves.  

As you watch the almost imperceptible changes of Tree and Moon, you wonder what transformations your other is going through. What transformations you are going through. How the numbness hangs like lead in your limbs! How will you recognize each other? How to work loss or gain into symmetry? Or at least a pleasing asymmetry?

- So you were saying - the menstrual cycle of women is a sacrifice - pure loss -

Yes. Ova are formed to last for the reproductive lifetime of a woman once and for all while she is a developing embryo - two million oocytes in the ovaries at birth.²⁴ Upon entering womanhood, one egg matures every 28 days as the Moon, Turner of every tide, is well aware, - and bursting from

McIntosh in her discovery of "transposable elements" in maize - that the process of gene development is not one-way or linear as was once thought, but that genomes ("a cell’s compendium of genetic information") are fluid and capable of "mobility, rearrangement, regulation, interaction". A substance called "reverse transcriptase" can read RNA into DNA and, by running backward rather than forward, insert new material into genetic programmes. Retroviruses (including the cause of AIDS) work in this way.


follicle and ovary, it travels down to the uterus where, unfertilized, it is shed, together with blood built up specifically for that egg. The blood and egg are lost forever. The woman’s body produces and copes with this lost cause. Her body cannot recycle her own loss. It is a cause lost.

- Lost?
  - Lost.

- Lost. Whereas in the grown man, several hundred million sperm reach maturity in the epididymis and are stored in the vas deferens on a daily basis. And whatever is not released in ejaculation is reabsorbed, part of a continuous cycle. 25 Nothing is lost (unless wilfully). His body eats back his reproductivity. It is reabsorbed.

- Reabsorbed?
  - Reabsorbed.

- Reabsorbed.

- Sounds like the resurrection of Christ! Loses his life and then promptly reclaims it! Does this make his dying a sacrifice?

- Or is the sacrifice only a sacrifice if blood is shed and lost?

  - The sacrifice has been made and is always already continuing to be made. It would appear woman is solar - expending energy away, constantly losing, and man lunar - renewing itself daily. Quite a departure from traditions of sun and moon that have adhered themselves in myth and religion. Yet, even then, there is flux between the mythic metaphors.

- Yes. Plato’s planetary theory of androgyny bears some scrutiny here. In the Symposium, he writes (through Aristophanes) that there are three sexes: the Solar sex was male, the Earthly sex female and those born of Luna were hermaphrodites. And he somehow accounted for heterosexuality as well as homosexuality through a unilateral splitting that occurred in all ‘three’ sexes, regardless of planetary origin.

  - As I said, the only thing constant is constant flux. Even magnets sometimes reverse polarities.

The Tree, seeming to rise somewhat higher into the air, says: - I’d like to bring to mind another interesting bit about human development. It concerns passages of change in the body - from rectum to vagina to the inguinal canal to the fistula. The first two occur and remain ‘naturally’. As we discussed

25. Encarta 96 Encyclopedia
earlier - they have dual, multiple purposes - just like cloacas. The fistula is a pipelike ulcer, an abnormal or surgically-made passage. The inguinal canal - only present in the male embryo - is the passage through which the testes descend to the outside of the eight-week old foetus. The interesting thing is, 'nature' is supposed then to seal the passage up, after this descent. But apparently 'nature' often forgets - as many as one in fifty times. And this open forgotten passage then often becomes lodge for a hernia. Hence, another cloaca.26

How like that ancient Battle in the high mountain pass of Thermopylae - needing to be sealed off: defended, protected - otherwise risk invasion, attack, infection.»

- The question is: when to seal off passages of change?

You know there are always risks involved in any passage of change, however momentary. The passage you are making now is toward change. But sometimes even the passages change. A strange feeling of vertigo: you nearly stumble. You brace yourself against the Tree.

- That was a little detour. Back to excrement. In erotic and pornographic texts, the eating of faeces is sometimes depicted.27 This is a bending back upon oneself - into oneself. How is this erotic? It is erotic only as an image. I quote the Art Historian Rosalind Krauss: "To represent ecstasy, it is enough to rotate the head 180° to disorient the human axis from its natural alignment - eyes, then nose, then mouth - to a horizontal in which, curiously, the mouth is now uppermost."28

The horizon seems unstable. The ground, shifting.

- So, the passage of change is from the vertical to the horizontal. A change of axis. A new alignment.

The Moon agrees. * And Dali's photographic collection of his "Phenomenon of Ecstasy" are "of such heads - of women falling from the

26. Girls also have inguinal canals - through which the ligament supports the uterus. But these are not likely to develop hemias. (from an article in the Inner Western Suburbs Courier by Dr Susan Adams, Paediatric Surgeon: 'Sealing the pathway nature forgot', Monday, August 31, 1998.)

27. In Cooper's Frisk,(p 96) there is an eroticization of the desire to eat faeces and have one's faeces eaten.

vertical into the horizontal." 29

— Repeating Krauss’ question: “How is it that with that simple implication of falling, ecstasy is produced as image?” And her answer to that question:
In the animal’s natural geometry - the mouth and the “anus are in a straight line [...] the formal relations of the alimentary drive [...] The human being has ‘abandoned’ horizontality in standing up - assumed a verticality [...] Yet this architecture of the human will be transformed in moments of greatest pain or greatest pleasure - the ‘thrown back’ head, will reassert that position in which it is the mouth that is at the end of the vertebral column.” 30
Vertigo threatening to overtake you, you close your eyes and ask: — How does that make the image of faces-eating erotic?

— Because it is an image of the symbol of this alignment, this becoming-animal; becoming-Uroborous; the serpent biting its tail; a recycling; the eternal self. This is a closed circuit, a conduit of energy, there is no waste, there is no loss. And this is the symbol of Infinity ∞ - which is a horizontal 8. As a number, the vertical 8 has an end. It is the number of mortality. It is finite. And only when 8 falls from the vertical to the horizontal, does 8 become infinite. We become-snake. Beguiling.

You admit - while the Earth inclines away from your feet - you are beguiled by this hypothesis.

* So this falling or anticipation of falling creates ecstasy, the ‘falling’ state, vertigo. Is it any wonder that moving away from the Apollonian vertical philosophy, we experience the disorientation of the new axis, Dionysian ‘crowned Anarchy’ 31 - the fall into lateral, rhizomatic thinking, the fall into the horizontal? But it is in the memory of the fall that desire lies: ecstasy is in the gap between the vertical and the horizontal - the gap we had once experienced as acceleration. *

The forest darkens. As the sky blazes in the fire of the soon to be

29. Krauss, p 156.
31. Deleuze & Guatarri, p 158.
drowned sun, you hear drumming and the rhythm of fast moving feet. You try to find the direction it comes from but it reverberates - the ground reverberates - and the whole forest whirls. A smell of burning reaches your nostrils - you move cautiously down one path, negotiating your balance, and then - you see it. In the middle of a hoop of flames flaring in the breeze, a frenzied manyarmed Nataraja - the male androgyne of Shiva-Shakti - dancing so wild and so furious your hair stands on end, in a stomach-churning mixture of fear, longing and awe. Dancing relentlessly with and into the fire -

- Dance or burn! It was a tongue of leaping flames - two flames, two voices, pitched differently, both speaking simultaneously.

You panic as the very ground catches fire from the pace of the dance. An instant later everything disappears and a tiny gust eddies off fallen leaves on that once burning spot. The leaves on the trees move easily with the breeze.


While the sky darkens, the Moon seems to brighten.

* Deleuze's *radically horizontal, rhizomatic thought - leads to the permeability of all boundaries and barriers.*

You nod, and your head seems to float. - This is so for Nietzsche too, where 'subject and object are metaphysical categories.' For "vertical" philosophers like Hegel and Plato, the concept is distinct from any material manifestation of the concept: "the world of appearance is deemed to be separate and distinct from the world of essence, or reality." For the x-axis practitioners, the only world is the "apparent, 'subjective' world." Deleuze and Guattari refused any relative distinctions between Life and Art - each informs the other.

* An experiment would prove how this cross-pollination affects perception.*

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33. Leche, p 103.

34. Leche, p 103.
We say texts after all, are just ‘words, words, words’, and ask questions like ‘what’s in a name? Yet if ‘a rose’ would smell as sweet by any other name, let’s try this tiny experiment - take the line ‘my love is like a red red rose’ - do a small cut and paste, - ‘my love is like a red red fire hydrant’ - surely the displacement should be unnoticeable. One should not expect any dampening of the beloved’s ardour, should one?

Despite your rising vertigo, you laugh. - One’s beloved’s ardour may be protected by an impermeable rainjacket. Actually, Duchamp played around with this intra-permeability between life and art in a most ‘practical’ way. His ‘readymades’ were sort of dual objects. A simultaneous existence of exhibited art and lived-in life (as technologically enhanced). But let’s look at his Étant donnée. 35 An assembled scene, a set scripted into dis/play: a heavy door, locked and bolted, with a peeping ‘slit/crack through which one could glimpse another crack - another door - and then through that to another crack, and yet another door: the vagina, the cunt. 36 This could be seen as heavily retinal - all those viewing and vanishing points.

* Retinal maybe - yet Duchamp had this “supremely carnal” line for his philosophy: “I want to grasp things with the mind the way a penis is grasped by the vagina.” 37

- Carnal - yes - ’enfleshed’. Take Duchamp’s concept of the ‘infra-thin’ 38 - an example of which is ‘the warmth of a seat just left’ or ‘the whistling between two velvet trouser legs’ - it would definitely have included the ultimate ‘infra-thin’, the highest degree of elusiveness - that is, the interstitial slit between the labial lips of a vulva. The ‘skin’ between death and desire. Of course there is the question: whose desire? And of what nature this desire? This “cleft” between a woman’s thighs which, through the peeping slit of door within door, the squinting eye -


38. Tono, Yoshiaki, “Duchamp and “Inframinco””, Duchamp: Exposición organizada por la Fundación Caja de Pensiones y la Fundación Joan Miro, Madrid, 1984. Duchamp’s term “inframinco” translates into “infra-thin”. Quoting Tono: “Perhaps Duchamp passed away after burying his vision of the whole universe into the “infra-thin” cleft between her thighs. 194

The other “infra-thin” examples (paraphrased) are from Duchamp’s unpublished notes as evidenced by Yoshiaki Tono in the article.
similarly slit - perceives. The eye bears the 'imprint' - a word used both by Duchamp and Deleuze - of that which it perceives.

"And whose death? Of course this 'frighten clef' could be Duchamp's Vaginal Mind - Duchamp, in death, grasping gazes and the myriad imprints of focused retinas - the imprints of all Things-Penis - perceiving and thus perceived - an eternally reversing Voyeurism. Duchamp as Rose Selavy, (he 'became-female-impersonator') the Hermaphrodite, with distance (the distance of death - as well as 3-dimensional space between viewer and viewed) as part of the assemblage. And the third party who transports and is the 'connection' to the world beyond and the distance between Marcel Rose Duchamp Selavy? The perceiving/perceived eye."

- And if the eye is the 'window to the soul', or 'mind' - then, as with the Hermaphrodite, this is not just

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39. Krauss, p 113. Citing Lyotard : "[...], this is the specular image of the peeping eyes; such that: when these think they're seeing the vulva, they see themselves[...], he who sees is a cunt."

40. In Krauss, p 113 : there is a reference to the "matter" of viewing and vanishing points: "And the viewing and vanishing points whose normal status as antimatter derives from their conditions as geometric limits, these points are similarly incarnated. For the vanishing point, or goal of vision, is manifested by the dark interior of a bodily orifice, the optically impenetrable cavity, a physical rather than a geometric limit to the reach of vision." The tide again brings Frisk to shore for analysis - for in Frisk, (with the opening/closing door, the image/photographs) the enfleshing of the viewing and vanishing points is neither geometric nor material - but textual. Text as matter. But the exit in Frisk is at the same time an earth-bound, disillusioned exit. Although the entrance/exit is permeable, a process of disillusionment, disease, experience, has progressed and therefore the entrance/exit is not a complete parallax of viewpoints but a shifted, syncopated one. Again an emphasis on the fallible, non-geometric nature of the textual experience. While the cycle does not die, neither does it renew itself at every exit. It decays, rots, and thus unlike the enigma of Duchamp's cloacal tunnel, his masturbatory parallax-assemblage, the experience of Frisk, for the voyeur-reader, is an experience of the power dynamics of sex - one would say rape even. And paradoxically, because so marked, so whole, so 'seeming' hurt and so analyzable, the exit photographs in Frisk of the full length, back to front, used body leaves one with a feeling of looking close up at a mirror as it gradually fogs up, blurring both viewing and vanishing points.
give and take, eater and eaten, inserter and inserted sex - but a mutually masturbatory, incestuous and hermaphroditic relationship of the Voyeur and the Voyeured, Vagina Mind with Eye Mind, both maintaining a circuitous flow of intensity, both grasping and grasped, both caught in a loop of desire. An eternally recurring journey. Reminds me of an Escher 'Becoming' print.

I would modify 'Hermaphrodite' to 'bisexual hermaphrodite' and 'bisexual hermaphroditic relationship.' There is a difference between the hermaphrodite, the bisexual, and the androgyne. Hermaphroditism is "physiological" intersexuality: in myth - and life - they are seen as abnormal, monstrous. (Although we are all, everyone of us, already Hermaphrodite from birth) Bisexuality is a psychological inclination: Freudian - gender identification "lacks clarity" and concerns are mainly "interpersonal." (What's crucial here is the word "inclination". A leaning towards.) Then there is androgyne: which can be subdivided into different types: physical (natural and surgical), psychological, mythological, anthropomorphic, twins - but generally - it is a constant splitting and fusing of the sexes - and concerns are mainly "intrapyschic" - Jungian - there is an "active presence of both sexes in one." 41

Again, the horizon starts to spin around you, quickening its pace ever so slightly. You lose your sense of direction.

- "Can a new alchemy bring into being a union or reunion of opposing elements, a conjunction that may produce a new guiding image?" 42

- We can imagine. But, though the elements may be opposite, they are not opposing. Or why, even while separating, the desire to unite or reunite?

You try, without success, to gain your bearings.

- So - there is the hermaphroditic two on a ledge; then the bisexual inclination, a leaning forward, backward or on either side; and then the fall - into androgyne.

- Exactly! The fall into androgyne is that symbolic "union without desire or desire without union." 43 As Swedenborg intimated and Blake expounded -

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42. Singer, p 25.

43. O'Flugherty, p 320.
binarism is the Fall. It is not a falling-out - rather a falling-out within. But the fall into androgyny is a falling-into within. It is in the memory of that fall that desire lies. Ecstasy is the gap between the vertical and the horizontal which we had once experienced as acceleration.

Back in the hothouse, the Tree’s imperceptible inching upward and outward becomes impossible to ignore. It seems to breathe visibly and the glass walls and faceted roof suddenly fogs up. In an instant the outermost branches push with determined fingers through the glass and the palace shatters utterly, into a million slow rising then falling shards, piercing like rain around you.

You cover your head and run. Everything seems to be turning. You feel the curving left concave of the Moon’s parenthetical drive you back - past ornamental gardens, sewers, bogs, rivers - to the memory - accelerating - backwards, backwards backwards.....

In the forest, you hear a rustling behind you and you turn around. One by one, grey and ghostly, they walk out of the trees, the stream, the lake, every available space of sky between the canopy of leaves; materializing from ground as figure and figure as ground; dimensionalizing from the tight dovetailed plane of an Escher print - anomalies, assymmetrical and syncopated - Artemis, Kuan Yin, Quetzacoatl, Wo(o)lf, unfossilizing archaeopteryxes, centaurs, the Nataraja - dancing you out, out, out of the forest -

44. Boor, John, Blake’s Humanism, New York, Barnes and Noble, Manchester University Press, 1968, pp 19-20 & 23: “Blake took over and developed Swedenborg’s hini that the Fall was a division within man rather than a separation from something outside him. In a Fall which takes place by such division, all the powers are correspondingly diminished, withering in their isolation from the synthesizing whole which would allow them to grow together and nourish one another.” One also remembers that Hindu Brahma’s command to the first androgynous creature was “Divide yourself” - quite a contrast from the God of
You turn almost in slow motion, the horizon spinning wildly, and pursued by the right parenthetical split x of the mediating Moon, you find you are racing through the forest, over burning deserts, mountains, plains - to a somewhere you faintly remember, faster and faster, forward, forward forward ......

And then, suddenly, you come to the precipice. The ridge. The edge of the ravine. Down below the river snakes, copper in the setting sun; mercury in the rising moon. A paradise where a tiny kingfisher lives - diving the narrow gulley and feeding on a diet of liquid silver that streams in thin long ribbony lines. A paradise where occasionally, the bird would be poisoned by its own diet - an excess of silver - and die.

The alchemy you do, you do in search of quicksilver, not gold.

You look across the endless fall of the ravine and see - your other. From both sides of the ridge you throw thoughts to bridge the gap, to extend into each other - and with the lunar inspired parenthesis holding your extended ‘selfs’ together like a vice, you feel the fusing of the xxy, the being-in-excess of two sexes - the female androgyne.45 Not Adam and Eve. Or Eve from Adam. Instead - ‘Madam If.’ S/He. The asymmetrical female hermaphrodite, hyperbolically enfleshed. The shattered and reassembled refraction of intervals, gaps, distance between selves. And in the reassembly of these refractions, these ‘reflections’ of differentness, S/He becomes synonymous with chaos, hyperbole, and asymmetry. An art attributed to witchcraft. Or perhaps Magic. Or perhaps fiction.

You weave a hypothetical We. Down below, the ravine falls away endlessly.

Genesis - "Be fruitful and multiply." Division before multiplication - thus we split our differences and compound our problems. In the genesis of any myth, there will always be questions on the difference(s) between creativity and mimesis, fertility and sterility, production and re-production, originality and derivation, birth and resurrection, entity and reflection. Any ‘beginning’ will always involve the differences between the sexes - and sexualities.

45. Unlike the more prevalent icon of the male androgyne - which is constructed from the male perspective - and perception from this perspective - of the assembly and unification of “the two faces of his being”, “two reflections of sameness”. (Irigaray, pReading in a mimiciery of the supposed ‘symmetry’ of nature.
Perhaps, if we fell, we will be dashed, crushed, and bleed purple like the snails of Tyre and Sidon. But who’s to say our ‘spiralled’ beings will not return from pulverised shells, slide, slither, re-spiral into life, and stain our skins purple again?46 The only distance between us is depth. We take the plunge. Freefall.

And in the falling, fuse. With our birdseyeview we spy where the theoretical ships crash on rocks of fiction. We watch the shipwrecks leak silvery texts into the sea beyond the river where we, diving, dine on the streaming liquid silver, swallowing art with every beakful. And swallowed in turn into the river, we snake out to sea. After Bird, Reptile. After Reptile, Bird. And if we split into bird and reptile, we will pass each other again in a moment of transit along our intertwining, elliptical, asymmetrical orbits.

With eight arms, four on each side, I juggle the solar system, balancing the sun, a yellow nimbus, on my head. Each finger of each hand touching dark matter. As I cross, constellating the drifting continents, I shed, two arms at a time, a kaleidoscopic vanishing, in synchrony, in symmetry, in sympathy, limbs and genitals I shed, transected in the sky. And still transfiguring...

And then all is released to the call of gravity, and I am all torso, all vertebrae, all scales, the shed tail of humanity, falling, twisting, writhing...

Into the valley below, the cleavage. This is the interval where demons sprout wings and fly, laughing at smug angels - because philosophy can clip an angel’s wings and biology can dissect your stillbeating heart, but pleasantly deceived by art and busy with laughter, I forget to fly anyway, miss the current and plummet, flight strapped firmly to my back - how moored my mutability to the exhilaration of the fall!

With an umbilical, tantric stretch, reality warps, and as I recoil in a tempest of protean change, wrestling form’s embrace, I will answer no questions - and if absolved of wings -

I will....

Land on my feet, tip the horizon, and so begin again, descending flights of stairs.
NOTES TO THE DESCENTS


2. Perniola, Mario, *Enigmas*, trans. Christopher Woodall, London, Verso, 1995, pp 8 - 12. "[...]declination involves a shift that is as slight as possible [...] involves infinitely small displacements. The effectiveness or impact of a fall is in inverse proportion to its degree of divergence from the vertical." Adorno’s reference to the “art of the smallest link” is in the context of Alban Berg’s music - where through “chromatic mediation” - that is step by minute step, one experiences sound that flows from the “simplest sound to the fullest [...]exuberant phonic wealth” and then turns back again to “the greatest possible concentration of silence.”


5. Bachelard, p 150.


8. Deleuze, *The Fold : Leibniz and the Baroque*, p 29. “The world was thought to have an infinite number of floors, with a stairway that descends and ascends, with each step being lost in the upper order of the One and disintegrated in the ocean of the multiple. The universe as a stairwell marks the Neoplatonic tradition.” But the Baroque tradition “is a world with only two floors, separated by a fold that echoes itself [...] it expresses [...] the transformation of the cosmos into a “mundus.”

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