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Recreating the World/Word  
The Mythic Mode as Symbolic Discourse

Lynda D. McNeil

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circle provided important insights into the poets I studied. And finally, I am appreciative of the encouragement that John Murphy, professor of English at the University of Colorado, Boulder, has shown for this project and for the time he has taken to read and comment upon portions of the manuscript in its early stage. Our office conversations and exchange of reading materials was intellectually stimulating and provided me with emotional support when it made all the difference. The article by Roland Fischer in *Diogenes*, to which he introduced me, provided me with fresh insights into the neurobiological connection to other areas of the mythic mode, and he cultivated my sensitivity to the lexical and ethical issues at the heart of this project.

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PART I  
THE MYTHIC MODE AS SYMBOLIC DISCOURSE

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## INTRODUCTION

With his passing in 1988, Richard Feynman, Nobel laureate physicist, bequeathed to posterity the legacy of his profound understanding of the physical world and human nature. Some of his last thoughts are preserved on his Cal Tech office blackboard where, among the symbols and equations, he wrote: "What I cannot create, I do not understand." In meager tribute, I am using Feynman's elegantly simple statement to introduce the unifying theme of this book, which is fundamentally about the problem of understanding as a creative process. Feynman's brief comment provides us with a contemporary example of one of the great epistemological debates to take place since the Enlightenment, a once purely philosophical debate that has been enriched in present times by research in anthropology, psychology and neurobiology. As this study will show, Feynman's remark would have been as meaningful to Johann Gottfried Herder in the eighteenth century as to Alfred North Whitehead, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and others from various disciplines in the twentieth century. By combining interdisciplinary and literary perspectives, this study will focus on problems concerning the nature of understanding, especially with regard to the role of the self in the creation of meaning, the interaction between the self and world in the creation of meaning, and the nature of reality-as-understood.

The ideological tensions of the latter part of the eighteenth century, especially between Rational-Empiricism and German Idealism, dramatized the struggle over which ideological camp would secure exclusive authority in determining how these questions about understanding should be answered. The pendulum effect marking the extremes of rational-empiricism and German Idealism, as well as the philosophical gradations that fall between them, has been fully documented in the scholarly criticism of the pre-Romantic and Ro-

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matic periods. But, what has been overlooked or marginalized in the scholarship of this period was an alternative epistemology which harkened back to pre-Kantian philosophy, was indebted to empiricism and expressivist theories of language, and, yet differed in significant ways from its philosophical cousin, German Idealism. More concerned with the relationship between the experiencing mind and sensory experience than with metaphysics, Herder's revolutionary epistemology, which forms the philosophical foundation of this study, explored a path of knowing and understanding largely misunderstood by his contemporaries, as well as by the Romantic Idealists who adopted many of his ideas. 1 Herder's significant, albeit largely overlooked, contribution to Western thought lies in his attempts to reappraise the epistemological limits set by the rational-empiricists, and in particular Kant. It is with a sense of ironic justice, then, that we can say that Herder's epistemology of understanding anticipated issues of central importance to post-Romantic poetry, to modern philosophy and hermeneutics, as well as to anthropology, psychology, and neurobiology.

The dynamic interplay of ideological hegemonies during the late eighteenth century and continuing through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may be illustrated through the work of the Swiss artist Paul Klee. In the first drawing, *Limits of Understanding* (1927), Klee places the figure of a sphere or a circle above a complex structure of ladders and lines. This base, composed of perspective planes mixed with freely cast lines, suggests a "cagelike human head, from the cerebral regions (intellect) of which upward probing lines are projected."2 (See photo.) On one level, these images bring into imaginative play geometric forms which, historically, have been construed as "sacred symbols" (Eliade) and, as such, illustrate the symbolic discourses to which Herder's philosophy was a vital response. The sacred image of the circle (sun, moon) suggests a transcendent oneness, unity or presence. Directly below the circle, we find ladders associated with the desire for ascent to the transcendent, as in the biblical story of Babel or in the concept of the Great Chain of Being. Then, strewn across the bottom of the drawing numerous linear and geometric constructs in various angles to one another divide and close some spaces while opening others. At the center, the eyes of a human face suggest the limitations of Newton optics or Lockean empiricism which treats the eye as simple receptor of sensory data. In addition, the lines and geometric forms bring to mind the Aristotelian philosophical tradition based upon analytical and logical constructs. Within the limited scope of these three symbols (and their

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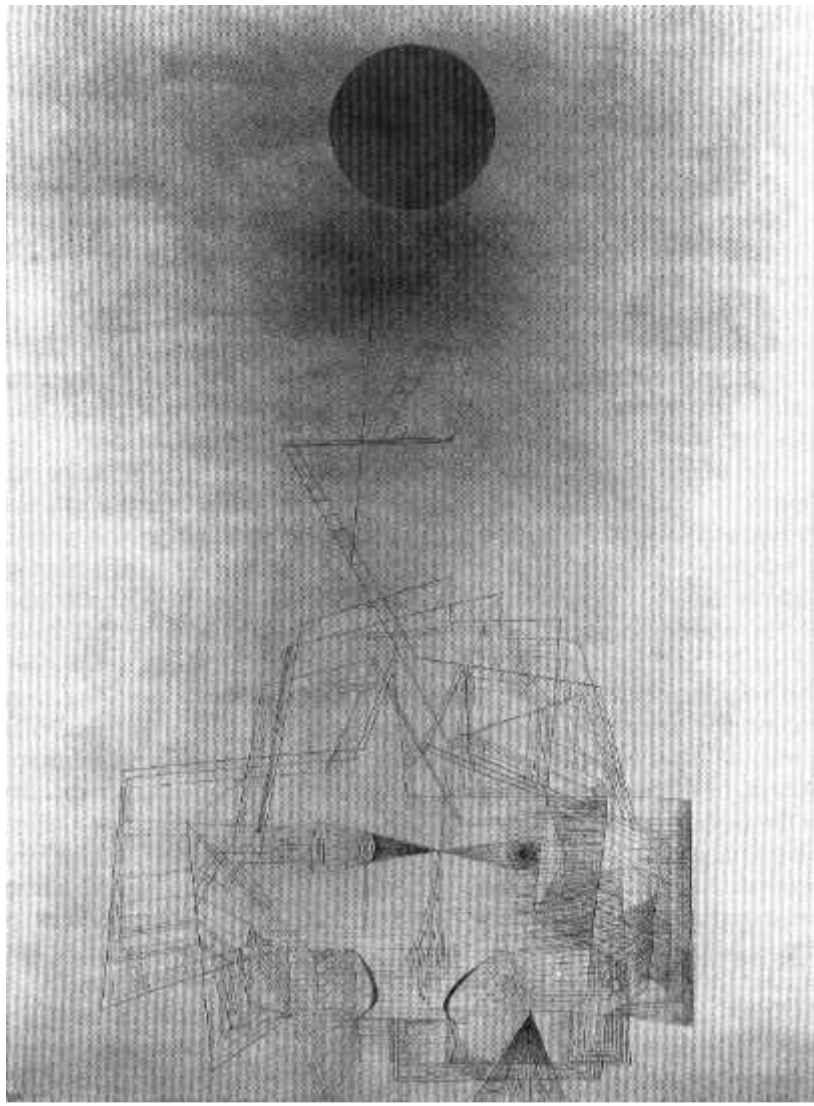


Figure 1.  
*Grenzen des Verstandes* (Limits of Understanding) by Paul Klee.  
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ironic reversal), lies the history of Western culture's attempt to understand the self and its relationship to reality.

I have chosen Klee's painting to begin the introduction to this book, because its images suggest, in a powerfully visual way, the ideological fissures and compressions that interacted to form Herder's radically new "mythic" ontology and epistemology. The ladder of ascent (*methodos*) and the circle (*teleos*) of German Idealism aspired to bridge the abyss which the Kantian categories had placed between the individual and *noumenal* reality (note the cloud obscuring the observer's view of the transcendent orb in Klee's painting). Herein lay the metaphysical problem faced by the German Idealists and Romantics. In the epistemological sphere, the constraints of rational-empirism on the creative mind (imagination) erupted into an international resistance, Continental and English Romanticism, which glorified the poet-genius and the active, creative imagination.

In another work, a schematic drawing that accompanies his "Ways of Studying Nature" (*Wege des Naturstudiums* in *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar: 1919-23*), Klee presents in visual form the holistic epistemology of subject-object unity central to Herder's epistemological revolution. Unlike the circle of transcendent oneness, the symbol of the *telos* of Platonic and Neo-Platonic Idealist traditions (Medieval Christian and Romantic Idealist) both prior to and following Herder, the smaller circles within one great circle in Klee's drawing, represent the desire "to reach an understanding of the Whole." <sup>3</sup> The circle, as used by Klee in "Ways of Studying Nature" and by many others, has been interpreted as a symbol of the Self and the totality of the psyche which encompasses the human and the whole of nature. Thinking of the circle as the coming into being of the Self through the process of understanding may help to clarify what Herder and others have searched to express. The drawing describes the ways knowledge comes to us: "(1) *in material ways*, such as the dissecting knife and optical instruments (microscope and telescope); (2) *in intuitive ways*, through our power of perspective judgment, which enables us to see through the outside to the inside of things." "Thus mankind and objects, the earthly and the cosmic, are fused at the cross-roads of the eye" and "All paths meet in the eye and lead outwards from their meeting-place, translated into form, to the synthesis of outward seeing and inward perception."<sup>4</sup>

For Klee, as previously for Herder, the artist "has created something which is parallel to the work of God" (Klee) and, as Werner Haftmann states, "Klee's whole effort was directed to repeating the act of creation within himself, in order to reach an understanding of

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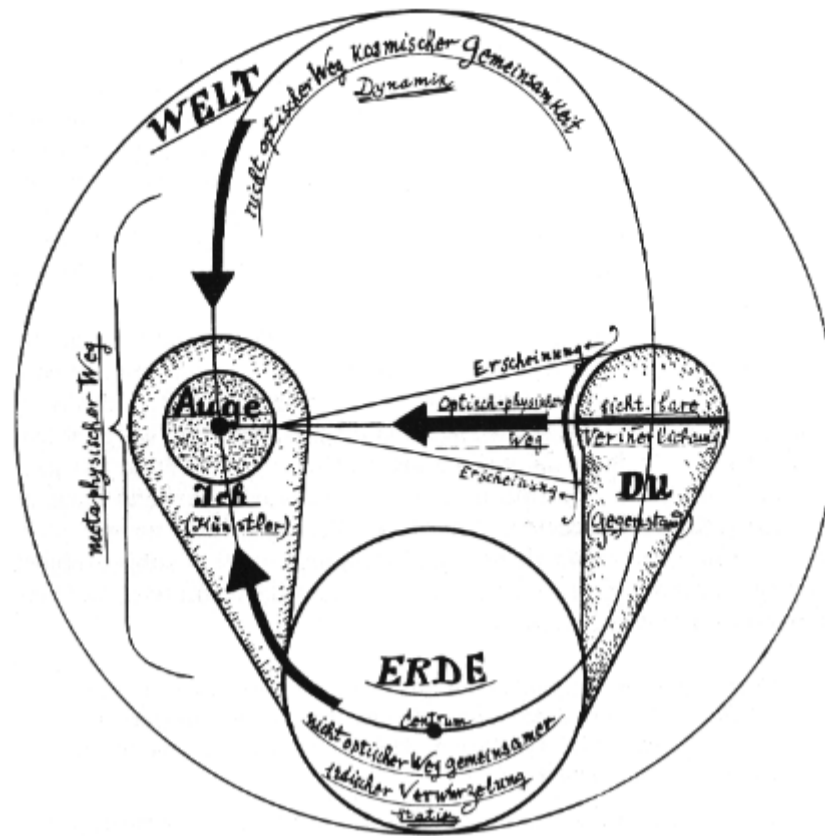


Figure 2.  
*Wege des Naturstudiums* (Ways of Studying Nature) by Paul Klee.  
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the Whole. With this understanding he then set out to create images which fit into and complement the quintessence of the Whole by the fact of being themselves newly created. So Klee could not reproduce Nature. Nature is in him, he is himself Nature." And later, "he saw through her with his penetrating gaze, experienced and comprehended her then he turned away from her and resumed his own serious game" (Haftmann, 123-124). Klee's discussion parallels and anticipates various contemporary and later treatments of the inter-relatedness of the human and natural, such as that of Alfred North Whitehead.

Alfred North Whitehead, who was apparently unaware of the intellectual legacy he and others owed to Herder, may further contribute to our understanding of the mythic mode. In *Modes of Thought* (1938), Whitehead writes about understanding as "penetration": "the world is in us and we are in the world." 5 While the presupposition of the separation of mind and world harkens back in modern times to Descartes, Whitehead discusses how modern philosophy from Kant onwards has echoed an argument of subject-object duality that is a *reductio ad absurdum*, beginning as far back as Isaac Newton and David Hume:

Combining Newton and Hume we obtain a *barren* concept, namely a field of perception devoid of any data for its own interpretation, and a system of interpretation, devoid of any reason for the concurrence of its factors.

It is this situation that modern philosophy from Kant onwards has in its various ways sought to render intelligible (Whitehead, 135; my emphasis).

In other words, in Newton's thought Whitehead sees sense data without meaning or value, while with Hume sense perception has been stripped of any means for interpreting itself. Arguing that Kant combined Newton and Hume, Whitehead goes on to say that Kant

accepted them both, and his three Critiques were his endeavor to render intelligible this Hume-Newton situation. But the Hume-Newton situation is the primary presupposition for all modern philosophic thought. Any endeavor to go behind it is, in philosophic discussion, almost angrily rejected as unintelligible.

My aim in these lectures is briefly to point out how both Newton's contribution and Hume's contribution are, each in their way, gravely defective. They are right as far as they go. *But they omit those*

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*aspects of the universe as experienced, and of our modes of experiencing, which jointly lead to the more penetrating ways of understanding.* (Whitehead, 135; my emphasis)

This passage, taken from the first of two lectures delivered at the University of Chicago in 1933, shows Whitehead searching for a way to understand the apparatuses for the "penetration" of self and world by applying the term "enjoyment" to the idea of cognition:

The individual enjoyment is what I am in my role of a natural activity, as I shape the activities of the environment into a new creation, which is myself at this moment; and yet, as being myself, it is a continuation of the antecedent world.

Then, he examines three ways of emphasizing the different components in this interactive process:

If we stress the role of the environment, this process is causation. If we stress the role of my immediate pattern of active enjoyment, this process is self-creation. If we stress the role of the conceptual anticipation of the future whose existence is a necessity in the nature of the present, this process is the teleological aim at some ideal in the future. This aim, however, is not really beyond the present process. My aim at the future is an enjoyment in the present. It thus effectively conditions the immediate self-creation of the new creature. (Whitehead, 166).

The scientific research to enable our understanding of this creative process emerged in the 1970s and 1980s when neurobiology would explore the interdependent processes involved in the senses-brain and the brain-mind creation of meaning. Whitehead was indeed prophetic. The neurobiological work of Roland Fischer in the 1980s, to name just one researcher, has addressed the questions of understanding as the "penetration" of self (brain-mind) and world (sense data), as well as questions concerning the nature of understanding with respect to the "hermeneutic circle" (discussed in chapter three). 6

Lexical Problems with the Terms "Primitivism" and "Mythic"

To appreciate the importance of the counter-episteme that characterizes Herder's thought, we must isolate the biases and lexical problems that have come to be associated with Herder's thought and

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the terms associated with it, such as the "primitive" and the "mythic." Herder's reputation throughout the nineteenth century and up to the present has suffered due to factors needing reappraisal. 7 The first factor involved the bad-blood between Herder and Kant, which had been initiated by Herder's *Metacritique* (1799) of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). The unpopularity of Herder's attack with Kant and the neo-Kantians led to the marginalizing of his epistemology. Wulf Koepke writes that "Herder's brand of empiricism (was), of course, a product of pre-Kantian philosophical discussion, which was cut off by Kant's and Fichte's enormous influence."8 In our own century, especially during the emotional climate of post-WW II Europe, reactionary conservatives created an intellectual climate in which Herder's ideas were loosely associated with buzz words such as "primitivism" and "irrationality", as well as with the Nazis' elevation of "*das Volk*." Koepke points out that "Hans Georg Gadamer's statement (in 1942), that Herder was the one among the great minds of the period of Goethe whose works were no longer read, has still a good deal of validity.9

In fairness, we must keep in mind that Herder understood the term "primitive" in a way quite different from, say, his contemporaries Condillac or Rousseau.10 For Herder, the "primitive" referred to an "original", integrated state of consciousness and language, in which the senses, reason, and feeling all came into play, and self and other were related through a universal force (*Kraft*). Ironically, Herder's understanding of the concept of the "primitive" (also associated with the "mythic") meant the opposite of "egoism", because self and world were, according to his epistemology, organically unified. In addition, his concept of 'reflectiveness" (*Besonnenheit*), rather than being anti-rational, did unseat the Kantian view of reason as a separate, superior faculty by integrating the *process* of reasoning in thinking and understanding. He combined the concept of the primitive with mythic thought and language as the original undivided language and consciousness (see chapter two).

According to James Stam, "The term primitivism is misleading, since it was rare than anyone (in the eighteenth century) blindly eulogized mindless acorn-eaters." Nor were the "primitivists" necessarily committed to a notion of historical regression. Instead, "they perceived in the past certain periods of maximum human creativity, axial periods of human development."11 Rather than eliminating or marginalizing reason, as misreaders of his idea of the primitive have assumed, Herder had integrated reasoning with other mental processes included in the reflective (creative and integrative) mind.12

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Both literary and art critics of the early twentieth century have used the term "primitive" to suggest an array of pejorative characteristics (the irrational, blindly emotional, uncivilized, naive or childlike, or aesthetically formless), and it was often intended to contrast with notions of the more highly evolved, in several senses, such as the rational, scientifically objective, civilized, mature, or formally and syntactically coherent. For example, for the American New Humanist movement of around 1910 to 1930, the word "primitive" or "primitivism" went hand-in-hand with ideas of the irrational, barbaric, and, by inference, the "Germanic" (post-World War I). In general, these scholars, under the leadership of Irving Babbitt, initiated an intellectual conservatism perhaps best understood psychologically as a reaction to the trauma imposed by a morally and militarily senseless war, an historical and intellectual legacy of Enlightenment rationalism. 13 To them, it must have seemed as if the fundamental values of Western civilization—rationality, scientific progress, and the Christian faith—had been literally and figuratively thrown to the Prussian lions. Even today, The Great War conjures up surrealistic images of a corpse "factory" with seemingly endless battlefield "assembly lines" of faceless troops, mindlessly marching into automatic-fire machine guns. This was a war that had blurred the boundaries between nightmare and reality.14

Two members of the New Humanism, in particular, Irving Babbitt and Yvor Winters, played a central role in distorting American criticism's understanding of the "primitive" at least as Herder meant it. The "manifesto" of New Humanist conservatism was Irving Babbitt's *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919). In his chapter on Rousseau and nature, Babbitt refers disparagingly to: the "Rousseauist primitivist", "egoism", "emotional intoxication", "surrender to the sub-rational", "ecstatic animality" (of Rousseau or Whitman), "inarticulate ecstasy" (of Rousseau or Wordsworth) and "the pantheistic revery" of an "Arcadian nature cult." In a passage from this chapter, Babbitt writes: "The Rousseauistic view of nature . . . whether held optimistically or pessimistically, is even less capable of satisfying the standards of the positivists (than the mechanistic view of nature) and must be dismissed as a mere phantasmagoria of the emotions." 15 Babbitt's own belief in the oppositional categories of the aesthetic-religious, subjective-objective views of nature, rational-sub-rational/animal/or ecstatic clearly colors his reading of the Romantics, as well as his idea of the primitive.16

In *Primitivism and Decadence* (1937), Yvor Winters uses the terms in his title to delineate two types of experimental (what he

terms "abnormal") literary conventions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. 17 It is unlikely that many today would agree with Winters' assessments of these poets, for clearly his use of the terms "primitive" and "decadent" suggest narrowly rationalist and formalist poetic standards. He defines the "primitive" poets as 'those who utilize all of the means necessary to the most vigorous form, but those whose range of material is limited', and the "decadent" as 'those who display a fine sensitivity to language and who may have a very wide scope, but whose work is incomplete formally (in the manner of the pseudo-referent and qualitative poets) or is somewhat but not too seriously weakened by a vice of feeling (in the manner of the better post-Romantic ironists)' (Winters, 79-80). Hart Crane is cited as a primary example of the "decadent" poet, because his poetry is "incomplete" in the tradition of Walt Whitman (whom Winters calls "a second-rate poet"), whose doctrines were "illusory" and "anti-rationalist." And, with deliberate irony he adds, the precision of Crane's language forces the reader to recognize the "inadequacy of his reference." Winters notes later that the decadent poet (i.e., Crane) "is the major, or primitive, poet with some important faculty absent from the texture of his work" (Winter, 82).

Next, Winters cites "Dr. Williams" (William Carlos Williams) as the exemplary "contemporary primitive" poet, since he is a "major poet on a smaller scale." "His best poems display not a trace of formal inadequacies" which are "the signs of decadence", "his form is complete and perfect", "the feeling is sound." But, "he is wholly incapable of coherent thought and he had not the good fortune to receive a coherent system as his birthright"; "his experience is disconnected and fragmentary, but sometimes a fragment is wrought to great beauty." In conclusion, Winters unabashedly asserts that "both decadent and primitive lack an understanding and correlation of their experience; the decadent endeavors to conceal them, or, like some primitives, may never discover them: the primitive, however, treats of what he understands and the decadent of more than he understands" (Winters, 82-83). We wish only to call attention to Winters' choice of language here, as well as to the poetic standards he assumes in these definitions of the decadent and the primitive-standards by which, in his own estimation, only Samuel Johnson and George Herbert would emerge unscathed.

The association of the term "mythic" with "primitivism" in the eighteenth century continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, yet not always to its detriment. While some nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers accrued to it the same anti-rationalist

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and anti-Christian connotative baggage that they had associated with "primitivism", others associated the two terms in a search to understand the origins of human thought and language. Hamann and Herder had associated the "mythic" with the original undivided language (Homeric or Biblical) and integrated thinking (discussed in chapter one). In the middle of the nineteenth century Henri Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, the founders of positivism, called for a "demythologized religion of humanity." Ironically, positivism began with a visionary call for a new "religion." For these men, the "mythic" was associated with three progressive stages of consciousness in human history, moving from the theological to the metaphysical and to the positive or scientific level. In his *System of Positive Polity* (1851), Comte places the origin of language during the theological stage, human childhood "when men thought in images and myths and the suitable language was metaphorical and poetic." 18 Then in the adolescence of humanity, "metaphysical mentality required a language of abstract concepts albeit these are, in Comte's analysis, really mythical images abstracted and absolutized." Finally, Comte maintains, the positive stage will emerge, requiring "a new, unspecified linguistic type", a "universal language which he believed could only develop after mankind was united in *humanité*." The relationship of this early mythic-religious vision of positivism contrasts dramatically with its expression in twentieth century science.

#### Mythic Thinking A Special Form of Cognition

In the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, it has been commonplace to contrast the mythic with the scientific, that is to say, the "false" or purely imaginative with the true and objectively "verifiable." This false dichotomy reflects the persistent, popular belief in the myth of an objective, unmediated reality. However, the belief in "mythic" thinking as a special and distinct form of cognition, which emerged in the eighteenth century (e.g., Vico's *Scienza Nuova*, 1725), has continued into the twentieth century in a number of fields such as philosophy (Cassirer), anthropology (Lévy-Bruhl, Lévi-Strauss) and psychology (Arieti, Fischer, and Vygotsky).

Some psychologists studying creativity view mythic thinking as the foundation of all creative thought. In *Creativity: The Magic Synthesis* (1976), for example, psychologist Silvano Arieti describes "primitive cognition" as that type of thinking akin to what Freud called the primary process and what others have variously called

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immature, archaic, abnormal, defective, concrete, mythic, etc. Arieti stresses, however, that in terms of the creative process, "This type of immature thought is not just in art and myths but in every creative process, including science" (Arieti, 66). These "primordial processes" occur in dreams and in mental illness, especially schizophrenia. 19 Arieti called this primitive form of thinking "paleological" (Greek: *paleo*, old) and stressed that it is not illogical or alogical, but does follow a logic different from that used by the human being who is awake and healthy." In fact, the normal logic of the secondary process represents "the kind of thinking that in Western civilization is generally called Aristotelian logic, because Aristotle was the first to formulate its laws" (Arieti, 67). While paleological thinking is present in normal people in only a minimal degree, Arieti maintains that it can be found in a purer form in the schizophrenic.<sup>20</sup> Unlike Vygotsky and Lévi-Strauss who studied mythic thinking in childhood and/or in the "primitive", Arieti only discusses the incidences of this mental state in the normal adult and the schizophrenic.

In *The Savage Mind* (1962), anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, argues a radically revisionist position in saying that mythic thinking is an alternate type of scientific thinking. In his view, the thought and language of "primitive" people reflect their own kind of logic and demand for order, different *in kind only* from that of the modern scientific.<sup>21</sup> Rather than the commonly held belief that the "myth-making faculty" of primitive peoples reflects a "turning (the) back on reality", he argues that the value of myths and rites has been "to preserve until the present time the remains of methods of observation and reflection which were (and no doubt still are) precisely adapted to discoveries of a certain type: those which nature authorized from the starting point of a speculative organization and exploitation of the sensible world in sensible terms." He calls mythic thinking "the science of the concrete", and uses the analogy of the creations of the *bricoleur* (jack-of-all-trades) who builds up "new mythological worlds" from the debris of the past.<sup>22</sup> This idea will be discussed later in conjunction with Herder's "new mythologies" and Fischer's meaning-making mind.

The major difference between mythic and scientific thought, according to Lévi-Strauss, lies in what he sees as the scientist's creating events (changing the world) by means of structures (hypotheses and theories), while the primitive just creates structures by means of past events. What Lévi-Strauss overlooks or disregards in his distinction is the nature of the inductive process by which scientific "structures"

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are formed. Whether a scientist's theorem or equation begins with observations derived from nature or from the process of "addition to" or "subtraction from" previous theorems or equations, he creates structures from past events. In this way, the scientist's thinking, at least in the initial stages, is identical to the primitive's mythic thinking. In either case, mythic thought involves the process of making new arrangements from *given* elements (signs in new relationships to one another), or building up "new mythological worlds."

Lévi-Strauss' definition of mythic thinking, discussed above, shares important similarities with Arieti's "primitive cognition" in all forms of creativity and in schizophrenia, and Lev Vygotsky's description of "complex thinking" in children and primitives. Where Arieti viewed mythic thinking as a primary component ("a primordial mechanism") of all creative thinking processes, including scientific, Lévi-Strauss sees it as a distinct, although "equally valid", mode of thought. In his efforts to distinguish mythic and scientific thought, Lévi-Strauss overlooks the central role of mythical (undifferentiated) thought in all processes of understanding and meaning-making.

Misconceptions about the "primitive" or "irrational" nature of mythic thinking have been perpetuated in otherwise important works of literary criticism. <sup>23</sup> For example, in her introduction to *Ancient Myth and Modern Poetry* (1971), Lillian Feder shows that what she means by "mythic thinking" substantially differs from what either Arieti or Lévi-Strauss mean.<sup>24</sup> In one passage, she states that mythic thinking is "in essence an attempt to control's one's feelings and environment by non-rational means, e.g., magic, gods, spells, stories, or other devices, except practical or scientific ones", and "There is no doubt that as scientific and technological development increases, the obvious need for mythical thinking decreases" (Feder, 8). If mythic thinking is, as Arieti and Lévi-Strauss maintain, an integral part of either creative or proto-scientific thought, then the "need for mythical thinking" is less the issue than its new manifestations.

In her introduction, Feder discusses Freud's ideas about the relationship between phylogenetic and individual development as a possible explanation "for the persistence of myth in human society long after it has ceased to function in any organized ritual activity" (Feder, 10). Although our own interest here lies in mythic thinking, rather than in "the persistence of myth" in the form of thematic or narrative constructs, as Feder states, this reference to Freud is central to our interest in evidence of mythic thinking both in primitive

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people (phylogenetically) and in all children, past and present (on-togenetically).

In his essay "The Uncanny", Freud writes about "residues of animistic activity within us" in modern times. A passage from this essay follows:

It seems as if each one of us has been through a phase of individual development corresponding to this animistic stage in primitive men, that none of us has passed through it without preserving certain residues or traces of it which are still capable of manifesting themselves, and that everything which now strikes us as "uncanny" fulfills the condition of touching those residues of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to expression.

Feder's definition of myth which derives in part from this quote, states: "myth conveys the remnants within individual consciousness of the early stage of phylogenetic development in which myths were created" (Feder, 10-11). This point may offer an important key to understanding the different manifestations of mythic thinking, (especially with regard to child and primitive forms of thinking) as expressed by: Cassirer (primitive), Vygotsky (the child and the primitive), Arieti (primitive and schizophrenic), Lévi-Strauss (primitive and surrealist artist), Fischer (ecstatic states and schizophrenia, and Winnicott (the undifferentiated state).

In another passage, Feder takes issue with Philip Rahv's statement in "Myth and the Powerhouse" (1953) that the modern appeal of myth lies in its "archaism." This, she maintains, is an oversimplification that might only accurately refer to "those who" . . . . (and herein lies my objection) "like Mircea Eliade, romanticize archaic man's periodic return through myth to what took place *in illo tempore* in order to 'renew the world,' regretting that his *regressus ad originem* is unavailable to modern Western man" (Feder, 29). On the contrary, I would argue, it is precisely the nostalgia for return to a mythic mode of undifferentiated thinking, prevalent both in childhood and in our ancestral past, that constitutes a therapeutic form of "regression" generated from the need to balance the constraints of Western rationalism. Furthermore, it was a *regressus ad originem*, in this second sense, which compelled the poets in this study to break beyond the confines of "normal" consciousness. In addition, mythic thinking mirrors the original (mythologized) creative act which continues to serve as a paradigm of all acts of meaning-making or understanding.

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## New Language/New Consciousness

By beginning with Herder's idea of the mythic-organic as a recuperative, undifferentiated epistemology, we are able to recognize its continued applicability to philosophical, psychological, and neurobiological theories of understanding and the meaning-making mind today (discussed in chapters one through three). The poets we will discuss discovered the mythic mode of understanding by exploring altered and pathological mental states, or the "mysticism" of modern quantum physics. Somewhat ironically, many physicists today implicitly view themselves as priestly or shamanic ascetics, replacing shamanic incantations with mathematical calculations, the search for origins with theories of the Big Bang, and the holistic, ecstatic vision with a "Grand Unification Theory." These poets and thinkers saw themselves as priest-shamans, exploring new worlds of consciousness and understanding outside the confines of the narrowly defined rationality of normal consciousness.

One of the problems with discussing Herder's new epistemology lies in the lexical chaos surrounding the object of understanding, reality: Herder (*das Seyn and Kraft*), Frederick Schlegel (*Fülle*), or in the twentieth century, Heidegger (*Dasein*). Behind these lexical differences, however, lay very similar concepts of reality as dynamic and mediated through human experience. This view of reality and knowing would be a radically different one from: the privileging of pure reason (Kant), objective reality (Positivists), or ideal categories in religion, philosophy or art (German Idealism through Aestheticism and Symbolism). The terms totality, wholeness, or holistic refer in this context to the mythic as the paradigmatic mode of understanding (or making-meaning), as well as the search for an understanding of totality. These words signify an alternative idea of understanding and of reality-as-understood. While sometimes referred to as a mystical way of knowing, the mythic mode of understanding for Herder, as well as for the poets and thinkers in this study, differs in important ways from the metaphysical or idealist mode with its desire to experience a transcendent Unity, Oneness, Absolute, or Center, achieved either in the present or future, and inside human history or outside of it.

Part of the task of exploring this subject has been to become attuned to the language thinkers and poets use to describe the new consciousness of a mythic or holistic way of knowing. The poets speak self-consciously about the task of "inventing" a new language (such as Crane's "intrinsic Myth" and "some Word that will never die"). Simi-

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larly, we as readers need to be aware of the conceptual shift that has taken place in words previously used in a metaphysical sense (Absolute, Oneness, Wholeness, or Unity). When poets and thinkers of the mythic counter-episteme (Herder, Goethe, Frederick Schlegel, Whitehead or Heidegger) refer to these terms, they have redefined the conceptual limits of these terms to exist within the context of human experience and understanding, that is, as "Being-in-the World" (Heidegger).

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## Chapter One

## Myths of Creation and the Meaning-Making Mind

*Each reader, translator, or recreator, renders his text into a form determined largely by his own cultural context. The arts form an extension of our own past, but find their meaning for us in our present situation. That present situation contains elements of vision which we project on the future, and those elements form the recreating aspect of our reading.*

*There is no longer any functional place for a divine creation myth at the beginning of things; there is only human culture, and therefore at most only the sense of human recreation as a distant goal.*

(Northrop Frye, *Creation and Recreation*)

To understand the epistemological and ideological struggles of the nineteenth and twentieth century poets in this study, one must begin with Herder. While there is no concrete evidence showing Herder's direct influence on the post-Romantic poets in this study, the aim of this chapter is to show how he prepared the philosophical ground for a mythic mode of discourse and understanding essential to the poetry and poetics of these later poets. This chapter will examine aspects of Herder's revolutionary episteme, in particular its cognitive and metaphysical assumptions. It was in part a vehement reaction to the "dangerous dualities" inherent in Locke's empiricism and Kant's categories of reason and mind, and in part a positive response to the plentiful inquiries into the origins of thought and language of his time.

The relationship of Herder's philosophy to the rational-empiricist ideologies of the Enlightenment in the second half of the eighteenth century can be understood by approaching it through Antonio

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Gramsci's model of ideological struggle in intellectual history. According to Gramsci (*Prison Notebooks*, 1971), cultural forms, which include intellectual constructs, serve as instruments of ideology. 1 "Hegemonic ideology contains the dominant, most widely shared beliefs and attitudes which are incorporated in social practices and institutions." Gramsci's theory of intellectuals and the production of ideology includes a theory of revolutionary intellectuals whose task is to develop a counter-hegemony; "hegemonic ideologies incorporate elements of new emerging ideologies." This was the case, for example, with Kant's ideologically privileged *Critique of Pure Reason* with its far-reaching influence on European culture well into the nineteenth century, thus creating a kind of ideological hegemony. According to Kellner, "artists, intellectuals, and dissidents are consistently challenging hegemonic ideology, often subverting it from within. Hence hegemonic ideologies contain simultaneously cohesive and disintegrating elements. . . ."1

Herder's thought, especially the "Essay on the Origins of Language" (1771) and *Metacritique* (1799), offered a "counter-ideology" to Enlightenment false consciousnesses, while using Locke and Kant as a springboard for his theory of understanding. While Herder's project to "subvert" the hegemonic ideology of Enlightenment rationalism and the confines of empiricist theories of understanding, and thereby transform German or European culture and consciousness, was largely unsuccessful, his influence on the German Romantics was extensive.2 Ironically, Herder's followers would use his new ideas to forge an Idealist philosophy very different from his own organicist and quasi-immanentist outlook. Herder's was an attempt to redefine the limits of Lockean and Kantian epistemology, by redefining the issues and terms of the epistemic debate and, if not "excluding oppositional ideas," as Kellner states, at least seriously challenging the opposition. Because Herder was perceived as the opposition to the Kantians as a result of his attack on *The Critique of Pure Reason*, his deserved stature in the history of ideas has suffered a set-back.

Kellner writes about how tensions and contradictions can emerge between, and especially within "ideological regions" (political, economic, social, and cultural). They might include those in the cultural region of values, science, technology, philosophy, art, religion, popular culture, or mass media, or, as we see in Enlightenment philosophy, in the "oppositional moments" between Herder's and Kant's epistemologies. These "moments" result in contradictions that produce the space for the play of counter-ideologies. We witness these ideological tensions in the poets in this study, who shared Herder's

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program to offer a counter-episteme to the rational-scientific views of the mind, understanding, and language. Herder's mythopoeic episteme would concern the redefinition of the nature of understanding as "mythic thinking," in turn, bringing about the redefinition of the idea of the self and the role of language in constructing knowledge.

Within a few decades, Herder's mythopoeic counter-episteme would itself undergo a transformation, taking the form of the tenets of Idealist philosophy and, later in the nineteenth century, that of symbolist aestheticism. These idealist-aesthetic discourses, however, embodied a teleology or metaphysic that would be at odds with Herder's original mythopoeic vision. This chapter will argue that to understand Rimbaud and his philosophical and poetic heirs more accurately and completely than in the past, we must consider them within the intellectual tradition originating with Herder. In addition, while many of Herder's ideas helped to shape the literary and philosophical traditions of Romanticism and Symbolism (through his younger contemporaries and the next generation), it remains to be shown the precise paths where his ideas diverged from theirs. As a result of these differences between the mythopoeic, on the one hand, and the romantic and symbolist, on the other hand, the poets in Part II must be reappraised with these important distinctions in mind.

All of them shared a common program, conceived in messianic terms, to supplant the culturally privileged logical, scientific, or Aristotelian episteme and to replace it with the language of a new consciousness. They were revolutionaries in the sense that they systematically devised individual projects intended to call into question and to undermine the underlying assumptions of Enlightenment concepts of rationality, understanding, and their relationship to language. Although often associated in one way or another with Romanticism or the Symbolist aesthetic, they harkened back to the English and Continental Romantic traditions only in a narrowly defined sense which owes more to the mythopoeic ideas of the pre-Romantics (Herder and Goethe), than to those of the post-Kantian Idealists (Fichte, Schiller, Schelling, and Hegel). As I will discuss more fully in the first two chapters, their selective affinities with Romanticism included the following areas: the redemptive role of the poet as re-creator of the world (as commonly experienced), the rejection of the egocentric in favor of a depersonalized and enlarged lyric self, and the attempted restoration of a new consciousness with Being (*Dasein*) akin to the mythic thinking of the child, the primitive, or the schizophrenic through the creation of a new poetic language.

Their individual mythopoeic projects were, in general terms, a

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response to the crisis of modernity which Lawrence E. Cahoon co-gently describes in *The Dilemma of Modernity: Philosophy, Culture, and Anti-Culture* (1988).<sup>3</sup> So relevant are Cahoon's concerns to those of Herder and to the poets under investigation in Part II, that they merit at least a general introduction at this time. Cahoon views modernity as involving an early phase, beginning in the seventeenth century through the Enlightenment, and a later phase which emerges in the twentieth century and persists to this day. During the early phase, a dominant and powerful worldview emerged that would have far-reaching effects on modern philosophy and culture. Cahoon defines this view, subjectivism, as "the conviction that the *distinction between subjectivity and non-subjectivity is the most fundamental distinction in an inquiry*" (Cahoon, 19). From this distinction metaphysical, ethical, and epistemological inquiries were reduced to the privileging of one side of the subjective-objective duality over the other, leading in recent times to the self-negation of the humanistic values (democratic freedoms and individual authority) which had served as the cultural and intellectual bedrock of modernity. Furthermore, he maintains that "subjectivism privileges those modes of the subject's knowing, experiencing, and interacting with the world in which the subject is in greater *control* over the product of this interaction, as opposed to those modes or situations in which the subject is more vulnerable to, affected, or determined by the object" (Cahoon, 57). Subjectivism in these senses is synonymous with consciousness, yet Cahoon makes an important distinction between consciousness that is private and consciousness *in vivo*, that is, the property of a living human being *in continual interaction with the natural and social worlds*" (Cahoon, 25; my emphasis). This distinction has important implications for literary interpretation as well, especially with respect to reader-response or deconstructionist criticism (discussed in chapter three).

After carefully situating the origins of subjectivism in the philosophies of René Descartes (*The Meditations*) and Immanuel Kant (*The Critique of Pure Reason*), Cahoon discovers, in the combined concepts of "human being" and "culture" in the works of Donald Winnicott, Ernst Cassirer, and John Dewey, the "region of experiencing" wherein the subjective-objective dichotomies are overridden and an integrated psychic state emerges. In their collective views, human beings are "the kind of beings who endlessly recreate and reshape materials in ways that carry interpretations of the world which guide individual action and community life. The process of experiencing-interpreting-creating is not a synthesis of logically prior or more

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fundamental processes; it is fundamental and non-derivative" (Cahoone, 254). For Herder, as we will see in the next section, the mental condition of "reflectiveness" would be the cornerstone of all human beings' cultural and linguistic creativity. In addition, Herder's and Friedrich Schlegel's admonition to the poets of their day to create "new mythologies" would serve as a corrective to the "dangerous dualities" inherent in rational-empiricist philosophies. Like Herder's concept of "new mythologies," "culture," "Cahoone writes," connects human beings not only with things, but with each other and with dead generations whose products are reinterpreted and reinvested with meaning by the living" (Cahoone, 254).

#### The Problem of the Unity of Mind

Herder emerged as the first to explore the unmapped territory of philosophy and psychology through his theories of the organic unity of mind and the inseparability of thought and language. It is by now a commonplace of literary history that Herder's ideas had a profound impact on the next generation of thinkers and poets, the Romantic Idealists (Schiller, Hölderlin, Novalis, Schelling, and the Schlegels), informing their early expressive theories of language, the idea of the original genius, the creative faculty of the imagination, their interest in folk literature and mythological themes. It is, also, well-documented that his ideas traveled through his German predecessors especially through Schelling and the Schlegels to England and France through Mme. de Staël. 4

What has received comparatively negligible attention, however, in literary criticism is the nature of Herder's mythopoeic episteme and its relationship to mainstream Romantic and post-Romantic poetry and poetics.<sup>5</sup> Herder's concept of mental "reflectiveness" (*Besonnenheit*), and its inseparability from language, represented a revolutionary paradigm shift from rational-empiricist epistemologies and their views of the role of language in understanding. Both the rationalists and empiricists of the Enlightenment had treated cognition (the mind) and perception (sensory "data") as separate and mutually exclusive "faculties." For example, Descartes and the pre-Kantian Rationalists believed that one arrived at understanding through the experientially untainted apprehension of transcendent, "innate ideas," while Locke and the other empiricists, conversely, confined understanding to the passive reception of raw sensory experience.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, the two major influences on Herder's concept of

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reflection came from "two extreme poles in the approach to language," Hamann and Leibniz (Cassirer, 152). He reasoned that "even if all language is rooted in feeling and its immediate, instinctive manifestations (cries, articulated sounds)" (Hamann), the specific "form" of language comes into being only with the operation of a definitively human faculty of "reflection" (which Leibniz had called "apperception"). Therefore, what we find in Herder's concept of reflection is an amalgam of empiricist and expressive theories of language and cognition, which would lay the foundation for Romantic theories of the imagination and organic form. While Kant conceived of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) as a spontaneous function of soul and a transcendent synthesizing faculty, for Herder it represented a mediating and processive condition of the human mental powers. Here is Herder's full text on "reflection":

Man demonstrates reflection when the force of his soul works so freely that in the ocean of sensations that flows into it from all the senses, he can, in a manner of speaking, isolate and stop one wave, and direct his attention toward this wave, conscious that he is so doing. He demonstrates reflection when, emerging from the nebulous dream of images flitting past his senses, he can concentrate upon a point of wakefulness, dwell voluntarily on one image, observe it calmly and lucidly, and distinguish characteristics proving that this and no other is the object. He demonstrates reflection when he not only knows attributes vividly and clearly, but can *recognize* one or more distinguishing attributes: the first act of this recognition yields a clear concept; it is the soul's first judgment and what made this recognition possible? A characteristic which he had to isolate and which came to him clearly as a characteristic of reflection. Forward! Let us cry *Eureka!* the first characteristic of reflection was the word of the soul. With it human speech was invented! 7

The older definition held that imagination involved the mind's capacity to retain the images imprinted upon it by sense. Thus, Hobbes referred to the "decaying sense" and wrote that "imagination and memory are but one thing, which for divers considerations hath divers names." Though Locke and Berkeley pictured the mind as a more active agent of construction, neither emphasized the role of imagination. With Hartley and Hume, however, imagination came to occupy a central place. Using the psychology of association, both interpreted imagination as that active mental faculty which puts images together from associated ideas. Thus the concept of the imagina-

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tion changed from that of image retention to image composition. 8

Cahoone maintains that with the loss of the transcendental in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, "the (Kantian) bridge mediating and relating the ideas inhering in my mental substance to entities existing independently of my mind (through pure reason) had been burnt" (Cahoone, 73). It seemed that "with the transcendental support for their interrelation de-legitimated, subject and object can no longer be plausibly conceived as separate yet related" (Cahoone, 72). This breach would lead to the paradoxical or dialectical problems surrounding the concepts of subject and object in modern philosophy, and most painfully to the undermining or self-negation which characterizes the recent cultural and intellectual enterprises. While Cahoone stresses the concept of "culture" as a process of experiencing-interpreting-creating which mediates subjectivity and objectivity, Herder adopts the idea of *Kraft* from the biological sciences to describe the dynamic force informing (but not synthesizing) the plurality of all human and natural activities. (See Clark on Herder's concept of *Kraft*.) Unlike Kant who viewed reason as a separate and dominant faculty, Herder maintains a place for reason in the process of thinking ("reasoning") as just one component of the mental condition of reflectiveness, the integrative "force" necessary to achieving understanding. What was new was that Herder's ontological and epistemological bridges (*Kraft* and *Besonnenheit*) derived from natural rather than transcendental causes, and yet, as Barnard points out, the idea of *Kraft* as "God" echoed, at least in part, Spinoza's pantheistic theology. (See also, the discussion of metaphor as bridge in chapter two and in chapter six on Hart Crane's "logic of metaphor.")

Herder's differences with Kant reached a climax with the latter's critical review of the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791), were further fueled by Herder's critique of the Kantian "categories" in *Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1799), and persisted until Herder's death in 1803.<sup>9</sup> One major point of disagreement included the Kantian categories which corresponded with the widespread belief in epistemological hierarchies and which Herder refuted as working together in the single power of *Kraft*. As Stare points out, "Epistemological hierarchies of both empiricists and rationalists often seem to imply that understanding and reason were mental bonuses, the extra advantage of being humanas though man were at one moment a creature of reason, at another of sense perception, and at still another of fantasy or memory" (Stam, 121-122).

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## Language and Understanding

The philosophers of the middle and late eighteenth century were interested in questions of language and understanding, such as how and from where does the mind gain knowledge and understanding of the world of the senses; what is the role of the different "faculties" (mental abstraction, sensory perception, and reason) in gaining understanding (i.e., making meaning, as oppose to gaining knowledge); what is the relationship of language (expression) to understanding; and, what is the nature of the truths we seek through understanding (whether rational or empirical)? To begin with, the rationalists in the tradition of philosophical idealism (Neo-Platonism), had one answer to the nature and purpose of language. According to Descartes, the ideal of the unity of all knowledge (the *sapientia humana*), which remains one and unchangeable, can be extended to language: "To the demand for a *mathesis universalis* is added the demand for a *lingua universalis*." 10 His plan, though never executed, called for a universal language; the contents of consciousness would be reduced (i.e., generalized) into their constitutive "ideas." In fact, Descartes' followers created different systems of artificial language and went so far as to say that "a truly perfect language must strive to express this natural hierarchy of concepts adequately in a system of signs" (Cassirer, 128).

Following Descartes' lead, Leibniz restored the problem of language to the context of universal logic: "the specific content of language itself is in danger of being submerged in its very universality" (Cassirer, 132). From his Rationalist perspective, language is seen purely as a means of cognition, an instrument of logical analysis, i.e., the algebraic analysis of breaking down into prime numbers has its parallel in cognition in the breakdown into primitive ideas. Sensation must be transformed into the distinct ideas of the understanding, yet even our most abstract ideas contain some admixture of "imagination" (albeit, "tainted" by sense impressions). The purest form of apprehension (abstraction) is always out of reach; "our analysis never arrives at an ultimate limit but rather can and must continue *ad infinitum*." 11 The hierarchy of being is determined by the hierarchy of cognition "only the supreme, divine being is characterized by perfect cognition" (Cassirer, 131). Language strives more and more to encompass the totality of knowledge (associated with divine being and pure cognition), at the same time it limits, through its symbolic nature (as sign, not name identical with being), this totality. Every sensuous symbol is the vehicle, of a purely spiritual signification, which to be sure is given only "virtually" and implicitly in it.

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In addition to the rationalists, empiricist thinkers (Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Berkeley) addressed the problem of the relationship between language and understanding. While at first Locke's critique of understanding did not include language, "language became for him one of the most important witnesses to the truth of the fundamental empiricist attitude." He wrote in "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding:" "all words (are) taken from the operations of sensible things and applied to certain modes of thinking. Spirit, in its primary signification, is 'breath'; angel, a 'messenger': and I doubt not but, if we could trace them to their sources, we should find, in all languages, the names which stand for things that fall not under our sense to have had their first rise from sensible ideas." 12 This universal principle of language (based in sense experiences) was also formulated by Hobbes "who believed that with this formulation he had withdrawn the philosophy of language from the sphere of metaphysics."13 Cassirer writes that "among the rationalists, the reduction of all contents of cognition to their simple ideas and the designation of these ideas signifies a return to ultimate and universal *principles* of knowledge; among the empiricists, it stands for the derivation of all complex intellectual notions from the immediate data of the inward or outward sense, from the elements of 'sensation' and 'reflection'." There was a progressive development within empiricism (from Bacon to Hobbes to Locke) toward a polarity in the sensationalist idea of cognition and the abstract word as the expression of the "abstract universal idea." Cassirer continues:

From Locke to Berkeley there was a peculiar reversal in the empiricist position on the problem of knowledge. Locke found in language a confirmation of his fundamental approach to knowledge, and invoked it as a witness to his general thesis that there could be nothing in the understanding which was not previously in the senses: but now it becomes evident that the distinctive and essential function of the word has no place within the sensationalist system. . . . Far from having even a conditional and relative truth content, language is a magic mirror which falsities and distorts the forms of reality in its own characteristic way" (Cassirer, 137).

Herder's "Essay on the Origins of Language"

In his *Preisschrift* essay on the origins of language ("Essay on the Origins of Language," 1772), Herder set out in his argument to discredit two popular arguments on the origin of language (speech): that

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of the rationalist, Johann Peter Sussmilch, who argued for the divine origin of speech (as innate ideas) and that of the empiricist, Pierre Moreau de Maupertius, who saw man as the inventor of language, the discoverer of a useful (albeit external) tool. The question for Herder, and his fellow competitors for the prize, was no longer solely that of the hypothetical *Ursprache* (although Herder does speculate on this topic at the end of his essay), rather the major focus of their arguments concerned the origins of language itself, understood as speech (*parole*).

Herder's essay, perhaps intended as a goad to the Prussian Academy of Sciences, has been called "probably the most famous essay on language origins ever written" (Stam, 97); it marked the beginning of a new era in theories of language, successfully rebutting current theories, and was not without political purpose. One might recall that the Academy, founded by Frederick I in 1700, was intended originally to promote "the culture of the German language," but in 1740 Frederick the Great, a Francophile, assumed the throne and reshaped the Academy by awarding the presidency to Maupertius, who renamed the society the *Academie royale des sciences et belles lettres* (modelled on the Parisian *Academie des sciences*) and established French as the official language. German members were understandably resentful.

In his *Travel Diary* of 1769, Herder wrote disparagingly of the Academy, but decided to enter the contest anyway. Herder's resentment may have been further aggravated by the ideological and political hegemony exercised by French rationalism, first attacked in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and, then, in Herder's essay. In "Essay on the Origins of Language" was born (actually revitalized from Spinoza) the epistemology of the mythopoeic, which is crucial to our understanding of the post-Romantic poets in this study. In his thorough discussion of Herder's essay, James Stare points out that it is divided into two main parts, which correspond to the two questions posed by the Academy: "Whether man could have invented language and how they might have done it." Furthermore, the first part (of most interest here) is divided into "three untitled sections, which concern, respectively, the place of language in the realm of nature, its place in the realm of human nature, and the nature of original language" (Stam, 118). First, to give a brief summary of Herder's rebuttals, he opposed Sussmilch's theory of divine origins, countering it with proof of the naturalness of human language, and secondly, he tried to dispose of the animalistic explanations (Condillac, Rousseau, Maupertius, Diodorus, and Vitruvius). He accuses the "animalistic" theorists of "failing to differentiate between human language and

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animal noise and thoughtless signals" (Stam, 119) and of overlooking the developmental character of language, i.e., that the sounds and cries of self-expression precedes communication as a source of language.

He begins his inquiry into the question by establishing that which distinguishes man from the other animals; according to Herder, "Condillac had made animals into men and Rousseau had made men into animals." 14 While animals, unlike men, instinctively possess certain "artistic drives" (webs, dams, hives, etc.), they lack man's reflectivity, a mental condition dependent upon "reasoning." For Herder, "The human comes into the world as the orphaned child of nature, naked, weak, needy, unarmed, and without instincts. In place of instincts there must be other hidden powers dormant in him." 15 Herder believed, then, that there must be "some missing term which balances the different parts of this relationship," something different from instinct which is nonetheless man's peculiar "natural gift." Herder defines man's *differentia specifica* as "reflectiveness" (*Besonnenheit*), the "genetic proof" that humanity differs from the animals in kind, not merely in degree. 16

According to Herder, "reflectiveness" is the necessary condition for the development of language. "The origin of language is not so much invention as discovery, man's discovery of the world about him" and "language learning is the activity whereby the external is made internal, the appropriation of the outer world within the human soul" (Stam, 123). Stam continues:

Man, when set out into the universe, confronts a chaotic ocean of sensations, a stream of impressions as in a dream. He shows his reflectiveness when he selects certain impressions and gives them his special attention, when he concentrates upon a single object, distinguishes certain of its characteristics, and identifies these with the object itself. Thus mere cognition (*Erkennen*) becomes recognition (*Anerkenntnis*). Recognition singles out distinguishing marks (*Merkmale*) through reflection, so that objects are discerned according to their peculiar properties. These distinguishing marks become in their turn the "words of the soul," or distinguishing words (*Merkeworte*), and therewith human language originates within the psyche and without a sound having been uttered (Stam, 122-123).

Language is no longer the external "instrument" of expression and communication, but is seen as originating in an inaudible, internal reflectiveness and language "the means of ordering the world in the individual soul becomes the media of communication in social



intercourse" (Stam, 123). Language, like the self who generates it, is a social construct; thus, understanding through linguistic expression engages a social, interactive consciousness and participation in wholes (natural and social) larger than the self. In fact, Herder's concept of *das Volk* implied a language community identified with the force of Nature (*Kraft*) and with the political concept of Nation which is organically formed from within, not externally imposed from without through institutions and bureaucracy.

#### Concepts of the *Ursprache*

In the third section of his essay, Herder turns to the subject of the original languages (*Ursprache*) and speculates about the nature of the original discourse(s). Like Hamann and the Scottish writers, Herder emphasizes the musical quality of the primitive idiom, "its rhapsodic poetry and mythic fantasy." In his fanciful *The World's Oldest Document*, Herder actually tries to recreate this discourse, which he conceives as being heavily weighed with nouns and metaphoric language. 17 And in "The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry," he writes further about poetry as the original language and its embodiment of mythic thought and language.

Herder's interest in the *Ursprache* followed from the inquiries of Hamann and the Scottish tradition of Classical and Biblical studies. The emphasis on a "New Homer," "the Father of Poetry" first by Vico (1725), then by Thomas Blackwell and his Scottish followers, and Robert Wood and those influenced by him in Germany (Hamann, Herder, and Goethe) stressed Homeric language as the "language of nature." Herder viewed the *Ursprache* as a "natural" language (original, poetic, and undivided); he refuted those who saw speech as of divine origin (Susmilch) or as animal-like sounds and cries (Condillac and Rousseau). This was significant in that an "undivided language" prior to the social changes and "progress" in the arts, trades, and sciences also represented an original unity of discourses and media. Hence, the separation of the arts was in part cause, in part symptom of general social dissolution." 18

Because the thinkers of the eighteenth century did not have access to comparative linguistics or evolutionary thought, both Greek and Hebrew were believed to be the original languages prior to Babel. The Englishman Robert Lowth in *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753) had called the Scriptures "sublime primitive poetry." In Germany, Johann Eichhorn, professor of Oriental and Biblical

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literatures, called Moses a "poetic legislator" (anticipating Shelley's view of the poet in "The Defence of Poesy") and Eichhorn with Philipp Gabler wrote a multi-volume work on Hebrew's "mythic mentality" (Stam, 70). Later in eighteenth century Germany, "primitive" poetry became equated with mythic thought and the language of the mythic-symbolic.

The original language was described as "natural speech" natural, spontaneous, and emotional. The idea that the "first elaborated form of language was poetic," was integrated into the doctrine "that poetry preceded prose because poetry is the natural expression of feeling." 19 Abrams writes that "a number of these Scottish theorists maintained that poetry had been instinctive and emotional in origin, and coeval, or almost coeval, with the birth of language itself," a view restated in Cassirer and Vygotsky. And John Brown in England (1763) saw the origins of art in "savage Life, where untaught Nature rules." From England, these ideas filtered into France through Condillac (1746) to Rousseau "whose general emphasis upon the primacy of instinct and feeling influenced the emotive theory of art." In *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, he "insisted that since man began not by reasoning, but by feeling, the first words were cries extorted by passion, and the first languages were song-like, passionate, figurative, and therefore the language of poets, not of geometers."20

#### Herder's Organic Unity of Mind

At this juncture, we see where Herder's concept of the process of understanding diverged both from Lockean empiricism and Kantian rationalism. Locke's *Reflexion* referred to a particular operation of thinking, while Herder's *Besonnenheit* defined the essential condition of thinking, i.e., the totality (perceptual, cognitive and volitional) within which the process of thinking can operate."21 It is not a separate "faculty," rather it involves the whole direction and arrangement of modes ("the relational unity of a process") which make man a creature *sui generis*. While Herder shares Locke's conviction that all our ideas are derived from experience and revealed to us through the senses, Locke treats "the ideas of sensation as the raw materials of experience upon which the ideas of reflection can then set to work." In contrast, Herder makes no such distinction: "The act of experience, complex though it is, is nevertheless held to be a single, creative process. Creative because, Herder insists, we do not merely see but

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also create our images. . . . The only knowledge we can be said to have of the outer world is that which the mind constructs in the process of perception, which, though empirical in its mode of operation, involves also the integrating and creative function of the mind." Therefore, Herder argues against Locke that "it is not the external object as such which is the determinant of what we perceive, but the perceiving mind." 22 Although Herder resembles Berkeley on this point, he parts company with subjective idealism: "if self-consciousness is certain knowledge, and hence by implication the presupposition of all human knowledge, it cannot be wholly subjective. For self-consciousness contains an objective, as well as a subjective element, in that the self is both the object which is known and the subject that knows." (Bernard, 34). Herder's treatment of self-consciousness ("inner experience") throws light on the subject-object relationship in a way that anticipates the views of Winnicott, Cassirer, and Dewey on the mediating role of "culture" in human experience. For Herder, self-consciousness "cannot be intuitive or *a priori* because it cannot be divorced from the self's experience of the outer world." In Herder's words, "This inner sense is neither a mystical *a priori* category nor something wholly apart from our awareness of the objects of the external world."23 The knowing self and the known object are not really separate things which are somehow brought together by the relationship of knowing" (Bernard, 35).

Herder's ontological assumptions carry the basic premise that existence (*Sein*) implies active being (*Dasein*) and that reality is a universe pervaded by organic activity or a "living universe." The universe is seen "in terms of an organism, or as a complex of inter-related organisms and envisaged as a whole or unity" (Barnard, 36). As in his epistemological assumptions, the "nature of the whole is that of an organic unity, whilst the nature of an aggregate, even if it forms a unit, is that of a mechanical assembly."24

The inner-connecting link of all natural phenomena is what Herder calls *Kraft* (from the new science of biology and Albrecht von Haller), or the vital energy or life force.25 Although Herder admits some metaphysical origin in the concept ("What exists, exists through *Kraft*"), he adopts it in order to replace "the traditional metaphysical 'support' of Substance in order to avoid the 'fatal dualism' which Herder attributes to the Cartesian system."26 As a substitute for Substance, Herder even sometimes equated *Kraft* with God.27 As Barnard points out, "Herder regarded himself as a Spinozist," but his metaphysical presuppositions were very different from those of Spinoza, i.e., represented a different brand of monism.28

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Herder's concept of "reflectiveness" extends his assumptions about the organic unity of mind: "Mind' is not part of a human being; it is *the* human being:"

The mind, whether it is perceiving, or thinking, or judging, or building conceptual images, is always one single vital power, one active unity amidst the diversity of its operations . . . and, as such, no less than the whole sentient being of man; indeed it is man. 29

Here, Herder rebuts several Enlightenment assumptions about the mind. First, he implicitly refutes Descartes' theory that the mind can be found in a particular *locus* (the pineal gland); rather, for Herder it "is the combination of all the nerves, the interaction of all human organs." Secondly, Herder addresses the practice of classifying faculties into superior and inferior categories. He is particularly anxious to dethrone "reason" from its position of dominance as the supreme faculty of the mind:

Human reason has been conceived as a novel and quite distinct faculty of the mind, as something that had been added to man to distinguish him from the animal; a kind of fourth rung of a ladder over and above the three lower ones, destined to be singled out for special consideration. But to speak of reason in this manner is to talk philosophical nonsense, even if the greatest philosophers do the talking.<sup>30</sup>

On the other extreme, he opposes Rousseau who speaks of reason as a mere capacity or potentiality (especially in primitive peoples). Herder's argument that reason is really the process of reasoning, not a separate, elevated faculty of mind is expressed in his *Metacritique* (1799), a carefully aimed attack against Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The following excerpt from Herder's work sums up his position on the subject of reason:

When in our thoughts and words we single out reason from among the other (mental) energies (*Krafte*) of our nature we do so for a specific (conceptual) purpose; but in doing so we must never forget that in actual fact it cannot subsist in isolation apart from the other mental energies. It is one and the same mind that thinks and wills, that understands and perceives, that seeks reason and applies it. All these tendencies or energies of the mind are so close to one another, so intertwined and interacting, not only in practical application, but even in their origin and development, that we must

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never presume that in naming any one operation of these energies we are actually naming a distinct faculty in a substantive sense. For by the act of naming we do not erect compartments in our mind; we do not subdivide it. All we are doing is to classify its operations, the application of its energies. 31

As Barnard writes, "Reason then (for Herder) is neither a separate, nor a superior, nor a prior faculty of the mind, but rather an integral element in the processes of the mind with which it is related and interacting" (Barnard, 42). Mind (or self) for Herder was both an organic and cultural construct, deriving its being both from its physiological and social interactions.

#### The Genesis of Understanding: Herder's Epistemology and Myths of Creation

Cassirer alludes to the inherently mythic nature of Herder's concept of the organic ("organic form"): "This idea (reflectiveness) bridged the chasm that seemed to divide the unconscious growth of nature from the conscious creation of the spirit here for the first time man gained an intimation of the true unity of his own nature, in which intuition and concept, form and object, ideal and material, are originally one and the same."<sup>32</sup> This observation is particularly interesting in light of the fact that Herder was an avid reader of creation stories during the formative years of his thought. According to Wulf Koepke, "he began to compare different accounts of the creation," and "A re-creation of the process of creation and of the original communication between God and human beings pierces through the intellectual shell of the philosophical age and opens up deeper layers. The ultimate object of Herder's often praised historical *Einfühlung*, empathy and intuition, is the biblical text, especially *Genesis*."<sup>33</sup>

Creation myths, by locating the genesis of understanding at the origins of human history, demand its restoration in the present. It is interesting that creation myths, therefore, provide the conceptual prototype for both Romantic theories of the creative imagination, as well as contemporary theories of understanding. Many creation myths may be interpreted as representing symbolically the stages of a cognitive process associated with the emerging understanding of a primordial, reflective Self.<sup>34</sup> This often takes place through the linguistic art of forming (i.e., naming, defining, classifying) the world out of the chaos of sense impressions (i.e., the pre-conceptual).

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Numerous creation myths from around the world seem to equate the creation of the world with the simultaneous emergence of the self and language, i.e., of a (male) being who understands himself and his world through the shaping process of language. "In the creation accounts of almost all great cultural religions," Cassirer writes, "the Word appears in league with the highest Lord of creation; either as the *tool* which he employs or actually as the primary source from which he, like all other Being and order of Being, is derived." 35 For Cassirer, the emergence of thought (albeit pre-logical or paleological) and verbal utterance occur simultaneously.

In other accounts, thought (understanding) and verbal utterance are one, but the Word (the coequal of thought) becomes the first in origins, as well as the powerful force behind creation. Scholars have pointed out the similarity of this account to the view of the God of creation of the Christian era, "conceived as a spiritual Being who thought the world before he created it, and who used the Word (in the Gospel according to John) as a means of expression and, thus, as an instrument of creation" thus, symbolically referring, I believe, to cognition. There is an exact parallel in a creation hymn of Polynesia in which the god Tanonaoa dispels the original silence, Mutuhei, and in India the power of the spoken word (*Vac*) is exalted even above the might of the gods themselves. The Babylonian-Assyrian myth of creation explicitly describes Chaos as the condition of the world when the heavens above were "unnamed" and on earth no name was known for anything.

The "lord of all creation," signifies an objectified, primordial self through whose self-reflective utterance, "I AM" (*Sum*) enters into being (i.e., understanding) simultaneously with or through the naming, shaping, or disclosing power of language. In John's gospel, the primordial self, "God," is the Word made flesh, "the true light (i.e., understanding) that enlightens every man was coming into the world" or was creating the world through the conceptualizing power of the word, language (John 1:9). And, as one scholar has written: "Whether or not with God, at least with man, in the beginning is the word." Ihde makes this point in the context of discussing Ricoeur's model of language.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Campbell points out that in the cabalistic text of medieval Hebrew, the Aged of the Aged or the "Great Face," Makroprosopos, is the divine, primordial self" (Campbell, 268-69) and the "all-father" or "Self" (India) is represented as the source of all emanations.<sup>37</sup>

Hence, both mythological and cognitive acts of creation are often associated with parturitiontwo analogous *formative* processes

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which began with an act of conception. The significance of creation myths to Herder's theory of thought (conception) and language may be better understood in relation to anthropologist Alan Dundes' interpretation of myths of the flood, which are in themselves re-recreation stories. In "The Flood as Male Myth of Creation," Dundes argues that in flood myths as a second creation, we find the male imitation (not necessarily in envy, but perhaps in empathy?) of female pregnancy and parturition. 38 The same argument, it seems to me, holds for myths of creation that involve a male deity from whose fertile words, *in lieu* of semen, the world (i.e., understanding) comes into being, that is, generated or begotten.

#### What Herder's "Mythic Revival" Meant

Ushering in a new century in 1800, Friedrich Schlegel hoped to revive and revitalize ancient mythology with his mandate in *Rede über Mythologie* (1800) to contemporary poets: Why don't you arise and revive those splendid forms of great antiquity? Try for once to see the old mythology, steeped in Spinoza and in those views which present day physics must excite in every thinking person, and everything will appear to you in new splendor and vitality?" The century following close upon the Enlightenment might have rightfully been called the Age of Mythic Revival or Herder's "Copernican Revolution" so widespread and various were its interests in the mythic subjects, mythography, and the epistemological and linguistic issues associated with mythology. The scholarly search for the origins of language (first as the *Ursprache*, as philology, and as speech or spoken language) combined with the desire to discover a prior ("primitive") authenticity of being or wholeness.

The revival of interest in myth and with it mythic thinking (the meaning-making mind or the world of understanding), as well as the language of the mythic-symbolic which had been forgotten or marginalized since the Renaissance, had as its tacit plan the reexamination and reappraisal of the received epistemology of the Enlightenment. Like the Christian and pagan creation myths themselves, from which eighteenth and nineteenth century thinkers derived so much of their imagery and narrative forms, the underlying issues they addressed had more to do with the nature of understanding and epistemology than merely with revitalizing or translating ancient mythological themes into modern terms.<sup>39</sup> For Herder and Schlegel, the activity of

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mythic recreation was analogous to what Cahoon describes as "human culturality" which "involves each individual in a communal and historical process and makes the individual the inheritor of a fund of historical meanings and media. Culture (transmitted in Herder's sense through past mythologies) "connects human beings not only with things, but with each other and with dead generations whose products are *reinterpreted and reinvested with meaning* by the living" (Cahoon, 254; my parenthetical remark and emphasis).

This new poetic mode could, they hoped, fulfill a special "redemptive" function, a kind of psycho-linguistic return to "a psychic region which escapes differentiation" (Winnicott). F. Schlegel, Schelling, Moritz and Creuzer all believed in their own way that the lost unity between the mind and nature, subject and object, the finite and the infinite could be restored through "new mythologies" and the language of the symbolic. (This term was subject to a wide range of interpretations among these thinkers, which will be discussed fully in chapter two.) According to W. Taylor Stevenson in *Myth and the Crisis of Historical Consciousness*, "The fundamental function of myth is one of the cosmicization; of giving meaning and shape to the world. 40 Myth-making is, as philosophers of mythic thinking such as Stevens and Cassirer have argued, the prototype for all meaning-making acts of mind ("cosmicizing," then, in this context means the formative powers of mind). Therefore, it is no coincidence that the metaphoric connection between the cognates "conception" and "conceive" (Latin: *concipere*, p.p. *conceptus*) for both biological and cognitive processes lies in their shared sense of a coming into being. The various definitions of "conceive," both physiological and cognitive, reveal the mythological foundation of the concepts. For example, conceive is defined as: to take into one's mind, to form in the mind (as a concept or idea), to form a conception (imagine, visualize, image), to apprehend or understand something through reason or imagination, to give expression to (couch, frame, phrase). The terms "concept" or "conception," then, derive their meaning from the mythic metaphoric idea of mind as active agent in processes of conceiving (taking into one's mind) and forming a concept linguistically, that is, begetting. Therefore, the phrase "concept formation" carries with it an etymological trace of its origin in myths of creation. It is, also, interesting (as I will discuss more fully below) that often myths of creation (cosmogony and theogony) represent symbolically the emergence of understanding and selfhood through the formative powers of language. Thus, it is with this view of myth and the myth-making mind as a

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prototype of all meaning-making in mind, that I will approach the subject of the mythic revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The major poetic counter-Enlightenment ideologies of the nineteenth century—the mythopoeic, Romantic Idealism, and Symbolist Aestheticism—tried, each in its own way, to create a new language, and through language, to recreate the world according to their own understanding. These philosophical and literary "ideologies" often represent an implicit form of social dialogue and dialogical thinking, interacting with the conflicting models and languages for conceptualizing the world, as will be discussed more fully in Part II. The collective mythopoeic projects of Herder, F. Schlegel, and Schelling may be better understood from the perspectives of several contemporary thinkers who have written about the artistic-cognitive process of recreation. In *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), Mikhail Bakhtin talks about dialogical interaction in the writing process in a way that harkens back to Herder's concept of recreative mythologizing: "Only the mythic Adam, whose word and whose world were verbally unqualified, was free of the internal dialogism of the word; the rest of us, structured by historical human discourse, continue to structure what we know and how we know it within this polyglot language environment." 41 Choosing a new language (the recreative thought and language of new mythologies) grew out of the conviction that "one's language, one's individual consciousness is always saturated by the otherness of living language, the language as it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own" (Bakhtin, 294).

For Hegel, the restoration of the historical spirit of a text did not consist in the restoration of its past, but in a thoughtful mediation with contemporary life: "To place (texts) in their historical context does not give one a living relationship with them but rather one of mere imaginative representation" (like the inauthenticity of a restored building). As Gadamer tells us, Hegel and later Heidegger, define hermeneutic thinking as 'the historically operative consciousness' dialectically interacting with tradition as transmitted through the text. This "hermeneutic thinking" seems to be what Herder had in mind when he spoke of creating "new mythologies." In other words, interpretation is the disclosure of the Being of the text: "Being that can be understood in language and hermeneutics is an encounter with Being through language."42 The basic interpretive process is the bringing to understanding what is foreign, strange, unintelligible

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into the medium of one's own language" (Gadamer and Bakhtin). In this sense, the reader is a translator, like the Greek god Hermes (from whose name, meaning "messenger" or "interpreter," the word "hermeneutics" is derived), or like the officiant at a ritual who mediates between one world and another. Recreation, whether in "new mythologies" or in hermeneutics, represents the process of the individual's bring forth of Being through understanding (i.e., mediating between his world and another world).

In *Creation and Recreation* (1980), Northrop Frye has written about how culture is the product of a desire to form (akin to Schiller's *Formtrieb* discussed in chapter two), that is, to create in art and in culture, and about the process of recreation in which the poet participates. He writes, "The moment we ask (why objectify the world at all) we are involved in the whole process of what I have called the recreation, the constructing of human culture and civilization, and the question itself seems to push us away from the biblical story of a beginning creation, and towards the vision of recreation as a future goal in which our own efforts are involved." 43 As Abrams has written in *Natural Supernaturalism* on the Romantic enterprise of translating sacred history into human cultural history, "The course of human life is no longer a *Heilsgeschichte* but a *Bildungsgeschichte*; or more precisely, it is *Heilsgeschichte* translated into the secular mode of a *Bildungsgeschichte*" (Abrams, 190).

#### New Mythologies: The Imaginative Reconstruction of Herder's Epistemology

For the German post-Kantian idealists, new mythologies-adapting (recreating) ancient myths into modern experience were thought to restore an original, integrated state either in the history of mankind or the individual. They conceived of mythic thinking as a past-oriented, nostalgic restoration, that is, as an integrated psycho-linguistic state prior to the "fall," which was perceived in terms of the dualities of Aristotelian logic and language, as well as the subject-object dichotomies of rational-empiricist epistemologies. (Hölderlin and Novalis are, of course, the primary examples of German poets to take up Herder's and F. Schlegel's mandate.) As Stam has pointed out, "that which is (or is like that which is) at or near the origins, and therefore ancient or 'primitive,' is the original or paradigmatic." He goes on to explain how a semantic shift in the meaning of *originality* as the novel or inventive occurred when poetry was

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associated with the original language and Homer (or Moses) as the first poets. Often injunctions were heard (as, for example, those of Vico, Blackwell, Wood, Wolf, and F. Schlegel) to imitate the "original" mythic-primitive authors, while, paradoxically, creating a new work of art. The ancient myths had become meaningless to the present and had to be recreated (translated, interpreted in a dialogical sense) into a modern language and worldview. "Originality" meant something paradoxical to them, that is, creative expression simultaneously through imitation and invention.

In the next generation, the Romantic poet, himself, became the heroic prototype of Herder's meaning-making, mythologizing mind. Herder had written in his essay on the origins of language, "through language man imitates not nature, but divine creativity itself." Like the Biblical Moses restoring his people to their original homeland, the poet reproduced "the primordial act of creation in a paradigmatic gesture that repeats the original cosmogony" (Eliade), either by transforming, or destroying and replacing, the fallen world with a new world, a utopia of the recreative mind (as was Blake's Jerusalem). With the expressive theories of the imagination, the creative arena had shifted internally to the mind of the poet, and, hence, to the formative powers of language and imagination. The late eighteenth century German philosopher, Wilhelm von Humbolt, has written, "if in our language we say *Bildung*, we mean something both higher and more inward, namely the attitude of mind which, for the knowledge and the feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor, flows harmoniously into sensibility and character." (TM>, 11-12) The poet-creator was thus empowered with the privileged role, in *imitatio dei* (Eliade), through his creative, reintegrative imaginative power. Through the "plenary imagination" (i.e., Herder's "reflectiveness" or Coleridge's Primary Imagination), he could poetically reenact the reintegration of the dualisms resulting from the fall.

In a discussion in *The Savage Mind* (1962) that indirectly alludes to the mythopoeic act, Lévi-Strauss uses the analogy of the "bricoleur" (jack-of-all-trades or improvisator) to describe the psycho-linguistic process of creating new mythologies. For Lévi-Strauss, mythic thinking resembles the work of a "bricoleur" in that it always consists of a new arrangement of given elements, the nature of which is unaffected by whether they figure in the instrumental set or in the final arrangement: "it would seem that mythological worlds have been built up, only to be shattered again, and that new worlds were built from the fragments." 44 This certainly calls to mind the fragmentary nature of the recreations in Rimbaud's *Illuminations*, as distin-

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guished from Eliot's *The Waste Land* that loosely assembles the fragments of past and present cultures without forging them into a "new world" or creation. Eliot dwells on the ironic; his is an idealistic program, doomed to alienation and irony. In contrast, Rimbaud's, Trakl's, Crane's, and Olson's mythic projects are charged with the dynamics of creation/decreation. Rather than reassembling (or creating a new assemblage or "bricolage") from the "debris" of the past, Eliot's ironic compositions are held in tension by ironic contrast and dissociation. Conversely, Lévi-Strauss maintains that "The characteristic feature of mythical thought, as of 'bricolage' on the practical plane, is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structured sets, but by using the remains and debris of events" (Lévi-Strauss, 21). The poet as 'bricoleur' 'speaks' not only with things, but also through the medium of things" (as through their relationships and participation with other things).

Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss' distinction between mythical and scientific thought brings to mind our earlier discussion of the epistemic hegemony in the eighteenth century discussed at the beginning of this chapter. While the scientist creates events (thereby changing the world) by means of structures, the *bricoleur* creates structures by means of past events (Lévi-Strauss, 22). This does not indicate an evolution of knowledge from mythic to scientific; a belief which Cassirer, for one, implied in *Language and Myth* and which Lévi-Strauss hoped to refute. Nor does it represent a fall from a mythic, integrated consciousness to the dissolution of unity through rationality as a number of Romantic and Victorian poets and thinkers believed. 45 Rather, as Lévi-Strauss argues, these two ways leading to knowledge represent the co-presence of equally valid approaches. Furthermore, theories of creativity currently argue that the two modes of thought (linear and holistic; analytical and intuitive, *logos* and *muthos*) appear actually to be complementary and interactive, and, therefore, both are crucial to achieving new insights.46

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## Chapter Two

## The Mythic-Symbolic: Path to Wholeness

*The meeting of the whole soul of man with the whole soul of the cosmos is quite inconceivable when the soul of man, divided into component parts of reason and emotion, can see only fragments. The balanced, antithetical, wholly reasonable couplets with which Dryden and Pope translated Homer measure the distance of Enlightenment poetry from the original impulses that generate myth.*

(John Riede, *Swinburne and Myth-making*)

By the end of the eighteenth century, the symbol had emerged as the mode of poetic expression associated with "primitive" poets (Homeric and Biblical) and, consequently, with the original, undivided state of thought and language (which Gadamer refers to in his discussion on "Logos and Language"). The Weimar classicists readily came to associate allegory with "the rationalization" of the mythical or with the Christian interpretation of the scripture. Allegory, Gadamer reminds us, had been an attempt to reconcile classical culture and the Christian tradition: "The moment art freed itself from all dogmatic bonds and could be defined by the unconscious production of genius, allegory inevitably became aesthetically questionable." 1 The attraction of late eighteenth century philosophers and poets to the symbolic mode can perhaps be explained best within the context of the general emergence of the mythopoeic episteme in philosophy and literature as a counter-episteme to Enlightenment rational-empiricism. Most of the arguments for the rejection of the allegorical are based upon its dogmatic and rationalistic bent, as stated above but also, in the opposite direction, upon its exploitation of the concrete image along the "trajectory of transcendence" (Todorov), its sole purpose being signification.

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In allegory, Goethe writes, one reaches the general through the particular (image). Though both allegory and symbol are similar in following the particular-general-particular direction ("there is always a concrete phenomenon at the beginning, then a phase of abstraction, before the image, equally concrete is reached at the end," 2 there are important differences. First, in allegory the "concept" belongs to reason and is opposed to the symbol's "idea," which derives from Kantian global or "intuitive" apprehension. Another important difference has to do with the signification of the two modes: "in allegory, signification is obligatory (direct) and the image present in the work is therefore transitive; with the symbol, the image present does not indicate in itself that it has another meaning; it is only later or unconsciously that we are led to the task of interpretation" (Todorov, 205).

A close reading of the correspondence between Goethe and Schiller reveals the two directions that German Romantic thinking would take concerning the symbolic. In the letter of August 17, 1797, Goethe writes about his impressions of Frankfurt, how these impressions aroused in him a "sentimental mood" and that the objects that induced this mood are "properly symbolic," that is, "they are eminent examples which stand, in a characteristic multiplicity, as representative for many others, and embrace a certain totality" (*das Allegemeine*) which ultimately helps him escape the 'million-headed hydra of empiricism'" (Gadamer, 68). This, however, is not so much an aesthetic experience as an experience of reality. By 'transcending' the multiplicity of concrete forms (*Gestalten*), one gleans the underlying unity; therefore, Goethe finds symbolic significance in the physical properties themselves, not in any transcendent meaning in the metaphysical sense. As this discussion of Goethe's view of the symbolic shows, there were important differences between the earlier (Herder and Goethe) and later German thinkers (Schelling) on the nature of the symbol and the metaphysical hopes they attached to it.

Romantic Idealist Hegemony: Nostalgia for Return

The mythopoeic mode of expression and pattern of experience became, as Abrams has illustrated, one of if not *the* dominant episteme of the Romantic Age. By this, Abrams meant the nostalgia for return to a mythologized prior *transcendent* state of Oneness in the Christian, Neo-Platonic sense. This Christian redemptive pattern was, however, unwittingly in tension with a more imma-

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ment/monist (Spinozan) one that redefined the fall and restoration in psycho-linguistic rather than Christian, Neo-Platonic terms. As Kenneth Burke has pointed out, our symbol systems, whether in philosophy, literature, or art, function as formal structures for "encoding" (constructing meaning from) the world. They emerge at certain historical moments out of our attempts to resolve the contradictions within those moments and, eventually, give way one to another either in an individual's life or in the history of civilization. 3 As one orientation gives way to another, a counter-orientation (in this case, an ideology) is formed which attempts to act as a corrective to its predecessor, thus creating a dialectical interaction or interplay between both symbol systems and the ideologies they embody.

These symbol systems disclose the values of a particular period and individuals who may either conform to or react against them in the form of the reworking of the dominant symbolic structure. Burton Hatlen, discussing Burke's "dialectical model" of symbol systems (i.e., "how symbol structures emerge and pass away into history"), asks if a "Dialectical Rhetoric" could be developed that "will be faithful both to the ways in which the historical moments into which we are born determine the symbol systems through which we understand ourselves, and to the power of the individual human being to unmake and remake these symbol systems? . . . Further a Dialectical Rhetoric would recognize that the forms of discourse are not neutral 'containers' into which any sort of content can be poured; that rather, these forms are inherently ideological, encoding very particular stances toward the world."4 Hatlen's proposal (like Herder's "new mythologies," Cahoon's "culture," or Gadamer's "world") form a rhetoric that serves as a *via media* between "the self formed by the world (or the culture) in which it finds itself and the world which consists of a vast sea of symbol systems created collectively by our ancestors. Such a dialectical rhetoric focuses on the relationship between the antecedent form (here Enlightenment models of mind and understanding) and the individual act of creation (understanding) as truly dialectical (or dialogical), a breathing in of one or more exemplary texts, and a breathing out of something new, remade" (Hatlen, 78-79).

The philosophers and poets living during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, each took a personal stance with regard to the dominant symbol system of the period, the mythopoeic "Odyssey of the Spirit" (Schelling), and each in his own way engaged in the "breathing in" and the "breathing out of something new, remade." Interest in myth and the symbolic mode, widespread in Germany and

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later in France, England, and America, 5 seemed to satisfy a desire for return to a prior state of wholeness, whether conceived in metaphysical or in mythical terms. Herder's and Goethe's thinking about the language of the mythic-symbolic would serve as a wellspring for the philosophies of Idealism and Aestheticism until the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, while laying down a radically new direction. This path would be explored rather sporadically by a few contemporary and younger poets (Hölderlin, Novalis, Keats, Coleridge, Nerval, Hugo), leaving to the post-Romantics in Part II of this study to push the boundaries still further.

### Romantic Episteme

In *English Romantic Irony*, Ann Mellors has described the dominant symbol system present in Idealist philosophy and literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as "a secularized Judeo-Christian conception of an ordered, teleological universe in which mankind progresses toward an apocalyptic *marriage* with the divine and a return to paradise."<sup>6</sup> In addition, Abrams and others (Brown) have shown how the Romantic episteme reflected a narrative pattern "conceived as a fall from unity into division and into a conflict of contraries which in turn compel the movement back toward a higher integration."<sup>7</sup> Therein the sign and signified, the finite and the infinite, and the subject and object enjoy an "indissoluble unity" (pre-Socratic *eikon* as opposed to Socratic *semeion*.) In psycho-linguistic terms the fall meant a dissolution from the *Ursprache* into the babel of many languages and from an integrated mythic-symbolic consciousness to an ego-centered, alienated and ironic consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

#### A. German Idealism, a Religious Program

As Cassirer has noted, intellectual and religious issues were interwoven in the Enlightenment period and for a time thereafter.<sup>9</sup> This meant that the poet acted as creator of new meanings, an *imitator dei*, able to gain access to understanding through the language of the symbolic. Through the poetic creation both he, and by inference the reader, could be restored to an original state of oneness conceived in both epistemological and linguistic terms. This was attempted through the narrative pattern of experience (i.e., Abrams on

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the "Greater Romantic Lyric") in Romantic poetry, as well as in the language of the symbolic.

Under German Idealism, myth rapidly became a "deliberate religious program" (a metaphysics of art) a way back or forward to a deep, progressively expanding and unifying spirituality modelled on Christianity. For example, Friedrich Schlegel wrote, "Myth seems to join literature and religion inseparably; myth illuminates for modernity the missing link between art and faith (hence the 'sublime' gives the sense of fusing these two experiences), for myth shows both the origin and the goal implicit in both art and religion." 10 While the earlier proponents of myth, "Herder and Goethe, daringly affirmed myth as a mode of truth, they never exalted myth as promising a transcendental unity" (F and R, 304). Conversely, the German Romantic Idealists did make such promises:

Taken together, the romantics in their early phase stress the opposite (of Herder and Goethe): that the true goal of human and natural striving is to seek and find the undetermined, the primally undivided and the formless, the infinite and the boundless, the oneness behind all seeming separateness. And they usually describe myth so as to support this view.

Romantic myth may in part be described fairly as a revival in secular or idealist form of an older Christian hope. Instead of being an aspect of organic historical or natural growth, myth now becomes a mode of redeeming a humanity separated from a lost primal unity. (F and R, 304)

Although not always stated explicitly, the Absolute, Center, or Oneness toward which the German Idealists aspired in their various philosophies and aesthetics were derived, in large part, from the exegetical search for an original *Logos*, conceived in metaphysical rather than in mythic (i.e., experiential) terms. Myth and mythic language, for the German Idealists would satisfy a metaphysical longing akin to the revival of Pietism and "inner light" Protestant beliefs. Herder, like F. Schlegel and Schelling, argued for the inseparability of poetry, myth, and religion regaining a new depth and inwardness harking back to ancient, medieval, and Renaissance conceptions of myth: "Myth becomes a way of redeeming modern man and restoring him to his earlier simplicity his original and primeval union with God and nature" (F and R, 297). In addition, ancient myth provided examples for the creative-synthesizing activities of the imagination, believed capable of reconciling the dualities of experi-

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ence after the "fall." In this context, the fall would be conceived of as the loss of both a unifying language (*Ursprache*) and a primordial, integrated consciousness. 11

In their recuperative efforts, Romantic Idealist philosophers and poets accrued to themselves recreative powers of mind and language, perhaps, best understood as a secularized ritual act of recreation. Abrams has written, "The theological design, as transposed into the metaphysical systems of the German Idealists, is an extraordinarily complex, but nonetheless recognizable version of the great circle of Neo-Platonic Christianity, according to which the process of emanation ends at its beginning, and the beginning and the ending are the One" (Abrams, 179). This "theological design" was explicit in Herder and F. Schlegel's teleology of new mythologies, but the nature of the reality to which they wished to return had been radically redefined or reconceptualized. The nostalgia of return was more immanent (or experiential) than the German Idealists' metaphysical goals would be.

#### B. Organic Unity from Biology to Ontology/Epistemology

The desire for return to a prior state of Oneness conceived of as either transcendent or earth-bound, metaphysical or epistemological eventually had to be considered from the present, human perspective. This unavoidably included the burden of temporality for the self and language, which would lead to the dissolution of idealist or mythic vision, ironic skepticism, and "philosophical narcissism" (Cahoone). Whether the nostalgia for return harkened back to an Earthy Paradise before the fall (e.g., Dante, *Purgatorio*), the awareness of a dialectic between the presence and absence of this state was an inevitable part of human experience.

Furthermore, Henry Remak has articulated the widely-accepted view of the romantic return to a prior state of Oneness as a desire to "Real the breach," and that this desire became the wellspring for characteristics usually associated with Romanticism. According to this canonical view, Romantic philosophers and poets attempted to return to "the springs of existence" whether by way of nature (the source of life), childhood (the visionary origin of the individual's life), the primitive or *das Volk* (origins in culture or society), or inwardly as a return to the pre-conscious or unconscious mind (Nerval), to unadulterated stages of Christianity (Blake), or to institutionalized religion (Chateaubriand, Novalis).

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The Idealist bent of some Romantic writing with respect to the idea of a return to origins appears, for example, in Schelling's *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800). Here he states that, like art or poetry in his day, "Myth gives the first sign that man has truly glimpsed the 'pre-established harmony between the ideal and the real worlds' that prevades all seeming contraries and antitheses." And later in *Philosophie der Kunst* (1803), he writes about the mythic gods as "the finite expressions of the infinite, as imaginative symbolic forms of the Spirit . . . , the mythic gods refer to no higher truth outside themselves, but are autonomously real" (F and R, 317). Douglas Bush has described Schelling's new position as the combination of Greek (Homeric) finiteness or outwardness with Judeo-Christian ideas of infinity or inwardness especially in Neo-Platonism, and, Bush writes, "Pagan myths served as vital symbols of the religious imagination and established mythology as the language of poetic idealism." 12 While Bush and Abrams identify Wordsworth as the foremost Romantic poet of the mythic imagination, having gotten his ideas from Schiller through Coleridge, I agree with Hartman and Ahearns, who place Coleridge among the English Romantics in that distinguished position.13

#### Herder's Episteme

In the formal structures and symbolic systems of both the "new mythologists" (Hölderlin, Keats, Coleridge), in Herder's sense and the Romantic, we find the ritualized desire for recreation through the mind's imaginative power. Their desired, if not attainable, goal was to recoup a reintegrative (or "undifferentiated") state reflected in the Homeric and Biblical poetry (accessed through childhood, primitive, pathological or ecstatic states of mind). Their hope was that, through the symbolizing (that is, the reintegrative, undifferentiated, esemplastic, metaphoric) power of the imagination, the poet could imitate both the divine act of creation and describe the world of a mediated reality. The poet cognitively and linguistically retraces the fall into human history (temporality), and attempts a reintegrative redemption through the aesthetic experience as interpretative act (poet and reader). The language of poetry becomes the desired vehicle of the "redemptive" imagination in its perceived ability to recreate for both the poet and the reader a mythopoeic experience of timeless unity. For the canonical Romantic poet, writing poetry was a mythico-religious act capable of creating through the language of the poem (myth-

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ic-symbolic) a reintegrated state of mind or mythic consciousness (union of sign and signified). In this sense, the term "mythopoesis" describes that uniquely Romantic form of discourse believed to privilege the poet, and the mythic-symbolic language expressive of his imaginative vision, with an ability to heal the perceived psycho-linguistic dissolutions in human experience.

### Schelling and the Symbolic

The "pre-established harmony" of which Schelling writes in *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* suggests what was for the German Romantics a view of myth and the language of the symbolic as a forgotten, but recoupable original state of integrated consciousness. In discussing Plato's *Cratylus*, Hans-Georg Gadamer talks about the shift from the pre-Socratic belief in the perfect identity of sign/signified (*eikon* as image, or *symbolon*), as opposed to the infiltration of ironic skepticism in the Socratic sign *versus* signified. 14 It is back to that prior, pre-Socratic (or preliterate) way of thinking about the relationship between the sign and the signified that both Schelling, on the mythic-symbolic, and Cassirer, in his discussion of "mythical ideation" (naming), return.

Schelling's theory of the symbol, the most patently idealistic, shows a clear religious-metaphysical direction with the "fusion" of contraries (real and ideal, finite and infinite) and the absolute identity of the sign and signified. In his view, the symbol reflected an actualizable experience of reconciliation of dualities.15 From the two fundamental categories, the general and the particular, he derives a third one which combines these two.

That representation (*Darstellung*) in which the general signifies the particular, or in which the particular is apprehended through the general, is the *schematic*. That representation, however, in which the particular signifies the general, or in which the general is apprehended through the particular, is *allegorical*. The synthesis of the two, in which the general does not signify the particular nor does the particular signify the general, but in which the two are absolutely one, is the *symbolic*.16

For Schelling, then, the general and the particular, signifier and signified, finite and infinite, were identical: "The symbol does not simply signify, but also is: in other words, by the intransitivity of that

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which symbolizes" (Todorov, 209). In the symbol, "the finite is at the same time the infinite itself, and does not merely signify it" and "an image is a symbolic whose object does not merely signify the idea but is that idea *itself*." 17

From here, Schelling attempted the assimilation of symbol and mythology: "In allegory, the particular does no more than *signify* the general; in mythology, it *is* at the same time itself and the general." 18 Todorov writes, "As with the symbol in general, in the case of mythology Schelling insists particularly on the paradoxical side of his definition: mythology is *at once* general and particular, it is *and* it signifies": "We must not say, for example, that Jupiter and Minerva *signify* or *must* signify that. In so doing, we would have canceled out all the poetic independence of these figures. They do not signify, they *are* the thing itself" (V, 400-401). In the *Philosophie der Kunst*, he writes:

Each figure in mythology is to be taken for what it is, for it is precisely in this way that it will be taken for what it signifies. The signifying here is at the same time the being itself, it has passed into the object, being one with it. No sooner do we allow these beings *to signify* something than they are no *longer anything themselves*. . . . Indeed, their greatest attraction lies in the fact that, whereas they only *are*, without any relation, absolute in themselves, they still allow signification to shine through. 19

Schelling, therefore, sets up the same kind of identity between the symbol and the thing it signifies as in the mythic-symbolic (pre-Socratics, Cassirer). The key difference, however, lies in *what* each signifies, the idea or metaphysical for Schelling and the sensible for Goethe or Herder.

For the Romantics following Schelling (especially Coleridge), the power attributed to the symbolizing imagination was believed to be the primary instrument for regaining the experience of primordial Oneness. The canonical texts of the period privileged a type of symbolization that took the form of a cyclical or spiraling, centering, centripetal, or teleologically-ordered narrative pattern, hence the recurrence in canonical texts of the quest, journey, and pilgrimage narrative patterns. Often in these texts the literal or imaginative journey follows the path of creation-fall-redemption-return (Campbell's "cosmogonic cycle" or Eliade's "eternal return"). Analogously, the imagery of canonical Romantic poetry is conceptually related to these experiential patterns of creation-fall-redemption-return by fo-

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cusing on: the lyrical Self as "divine" recreator (*Sum; I AM*) and either a cosmic (Paradise, Jerusalem), metaphysical (God, Center, or Absolute), national, ancestral, or epistemological return. Through mythic thinking, memory, or imagination, the mind becomes the active creator in search of original oneness.

In linguistic terms, this return meant the imaginative recreation of the original mythopoeic state through the language of the symbolic. According to Wellek, in all the studies of Romanticism, however diverse in method and emphasis, we find a convincing argument: "they all see the implication of imagination, symbol, myth and organic nature, and see it as part of the great endeavor to overcome the split between subject and object, self and world, the conscious and the unconscious." 20

#### Cassirer on Naming vs. Logical Discourse

Cassirer maintains that mythic thinking (associated with primitive peoples) helps to shed light on the origins of language and concept formation in the human species viewed historically. Initially, he explains the differences between "mythical" and "theoretical" (e.g., logical, analytical, Aristotelian) types of thinking. While theoretical thinking proceeds discursively, "in that it treats the immediate content only as a point of departure, from which it can run the whole gamut of impressions in various directions, until these impressions are fitted together into one unified conception, or closed system," mythic thinking takes hold of immediate experience, the sensible present; furthermore, "it is as though the whole world were simply annihilated; the immediate content, whatever it be, that commands his religious interest, so completely fills his consciousness that nothing else can exist beside and apart from it." 21

In mythic thinking, according to Cassirer, the importance of *naming* is associated with the notion that the word and what it denotes (signified and signifier) are *identical*; interestingly, noun heaviness and non-discursivity of the mythopoeic mode are related to this naming phenomenon. Hence, in religious rituals the significance of reciting the deity's name is to assure his/her actual presence. According to Cassirer, in mythic thinking the name or the chosen word

is not a mere conventional symbol, but is merged with its object in an *indissoluble unity*. The conscious experience is not merely *wedded* to the word, but is *consumed* by it. Whatever has been fixed by

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a name, henceforth is not only real, but is Reality. The potential between "symbol" and "meaning" is resolved; in place of a more or less adequate "expression," we find a relation of *identity*, of complete congruence between "image" and "object," between name and the thing. (Cassirer, 58; my emphases)

Cassirer's notion of mythic thinking as associated with naming (*eikon*, not *semeion*) recalls Schelling's Idealist theory of the symbolic (discussed later in this chapter), ideas both of which harken back to pre-Socratic ideas of symbolic identity in the world (*eikon*).

Cassirer's view of metaphor is as religiously "symbolic" as Schelling's, stressing the center and centripetal force behind it. For Cassirer, the wellspring for both mythic ideation and language lies in metaphor or in metaphoric thinking: "The great structures of the mythic and linguistic realms, respectively, are determined and guided through long periods of their development by the same spiritual motives" (LM, 83). He identifies metaphorical thinking as the common "center" (recalling Schelling), back toward which both myth and language converge "back to the point from which these two divergent lines emanate." And in either case, the tensions between subjective and objective are resolved: "two diverse offshoots from the same parent stem, the same impulse of symbolic formulation, in the vocables of speech and in primitive mythic figuration, the same inner process finds its consummation"; "they are both resolutions of an inner tension, the representation of subjective impulses and excitations in definite objective forms and figures" (LM, 88).

Furthermore, both mythic ideation and metaphor are shown to be governed by the same act of compression toward a central point of experience (recalling Schelling's and Frye's "centripetal force"). Reinforcing the stereotypical opposition of mythic and rational thinking. Cassirer describes the antithetical forces or impulses at work in "logical conception" and in "mythic ideation." With the former, "a concentric expansion over ever-widening spheres of perception and conception takes place, while, conversely, we find exactly the opposite movement of thought giving rise to mythic ideation. The mental view is not widened, but compressed; it is, so to speak, distilled into a single point" (LM, 90). He describes mythic-metaphoric thinking by using the "light" metaphor to show the concentration of attention or "distillation" of perception on the "essence" or "significance" of the thing: "All light is concentrated in one focal point of 'meaning,' while everything that lies outside these focal points of verbal or mythic conception remains practically invisible" (LM, 91). And in another

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passage, he compares mythic perception with magnetic forces: "While certain contents of perception become verbal-mythical centers of force, centers of significance, there are others which remain, one might say, beneath the threshold of meaning" (LM, 91).

Metaphor, Cassirer tells us, is the foundation of all verbal conceiving. It is not just a particular development of speech, but must be regarded as one of its essential conditions: "The same process of concentration, the compression of given sense experiences, which originally initiates every single verbal concept" (LM, 95). In mythico-linguistic thought, we find a law which might actually be called the law of the leveling and extinction of specific differences. Every part of the whole is the whole itself, that is, the *pars pro toto* principle: "The part does not merely represent the whole, or the specimen its class; they are *identical* with the totality to which they belong; not merely as mediating aids to reflective thought, but as genuine *presences* which actually contain the power, significance and efficacy of the whole" (LM, 92; my emphases).

Like the Romantics with whom he shares basic assumptions about myth and language, Cassirer associates myth with an original unity of spiritually motivated expression: "Myth, language, and art begin as a concrete, *undivided unity*, which is only gradually resolved into a triad of independent modes of *spiritual creativity*. Consequently, the same mythic animation and hypostatization which is bestowed upon the words of human speech is originally accorded to images, to every kind of artistic representation" (LM, 98; my emphases). This original unity in mythic thinking "begins to disintegrate and dissolve" over time, "for (according to Cassirer) language does not belong exclusively to the realm of myth; it bears within itself, from its very beginning, another power, the power of logic" (LM, 97). More recently, we have come to appreciate that mythic thinking "disintegrates" over time due to the transition from preliterate to literate modes of communication. (See Ong, et al. on the preliterate in chapter seven.)

Romantic Episteme: ReturnBut to What End?

Herder's *Ganzheit* or *Kraft* or Friedrich Schlegel's *Fülle* represented new ontological and epistemological models ("reality" *ding an sich* redefined as knowable, dynamic, and disclosed through language), which differed from the return to origins in a metaphysical sense of symbolic identity or transcendental synthesis (Absolute,

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Ideal). In *muthos*, mimesis is possible (Ricoeur). Cyrus Hamlin has argued convincingly that the philosophical foundation of the Romantic theory of the symbol, as the play of presence and absence, lies in Schiller's aesthetic concept of beauty. This concept is stated in a series of letters on beauty (*Schönheit*) which Schiller wrote to his friend, Korner, in 1793, and reformulated in 1795 for publication in the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Within the key phrase, "beauty is the appearance of freedom" (*Schönheit ist Freiheit in der Erscheinung*), there appears, upon closer scrutiny, two ambiguities important to the mythic concept of the symbol. First, the term "appearance" means *videtur* (semblance) predominantly in this earlier version, but in the 1795 letters Schiller plays on the second meaning *lucet* (manifestation or illumination) as the ideal goal for art. Hamlin states that by the end of the decade, due especially to the Neo-Platonic leanings of such theorists as Schelling, the shift toward the preference for beauty as manifestation was complete: the mirror (semblance, *videtur*) had become the lamp (illumination, *lucet*). The anagogic (i.e., revelatory of the metaphysical) function of the symbol had emerged.

In the past two decades, there has been some discussion about whether the term "symbolic" accurately describes Romantic poetic practice, or whether what it bears witness to is the tension inherent within the symbolic, a tension which Schelling chose to deny and Schiller and F. Schlegel recognized as the nature of ontology (a knowable, noumenal reality for Schlegel), as well as aesthetic consciousness. That is, as both Hamlin and Gadamer have pointed out, the ideal goal of the symbol for reconciliation held within it a natural skepticism (irony or alienated consciousness) inherent in the temporality of language and human experience (Hamlin) and the alienation of aesthetic consciousness from reality (Gadamer).

Apart from specific references to skepticism regarding the mythic-symbolic desire for unity, there were more general allusions to doubt. Nearly two centuries of codifying the canon of Romantic texts have reinforced the belief in an unquestioning desire at the heart of monist, mythopoeic readings. Yet, as recent scholarship reassesses the renderings of canonically mythopoeic critics (Frye, Abrams, Wellek, Remak), a new picture emerges. Overlooked or marginalized skepticism asserts itself in tension with Idealistic and mythic visions.

The High Romantic argument, inaugurated by Wordsworth, sought to empower the poetic genius with the privileged ability to overcome the forces threatening the power of the individual in interpreting and shaping his future destiny. Yet, it is important to rec-

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ognize that the philosophical and poetic discourses of many Romantics, while purporting to promulgate Idealism, often acknowledged in their writings, as a kind of concession to reality, however conceived *Kraft, Fülle, etc.* the ironic tension in their desires. For example, Henry Remak has argued that the Romantics' awareness of the "break in the universe" appeared to be the problem to which the other characteristics associated with Romanticism are the reactions or attempted solutions. According to Remak, despite the Romantic poet's apocalyptic aspirations, he

seems to have increasingly realized the incurability of the split in the universe, and thus seems to have written an epigraph, for the time being, on the attempt of Romanticism, apparently doomed to failure and abandoned by our time, to identify subject and object, to reconcile man and nature, consciousness and unconsciousness by poetry which is the 'first and last of all knowledge,' in the words of Wordsworth. 22

While Remak views this "increasing realization" from a temporal perspective, evidence in the works of the high Idealist thinkers suggests an inherently dialectical tension in the restorative aspirations of early Romantic Idealism (which might also account for the conflicting interpretations of recent criticism).

While Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism* privileges a monistic-symbolic episteme, he includes in his argument conflicting evidence that reveals an undervalued counter-argument, i.e., the skepticism of those most representative of Idealism. For example, at the end of a discussion of Romantic literary forms, Abrams states that there were a number of Romantic writers for whom "the journey in quest of an earthly consummation is qualified by the realization that the goal is an infinite one which lies forever beyond the reach of man, whose possibilities are limited by the conditions of the finite world."<sup>23</sup>

Schiller's "Spieltrieb"

Schiller, unlike his more popular portrayal as the pure Idealist, searched for a way beyond this impasse of the ideal and the temporal through the dialectical aspect of the aesthetic experience which he called "freedom" (*Freiheit*). Schiller's idea of "freedom" is a "reciprocal balance between two opposing activities of mind" (presumably the author's and the reader's); these are the urge to form (*Formtrieb*)

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(subjectivity) and the urge for substance (*Stofftrieb*) (objectivity); he seems to have recognized that mankind's sense of being is grounded simultaneously and dialectically in his forming powers of mind (e.g., naming, abstracting, defining, etc.) and in his participation in the concrete, sensory. Hence, in this letter Schiller intuits what we have come to understand as mythic thinking: a dialectical process of knowing, which closely resembles Herder's *Besonnenheit*.

For Schiller, the aesthetic experience is described as the urge to play (*Spieltrieb*), which is the dialectical play of these two opposing activities of mind. While Schiller acknowledges that total "freedom" may be "an ideal norm beyond the possibility of actual realization in human existence," nevertheless Hamlin states that

Aesthetic experience, defined in the next letter as the urge to play (*Spieltrieb*), is asserted to depend entirely upon this reciprocal interaction; and beauty, which (we recall) is the appearance of freedom, is the product of a balance or harmony between these forces. The play urge is essentially identical with that creative power of mind which is otherwise called the imagination by theorists from Kant and Fichte to Humboldt, Schelling, and even Coleridge. 24

Schiller's apparent skepticism concerning whether the aesthetic ideal (beauty) could ever be realized in this life is clear in the idea that aesthetic experience produces only the "appearance (i.e., semblance) of freedom." He recognized that "the object that would afford him such a vision would be a symbol of his *accomplished* destiny," but that it could only be attained in the totality of time (Hamlin, 178; my emphasis).

#### Understanding The Play of Being in Language

Hamlin best explains the nature of the tension or play in aesthetic consciousness when he writes about the metaphoric (in place of the symbolic) relationship between: the temporal experience of the subjective self in Romantic poetry, and the nostalgia for the infinite and totality of time retrieved through myth and the symbolic. Like the temporal experience of the subjective self in the lyrical poem, the language of poetry is based on a temporal experience "subject to division and difference" (Hamlin, 185). Hamlin continues,

Recollection of what has been lost or prediction of what was to come

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could only be achieved poetically in the language of metaphor, that sentimental mode of discourse where emotions and intuition must interact through dialectical opposition with reflective thought and self-consciousness. The voice which speaks in poetry can only be aware of itself within a temporal structure, just as the source for any vision of transcendence must be the mortal eye, which can only see its object by standing apart from it. *Mystical communion and symbolic identity are beyond the limits of language* (Hamlin, 185; my emphasis)

Hamlin has in mind here the distinction, raised in the quote above, between Schelling's idea of the symbol as "mystical communion" and Schiller's notion of the dialectical play (*Spieltrieb*) between the finite and the infinite in aesthetic consciousness. It is a distinction expressed through the opposition of the language of the symbolic and the metaphoric: "The actual experience of poetry is always subject to temporal process, and self-fulfillment is never more than an aesthetic illusion. The status of the work in its relation to human experience may far more appropriately be described as metaphoric than symbolic" (Hamlin, 179). While Schelling viewed this tension as paradoxical (in the Eastern sense: a koan), for Schiller it is "ironic" (in the sense that F. Schlegel uses the term).

Therefore, the metaphorical relationship between the poet as a temporal self and his transcendent or expansive experience is metaphoric not because they are identical, rather because there is what Paul Ricoeur has described in his notion of "living metaphor" as the striving toward the abstract ideal while simultaneously being grounded in the finite and temporal. There is an ironic or dialectical relationship between the experience that Romantic poets seek "to embody, represent, communicate, and reveal" (Hamlin, 181), and the reality that a symbolic fusion cannot be achieved, or if temporarily achieved, cannot be sustained. Hamlin writes,

Some degree of tension or discontinuity always remains between the finite means and the infinite end, the temporal structure and the transcendental goal, which poetic language and the poetic experience cannot overcome. This tension of dialectical structure (especially if we were to use these terms as defined by such German theorists as F. Schlegel or Hegel), is what I mean by the metaphoric distinct from the symbolic-mode of Romantic poetry (Hamlin, 182).

Friedrich Schlegel's philosophical irony provides the basis for

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understanding the dialectical nature of metaphor, as well as the dialectical nature of interpretation according to Gadamer (discussed in chapter three). Schlegel's contribution began with his attempting to resolve the problem of Kantian unknowability of the noumenal (*ding an sich*), post-Kantian skepticism. He argued that the relationship between the phenomenal and the noumenal was not necessarily contradictory if one were to redefine the essence of Reality (the noumenal) as becoming and to identify the "spiritual intuition" of the infinite (Fichte) with the aesthetic experience of "hovering" (similar to Schiller's "freedom"). In this way, he collapsed Kant's antinomies by uniting both the finite and the infinite into a state of becoming. Anne Mellors in her book on English Romantic irony, says of Schlegel's "hovering": "The finite-in-change is thus an analogue for, and way into, infinity, which the human mind can apprehend as an unceasing activity, as pure energy or the process-of-becoming underlying all being" (Mellors, 225).

Schlegel's philosophical irony (his ontology may be a development of Herder's *Kraft*) embraces the activities of both creation and decreation, activities that are especially relevant to the tension between mythopoeic urgings and the actual experience of temporality of the Romantic sensibility:

Just as the individual consciousness can never be fully satisfied (or can never attain an infinite self, even theoretically, without ending its own becoming), so every theoretical formulation of reality can never be infinite or complete, but only "an approximation" that must ultimately be transcended by being negated and rejected" (Mellors, 226).

And,

The artistic ironist begins with the enthusiastic creation of a system or fiction, a fiction that he simultaneously subjects to ironic scrutiny and rejection. These acts of creation and deconstruction must take place at the same time, notes Paul de Man would have it sequentially. The fictional world must be both sincerely presented and sincerely undermined; the romantic ironic must constantly balance of "hover" between self-creation and self-destruction in that mental state Schlegel insisted that mimesis is possible. The work of art moving back and forth between enthusiastic creation and skeptical de-creation accurately mirrors the fertile chaos (*Fülle*) of life itself (Mellors, 226-227).

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The poet's *enthusiastic* (i.e., being *entheosed*, filled with the deity) creation of new mythologies with the language of the symbolic (with which we should include the philosophies of Romantic Idealism, as well as poetry) was accompanied, F. Schlegel maintains, in practice by a skeptical de-creation. And while the Idealist/Symbolic tradition continued throughout the nineteenth into the twentieth century, the ironic nature of artistic "hovering" (creation/de-creation), dialectic, or "play" would come increasingly to the foreground, especially in the Rimbaud tradition discussed in Part II.

### The Dialectic in Metaphor

Dialectical tension exists in the symbol (or metaphor) both in the Idealist and mythic modes, because both try to achieve unity-one-ness with a transcendent or expansive concept of being. For the Idealists that concept of being/reality is the metaphysical Absolute, an unknowable, static noumenal reality; from this perspective, the symbol is doomed to dissolution into irony or aesthetics (Beauty/Art). Yet, the mythic concept of being is related to an ontology of unity of mind and the world and the acceptance of reality/being as dynamic, in process (creation/decreation).

We have seen how the symbol in Romantic Idealist philosophy contained within it the ironic tension between the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, the ideal and the real. Schlegel's theory of aesthetic "hovering" involved an unending process of becoming in the simultaneous creation and undermining of the ideal and the real (form and chaos). Ontology and epistemology in poetic creation complement one another here. The conceptual leap from Schlegel's imaginative hovering to Paul Ricoeur's theory of "living metaphor" is surprisingly short. In *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur applies his talent as hermeneutic phenomenologist to the study of "the truth of being" of metaphor. 25 Rather than adopting a Neo-Positivist or Formalist view of metaphor as a substitution of signs (e.g., Richards' tenor/vehicle), Ricoeur sees it as a performative activity. Metaphor as *muthos*, dynamic action, relates to Herder and F. Schlegel's idea of re-creating reality or as: "that rhetorical process of transposing and transmuting semantic differences by which discourse unleashed the power certain fictions have to describe reality" (recalling Schlegel's "new mimesis" or *Fülle*).

According to Ricoeur, the philosopher's metaphors disclose being, "since the dialectical tension of figure and concept in the living

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or revived metaphor of a philosopher's text can contribute to a Platonism of the invisible or glorify the visibility of appearances" (RM, 311). He contrasts his own concept of "living" metaphor (or "impertinent predication") with Derrida's "dead" metaphor (or "deviant denomination") as expressed here in "White Mythology:"

The primitive meaning, the original figure, always sensible and material, is not exactly a metaphor. It is a kind of transparent figure, equivalent to a proper meaning. It becomes metaphor when put in circulation in philosophical discourse. At that point, the first meaning and the first displacement are simultaneously forgotten. The metaphor is no longer noticed, and it is taken for the proper meaning. This is a twofold effacement. On this view, philosophy would be a self-eliminating process of generating metaphor. It would be of the nature of philosophy that philosophical culture be a rude obliteration. 26

What Derrida seems to mean by the "original figure" here is the mythic-symbolic's concreteness and immediacy as opposed to the distanced or "alienated consciousness" of cultured (*gebildet*) aesthetic or philosophical symbols. The original figure is described as "sensible," "material," "transparent," and "equivalent to a proper meaning" (like Schelling's or Moritz's "symbol" or Cassirer's "naming"), while the metaphoric language of philosophy is described as "self-eliminating" or "a rude obliteration." While these two positions represent an apparent impasse between mythic and deconstructionist models of metaphor, Ricoeur revises these antithetical notions of metaphor as the substitution of the contextually present sign ("illustration") and its implied and absent abstraction ("intellection"). In contrast, he would counter that metaphor as a performative activity involves the dialectical play between never-to-be reconciled antitheses, that is between the present sign and its absent signified (ideal or abstraction).<sup>27</sup>

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### Chapter Three Mythic Return, the Mind, and the Hermeneutic Circle

*The brain, indeed, is the only organ that learns to interpret its interactions as real by experiencing itself. This same self-referential circularity is the essence of the "hermeneutic circle," that is a reflection of the self-programming brain-mind. To understand a text is to weave it into your own mode of existence.*

(Roland Fischer, *"The Emergence of Mind from Brain"*)

In anthropology, "primitivist" explanations for the emergence of speech along with metaphoric thinking in *homo sapiens* began with the "new Homer" theorists from Vico, Thomas Blackwell, Robert Wood, and those influenced by him in Germany (Hamann, Herder, and Goethe) and survive in modern philosophical anthropology (Lévy-Bruhl, Lévi-Strauss, and Cassirer). While these thinkers looked to our ancestral past to discover the origins of speech and mythic-metaphoric thinking, others in developmental and clinical psychology (Vygotsky, Fischer) and anthropology have looked to the present and the individual, either the child or the primitive (that is, the person uninitiated into Western literacy and modes of thinking). The mythologized and scientifically investigated idea of an original, integrated state of mind, both in our ancestors' and the child's past, what we might call mythic-symbolic or metaphoric thinking, relates to what recent thinkers from various disciplines have called: the primitive (Lévi-Strauss, Lévy-Bruhl), the ecstatic (Fischer), the paleological (Arieti), complex thinking (Vygotsky), and the undifferentiated state (Winnicott). Hence, in a psycho-linguistic sense, it appears that "ontogeny may very well recapitulate phylogeny!"

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## Mythic Thinking and Redefining the Lyric Self

Romantic and Victorian sentiments concerning analytical thought as a "disease" and the "burden" of the ego (self or I) are by now common knowledge in literary criticism. In particular, Geoffrey Hartman's essay "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness'" (in *Romanticism and Consciousness*) argues with convincing evidence that poets of both the German and English Romantic traditions anguished over a "problematical self-consciousness," which was related, in turn, to the restricted consciousness of rational and analytical modes of thought. 2 While the Germans sought a return to a "second naïveté" (like Blake's "organized innocence") through an art that arises from a "plenitude of consciousness," the English Romantics resorted to various forms of imaginative 'transcendence' (getting beyond the I-consciousness barrier). In the poetry of Keats, Shelley, and Blake, Hartman sees various ways of expressing the conviction that "self-consciousness cannot be overcome; and the very desire to overcome it, which poetry and imagination encourage, is part of a vital, dialectical movement of 'soul-making'" (Hartman, 48-49).

At this point, the subject of "mythic thinking" in Hartman's argument converges with our discussion of Herder's initiation of questions concerning the restoration of an original, unified consciousness. With the Fall, Hartman maintains, our first parents gained a sense of self-consciousness, which resulted in the experience of separation (from nature, the divine and humanity) and, consequently, in an alienated sense of self. For the English Romantics, it is the "destiny of consciousness," or Imagination, to separate from nature. However, Hegel, acknowledging this fallen state ("The spiritual is distinguished from the natural . . . in that it does not continue a mere stream of tendency, but sunders itself in self-realization"), envisions a remedy (" . . . the spirit must, by its own act, achieve concord once more. . . . The principle of restoration is found in thought, and thought only: the hand that inflicts the wound is also the hand that heals it").3 As Hartman concludes, with particular interest to this discussion, "the attempt to think mythically is itself part of a crucial defense against the self-conscious intellect" and "Whether myth-making is still possible, and whether the mind can maintain something of the interacting unity of self and life, are central concerns of the Romantic poets." (Hartman, 49-50). For a number of German and English Romantics, consciousness (i.e., self-consciousness or the burden of ego) is that curse following the Fall which alienates one from an integrated self and from nature and one's fellow beings. Romantic

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art's religious function becomes clear where the Christian redemption cycle of Eden/Fall/redemption is replaced by nature-self-consciousness-imagination. 4

The goal of mythic thinking for certain poets was to break beyond the confines of the self (from the isolation of the ego or the rational mind and temporality to imaginative freedom) to take the "journey beyond self-consciousness." 5 It reflected the importance of a community of fellow creatures (human and animal), community of feeling (*Einfühlung*), and the present, living moment. For example, Wordsworth "convert(s) the solipsistic into the sympathetic imagination" ("it entices the brooding soul out of itself, toward nature first, then toward humanity") (Hartman, 55); Keats sought a "less self-centered sublime" (negative capability); and Coleridge traces a rite of passage from "the soul's birth to a sense of separate and segregated being" to "full human communion" in the *Ancient Mariner*. Hartman describes Coleridge's poem, a central one for charting the emergence of the mythic, "plenary" imagination out of the self-centered ego:

In one of the really magical and hypnotic poems in the language, Coleridge evokes the travail of passing through self-consciousness to imagination. The slaying of an innocent creature, the horror of stasis, the weight of conscience or of the vertical eye (the sun), the appearance of the theme of deathlessness, and the terrible repetitive process of penitence, whereby the Wanderer becomes aware through the spirits above and the creatures below of his focal solitude between both these points with archetypal force to the burden of selfhood, the straits of solitude, and the compensating plenary imagination that grows inwardly. The poem opens by evoking that "rite de passage" we call a wedding, and which leads to full human communion; but the Mariner's story interposes itself as a reminder of human separateness, and of the intellectual love (in Spinoza's sense) made possible by it. (Hartman, 53)

The recurrent theme of the burden of self and the rejection of "lyrical egotism" manifested itself in a redefinition of the lyrical self in specific nineteenth century poets. Through an altered mental state (usually ecstatic, schizophrenic, or a combination) certain poets would shift consciousness from an I-ego to a Self-other state (see Fischer below). A number of poets speak of this depersonalized experience: Keats' "negative capability," Jean-Paul's depersonalized self; Rimbaud's "*Je est un autre*"; Thoreau's "unconsciousness" as a equivalent of vision and, "The absence of the speaker from his speech"; Browning's and Pound's *personae* or masks; the imperson-

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ality of the Symbolist method, in general, and, in particular, Eliot's image as "objective correlative" or Crane's "logic of metaphor." All of these innovative lyrical techniques throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century reflect the poet's eschewal of directly personal and discursive expression.

The transition from self-consciousness to imagination (Herder's "reflectiveness" or Coleridge's "esemplastic imagination") evokes the idea of a journey which, in the case of Rimbaud, Trakl, and Hart Crane, "become(s) a sustained metaphor for the experience of the artist during creation" (Hartman, 54), creation possibly equated with the cognitive act of understanding or meaning-making. 6 These journeys, I would add, suggest the experience of the poet's mind creating a "new mythology," that is, discovering a new world mapped out by mythic thinking. In this way, the visionary poetry of the past undergoes a radical revision, being redefined within the context of the mythic mode of vision, that is: the ego is replaced by a depersonalized self, harmonizing the dualities of experience into "new mythologies," the constructs of understanding.

#### The Undifferentiated State of Mind

Recent research in developmental and clinical psychology strongly suggests that the Romantic nostalgia for a lost sense of wholeness, often associated with childhood or the primitive, may have some basis in psychological fact. What this means is that studies of childhood and primitive thinking, and altered mental states, indicate that these modes of thought display a higher incidence of "undifferentiated" experiences than those of "mature adults," especially those acculturated in literacy or a Western Aristotelian style of thinking.

In the past and even today, developmental theorists have tended to see the child, the primitive, and the pathological individual (e.g., schizophrenic) as un-, pre-, or de-differentiated, that is, "as lacking the stable distinction between inner and outer, self and other, subject and object, characteristic of mature adulthood."<sup>7</sup> For them, the undifferentiated state indicates an immature, pre-realistic state of mind. Vygotsky, however, sees similarities in childhood and primitive thinking, and concedes that adult thinking continues to rely on these antecedent forms. And, more recently, Cahoon, referring to Donald Winnicott's psychiatric theories, states that "the undiffer-

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entiated state is supplemented and altered but never supplanted or negated. . . . The fullness of integrated experiencing for the adult, as for the child, resides, according to Winnicott, in the psychic region which escapes differentiation. The most fundamental and the most enduring deep level of experience and reality escapes the subject-object distinction" (Cahoone, 252). According to Cahoone, the developmentalists have, in general, "failed to see that the primacy of the undifferentiated is not merely temporal, not merely characteristic of less mature forms, but is a logical and existential presupposition of mental life in *all* phases of development" (Cahoone, 251).

#### A. Vygotsky on Childhood Complex Thinking

By associating mythic-metaphoric thinking with a lost state of psycho-linguistic unity buried in the primitive past, Cassirer may simply have been historicizing our faintly recollected memories of an integrated way of conceiving the world in childhood. Evidently, prior to the onset of analytical, conceptual thinking in the first three to five years of childhood, the child engages in a preconceptual form of thinking. 8

Lev Vygotsky's research on concept formation in children parallels, albeit on the individual level, Cassirer's view of mythic ideation which he situated in the primordial past of human "evolution." Vygotsky talks about the stage prior to adult logical concept formation as that of childhood "complexes" and "pseudo-concepts." He describes the "ascent to concept formation" (i.e., "learning to direct one's own mental processes with the aid of words or signs") as involving three basic stages: syncretic thinking, thinking in complexes, and pseudo-concepts. In addition, he shows similarities between the child's and the primitive's (i.e., preliterate, un-Westernized) styles of thinking. Because his precise descriptions of childhood thinking correspond with the ideas of both Cassirer and Lévi-Strauss on mythic (primitive) thinking, and therefore pertain to the poets discussed later, I would like to summarize some of Vygotsky's conclusions.

Under the first stage of childhood thinking, syncretism, Vygotsky describes how children form "heaps" or "unorganized congeries" which consist of disparate objects grouped together by chance in the child's perception. At this stage, word meaning denotes nothing more than a vague syncretic conglomeration of individual objects that have somehow or other coalesced into an imago in his mind. Syncretism is

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related to the trait of child thinking that tends to merge the most diverse elements into one unarticulated image on the strength of some chance impression. 9

The second major phase on the way to concept formation, the one most revelatory in discussing mythic thinking, is called complex thinking: "In a complex, individual objects are united in the child's mind not only by his subjective impressions but also by bonds actually existing between objects" as s/he emerges partially out of his egocentrism. "He no longer mistakes connections between his own impressions for connections between things a decisive step away from syncretism toward objective thinking" (Vygotsky, 61). The difference between a concept and a complex lies in the fact that a concept groups objects according to just one attribute, while a complex "relates elements to the whole and to one another by bonds that are as diverse as the contacts and relationships of the elements are in reality" (Vygotsky, 62). Nevertheless, the idiosyncratic way that the child relates objects to one another or to a single "nuclear" object follows the "rules" of different types of complexes, each of which has its own crude logic.<sup>10</sup>

Often the poets in Part II juxtapose images in a way that resembles a child's or primitive's complex thinking, which is essentially related to Cassirer's metaphoric thinking or Fischer's "subjective symbols." The bonds between objects may follow one of the following modes of complex thinking: simple association to a nuclear (chosen) object, collecting or associating by an object's participation in some practical operation (table setting), chains or consecutive joining of individual links, or diffuse or floating and changeable, loosely joined links. Often in the poetry studied later, the bonds between juxtaposed images may be unclear, seemingly indeterminate according to the rules of adult ("mature") thinking, and yet connections exist within the context of mental structures such as memory, the unconscious, or ecstatic states. Complex thinking is like mythic thinking in its tendency to condense and to forge identities. Unlike the concept, "it merges with the concrete objects that comprise it. This fusion of the general and the particular, of the complex and its elements, this 'psychic amalgam' is the distinctive characteristic of all complex thinking and of the chain complex in particular" (Vygotsky, 65) and relates to Herder's "new mythologies," Lévi-Strauss' "bricolage," and to the imaginative recreations of the poets in Part II.

Finally, the pseudo-concept is described as a bridge between complexes and the highest stage of concept formation.<sup>11</sup> Pseudo-concepts occur whenever a child clusters "a sample with objects that

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could just as well have been assembled on the basis of an abstract concept." Comparisons are formed on the basis of concrete rather than abstract characteristics (e.g., color or shape), in the same way that the mythic and aesthetic symbolic differ (discussed in chapter two): "In reality the child is guided by the concrete, visible likeness and has formed only an associative complex limited to a certain kind of perceptual bond. Although the results are identical, the process by which they are reached is not at all the same as in conceptual thinking" (Vygotsky, 69).

#### B. Ecstatic States A Temporary Sense of Unity

The clinical research of Roland Fischer, professor of experimental psychiatry and associate professor of pharmacology at Ohio State University College of Medicine, has identified the features of ecstatic and meditative states of mind, both those produced by natural means (dream or schizophrenia) and by artificially induced hallucinatory and ecstatic states. 12 These altered mental states are especially relevant to the poets in Part II, who achieved ecstatic states of mind either through artificial means (drugs, alcohol), natural means (physical suffering, fatigue, sex) or through uninduced states (schizophrenia), which produced a temporary mythic experience of wholeness.

Fischer's research may help the literary critic describe the important features of mental states that produce a mythic kind of thinking, which, by its nature as an induced state, is fleeting or "doomed" by its temporality. (See Hamlin on the "Temporality of Selfhood"). His "cartography" of mental states, ranging from normal consciousness ("I"/perception) either to hyperaroused (ergotropic) or hypoaroused (tropic) states of mind is particularly relevant to our understanding of the "ideological" hegemony of the rational and the mythic-symbolic, now viewed on a neurobiological level.

The mental states relevant to the poetry discussed in Part II occur on the ergotropic side of Fischer's scale, which includes the schizophrenic state (hyperaroused) and mystical rapture (ecstatic). The areas of most interest to mythic thinking and the redefinition of the lyric self in these ergotropic states (to be discussed more fully in Part II) include: the depersonalization of the self, loss of a sense of subject-object dichotomy, the mystical experience of "the Oneness of everything," and the experience of the integration of cortical (interpretive) and subcortical (interpreted) structures of the brain expressed through the language of metaphor. Normal consciousness,

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Fischer maintains, shifts from use of the sign to the "subjective symbol."

To understand the "mythic" component involved in the ecstatic state, let us examine these characteristics along the continuum from normal consciousness to schizophrenic and ecstatic states. First, with regard to the depersonalized self, Fischer describes how the stability of the "I" of normal consciousness "is interfered with as one moves along the perception-hallucination continuum from the T of the physical world to the 'Self' of the mental dimension"; there is actually a departure from the "I" to the "Self." Fischer calls this the "depersonalization phenomena," a mental state that accompanies the "dissolution of ego boundaries during creative, psychotic, ecstatic, or meditative states"; it is also a major characteristic of the "depersonalized lyrical mode" used by the poets in Part II. The self ("I") of normal consciousness is related to the cortical (interpretive) structures of the brain, "that which sees and knows," while the self ("Self") of altered states is related to the subcortical (interpreted) structures, "that which is seen and known." The communication of the Self and the I, the cortical and subcortical structures, possible only during dream or hallucinatory states (natural or drug-induced), is "the creative source of art, science, literature, and religion" (Fischer, 902).

Secondly, during ergotropic arousal one experiences a loss of the sense of subject-object dichotomy (that is, the world experienced as separate from oneself) of the "I"-state. With increasing ergotropic arousal, this separateness disappears, "apparently because in the "Self"-state of ecstasy, cortical and subcortical activity are indistinguishably integrated.

The separateness of subject and object during the daily routine levels of arousal (in the "I"-state) has been elaborated in our customary, rational, Aristotelian logic and language a two valued (either-or, true-false) logic that discounts the interaction between observer (subject) and observed (object). This separateness of object and subject, as we have seen, is a reflection of the relative independence of cortical interpretation from subcortical activity and is of survival value in the "I" state, where the subject must make decisions of life and death by manipulating objects (through voluntary motor activity) (Fischer, 902).

"This unity is reflected in the experience of Oneness with everything, a Oneness with the universe that is oneself" (Fischer, 902). In addition, Fischer maintains that the ecstatic state of ergotropic arousal "is paralleled by a restriction in the individual's repertoire of avail-

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able perceptual-behavioral interpretations" (Fischer, 901). What this means is that during the ecstatic state the "all-pervasive experience of absolute certainty" does not require further verification and will be structured according to a current mythology or belief system (e.g., the Neo-Platonic or Christian pattern of fall, separation, and return). This sense of "absolute certainty" is necessarily doomed to dissolution due to the temporal nature of the hallucinatory or ecstatic experience, to which the poets in Part II will attest.

Thirdly, in this state of unity, the separation of subject and object implicit in dualistic logic and language is replaced by a symbolic logic and language which alone can convey the experience of intense meaning: "meaning is meaningful only at the level of arousal at which it is experienced, and every experience has its state-bound meaning." 13 The teleology of the ecstatic experience, then, is not unlike that of Herder's epistemology which is based upon the faith in an organic unity of self and world and the experience of the psychologically posited unity of Being. Both are grounded in the belief in an epistemology (in place of a metaphysics) capable of disclosing a mystically unified and knowable reality.

#### Hermeneutic Recreation

The role of the self in the creation of meaning and the search for wholeness has important implications for hermeneutics and reader-response theories of literary interpretation. The act of reading and of interpreting literary texts has been described since Schleiermacher inaugurated hermeneutics, the "science of understanding," as the reader's reenactment of the original act of creation. This new version of the myth of creation, rather than being cosmological, first focused on the author, rather than the reader, as the source of all textual meaning. Furthermore, in Romanticism the comparison of the poetic genius to the original creative deity (discussed earlier) remained central to one's gaining an understanding of the text. With Hegel, the focus would shift again from the author to the reader. 14 In this section, I would like to discuss briefly three different directions in hermeneutics in this century, focusing on the reader's role in the interpretive act as recreation. Two of these directions, "demythologization" and "demystification," represent opposing stances toward the interpretive act as a reader-centered recreative act, while the third, Gadamer's "hermeneutics of play," presents an ontologically and epistemologically persuasive mediating position.

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In *De l'interpretation* (1965), Paul Ricoeur speaks of two different currents of hermeneutics in modern times. One, represented by Bultmann's demythologizing, tries to recover the hidden meaning in the surface symbols and words of the text, while the other seeks to disclose the symbol as the representation of a false reality or "false consciousness." It destroys "masks" and "illusions" (e.g., Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche) in a "relentless rational effort" at demystification.

Because of these two antithetical approaches to the interpretation of symbols today, Ricoeur asserts, there can be no universal canons for exegesis but only separate and opposing theories concerning the rules of interpretation. The demythologizers treat the symbol or text as a window to a sacred reality; the demystifiers treat the symbols (say, the biblical texts) as a false reality that must be shattered. 15

These two philosophically opposed currents in hermeneutics in modern times might also be described as following either "centripetal" or "centrifugal" impulses (terminology taken from Schelling's ontology which Frye adapted to his mythic criticism). The demythologizers are propelled toward a hidden unity or meaning in the text, thereby following a similar psychological pressure as the poet seeking ecstatic experiences of a Unity of Being hidden to "normal," rational-discursive consciousness. On the opposite end of the hermeneutic spectrum, the demystifiers operate under the assumption traced back to Platonic or post-Socratic assumptions about the gap between sign and signifier of the indeterminacy of a single or consensual meaning in the text.

By examining specific New Critical and Deconstructionist theories of interpretation, we may discover how they embody conflicting "myths" of interpretation as recreation in their underlying assumptions and language. Joseph Frank's "Theory of Spatial Form" provides a useful example of a New Critical form of demythologizing a literary text.<sup>16</sup> Although grounded in positivistic assumptions about meaning residing solely "out there" in the text, it serves as a good example of "the mythic method" or a "centripetal" pressure to disclose unity. Frank maintains that meaning emerges from the internal system of signs within the text, thereby ignoring anything beyond it. He ignores extrinsic matters (Wellek and Warren) and the role of reader in the process of creating his own "internal system of signs" or "spatial interrelationships."

William Spanos' critique of Frank's theory is illuminating both in its perceptiveness and in the mythopoeic language he chooses. First,

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Spanos discusses Frank's indebtedness to the Western metaphysical tradition, inherited from the Post-Socratic Greeks, that spatializes temporality. He calls Frank's theory noun-centered and grounded in a static space-logic which places sovereignty in the eye (vision):

It is, I submit, this recuperative, "panoptical gaze" (Foucault) so much more, finally, than simply a nostalgia for lost origin that lies behind what Joseph Frank taking his cue from T.S. Eliot's retrospective (and as far as poetry is concerned, misleading) definition of the mythic method as "simply as a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history," innocently calls the "space logic" of Modern Poetry. 17

Therefore, Spanos continues, we can view Frank's theory of spatial form as reflecting "the task of 'fallen' man to recuperate his home-sickness his lost origin to recollect, through the agency of Memory, the original and originating prelapsarian state of presence" (Spanos, 43). Interestingly, this recuperative task was the identical one undertaken by Herder and the mythopoeic poets following, perhaps unconsciously, in the spirit of his cause.

The reader, according to this critical stance, tries to regain the "prelapsarian state of presence" through his privileged and privileging "panoptical gaze," which gives shape (form, unity, meaning) to the perceived world of the text, and world which is actually his own mental construct. Although it may not have occurred to Spanos, one might speculate that the "mythic method" detected in Frank's strategy of reading could as easily apply to the impulses driving the modernist texts he chose to read, and might be a product of those readings. The same can be said of Frye's mythological criticism in his role as Blake scholar, which, in turn, sheds light on Murray Krieger's choice of language from the Biblical creation story used to describe Frye's criticism. This point has been made by Iser and Moore,<sup>18</sup> who say "a critic literally recreates the work of art from the potentialities of language" (Moore, 174). My point is that Romantic and Modernist texts exert centripetal pressure (toward a center or point of presence) that encourages these "mythic" readings. At the same time, their mythopoeic longings for return to unity are admittedly problematic due to the inevitably temporal nature of language and vision. As a result, they allow for conflicting readings due to the natural tensions inherent in desire and reality, the sign and the signified, and the syntactic ambiguities of Modernist and Postmodernist texts.<sup>19</sup>

On the side of a hermeneutics of "demystification," we find the

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theories of indeterminacy, which Charles Altieri has succinctly partitioned into 'three basic forms or strategies': psychological theories (Holland, Slatoff, Fish), logical theories (Derrida, de Man, Moore), and thematic theories (Kermode, Said, Barthes). 20 In the first group, the New Critical claims about the unity of the text are called into question through the distinction between natural vs. human meanings (de Man), or scientific vs. imaginative utterances (Slatoff): "Natural signs always have clear and repeatable meanings because they hide nothing and follow established laws, while human utterances are always intentional, always both uttered from a point of view not entirely evident in the signs and dependent on the intentions of the interpreter, and therefore always problematic."<sup>21</sup> According to Altieri, de Man believes that "intentionality signs a verbal object with the presence of a desire that can never be determinately recovered" (BI, 25), for intentionality means that the signs emanate from a point of view that can only be recovered from other points of view." (I should point out that de Man leaves out important avenues for approximating meaning: the "potentialities of language" itself (Iser and Moore), the play of cultural, historical, and biographical contexts in positing meaning). This view relies on a text vs. reader false dilemma and overlooks the role of extrinsic sources of meaning that might include: historical consciousness; open-ended, thick description in determining meaning; and various forms of contextualizing.

With Derrida as the source of "logical theories of indeterminacy," we witness the ironic reversal of issues surrounding the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' mythic and symbolic theories of language. According to Altieri, "He turns our practical difficulties in establishing meaning into a full-fledged epistemological skepticism based on a theory of the instability of all language" (Altieri, 75). Derrida takes the "necessary leap of doubting whether positing references and describing truths could ever be the function of language." He represents the canonical "centrifugal" hermeneuticist in that he poses as the central task of language "the process of *disseminating* meanings, of rendering the world continually indeterminate because the process of signification always releases more energies than can be resolved into what seems to be the object signified" (Altieri, 75; my emphasis).

According to Derrida's positivistic model of determinate meaning, the univocal is the essence or the *teleos* of language ("A name is a proper name when it has only one sense"). Understood in this way, the sign always stands as a deferred presence, a detour through signs that leads us on a chain of related concepts rather than to the present thing in itself (*logos*).

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When we cannot take hold of or show the thing, let us say the present, the being present, when the present does present itself, then we signify, we go through a detour of signs. . . . The sign would thus be a deferred presence. . . . Now this classical determination presupposes that the sign is conceivable only on the basis of the presence one intends to reappropriate . . . . [But] the signified concept is never present in itself, in an adequate presence that would refer only to itself. Every concept is necessarily and essentially inscribed in a chain or system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts, by the systematic play of differences. Such a play, then *différance* is no longer simply a concept but the possibility of conceptuality. 22

Lentriccia provides a salient contrast of Derrida and Frye on this point (i.e., meaning as origins): "Derrida's conception of the sign as *différance*" posits a simultaneous past-oriented (retentive) nostalgia and a future-oriented (protentive) yearning a kind of desire, to be sure, but one that will find no fulfillment in a center beyond discourse. For Frye, desire is the "still center" which "sanctions a 'real structure' as the fulfillment or *teleos* of wishing." (Lentriccia, 15). According to Lentriccia, then, "Human desire is the absence of form or structure a 'lack' which causes form or structure to come into being" (recall *bildung* earlier as forming), "a 'lack' standing outside of structurality as an unmodified and unmodifiable metaphysical *ding an sich*." The dialectic of Schlegel's "hovering" or Ricoeur's "dialectic of metaphor" (discussed in chapter two) bridge the extremes of structural center or its lack by focusing on action rather than on static being.

Derrida's view of structure, in contrast with Frye's or the New Critics, requires a center (a point of origin or presence) which "appears as mythological, that is to say as historical illusion." Derrida continues, saying that

structurality of structure has always been neutral or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a center or referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin. The function of this center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the freeplay of structure. . . . Nevertheless, the center closes off the freeplay it opens up and makes possible. . . . (A)t the center, the permutation or the transformation of elements (which may of course be structures enclosed within a structure) is forbidden . . . . Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is

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by definition unique, constituted the very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while escaping structurality.

As a turning toward the presence, lost and impossible, of the absent origin, this structuralist thematic of broken immediateness is thus the sad, negative, nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauist facet of the thinking of freeplay of which the Nietzschean affirmationthe joyous affirmation of the freeplay of the world and without truth, without origin, offered to an active interpretationwould be the other side. This affirmation then determines the non-center otherwise than as the loss of the center. 23

Interestingly, Derrida concludes this essay with his definition of man as "that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of onto-theologyin other words, through the history of all his historyhas dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of the game" (264-65). Might this "full presence" be nothing more than personal meaning or understanding?

The third form of indeterminacy theory, thematic in-determinacy, may be, according to Altieri, "simply a shifting of Derrida and the problem of semantics from a logical foundation to a historical or an intentional one. Instead of rooting indeterminacy in language itself, it roots it in the thematic operation of a text and makes indeterminacy part of the drama of certain works." Critics of indeterminacy overlook the possibility that a poet may deliberately dissociate words from their usual contexts in order to reassemble them into mythic reconstructions. For de Man, for example, "self-conscious writers use indeterminacy to mark the gap between the life of consciousness and the demands of the empirical world" (Altieri, 76). In such a case, the critics of indeterminacy see that the experience of the text can only be given coherence by the individual reader who, in effect, creates his own text, thus overlooking the poet's dramatic and recreative use of language.

But, what if the goal of interpretation is not to "give coherence" (to find full presence or the still center) to the work in the traditional semantic sense, but to understand the nature of its Being in language (Gadamer from Heidegger)? What happens, for example, in the case of poets who self-consciously use language to enact ritualistically their desire for symbolic unity (point of presence, center, mythic oneness) while, at the same time, they enact the inevitable fall into temporality (absence or loss)? This psychological play of presence and absence, experienced perhaps only subconsciously by the Romantic Ironic artists following F. Schlegel, rather than one of indeterminacy.

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(de Man), seems to have become the central theme or drama self-consciously enacted by the poets in Part II. In other words, rather than indeterminacy as de Man argues in *Blindness and Insight*, we find that an attitude of Schlegelian "hovering" might better describe the author's creative understanding that is disclosed through the language of the text.

Gadamer's hermeneutics of "play" reflects perhaps the most fruitful critical stance toward the self-consciously dialectical works in Part II. Gadamer uses the idea of the playing consciousness (*spielen*, dance, or the to-and-fro movement which is not tied to any goal) to explain the hermeneutic significance of a work of art (TM, 93). The reader, like a player in a game or a theatrical performance, becomes absorbed by the act of playing and the structure of play, removing from him "the burden of the initiative." The game takes primacy over the players, as the players give themselves to the performance, adopting an attitude of play. When human play finds its "perfection in being art," it is transformed into structure. "Only through this development does play acquire its ideality, so that it can be intended and understood as play" (TM, 99). Therefore, Gadamer concludes, the mode of existence of a poetic work "comes to be only in performance and in theatrical representation" (TM, 105). That is, the poetic work can only come to be through the performance of the reader: "it achieves its full being only each time it is played" (TM, 105). Both reading and interpretation (making meaning) involve a *recreation* that is not at all like the subjectivity of the purely creative act, but is guided by "the possibilities of being that the work itself possesses" or "the lines of the created work which has been brought to representation in accord with the meaning the interpreter finds in it" (TM, 106).

#### The Hermeneutic Circle, the Brain, and the Creation of Meaning

The idea that the text becomes a "field of play" (Iser) whereupon the reader's interpretive strategies, expectations, etc. meet the world of the text has relevance for the studies of how the brain is thought to create meaning, as well as for theories of literary interpretation; these two areas have been shown to be clearly related in their interpretive functions. For example, Roland Fischer's discussion of "the biological roots of the hermeneutic circle" explores the problem of the reader's role in the creation of meaning from a neurobiological perspective. He describes the mechanics of the transformation of sensory data into perceived data, and perceived data into experienced mean-

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ing in this way: "Sensory motor interactions (or closures) are 'objects', i.e., representations that exist within ourselves and, therefore, the cosmos is an internalized system of representations or signs. They become meaningful when the attentional and arousal systems of the CNS (central nervous system) transform the cosmic sign system into a sign system of experienced meaning" (Fischer, 6). In other words, as Fischer states further on, the sympathetic (attentional) arousal system will "intensify the meaning of signs that stand for values that were acquired through past experiences of the *individual* and the *species*" (my emphasis) hence, the archetypal patterns and imagery in literary and mythico-religious thought? 24 This process sounds curiously like Herder's "reflectiveness" in thought and language (discussed in chapter one) and, looking ahead, like Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle," both of which construct models of the mediating consciousness at the heart of all acts of understanding.

This is all said by way of introduction to the subject of the relationship of the hermeneutic circle to the neurobiological creation of meaning. Fischer explains that as the signs from the observed world become "translated" into meaningful signals (objects, tokens) to the observer, a recursive loop is generated, thereby subjecting this second, third, etc., removed set of data to interpretation. As Fischer explains:

the CNS legitimates reality, that is, the interpretation of its interactions, while the CNS itself is legitimated that learns to interpret its interactions as real by experiencing itself.

This same self-referential circularity is the essence of the "hermeneutic circle", that is a reflection of the self-programming brain-mind. To understand a text is to weave it into your own mode of existence.<sup>25</sup>

This idea of the "self-reflection of the self-programming mind" echoes Herder's epistemology in fundamental ways, while the idea of understanding a text means "to weave it into your own mode of existence" recalls his call for "new mythologies," that is, for new ways of recreating past literary forms and themes into present personal and historical contexts.

The text, like the world experienced through the senses, becomes a "field of play" whereupon the reader's interpretive strategies, including pre-understandings, meet the world of the text. This "world," which is partially composed of "objective" sense data, is conveyed

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through textual means, i.e., through sentence thought (*satzdenken*) or "intentional sentence correlatives" (Iser), which are related to authorial intention communicated on the sentence level in the text. What Iser means by a "phenomenology of reading," then, is the process of anticipation and retrospection analogous to Fischer's idea of excitation and expectation, rethinking and counteradaptations, which is *at least in part* guided by the semantic and syntactic nature of the text. 26

The world of the text exists in language, that is, it is linguistically created. Language creates the world within which everything may be disclosed through the possibilities held within it. However, as Gadamer has affirmed, "The interpretation of a text is not passive openness, but at best a dialectical interaction with the text; it is not a bald reenactment but a new creation, a new event in understanding" (TM, 448) for each reader. Fischer talks about how through counteradaptive behavior, the mind can override the brain; thus, a reader can get caught up in her mental world of interpreted signals and unconsciously allow her interpretations (mind) to override her brain (sensory, textual input). This could account for privileging certain readings, as, for example, a Blakean critic (Frye) or a Modernist critic (Frank), whose brains-minds are repeatedly "excited" with the mythological patterns of the literature they read, and, consequently, they begin to expect and thus to create or "discover" these patterns in their interpretations.

According to Iser, when faced with indeterminacy in the text, the reader becomes preoccupied with a search for connections, and has a need to find consistency by grouping together in the act of recreation: "By grouping the written parts of the text, we enable them to interact. We observe the direction in which they are leading us, and we project onto them the consistency which we, as readers, require" (Iser, 55). When semantic or syntactic indeterminacy occurs in the text, the reader fills in the gaps in his own way. While this may have been an unconscious process with traditional texts, the reader's interaction with the text in filling in the gaps, especially with the open-weave, paratactical styles of much modernist poetry, has become quite deliberate. The style of reading that Iser treats as the norm might be described as a "centripetal" style of reading: the search for connections and a center of meaning, the need for consistency by grouping together in order to resolve all indeterminacy. On the other hand, deconstructionist critics consciously resist Iser's temptation to find a center, rather expecting and "discovering" (i.e., creating) either logical, semantic, or thematic modes of indeterminacy.

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## Reading Romantic and Post-Romantic Texts

A major contradiction found in interpretations of Romantic works has been the tendency for scholars to interpret particular works along two lines, that is, either as symbolic (centripetal) or as ironic (centrifugal) discourse. As Anne Mellors has persuasively argued, there have been until recently two polar ways of reading Romantic poetry, represented in the extremes by Meyers Abrams and Paul de Man. She accuses Abrams of choosing "to privilege mythopoeic creation at the expense of ironic skepticism" a one-sided disclosure of the worlds of many of those texts. 27 On the opposite side, de Man is remiss for seeing language as "a self-enclosed system from which human consciousness cannot escape. The only truth that man can ever know is the ironic awareness of the falsity of all linguistic or conceptual constructions ('mystifications') describing the empirical world" (Mellors, 218). While for Abrams "symbolic discourse is predicated on the achieved synthesis of the subject and the object," for de Man "poetic assertions of an achieved identity between subject and object are illusory" (Mellors, 219). For de Man, symbolism is an historical "error," a "self-induced blindness" that functions as a "defensive strategy that tries to hide from this negative self-knowledge," "the knowledge that the self cannot be joined" and that "man must forever remain confined within a nexus of signs that refer solely to other, anterior signs, in a language established in the void of temporal difference" (Mellors, 220).

A possible resolution to this apparent impasse lies, as both Mellors and Gadamer suggest, in the philosophical irony of Friedrich Schlegel, which embraces the activities of both creation and decreation (or centripetal and centrifugal forces), repetition and playfulness. His concept of "hovering" which describes a new ontology (*Fülle*) and a genuine aesthetic consciousness, applies as well to the dialectical process of interpretation as play (Gadamer). It also sheds light on the nature of the mythic and symbolic constructs of post-Romanticism, their "enthusiastic creation" and "ironic scrutiny and rejection" and, as readers, we might allow their worlds to speak to ours.

The central role of the reader in the meaning-making process of interpretation has been by now widely accepted, and even provides a paradigm for all acts of understanding.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the reader's participation in the meaning-making process has been exacerbated in the interpretation of Modern and Postmodern poetry due to the increased incidence of non-discursiveness, paratactical structures,

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and ambiguous syntaxes should become clear with regard to the poets in the "Rimbaud Tradition" discussed in Part II.

Perhaps Northrop Frye has said it best. In discussing Milton's *Paradise Lost* as the watershed in literature through its shift from poet to reader-constructed meanings, he states: "The creation myth is a seed that comes to its own real fruition in a recreative effort in which Adam is involved. Adam is, of course, the representative human being, or, more precisely, the representative reader of the Bible." Within the Protestant context of Milton's theology, the supreme authority is not the Bible, but the reader of the Bible, "the person who understands it and possesses what Milton calls the word of God in the heart." 29 The "center of gravity" of literature had shifted from the hero, to the character, to the poet, and finally to us, the readers and the meaning-making mind.

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PART II  
THE MYTHIC MODE IN POETIC PRACTICE

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## Chapter Four

Arthur Rimbaud: *Le Monde Recréé*

*All love refers to the present; something that is pleasing to me in the present, appears to my mind's eye when absent, awakes the desire for its renewed presence.*

Goethe

*Only by forgetting that primitive world of metaphors, only by the congelation and coagulation of an original mass of similes and precepts pouring forth as a fiery liquid out of the primal faculty of human fancy, only by the invincible faith, that this sun, this window, this table is a truth in itself.*

Nietzsche

Unlike his Symbolist contemporaries whose aims were to evoke the absent and abstract from Nature, Rimbaud's search engaged him in a struggle to regain the absent Totality of Being (in Herder's, Heidegger's, or Winnicott's senses) in all its multifacetedness and immediacy to make Being present and sensible, to glimpse Totality (in the mythic rather than in the metaphysical sense) again and again through the magically transforming power of language. His attempt to regain and to sustain the experience of mythic wholeness would follow different paths and explore a variety of "inscapes" of consciousness throughout his brief poetic career (mainly from 1870-74). First, as Edward Ahearn has persuasively argued, Rimbaud's early poetry of "voyancy" (*Derniers Vers*) enacts the late adolescent's longing to recoup the child's "mythic" experiences of oneness with Being, intactness, or presence. 1 Secondly, in *Une Saison en Enfer*, Rimbaud undergoes a radical revision of the concept of the lyric self, especially with regard to the relationships between self/world, and

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past/present, in addition to a reappraisal of Western values (rationalism, science, and Christianity). Finally, in *Illuminations*, in his "mature" and final stage, he embraces a new epistemology and poetic, which includes the "metaphysique du concret" 2 and the poet's new dramatic role as amused and distanced "observer" of his own mythic recreations.

Rimbaud's interest in achieving an experience of oneness harkens back to Herder's interest in a holistic epistemology derived from myths of creation and in the role of "new mythologies" (i.e., recreation) in the creation of understanding. Like Herder, he strove to discover (or restore) a consciousness of wholeness through the poetic act of creating new worlds. In this chapter, I do not intend to revive the argument over whether or not Rimbaud was a Symbolist poet, since Marjorie Perloff has persuasively situated Rimbaud in the "Other Tradition," that of the Anti-Symbolists which includes Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, and others.<sup>3</sup> Rather, I will argue that Rimbaud's poetry, from beginning to end, consistently followed a path more accurately described as mythic-ecstatic; a path which harkens back to Herder's revolutionary epistemology of reconciled dualities and a redefined lyric sense of self (see "Redefining the Lyric Self" in chapter 3). Throughout, the motivating force behind Rimbaud's poetry would remain to transform the unsatisfactory present (as seen from the maturing adolescent's experience of loss of the child's sense of oneness with Being) into a lost sense of Totality. He would continuously strive to restore this original experience of unity by transforming absence, loss and despair into pure presence, renewal and hope for the future. In his early voyancy poems, this power over Being through language would temporarily satisfy a deep and insatiable need to fill the void of loneliness and separation with love and reintegration (his mother's distance and his father's departure speak to the core of his distress and "Mémoire," the prime example). In this regard, Bonnefoy reflects upon Rimbaud's sad childhood: "Robbed of love, Rimbaud was deprived of that possible communion with what is. And he saw reality, like his own mind, split into dangerous dualities."<sup>4</sup> The absent Unknown (*l'Inconnu*) for Rimbaud was not, as the Symbolist believed, "the secret aspect of the world of appearance" or an "Idea or moral presence beyond sensory realities," rather it meant "the perception, of course oblique, of course fleeting and paradoxical, of the unmasked aseity of things: this aseity which, in its stupendous immediacy, is more force than form, more ravishment than spectacle, more eruption than a state" (R,47).

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While the search for sustained communion with Being or the restoration of the undifferentiated state of childhood remained fairly constant throughout his short poetic career, his poetic method (*methodos*: journey toward) would change radically as the result of a redefined lyric self in *Une Saison en Enfer* (1873). As Ahearn has shown, the earlier voyancy poems tend to be concerned with the adolescent's attempt to recapture and to sustain the child's experience of mythic totality. Such a project, doomed to dissolve into irony, is characterized by the poet achieving his ecstatic vision through the agency of memory and imagination only to be followed by its sudden ("Aube") or gradual ("Mémoire") loss.

After *Une Saison*, however, Rimbaud rejected the subjectivity of his early poetry ("je dois enterrer mon imagination et mes souvenirs") and adopted a more objective stance, while imaginatively recreating the world in his poems. Rimbaud's earlier voyancy poems, those prior to *Une Saison*, reflect a calculated attempt to achieve this "mystic" communion, that is, a ritual use of the ecstatic experience to recapture the lost or fading childhood, undifferentiated consciousness. He does this through psychic journeys into the past and the deliberate altering of normal consciousness ("le raisonné déreglement de tous les sens"; my emphasis), such as through drugs, sex, alcohol, or merely physical and mental pain or exhaustion. 5 Like the primitive shaman's use of torture, self-mutilation, or drugs to achieve an ecstatic experience, Rimbaud hoped to suspend the mind's rational control over experience or the ego's "will to power," in order to gain access to the unconscious mind's repository of experiences and hidden or forbidden knowledge. In *Human Consciousness and its Evolution*, Richard Coan writes that "the shaman is essentially an individual who has developed an ability to enter an altered state of consciousness at will, and who uses this ability to cure the illness of others, to find solutions to tribal problems, to gain power, or to acquire knowledge from the hidden reality he or she is able to enter through a change in consciousness." In undertaking this priestly task, Rimbaud discovered a part of his consciousness (Fischer's "ergotropic") that was very different from and apparently opposed to the Romantic ego and loge-centered poetry epitomized by Alfred de Musset and different from his emerging rational ("I"-centered), adult consciousness. 6

In Edward Ahearn's view, Rimbaud's voyancy poetry of *Derniers Vers* reflects the mental state of the late adolescent who is painfully aware of the loss of childhood's ecstatic state of mind. 7 While Ahearn adopts a speculative, though somewhat plausible, Freudian inter-

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pretation of the child's sexual experiences (that is, his search for the pleasure principle and denial of the reality principle), I find that Lev Vygotsky's research on the child's cognitive development more convincingly addresses the issues of the adolescent's ambivalence about entering adulthood. Vygotsky concludes from his extensive research of the child's cognitive development, that maturation involves several stages from sensory-based complex thinking of the young child (2-5 years old) to a pseudo-conceptual, and finally an abstract, conceptual stage. These stages are not mutually exclusive; rather the last stage, Vygotsky states, contains traces of the first two. This first stage, which he compares to "primitive" or mythic thinking suggests the forgotten or nearly forgotten childhood experience of mythic totality (see Freud on how "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" in the Introduction), which Rimbaud is attempting to recoup either through memory and/or various artificial means. 8 In these early voyancy poems, we witness a repeatedly reenacted journey of psychic return to mythic totality. Since he is unable to sustain it, the poet-adolescent's desired goal is doomed to irony by the temporal nature of the revived ecstatic experience, as well as, by the inevitable process of aging. The nature of these early ecstatic poems, then, is by definition Romantically ironic,<sup>9</sup> nostalgically oriented longing for a past self or state of mind.

These poetic and psychic processes are analogous to what Ricoeur has called "living metaphor" (see chapter two): "internalizing the gaps and paradoxes (he) repeatedly confronts in life and transforms them through the dialectic into the play of being."<sup>10</sup> The "gap and paradoxes" that Rimbaud internalizes in his imagination, become disclosed through the radically metaphoric and ironically mythic imagery, syntax and structures seen in his voyancy poems.<sup>11</sup> As Frohock has observed, Rimbaud's capacity to experience visions of great vividness and beauty resulted from the use of artificial stimulants which served to: "loosen his ties with reality and allow his brilliant images to dissociate and then reform in new associations more or less beyond his control" and "The association would seem to exist objectively and could seem more real than the phenomena of his ordinary world."<sup>12</sup> Rimbaud's experiences are akin to the shaman's in his use of vivid, concrete images and mythic symbolism. Coan has written of the nature of the mythic symbolism bound up with the shamanic role: "More deeply than other community members, the shaman recognizes the mythic symbols for what they are and is adept at thinking in images. The deeper the experience of the shaman, the more he or she realizes that the account of the inward journey in

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mythic terms is only a way of rendering it somewhat intelligible to others, and that the deeper actually experienced (the more difficult to) be described in words" (Coan, 64).

### Mémoire Mythic Return Through Memory

A poem that enacts Rimbaud's desire to regain a childhood mythic-ecstatic experience, "*Mémoire*" (1872), is, in large part, an autobiographical narrative poem about *Monsieur (père)* Rimbaud's desertion of his wife and children, the implied causes of the separation, and the consequent suffering it brought both to mother and son (notably the poet as a child), as conveyed through a series of images generally associated with the River Meuse near Charleville, his provincial home. From a mythopoeic perspective, the poem is about the adolescent poet's longing for the childhood experience of mythic communion (with Being, Nature, Parents, Origins). Through the agency of memory (like Hegel's *Erinnerung*), he hopes to satisfy the need for reintegration on emotional and psychological levels. First in emotional terms, the poem is an expression of a deep need for maternal and paternal love, as well as familial harmony (i.e., the marriage reconciled as a metaphor for the mythopoeic experience). This emotional need is expressed through the marriage metaphor which structures the narrative development of the poem.

On a psychological level, the poem imaginatively recreates through its language the processes of mythic (or child associative complex) thinking and its gradual dissolution. Through the processes of mythopoeic memory (also, in Baudelaire, Victor Hugo, Wordsworth, or Dylan Thomas), the invisible past merges with the visible present and the poet and nature exchange qualities through metaphoric confusion (animism, personification, and synchronicity) as they attain sympathetic identification. Ahearn writes about "the heightened vision of the child, which is lost to most adults," but is rediscovered "in states of convalescence and intoxication" ("the child sees everything in *newness*; he is always *drunk*") and it "transcends normal, adult consciousness of nature, even of the real" (Ahearn, 49-50). Before looking at the poem, let us see how it functions within the tradition of romantic irony (see Anne Mellors in chapter two), while attempting to escape Romantic subjectivity and idealism.

Cyrus Hamlin, who hopes to revise our notions of the Romantic theory of the symbol in the light of Ricoeur's concept of "living meta-

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phor," discusses the metaphoric relationship between the temporal experience of the subjective self in Romantic poetry and the Totality of time or the Infinite experience that it attempts to capture. 14 And, like the temporal experience of the subjective self in the poem, the language of poetry, according to Hamlin (like Gadamer), is based on a temporal experience "subject to division and difference" (TS, 185), in contrast to the motive of such poetry as unmediated vision. Speaking on this inherently dialectical opposition both in the experience and in the language of Romantic poetry (i.e., between the subjective and temporal and the transcendent and timeless), Hamlin explains:

Recollection of what had been lost or prediction of what was to come could only be achieved poetically in the language of metaphor, that sentimental mode of discourse where emotions and intuition must interact through dialectical opposition with reflective thought and self-consciousness. The voice which speaks in poetry can only be aware of itself within a temporal structure, just as the source for any vision of transcendence must be the mortal eye, which can only see its object by standing apart from it. Mystical communion and symbolic identity are beyond the limits of language. (TS, 185)

Here he distinguishes between the symbolic (or naive) mode of poetry, formally attributed to the Romantics, as the fusion of the subject and the object, and the allegorical/ironic (or sentimental) mode that more accurately characterizes Romantic poetry in practice. The later mode is considered metaphoric (as opposed to symbolic), since in it there always exists those paradoxical or ironic gaps between the finite and the infinite, or between the temporal and the timeless: "The actual experience of poetry is always subject to temporal process, and self-fulfillment is never more than an aesthetic illusion. The status of the work in its relation to human experience may far more appropriately be described as metaphoric than symbolic" (TS, 179). Hence, the metaphorical relationship between the poet as a temporal self and his transcendent experience is metaphoric not because they are identical (i.e., symbolic), rather because there is the same quality in the relationship as that portrayed in Ricoeur's concept of "living metaphor," that is, the striving toward the abstract ideal while simultaneously being grounded in the finite and the temporal.

The former transcendent or "symbolic" pattern of experience which Rimbaud uses ironically (perhaps in F. Schlegel's sense) is reflected in Abram's definition of the Greater Romantic Lyric in which the poet's communion with nature through recollection brings enlightenment; it follows this experiential pattern: present-past-

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present and despair-recollection-enlightenment. 15 If one substitutes Coleridge's idea of the "esemplastic" power of the imagination for "recollection" here and in "*Mémoire*," then the poem Abrams describes relies heavily upon such an imaginative power whereby the Totality of time and space (infinity could refer to both) ideally subsumes the finite and temporal. Here, Abrams's theory parallels the idealistic theory of the "symbolic."<sup>16</sup>

To return to Rimbaud, "*Mémoire*" (as well as "*Le Bateau Ivre*," "*Aube*," and "*Enfance*") enacts an ironic reversal of this pattern of poetic experience (rather, enlightenment-recollection-despair), as well as the loss of mental stamina to sustain his imaginatively conceived childhood mythopoeic experience. This poem is, in fact, most emphatically about the dissolution of the metaphoric relationship between the poet's goal and his actual experience as thematically and stylistically the poem "regresses" into irony, dissociative metonymies and personal alienation both from his family and nature. Perhaps one could say that these earlier poems are Rimbaud's testament to his loss of faith in the Romantic (especially Wordsworth's) mythic-symbolic project itself, especially in its philosophical and epistemological assumptions that climaxed with Hegel. In the poems written in this ironically mythic mode, Rimbaud completes the recursive circle of experience the first half of which Abrams describes by plotting the plunge from enlightenment down to despair and discontinuity. Increasingly, especially in his later voyancy poems, Rimbaud would rely upon artificial stimulants to achieve a transient vision, only repeatedly to track its loss.

The mythopoeic experience and its dissipation is enacted stylistically in "*Mémoire*" through the heavy reliance on paratactical syntactic constructions that suggest both metaphoric and dissociative relationships among images (like the tension Ricoeur describes in "living metaphor") and through the transmutation of imagery that depicts mythical communion, as well as its dissolution. Particularly with regard to the style of "*Mémoire*," in *The Design of Rimbaud's Poetry*, Houston discusses ambiguities that arise due to the poem's paratactical syntax and its vague "symbolism."<sup>17</sup> Yet, what has remained ignored in discussions of this kind is the significant relationship of the paratactical constructions and shifting metaphoric ground of the poem to the stylistic enactment of the dissipating mythopoeic experience. In place of the "ambiguous symbols," the poem's imagery is comprised mainly of paired images that suggest interchangeably both personification and animism (the mythic harmony between man and nature) and that are themselves transmuted throughout the

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poem. Ahearn describes the poem as "The (adolescent poet's) fascination with the child's integrity of being, the painful loss of that state, and attempts to rediscover or recreate it" (Ahearn, 27). He, also, mentions the poem's sense of an "antecedence of being in reveries of childhood" which recalls C.G. Jung's view of the child as the "synthesis of the self" and the child's "joyous totality of being."

The first two sections (each composed of two quatrains) convey the sense of mythic communion and familial harmony, although themselves tainted with nuances of loss and sorrow (like Schlegel's irony or "hovering"). The first section is composed of often predominant images that are isolated from each other by periods, semi-colons, colons, or syntactic disjunctures. Yet this syntactic sense of dissociation is held in tension with the implied metaphoric associations between certain pairs of images. First, here is Fowlie's translation of that section (my analyses, however, have been based upon the French original):

*I*

Clear water; like the salt of childhood tears;  
The assault of the sun by the whiteness of  
    women's bodies;  
the silk of banners, in masses and of pure lilies,  
under the walls a maid once defended.

The play of angels-No. . . the golden current on  
    its way  
moves its arms, black and heavy, and above all  
    cool, with grass. She  
dark, having the blue sky as a canopy, call  
for curtains the shadow of the hill and the arch. 18

The first pair of such metaphorically associated images (including similes) in the first line ("Clear water, like the salt of childhood tears") establishes a mythic association, albeit played prophetically against nuances of sadness and loss, between the child and the river (as source-mother). The next cluster of images (11.2-3) includes the white female bodies bathing in the stream, followed by those of silk banners (from the past) and pure lilies (in the present along with riverbanks) ("The assault on the sun by the whiteness of women's bodies;/The silk of banners, in masses and of pure lilies"; *"L'assault au soleil des blancheurs des corps de femmes;/la soie, en foule et de lys pur, des oriflammes"*). Here, Rimbaud creates an interwoven quality syntactically (like a syntactic tapestry), so important to the associa-

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tion ("participation") of the white bodies with lilies and silk banners, by separating the prepositional phrase, "of banner" ("*des oriflammes*"), from the noun it modifies, "silk" ("*la soie*"), thereby juxtaposing banners and lilies ("*des lys pur, des oriflammes*"). The image of the bathers' "assault" on the sun ("*L'assault au soleil des blancheurs des corps de femmes*") can be linked to Saint Joan (soldier and martyr), while simultaneously contrasting what we know of her virginity and stoic self-discipline with the open sensuality of the silken white, sun-wrenched bathers. In this reading, the present text plays against another, absent "text" in a dialectic of sameness and difference.

The last cluster of images in this section (11.3-4) lilies, banners and the wall defended by Saint Joan of Arc introduce synchronistic mythic associations, that is, the simultaneous convergence of present (lilies along the still extant wall) and past (Saint Joan's *fleur-de-lys* bedecked banner placed on the same wall in the fifteenth Century). On the one hand, the pure lilies can be seen as metaphoric substitutions both for the glistening white and silken bodies of the female bathers and for the *fleur-de-lys* on the Tricolore gracefully undulating over the medieval wall. It appears that Rimbaud has assured the reader's making these associations by the syntactic positioning of "banners" at the end of the third line (rather than in the middle where it would follow more logically). There, it provides a syntactic bridge between the images of lilies, banners and the wall, suggesting the child's experience of mythic simultaneity (and associative complexes) as the present and the fifteenth century momentarily converge. Finally of note, this stanza introduces the central images of the poem (river, sun, and flowers) that become transmuted throughout the rest of the poem, the tenor and connotation of which will signal the decline of the mythopoeic experience.

In the midst of this opening scene, so full of visionary awareness, Rimbaud insinuates a foreshadowing of its loss (11.5-8) through contrasting imagery that suggests presence and absence. The first image, "the play of angels," combines the past and present in an allusion to Joan, saint and soldier, and the immediate image of the girls playing in the water. But, the ejaculation, "No," follows it suggesting that the chain of associations leading to "the play of angels" had broken the magical spell of mythic continuity, by the reminder of desertion (first the father's and soon after this poem was written, the son's), absence and loss. The emphatic, "No" after "play of angels" also suggests the poet's rejection of the absent, metaphysical, associated with the father-sun, in favor of mythic presence, associated with the



mother-river. 19 For example, the other reference to angels, in section III, compares the departing father-sun to "a thousand white angels separating on the road." Then, quickly for reassurance, the child turns to "the golden current on its way," symbol of presence and the mother, only to discover, ironically, that she (mother-river) has transmuted into a shadowy stream, now "black and heavy, and above all cool, with grass." The positive images of mythic association of the natural and the human, therefore transmute into negative ones clearly describing his actual, present mother. The dialectical inter-play of personification (river = woman) and animism (woman = river) used to enact mythic harmony, or the "participation" of man and nature, is held in tension with the evolving contrast of both river and mother first as pure presence and warm, erotic and vital source ("the golden current on its way" (1.5) and "the water fills the prepared beds with pale bottomless gold" (1.10), then as cold, sluggish and shadowy absence ("She/dark, having the blue sky as a canopy, calls up/for curtains the shadow of the hill and the arch").

In the first quatrain of this section, we see another instance of the interplay of presence and absence through the "confusion" of tenor and vehicle (personification and animism) in the images of the girls in green dresses and the willows out of which hop unbridled birds"). Here is the entire section:

*II*

Ah! the wet surface extends its clear broth!  
The water fills the prepared beds with pale bottom-  
less gold.

The green faded dresses of girls  
make willows out of which hop unbridled birds.

Purer than a louis, a yellow and warm eyelid:  
the marsh marigold your conjugal faith,  
O Spouse

At prompt noon, from its dim mirror, vies  
with the dear rose Sphere in the sky grey with heat.

Are the girls, probably Rimbaud's sisters, really present and dressed in green, perhaps brocaded with pictures of birds, or are the willow trees, alive with real hopping birds, merely being compared with the girls in green brocaded shirts? To be consistent with the other examples of mythic communion, perhaps both possibilities should be read as both literally and figuratively true and simultaneous. Indeed, the reciprocity of tenor and reference, of personification (willows like

girls) and animism (girls like willows), stylistically recreates the child-poet's mythopoeic imagination at work. However, at the same time that the similarities may strike the reader as apt, clearly the tension of their differences and of the uncertainty of their presence or absence, resulting from the syntactic gaps, figures as part of his, and the reader's, experiences and as a threat to maintaining the very tenuous, fleeting awareness of mythic communion. It would be inaccurate, however, to call this "uncertainty" a form of thematic or semantic indeterminacy, because the determinate meaning of the text lies in the dialectical play of presence and absence enacted in psycho-linguistic terms.

Section III signals the decline of mythic vision (note the reference to "children reading") as the river-wife and sun-husband image appear, not in nuptial union, but in inescapable discord. "Madame," cold and dark, stands "*trop debout*" (too straight or prim), while blocking out the sunlight with her parasol and stepping on the field of wildflowers. The husband, perhaps Rimbaud's father, like the now-setting sun, departs:

### III

Madame stands too straight in the field  
 nearby where the filaments from the (harvest) work  
     snow down: the parasol  
 in her fingers; stepping on the white flower, too  
     proud for her;  
 children reading in the flowering grass  
 their book of red morocco. Alas, he, like  
 a thousand white angels separating on the road,  
 goes off beyond the mountain! She, all  
 cold and dark, runs! after the departing man!

Both pronouns "he" ("*Lui*") and "she" ("*Elle*") could merely refer to sun and river respectively, this is until the last image, "after the departing man." For here the natural and the human meanings merge, while also suspended in doubt, where the dark river would more aptly be seen as chasing the sun, not "the man" as would Mme. Rimbaud. Like the sun which on its diurnal path must leave the river, thus transforming her into water, cold and dark like "the color of ash," the husband, having deserted his wife and children, leaves her "all cold and dark, run(ning) after the departing man!"

The separation completed, in section IV, Rimbaud adopts the emotional point of view of his deserted mother, as if the child, needing her (the pre-ego mother-child identity) more than ever, reaches out

briefly in an act of sympathetic identification. Through the eyes of Vitalie Rimbaud, longing for her departed man, we witness the collapse of her marriage, now synonymous with mythic unity, as reflected in the effects of sunset on the river and the animistic imagery expressed in terms of absence ("Longing for the thick young arms of pure grass"):

*IV*

Longing for the thick young arms of pure grass!  
 Gold of April moons in the heart of the holy bed; joy  
 of abandoned boatyards, a prey  
 to August nights which made rotting things  
 germinate!

Let her weep now under the rampart! the breath  
 of the poplars above is the only breeze.  
 After, there is the surface, without reflection,  
 without springs, gray:  
 an old dredger, in his motionless boat, labors.

Preceding images of sensuous opulence, presence, and immediacy recede into those of darkness, cold, absence, and decay. At the same time, gold, the color symbolic of visionary totality and hope for Rim-baud, fades into a shadowy gray that signifies loss of vision, and with it, the child-poet's despair.

The child's poet-visionary point of view informs the final section, which turns upon the poignant irony that what is oppressively present for the poet-adolescent is the realization of absence of childhood ecstatic vision, of golden daylight (sun) and the moving current, of love of husband and father, and of mythic-nuptial communion. For the prior merging of past and present and of man and nature in the child's memory of an idyllic state of vision (i.e., the rapidly receding undifferentiated state of childhood), vitality and love co-existed, he is returned powerlessly to the despair of the present and normal consciousness to a stagnant and visionless reality.

*V*

Toy of this sad eye of water, I cannot pluck  
 O motionless boat! O arms too short, either this  
 Or the other flower: neither the yellow nor which  
 bothers me  
 There, nor the friendly blue one in the ash-colored  
 water.

Ah! dust of the willows shaken by the wing!  
 The roses of the reeds devoured long ago!  
 My boat still stationary, and its chain caught  
 In the bottom of this rimless eye of water in what mud?

Acting as testimony to his loss of vision, abundant images of absence and sorrow close the poem: the bright "eye" of the sun becomes the "sad eye of water"; the dust of willows is shaken by the wings of departing birds (earlier on brocaded dresses); and the roses of reeds are devoured, surrounding the immobile boat, a familiar romantic image of the psychological journey, stuck in the "mud" of normal consciousness.

Rimbaud's ironically mythic view of experience in "*Mémoire*" depends upon imagery and syntactic relationships that suggest met-aphoric continuities in a dialectic between presences and absences, past and present. This dialectic reflects the tension between the fading memory of his past childhood ecstatic state of mind and the present adolescence's desire to restore this state. Yet, as much as he apparently wants or needs as a maturing, literate adolescent to poetically reenact the human and mythic harmony temporarily restored through his recreative memory and the language of the poem, the force of his will and his imagination fail against the forces of change in nature, in human relationships, and in the temporal nature of the ecstatic state. As we witness recurrently in his visionary poems, the ideal of re-experiencing the mythic totality of Being inevitably becomes subverted by the vulnerability of experience to change and loss. The ideal of the invisible, absent underlying continuities evoked through artificially imposed vision inevitably gives way to the "visibility of appearances," the ever-present antipodes of experience. And in stylistic terms, the dialectical interplay of "living" metaphor gives way to the presentational imagery and dissociative metonymies that signal the loss of vision. 20 Past and present, human and natural, mythic and mundane, all can be seen finally as much in ironic tension as in harmonious identification, further underscoring the differences, the absence of continuities, between what was merely imagined to be present and what actually was. "*Mémoire*" can be understood, then, as an early example of the loss of faith in the Romantic belief in the ability to restore and sustain the childhood experience of mythopoeic oneness. He expresses a growing skepticism in this poem by taking the dialectical tension seen in metaphor to the limits of irony and possibly even beyond it, to nihilism.

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## Une Saison en Enfer

After the *Lettres du voyant*, *Une Saison en Enfer* (1873) is the most important document of Rimbaud's poetic and epistemological development, marking at its juncture a "crisis of consciousness" (anticipated in "*Mémoire*") that would produce a radically new definition of the lyric self and, with this, his relationship to reality or the world. In the mode of a dramatic monologue that the poet conducts with his past "selves" and with his immediate split-self, Rimbaud confronts in narrative unfolding the moral, epistemological and poetic contradictions that comprise his conscious, rational (young adult) self. *A Season in Hell* is a prose poem devoid of the earlier metaphorical interplay of past and present, temporal and transcendent, and yet it continues with a dialectic of various dramatic (two personae), epistemological, and moral points of view. Like the shaman who uses torture and suffering to escape ego-boundaries in order to heal personal or tribal ills or to achieve special wisdom or truth, Rimbaud uses the first person plural to describe his epic journey (suffering, death, and resurrection) of the spirit: "We are going toward the *Spirit*" ("*Nous allons à L'Esprit*").<sup>21</sup> In an attempt to free himself from the limits of subjectivity and temporality, he first strains against the boundaries of the self by delving into his origins (Ricoeur's "archeology" of the self).<sup>22</sup> In *Illuminations*, his stance with respect to reality is usually mediated, that is, it involves imaginative transformation or recreation in a new world that bridges subjective and objective.<sup>23</sup>

Marc Eigeldinger situates Rimbaud's poetic of voyancy in an "objectivist" tradition that harkens back to German Romanticism (especially, to Novalis, and in France to Victor Hugo).<sup>24</sup> He persuasively argues that in *Lettres du voyant*, Rimbaud deliberately distanced himself from the subjectivity of Rousseau and French Romanticism (its self-enclosed egotism), in the search for the idea of a universal self ("*l'idée de l'universalité du Je*") or to transform the individual self into a collective self ("le poète transforme son moi individuel en un moi collectif"). Eigeldinger goes on to say that this would not involve the simple "*dédoublernent où dépersonnalisation*" of the self, but its "*élargissement*" (enlargement) as currently expressed in Jungian terms, an impersonal and collective self: "*qui porte et exprime l'âme inconsciente et active de l'humanité*"; *Cela m'est évident: j'assiste à l'éclosion de ma pensée: je la regarde, je l'écoute.*" In *Saison*, then, Rimbaud looks back on the subjective nature of his earlier voyancy poetry, which was largely built upon a Cartesian

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false epistemology ("*les limites de l'ontologie cartésienne*"), the individual unconscious and personal past, and struggles to redefine the lyric self in a way that recalls both Jung's and Fischer's ideas of an enlarged, impersonal Self, the collapse of subject/object and past/present distinctions. 25 In addition to re-examining his past poetic practice and epistemological assumptions, Rimbaud searches in *Saison* for the wisdom necessary to assess the value of the Western rational-scientific and Christian traditions.

In the first poem, "Bad Blood" ("*Mauvais Sang*"), Rimbaud begins the search for an authentic and integrated self by recalling his ancestral past, now co-present with the modern self, both of which are simultaneously coursing through his veins. He acknowledges his own "primitive" past, the moral and epistemological dimensions of that facet of himself represented by his barbaric and idolatrous Gallic ancestors:

I have the white-blue eye of my Gallic ancestors,  
their narrow skull and their clumsiness in fighting. I  
find my clothes as barbarous as theirs. Only I don't  
butter my hair. (SH, 6-7)

and,

It is quite clear to me that I have always been  
of an inferior race. I cannot understand revolt. (SH, 8-9)

The entire history of France, in fact, courses through his veins in the present moment, engrained, as Jung might say, in his racial "memory":

I recall the history of France, eldest daughter  
of the Church. A villain, I must have made the journey  
to the Holy Land my head is full of roads through  
Swabian plain, views of Byzantium, ramparts of  
Jerusalem: the cult of Mary, compassion for the  
crucified Christ awake in me among a thousand  
profane phantasmagoria. (SH, 8-9).

While his point of view shifts from the Gallic pagan, to the medieval pilgrim to the convict, beast and "nigger," suddenly the superstition, idolatry and magic of the amoral pagan transmutes into the reason, science and selflessness of the Christian pagan-convert: "The inferior race has over-run everythingthe people, as we say, the nation,

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reason, science" (SH, 11). And later, "O my abnegation, O my marvelous charity! here below however!" (SH, 15). The ebb and flow of moral and epistemological perspectives from the bestial pagan's superstition and belief in magic to the modern Christian's faith and belief in reason and science enacts the spiritual struggle that Rimbaud undergoes throughout the poem:

I have never belonged to this people;  
I have never been a Christian: I am of the race that sang  
under torture; laws I have never understood; I have  
no moral sense, I am a brute: you are making a  
mistake (SH, 16-17).

And later a shamanic-like ceremony (with drums and dance) contrast with the white man's landing:

I buy the dead in my belly. Shouts, drums, dance, dance, dance! I cannot even see the time when, white men landing, I  
shall fall into nothingness. (SH, 18-19)

The moral and temporal point of view changes to the pre-missionary, "Rousseauian" pagans:

The white men are landing! The cannon! We  
must submit to baptism, put on clothes, work.  
My heart has known the coup de grace. Ah! I  
did not foresee it.  
I have never done evil. Light will my days  
be and I shall not have known the torment of the soul  
half dead to good. . . . (SH, 19)

This section ends, however with Rimbaud's fall from the convert's innocence and zeal and with his disillusionment with both a restrictive rationality and blind Christian idealism:

I am not a prisoner of my reason. I said: God. I  
want freedom in salvation: how am I to seek it?  
Frivolous tastes have left me no more regrets for  
the age of tender hearts. Each of us has his reason,  
scorn and charity; I reserve my place at the top of  
that angelic ladder of common sense. (SH, 23)

In "Night of Hell" ("*Nuit de l'enfer*"), Rimbaud is punished for his sin of pride by being plunged into Hell. What began as a moral

struggle and ends as punishment for sin in "Bad Blood," becomes in "Night of Hell" a metaphor for the self-imposed hell produced by the delirium mandated by his poetics of voyancy: "I think I am in hell, therefore I am in hell" (SH, 27, 29). The ironic allusion to and reversal of Descartes's rationalist dictum, *cogito ergo sum*, discloses the implicit and anti-rationalist stance emerging here. This section of the poem parallels the experience of "the derangement of all the senses," spoken of in his earlier voyancy letters, including: the loss of innocence, morality, brotherhood (in general, the Christian virtues), and his self-destruction by fire. This is analogous to the alchemist's deliberate destruction, albeit of the self, out of which he hoped would emerge a radiant and renewed self-in-the world. While most likely, also, suffering the drug addict's withdrawal in his literal and figurative hell, the persona describes himself as a mutilated man:

I have swallowed a monstrous dose of poison.  
 Thrice blessed be the counsel that came to me!  
 My entrails are on fire. The violence of the venom  
 twists my limbs, deforms and prostrates me. I die  
 of thirst, I suffocate, and cannot scream. It is Hell,  
 eternal punishment! See how the fire flares up again!  
 How nicely I burn. Go to it, demon! (SH, 26-27)

And,

Noble ambitions!  
 And still this is life! Suppose damnation  
 were eternal! Then a man who would mutilate  
 himself is well damned, isn't he? (SH, 26-27)

The destruction of the self in the fires of hell results in a dramatized "*dédoublement du moi*" or split-self (pagan-convert, savage-modern, mythic-rational thinker). This split-self (akin to the schizophrenic) first appears subtly at the end of "Night of Hell" and, then, explicitly in the two voices that dominate "Delirium, I and II."

From the end of "Night," the two sides of Rimbaud's split-self emerge in the personae of the damned pagan-voyant and the redeemed reasonable-convert. Their morally and epistemologically distinct and antithetical points of view alternate, as if engaged in an internal dialogue or dialectic. The section below begins with what sounds like a declaration of mythic integration, followed alternately with exclamations by the pagan-voyant and by the reasonable-convert:

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I am going to unveil all the mysteries:  
religious mysteries, or natural mysteries, death,  
birth, the future, the past, cosmogony, nothingness.

I am a master of phantasmagoria.

Listen! . . .

I have all the talents! There is no one here  
and there is someone: I would not squander my  
treasures. Do you want me to vanish, to dive after  
the *ring*? Is that what you want? I will make  
gold, remedies.

Have faith in me the, faith assuages, guides,  
restores. Come, all of you even the little  
children that I may confront you, that my  
heart may be poured out for you, . . .

And what of me? All this hardly makes  
me regret the world very much. I am lucky not to  
suffer more. My life was nothing but sweet  
follies, it's a pity. (SH, 31-33)

The moral values, the way to truth, are less locked in a battle for dominance than juxtaposed in dialectical interplay, at once distinct facets of his personality, yet inextricably bound: "Ah! to rise again into life! to cast our eyes on our deformities. And that poison, that kiss, a thousand times accused! My weakness, the cruelty of the world! My God, pity, hide me, I behave too badly! I am hidden and I am not" (SH, 33).

Both "Delirium, I and II" continue the dialectic begun in "Night," but with the focus shifting to the epistemology and, in particular, the poetics of voyancy, a stance he now found to be based in self-deception. In "Delirium, I" the repentant self, the reasonable convert or "the foolish virgin," confesses his past sins to Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, telling how he had been seduced by the "infernal bridegroom," the pagan voyant. While Rimbaud's biographical critics have established the aptness of seeing Verlaine as the foolish virgin and Rimbaud as the infernal bridegroom, his seducer, to limit the poem to a biographical level of interpretation is to miss the significance of Rimbaud's internal moral and epistemological struggle (dialectic) that has been under way from the beginning. The "foolish virgin," the voice of the pagan-voyant, recalls his "entrapment" and escape from "Real life":

His mysterious delicacies had seduced me, I forgot

all my duty to society, to follow him. What a life!  
 Real life is absent. We are not in the world. I go  
 where he goes, I have to (SH, 37).

And he describes how he and Verlaine led a dream-like existence in which, as he says above, real life is absent:

He wants to live a sleepwalker. Would his goodness  
 and his charity alone give him the right to live in the  
 real world . . . I shall awake, and the laws and customs  
 will have changed, thanks to his magic power, or  
 the world, while remaining the same, will leave me to my desires,  
 joys, heedless. (SH, 45)

The effects of their cultivated derangement on poetic language are described in "Delirium, II," where we learn of the poet's power of alchemical transformation. In his induced visionary state, the ordinary or base metals of experience could magically be transformed into "gold," those radiant moments of imagined totality and newness of sight (childhood's ecstatic state). He describes one such instance below, reminiscent of the Surrealist poet's effort to bring his own "desires into the world he perceives" (Caws, 21):

I became adept at simple hallucination: in place of a factory I really  
 saw a mosque, a school of drummers led by angels, carriages on the  
 highways of the sky, a drawing-room at the bottom of a lake; mon-  
 sters, mysteries; the title of a melodrama would raise horrors before  
 me.  
 Then I would explain my magic sophisms with the hallucination of  
 words!  
 Finally I came to regard as sacred the disorder of my mind. (SH, 55)

Yet, from the end of "Delirium, I" to "Adieu," the final poem, Rimbaud seems to emerge from the depths of his self-imposed Hell into the light of reason only finally to relinquish complete faith in it, too: "At last, O happiness, O reason, I brushed from the sky the azure that is darkness, and I lived gold spark of *pure* light" (SH, 61).

In "The Impossible," while looking back on the poetry of voyancy he says, "how stupid it was" ("*quelle sottise c'était*") (SH, 68-69) and tries to examine the causes of "modern wretchedness" and the alternatives open to him. We live in what the persona calls "The Occidental swamps," which include all the "cruel developments the spirit has suffered since the end of the Orient" (SH, 71) (See where Olson

takes up this topic in chapter seven). Again, rejecting the values of the West, which include reason, science, pride, and conquest ("the will to power"), Rimbaud writes:

To the devil, I said, with martyr's crowns, the beam of art, the pride of inventors, the ardor of plunderers: I returned to the Orient and to the first and eternal wisdom. A dream of vulgar indolence it would seem!

Yet, I was hardly thinking of the pleasure of escaping modern wretchedness. . . . But is there not real torment in this, that, ever since the declaration of science, Christianity, man *fools himself*, proves to himself the obvious, puffs himself up with the pleasure of reiterating those proofs, and can live in no other way! (SH, 73)

Edward Said's discussion of "orientalism" provokes a deeper understanding of Rimbaud's perception of the Orient in this section as it relates to his personal struggle. Within the context of the nineteenth century French "orientalism," according to Said, "the Orient (is) less a place than a topos, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics" in contrast with Western "superiority," or "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'" 26 Furthermore according to such a view, the Orient as it is becomes clouded over by "the imaginative examination of things Oriental based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who and what was Oriental, then according to detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (Said, 8). In Rimbaud's case, however, his perspective in *Saison* does not come from the "unchallenged centrality" of Western consciousness (rational, scientific, and Christian), rather, conversely, from his challenging the supremacy of such a world view.

In "The Impossible," Rimbaud's desire to return to "the original fatherland" ("L'Orient, la patrie primitive") suggested an escape to a non-Western (preliterate) state of mind associated with eternal wisdom and purity of vision, in a historical-cultural sense akin to the innocence and mythopoeic vision experienced in childhood (see "*Mémoire*" and "*Enfance*"). Ahearn writes of *Une Saison*: "the critique of the attempt to alter consciousness retains the features of myth, ecstatic techniques and danger, and even its negativism displays a

continuing nostalgia, as well as the hint of *more appropriate methods of reaching the primal state of being*" (Ahearn, 140; my emphasis). As such, it is a "regressive" act, a romantic nostalgic longing for "restorative reconstruction" (Said, 176) of a worldview and epistemology whose assumptions have, until very recently, lost credibility. This "Eden" or Earthy Paradise, the Orient, contrasts with Western culture ("the Occidental Swamps"), characterized by (what he viewed as) the repressive forces of rationalism (science, philosophy, literacy), religion (Christianity), and imperialism (French colonization of North Africa): "How far all this is from the conception, from the wisdom of the Orient, the original fatherland" (Said, 73). Rimbaud seeks to overturn here what we have since then liked to refer to as the Western onto-theological and imperialist tradition, which, Heidegger would observe later, has run its course, leaving in its wake the dread of Nothingness or Absence (Kierkegaard):

Philosophers, you are of your Occident.  
 My spirit, beware. No violent projects of  
 salvation. Bestir yourself! Ah! for us science  
 is too slow!  
 O purity! purity!  
 It is this moment of awakening that has given  
 me the vision of purity! Through the spirit we go to  
 God!  
 Heart-breaking misfortune! (SH, 75)

As an alternative, the persona searches for the "purity of vision" freed from the ego and mind's "will to power" over reality: "ever since that declaration of science, Christianity, man fools himself, proves to himself the obvious, puffs himself up with the pleasure of reiterating those proofs" (see chapter seven on a return to preliterate, oral traditions). Through his attempt to efface the self (ego), he believed there would come about a progress of the spirit described in "Morning":

From the same desert, in the same night,  
 always my tired eyes awake to the silver star,  
 always, but the Kings of life are not moved, the  
 three magi, mind and heart and soul. When shall  
 we go beyond the mountains and the shores, to  
 greet the birth of new toil, of new wisdom, the  
 flight of tyrants, of demons, the end of super-stiition,  
 to adore the first to adore! (SH, 81-83)

The object of his search is ambiguous here; the search for a new wisdom encompasses neither the "silver star" of transcendence, nor the "mountains" and the "shores" of this world of the senses. And yet, like the magi of old, he awaits a redeemer, albeit for him in the form of "new toil, of new wisdom, and beyond the tyrannies of the mind and the senses. Although it is not explicit, I believe there is a movement here toward the self-less values emphasized in the last poem, "Adieu." While this spirit seems to draw him toward the transcendent, "the silver star," the forces of Life (mind, heart, and soul) pull him in yet another direction.

In "Adieu," Rimbaud says farewell (perhaps forever) to the amorality, irrationality and poetics of the voyant, and turns to embrace "rough reality," searching (perhaps for reality in the mediated, rather than in the positivistic sense) for the totality of Being in the pure presence of things, in the finite and paradoxical. Rather than try to reconcile the "dangerous dualities of mind" that he cultivated as a visionary poet, Rimbaud seems to go to the opposite extreme in seeking to abandon all subjectivity in favor of a dream of untainted perception:

I! who called myself angel or seer, exempt  
 from all morality, I am returned to the soil with  
 a duty to seek and rough reality to embrace! Peasant!  
 Am I mistaken? Would charity be the sister of  
 death or me?  
 At last, I shall ask forgiveness for having fed  
 on lies. And now let's go.  
 But no friendly hand! (SH, 87)

Despite reverting to the opposite extreme of the false dichotomy (subjective/objective; vision/reality) to which he falls victim here, Rimbaud ends "Une Saison" on an optimistic note, anticipating the future when he will be able to reconcile the dualities and contradictions of human existence: "Why talk of a friendly hand! My great advantage is that I can laugh at old lying loves and put to shame those deceitful couples, . . . and I shall be free to possess truth in one soul and one body" (SH, 89).

Any "reading" of *Une Saison en Enfer* runs the risk of imposing logical coherence on its multiple themes and points of view, thereby losing sight of the struggle which it enacts. Yet, careful readers may agree that throughout its orchestrated discord emerges a recurrent, if not a unifying theme that reveals approximately where Rimbaud

stands at the end of the poem: the idea of "charity" ("*la charité*"). In terms of the moral concerns in the poem, "charity" appears in several contexts to mean selflessness, self-abnegation, and brotherly love (the remnant from Christianity that he saves). Then, with regard to his evolving poetics, "charity" seems to be synonymous with Kier-kegaard's "interest" and Heidegger's "Care," that is, an attentiveness or openness to the pure presence of Being (reality).<sup>28</sup> And with regard to this shifting epistemological stance, "charity" signifies an objectivity akin to what he sees as the wisdom of the Orient.<sup>29</sup> All three facets of his personality—the ethical, the poetic and the epistemological—appear to converge in the figure of the Peasant in "*Adieu*": "I am returned to the soil with a duty to seek and rough reality to embrace." (He sounds much like his mother's letter to Verlaine on duty after the London break up?) Quite literally, then, his search has returned him to his origins. Despite the ruggedly idyllic image with which the poem ends, one must not forget the "spiritual struggle" that we have witnessed and, in semantic terms at least, in which we have ourselves participated. *Une Saison*, finally, enacts thematically, epistemologically, and poetically "*le combat spirituel*" through which Rimbaud—beginning with "*Mémoire*"—has struggled to make Absence (Totality) wholly present. By the end of *A Season*, "presence" has more to do with the poet's ability to apprehend the immediate and objective than with the visionary striving for communion seen in "*Mémoire*." However, the dialectic involving the child's imaginative world of mythic creations *versus* the adult consciousness of "rough reality" does not end here.<sup>30</sup>

#### Illuminations Discovering a New Ground of Discourse

In his discussion of "ecstatic realizations" in the *Illuminations*, Edward Ahearn shows that there are consistent references in Rimbaud's voyancy letters and poetry to ecstatic experiences and techniques. He argues that Rimbaud's ecstatic experiences and the techniques used to achieve them are common to other cultures (ancient Greek, Siberian and Asian, African, Islamic, and Christian mysticism) and periods of history, and were even given privileged importance by them.<sup>31</sup> Some students of religion (William James, Aldous Huxley, N. K. Chadwick, Mircea Eliade) have even argued for "the mantic origins of all cultures, for whom rationalism represents . . . a repression and sublimation of ecstatic states and systems of knowl-

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edge" (Ahearn, 153). For Rimbaud, as for other "priests" of the ecstatic (bacchants, shamans, mystics, etc.), the goal was to achieve a new consciousness of oneness with reality (elemental, animal, sexual, historical, geographical, societal). So strong and pervasive is the evidence of the importance of the ecstatic in Rimbaud's poetry and poetics, I believe (Ahearn, Bays, et al.), that it is essential to read the *Illuminations* in this context.

Before looking at selected *Illuminations*, I would like to summarize Ahearn's discussion of the ecstatic techniques that Rimbaud uses, as well as the ecstatic imagery and motifs that appear in his poetry in general. 32 First, Rimbaud draws upon ecstatic techniques that are derived from a variety of different cultures and religious traditions (e.g., Dionysian, fakiristic, shamanic, Christian mystical). In various contexts, he writes about sensory modification by deprivation, sexual activity, stimulants, self-imposed suffering, dance and drums, music, meditation and spiritual discipline (Ahearn, 151). Through these ecstatic techniques, certain kinds of imagery associated with ecstatic experiences emerge: the "barbarously" elemental (earth, fire, water, blood), the imagery of the cosmic and of totality ("*Voyelles*" and "*Génie*") or of new worlds (new "unreal" cities or combinations of nature-city-society), unity with the animal (shamanism, totemism, and hunting motifs) or with the elemental and natural, spiritualized imagery of alchemy and Christian mysticism (solitude, flight, light, intense joy-pain ("*Fêtes de la patience*"), and motifs of *dégagement* (Huxley's the "not-self" and Nietzsche's "unselving") and enlargement of the self.

In many *Illuminations*, Rimbaud creates new worlds where subjective and objective "worlds" meet, a mediated (transformed, interpreted) reality accessed through altered consciousness which depicts the poet as "divine" recreator, who, like the shaman of "primitive" societies, "alone attains the exalted state, which he communicates to his community in the form of a dramatic and musical spectacle.<sup>33</sup> Through the techniques of the ecstatic state, the poet achieves a new lyric self, an "enlarged" (C. G. Jung and R. Fischer), objectified Self, who refers back to the primordial meaning-making Self of creation myths (discussed in chapter one).

Many of the *Illuminations* enact the power of the poet-shaman's consciousness to create new worlds out of a dialectic with reality<sup>34</sup> and to experience, at least temporarily, the "primal state of being" (a lost Edenic state of integration with reality and of psychic unity). The *Illuminations* in which I am most interested from a mythopoeic perspective, then, are those which enact the recreative media-

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tion of mind and world ("new mythologies" or *bricolage*) in imitation of the original creative act. The *Illuminations* continue, albeit in a more objectified way, the mythopoeic impulses seen in his childhood voyancy poems and an "ecstatic poetics" expressed as early as the *voyant* letters. With his spiritual crisis in *Une Saison*, Rimbaud realized that he had been trying to regain "la sagesse de l'Orient" by inappropriately that is, obscuring and intoxicating means: "la brume," "l'ivrognerie! et le tabac! l'ignorance! et les dévouements!" Both the "ecstatic realizations" ("comédies") and the objectified "visions" (new creations) that fuse man, nature, city, and society continue to explore the poetic possibilities of mythic creativity, as well as the ecstatic techniques that disclose a more authentic truth of being. 35

To the extent, then, that many *Illuminations* are "no longer grounded in a coherent discourse" or "refuse to cohere in a consistent referential scheme," they might rightly be called "indeterminate" or "non-referential forms."<sup>36</sup> But, as Ahearn has convincingly shown, these poems reflect a new ground of discourse, one which quite self-consciously diverges from "normal" (literate, coherent, and referential) poetic or discursive expression. The *Illuminations* depicting "ecstatic realizations" and nature-city "comedies" ("*Fête de la patience*," "*Génie*," "*Barbare*," "*Villes*," *I and II*) unearth a new ground of discourse, which is perhaps better understood in relationship to mythic recreative impulses, as well as to the poet's "regressing to a primitive unconscious" (Feder, 52) or to pre-rational, preliterate, or ecstatic states (Cassirer, Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, Vygotsky, Ong).

Like others (Adam, Ahearn, Bernard, and Underwood), my readings of the *Illuminations* focus upon a mediated reality where one can discover the dialectical play between the poet's mind (albeit in its altered state) and the world. Like Lévi-Strauss' *bricoleur*, Rimbaud has reassembled the "debris" of past and present experiences (the London "tube," the suburban railway, the Grand Hotel in Scarborough, the Crystal Palace, the Alpine funiculars, etc.).<sup>37</sup> Suzanne Bernard, writing about the dynamics of the destruction and recreation at work in the *Illuminations*, stresses how out of everyday experiences something extraordinary comes into being: "*Il n'est pas seulement notre monde habituel décomposé en ses éléments chaotiques; il porte vraiment la marque d'un génie créateur*" (Bernard, 187), and "*on s'apercevrait que bon nombre des visions 'surnaturelle' ou féeriques décrites par Rimbaud peuvent avoir leur origine dans des spectacles vus ô Paris ou ô Londres*" (Bernard, 192). In other words, the reader would be remiss simply to discount the actual experiences that Rim-



baud is known to have had and the places he is known to have visited, especially when he rejected in *Saison* the earlier intoxications of extreme subjectivity. Rather, the *Illuminations* may more profitably be read as recreations using the "debris" of the old world (reality), and transforming it into new worlds, new mythological creations. In this sense, they follow from F. Schlegel's mandate to create "new mythologies" and from Lévi-Strauss' discussion of the *bricoleur*, one who creates something new from past and present debris. The poems represent new creations that are, also, myths in Jung's sense of "original revelations of the preconscious psyche."

#### A. "Villes I"

I would like to compare two readings of "*Villes I*," that are based on very different assumptions about the nature of poetic discourse and the creation of meaning in a poetic text. Although Marjorie Perloff grounds her reading of "*Villes I*" on symbolist-formalist assumptions about language and meaning, her perceptive and detailed close-reading lends support to any interpretation that takes into account the mythopoeic, ecstatic nature of the poem. 38 Here are several of the key phrases that Perloff uses to describe the "fictiveness" of "*Villes I*" the "central quality of Rimbaud's poetic landscape." The cityscape is unrecognizable or "impossible to locate in any 'real' space" (i.e., it has "no external referent," unlike Eliot's London or Yeats' Byzantium). The images of the city "are consistently *cancelled out* by images of wild nature." The poem shifts settings "without any discernible logic" and "Rimbaud's dream cities seem to be *everywhere*" and 'there is a *constant metamorphosis* of land into ocean and back again ("*Sur les passerelles de l'abime et les toits des auberges l'ardeur du ciel pavoise les mats*"; On footbridges over the abyss and on the roofs of the inns the fire of the sky adorns the masts with flags) (Perloff, 50-51; all italics are mine). With regard to time and space, "the *eternal present*, with its continuous metamorphosis of landscapes and its astonishing juxtapositions of disparate images, now gives way to *one time and one place*" ("*Et une heure je suis descendu dans le mouvement d'un boulevard de Bagdad*"; And, one hour, I went down into the bustle of a boulevard in Bagdad). On one hand, she talks about how Rimbaud "combines Christian and pagan connotations in phrases like '*seraphic centaureses*,'" and, on the other, how "images work against harmony" (Perloff, 53) and how "discontinuity"

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is the fundamental rule of the *Illuminations*. In addition to the fusion of times and places into an "eternal present" and "one time and place," Perloff maintains that the subject-object dualism, is, also, collapsed: "in Rimbaud, *the Romantic distinction between subject and object*, a distinction that persists in the poetry of Yeats and Eliot, *collapses*" (my italics, Perloff, 59).

When Rimbaud writes that he "had found the false meaning of the Self" (*lettres du voyant*) or that "*on me pense*" (rather than "*je pense*"), he was redefining the limits of the lyrical self. According to Perloff, these are not oracular "voices" speaking through him, rather the voices "come not from *outside* and *above* but, like the magic flood that wells up underground in so many of his poems, from *inside and below*, from the poet's subconscious" (Perloff, 61). In place of the "subconscious," we might more precisely describe Rimbaud's state as a self-induced ecstatic state which enlarges the self, merging it with reality (nature, animal, elemental). She continues, "if the I becomes 'another,' the Romantic dualism of subject and object is resolved; the self no longer contemplates nature but becomes part of its operational processes" (Perloff, 61). In this way, the "I" or Romantic ego is effaced or "dissolved" into the poetic landscape or cityscape. 39

In a more explicitly mythopoeic reading, Ahearn describes "*villes I*" as a "major ecstatic text" which is "archetypally syncretist, seemingly articulating the entirety of known ecstatic traditions, recreating them as present, then brutally asserting their loss" (Ahearn, 212). Here is the entire poem:

Ce sont des villes! C'est un peuple pour qui se sont montés ces Alleghanys et ces Libans de rêve! Des chalets de cristal et de bois qui se meuvent sur des rails et des poulies invisibles. Les vieux cratères ceints de colosses et de palmiers de cuivre rugissent mélodieusement dans les feux. Des fêtes amoureuses sonnent sur les canaux pendus derrière les chalets. La chasse des carillons crie dans les gorges. Des corporations de chanteurs géants accourent dans les vêtements et des oriflammes éclatants comme la lumière des cimes. Sur les plates-formes au milieu des gouffres, les Rolands sonnent leur bravoure. Sur les passerelles de l'abîme et les toits des auberges, l'ardeur du ciel pavoise les mâts. L'écroulement des apotheoses rejoint les champs des hauteurs où les centaures s'évaluent parmi les avalanches. Au-dessus du niveau des plus hautes crêtes, une mer troublée par la naissance éternelle de Vénus, chargée de flottes orphéoniques et de la rumeur des perles

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et des conques précieuses, la mer s'assombrit parfois avec des éclats mortels. Sur les versants des moissons de fleurs grandes comme nos armes et nos coupes, mugissent. Des cortèges de Mabs en robes rouges, opalines, montent des ravines. Lohaut, les pieds dans la cascade et les ronces, les cerfs tettent Diane. Les Bacchants des banlieues sanglotent et la lune brûle et hurle. Vénus entre dans les cavernes des forgerons et des ermites. Des groupes de beffrois chantent les idées des peuples. Des châteaux en os sort la musique inconnue. Toutes les légendes évoluent et les élans se ruent dans les bourges. Le paradis des orages s'effondre. Les sauvages dansent sans cesse la fête de la nuit. Et, une heure, je suis descendu dans le mouvement d'un boulevard de Bagdad où des compagnies ont chanté la joie du travail nouveau, sous une brise épaisse, circulant sans pouvoir éluder les fabuleux fantômes des monts où l'on a dû se retrouver.

Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure me rendront cette région d'où viennent mes sommeils et mes moindres mouvements?

[These are cities! This is a people for whom these dream Alleghanys and Lebanons have sprung up! Chalets of crystal and wood that move on invisible rails and pulleys. The old craters circled by colossi and copper palms roar melodiously in the fires. Love festivals sound on the canals hung behind the chalets. The pack of chimes cries in the gorges. Guilds of giant singers rush up in clothes and oriflammes dazzling like the light of the summits. On the platforms in the middle of the chasms the Rolands sound their bravura. On the footbridges over the abyss and the roofs of the inns the ardor of the sky decks out the masts. The collapse of apotheoses joins the fields on the heights where the seraphic centaresses move about amid the avalanches. Above the level of the highest peaks, a sea troubled by the eternal birth of Venus, brimming with orphic choral fleets and with the murmur of precious pearls and conches, the sea dims sometimes with mortal flashes. On the slopes harests of flowers big as our arms and our goblets, bellow. Processions of Mabs in ruddy dresses, opaline, ascend from the ravines. Up there, feet in the waterfall and brambles, the deer are suckled by Diana. The Bacchants of the suburbs sob and the moon burns and howls. Venus goes into the caves of blacksmiths and hermits. Groups of belfries sing the ideas of the peoples. From castles built of bone emerges the unknown music. All the legends circulate and the elks stampede the towns. The paradise of storms collapses. The savages dance

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ceaselessly the festival of night. And one hour I went down into the movement of a boulevard of Bagdad where groups of companions sang the joy of the new work, under a heavy breeze, circulating without being able to avoid the fabulous phantoms of the mountains where one must have met again.

What good arms, what fine hour will render back to me that region from which come my slumbers and my slightest movements?]

Ahearn describes elements that I would categorize as distinctively thematic and stylistic characteristics of the poem as an ecstatic lyric. First, there is the sense of "superhuman" energy or vigor (the force behind recreation) which is conveyed through exclamations, present tense verbs of movement and action in rapid-fire succession, and "breathtaking enumeration" (the mythic naming into existence). Along with this dynamic quality one finds the erotic energy of the hunt which unites nature, divine being and human activity (e.g., "*fêtes amoureuses*," "*Bacchantes des banlieues*," and *Vénus* in relation to water and fire "link the elemental and extreme in nature to the sense of divinity as a ceaseless erotic energy" (Ahearn, 219). Secondly, there are the altered perceptions ("transcendence of perceptual constancies"), foreshortening of nearby space with the elevation of the horizon (canals above chalets and the sea higher than lofty peaks), and exaggerated synaesthesia which transforms perception through the subversion of ordinary consciousness. Third, due to these altered perceptions, "contradictions become inoperant" (singular/plural, old world/new world, reality/dream, nature/humanity) and diverse entities combine in strange ways: "Recurrent motifs attain a heightened power but also an unusual completeness: the linking of city and nature (a dialectic that runs throughout), the amalgamation of music with forces of fire, volcanoes, avalanches, the fusion of animal-human-divine," etc. (Ahearn, 216). And finally, "the exaggeration the human potential for creation""the multiple efflorescences of human constructivity elsewhere produce a harmony between the natural world and that of mankind" and "evocations of human constructions that encounter the immensity of nature" (Ahearn, 216-17). The following passage merits quoting in full:

Human beings and nature are alike caught up in the sobbing, burning, screaming frenzy; then there is a paradisaic loosing of waters, a dissolving of all; finally a primal state, anterior to any recognizable cultural milieu, the elemental nocturnal trace experience, is revealed. Beyond the learned allusions, something timeless and prim-

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itive emerges. Like "Barbare," "Villes I" carries us to the core of ecstasy (Ahearn, 222).

The poem ends on a troubling note as the unidentified speaker, the narrating "I" appears, thereby causing an abrupt shift from the ecstatic to the normal state: "There is simply exalted plenitude and, rudely set beside it, the vacuity of normal consciousness. "Villes I" is a tragic embodiment of Rimbaud's ecstatic project, totally fulfilled, inexplicably and *simultaneously* lost" (Ahearn, 223).

#### B. "Enfance"

Included in the *Illuminations* (1873-74), "Enfance" traces in its five sections the birth, evolution, and abandonment of Rimbaud's mythopoetic restorative project. As such, it serves as a comprehensive example of the epistemological and stylistic evolution that paralleled Rimbaud's spiritual struggles from the "voyancy" poems to *Une Saison* and beyond to silence. "Enfance" deals with the theme of the child's imaginative awakening, as well as his own poetic evolution, from the visionary to the objective mode, and finally to the abandonment of poetry altogether.

For example, the first and second sections of "Enfance" are the most dream-like in the rapidity and density with images produced by free association (associative complexes) appear. The child is an orphan, yet princely, ruling over a land covered by beaches that have names that are "ferociously Greek, Slav, Celtic." 40 The processes of radically mythic association (dream-like, diffuse complexes at times) force experiences of disparate times and locations to converge in the child's imagination. In addition to this mythic structuring, imagery emerges from improbable yoking (here synaesthesia) in his magical, erotic land where "dream flowers tinkle, burst, illuminate" and where a girl with orange lips has "her knees crossed in the limpid flood rising up from the fields, a naked body, shadowed, penetrated, and clothed by rainbows, flowers, the ocean." For the poet-as-child, a leisurely stroll becomes a circus-like adventure (a "comédie") in which these exotic "parts merge in a circus collage." In addition to the figures in this "parade," a radically metonymic series of objects and people move across his sister's eyes: "their pilgrimages, sultans, princesses of tyrannical walk and costumes, foreign girls and some others sweetly unhappy." Indeed, in this entire section, there are no com-

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mon denominators or common ground (logical or experiential) drawing these disparate images together, except the magical power of mythical, complex thinking (Vygotsky) of the child's omnipotent mind.

Section II contrasts the absence suggested by death in the family and presence inherent in the visionary joy experienced in nature. For example, the little girl is dead and buried ("behind the rose bushes"), as are the mother, the small brother and the old man all are among beautiful flowers that provoke more attention than do the memories of the deceased. The "surreality" of this section derives from the paradox in presenting these dead (absent) relatives as if really present: the girl behind the roses, dead (as if alive and present); the small brother in India, buried over there in field of pine (as if absent in India, but alive!); the old man buried upright in the wall (as if standing up alive). It is as if Rimbaud were playfully confusing, on the one hand, the idea of physical presence and the literal (being either alive or dead) with, on the other hand, the idea of absence and the figurative level of meaning. He places two seeming contradictions in dialectical tension, thereby making it possible for one to be dead (absent), yet as if present (e.g., the little girl behind the rose bushes), or to be alive, yet absent (buried) as is the protagonist in "*Enfance, V.*" However, on a metaphorical level, one might wonder: are the relatives really, literally dead, but seemingly present in memory, or are they literally alive, but from Rimbaud's critical point of view emotionally or imaginatively dead? Both possibilities exist as traditional boundaries dissolve and their interplay makes up an important dimension of the poem's meaning.

This and other images of death and absence contrast with those of imaginative life in this section. Rimbaud describes how the "sluice (gate) opens" and suddenly: "Oh! the crosses and the windmills of the desert, the islands and the haystacks! Magic flowers were buzzing!" The claustrophobic feeling evoked in the preceding paragraph gives way to the expansiveness of the child's mind in a natural setting as his senses let in a flood of freely associated images (Vygotsky's syncretism). Geographic distances are bridged and converge (plains of windmills, desert and islands), while images of animism (flowers buzzing) abound: "The slopes rocked him like a cradle" and the clouds over the oceans were "made of warm tears of all time."

The third section muffles the tone of magical awakening, replacing it with a more sober and detached stance. In terms of Rimbaud's evolving poetics, this section best illustrates the ideas in *A Season in Hell*; that the poet must reject his poetry of voyancy in favor of a

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complete openness to the thingness of things and the contradictions of existence. Images are vivid and concrete, yet illogical or contradictory in their relationships to one another: "The difference that the 'there is' introduces into the poem is the difference between the presence and the things present or the visibility and what is rendered visible." 41

In the woods there's a bird whose singing stops you  
and makes you blush.  
There's a clock which doesn't strike.  
There's a clay-pit with a nest of white animals.  
There's a little carriage abandoned in the woods  
or rolling down the path, with ribbons all over it.  
There's a troupe of child actors, in costume,  
whom you see on the road through the edge of the wood.  
And then there's someone who chases you off  
when you're hungry and thirsty.

The images function as pure presences in themselves, devoid of any logical or visionary association except that in the poem they become a pretext for the integration or convergence of the human and the natural (combined in 3 or 4 of the lines). Anna Balakian has pointed out a possible context uniting these disparate images: Rimbaud's remembrance of them from a child's fairytale book (inverted pictures) that take on a kind of reality of their own in the child's mind.<sup>42</sup>

Yet, it is not necessary to discover an objective, determinate ground for the poem to mean something. According to Ahearn, the poem becomes a pretext to evoke the "pure experiences of the child, a purity that is conceivable only after childhood is over" (Ahearn, 79). In the objective stance true to the "self-forgetfulness of the child" (Ahearn, 79), it involves the acuteness of sensation and response, the direct physical impact of experience, in short the newness stressed by Baudelaire: "*Au bois il y a un oiseau, son chant vous arrête et vous fait rougir.*" In addition, the poem shows the child's freedom from time ("*une horloge qui ne sonne pas*"), curiosity ("*une fondrière avec un nid de bêtes blanches*"), and the child's proclivity for the imaginative (the cathedrals and lakes that rise and fall, beribboned wagons, and a troop of little costumed actors). In the child's world, the poem becomes the place where imagination and the real converge as pure presences that enact the integration of the human, the natural, and the artificial forms of human creativity (clock, clay pot, and carriage): "all *cohere* within the energy of the real" (Ahearn, 294; my emphasis).

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In section IV, anaphora, the repetition of identical sentence constructions, occurs again, but now for the purpose of ironic contrast between sections III and IV. While in section III the presentness of things emerges emphatically showing the magical harmony between child and nature, in section IV the child has become alienated from others and from nature. "A gap exists between the self and the sense of *Being* that in the Romantic tradition was the patrimony of the child" (Ahearn, 79; my emphasis).

IV

I am the saint in prayer on the terrace like  
 the peaceful animals that graze as far as the sea  
 of Palestine.  
 I am the scholar in his hard armchair.  
 Branches and rain beat against the library window.  
 I am the wanderer along the main road  
 running through the dwarfish woods. The noise  
 of the sluices drowns my footsteps. For a long time  
 I can see the sad golden wash of the sunset.  
 I might be the child abandoned on the wharf  
 setting out for the high seas, or the farmland following  
 the path whose top reaches the sky.  
 The pathways are rough. The slopes are covered  
 with broom. The air is still. How far away are the birds  
 and the springs of water! This must be the end of the  
 world, lying ahead.

It is as if we witness in this section the dissolution of the self into several masks (saint, scholar, wanderer, child) and the alienation of the self from nature. Ahearn points out that "the peaceful totality of nature," "the sea as elemental reality," and "the figures of the saint, savant, and wanderer" all imply a sacred undertaking, the effort to comprehend the totality of the world and to penetrate the absolute beyond" (Ahearn, 80). And yet, this is a poem marking the decline of childhood vision. All the imaginative roles that he adopts here carry "archetypal resonances" from the Romantic tradition of poetry (especially familiar is the wandering poet-child who appears in works from *Ma Bohème* through *Une Saison en Enfer*). They are, according to Ahearn, "all efforts to recreate the abandoned, cosmic child, vulnerable yet in literal contact with sea and sky. But the essential rupture is not to be overcome as the conditional '*je serais*' emphasizes." "A world has ended, in fact, with this distancing of childhood's birds and



springs that recalls analogous motifs and movements in "*Larme*," "*Mémoire*," "*Le Bateau Ivre*," and the first part of "*Vies*" (Ahearn, 80-81).

In "*Adieu*," possibly written after "*Enfance*," Rimbaud wrote: "Well! I must bury my imagination and my memories! ("*Eh bien! je dois enterrer mon imagination et mes souvenirs !*") An artist's and story-teller's precious flame flung away." These words are particularly salient with regard to "*Enfance, V*" where he would return to the burial metaphor to dramatize his final act of poetic suicide. In looking back cynically at his belief in his god-like mythic powers, he writes, "*J'ai créé toutes les fêtes, tous les triumpes, tous les drames. J'ai essayé d'inventer de nouvelles fleurs, de nouveau astres, de nouvelles chairs, de nouvelles langues. J'ai crû acquerir des pouvoirs surnaturels.*" As Ahearn has written, "This vision of alienated experience, echoing motifs in writers from Blake to Dostoyevsky, carries with it the temptation of a refusal of communication" and it evokes the state of "sterility that follows upon the loss of childhood and the failure of attempts to recreate it" (Ahearn, 81-82).

V

Now hire for me the tomb, whitewashed with the  
lines of cement in bold relieffar underground.  
I lean my elbows on the table, and the lamp  
lights brightly the newspapers I am fool enough to  
read, and the absurd books.  
At a tremendous distance above my subterranean  
room, houses grow like plants, and fogs  
gather. The mud is red or black. Monstrous city!  
Endless night!  
Not so high up are the sewers. At my side,  
nothing but the thickness of the globe. Perhaps  
there are pits of azure and wells of fire? On those  
levels perhaps moons and comets, seas and fables meet.  
In moments of depression, I imagine sapphire and  
metal balls. I am master of silence. Why should the  
appearance of a cellar window turn pale at the corner  
of the ceiling?

Here, the living and buried (ironically absent) persona is literally and imaginatively alienated from the rest of the world, self-interred in a white-washed tomb. The tomb itself (like the underground existence in "*Vies*") suggests the antithesis of the expansiveness of mind and feeling at the end of *A Season in Hell*, as well as in "*Enfance, I*."

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Furthermore, the tomb image is reminiscent of the image of the boy/dredger at the end of "*Mémoire, V*" where the persona finds himself surrounded by the terrestrial "*boue*" (mud). But, here at the end of "*Enfance*," he is no longer just stuck in it, rather he has sunk entirely into the quagmire of hopelessness and mundanity. The loss of childhood's mythopoeic vision is complete and perhaps irreversible. Whereas in "*Mémoire*," light, clarity, and movement symbolize the poet's transient joy and harmony in nature, here the persona merely sits immobile underground in endless nights ("*la nuit sans fin*"). And even his brief moments of imagining focus upon images (now as radical metonymies) that evoke his state of despair: "Perhaps there are pits of azure and wells of fire? On these levels perhaps moons and comets, seas and fables meet." In particular, the image "pits of azure" ("*des gouffres d'azur*") combines symbolic antitheses in an oxymoron that recalls the extremes of both despair and hope in Baudelaire and Mallarmé, respectively.

In the same place where Rimbaud talks about burying his imagination in "*Adieu*," he says: "I am returned to the soil with the duty to seek and rough reality to embrace." In a slightly different sense (possibly an ironic pun) here in "*Enfance*," Rimbaud finds himself "returned to the soil" and, being imaginatively cut off from his fellow-men, to silence. Like the peasants from whom he has come, he would a short time later drop his pen to become "*maître du silence*."

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## Chapter Five

## George Trakl: The Poetic Search for Psychic Unity

*Es ist umso besser als das ursprüngliche als es nun unpersönliche ist, und sum Bersten voll Bewegung und Gesichten.*

*(It is much better than the original to the extent that it is now impersonal and full to bursting of movement and visions.)*

Georg Trakl

The style of Trakl's poetry may be attributed to two almost inextricably interwoven influences on his life and art: the aesthetic-cultural conventions of his day (Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine/les poètes maudits) and his own deteriorating mental and emotional state. 1 Trakl used the experiences from his mental illness (especially in "Helian" and after), along with post-Symbolist stylistic techniques, to conduct an artistic search for psychic integration and to free his "false self" from the trappings of Western culture (rationalism, Christianity, politics). The goal of his search, mythic oneness and return, would be related to his personal psychological disorder, as well as, to larger cultural problems that he perceived, as Rimbaud had in *Une Saison*. His poetry, while subjective in its enactment of mental states through concrete imagery, would subtly launch a calculated attack against modern culture.

Trakl was not an activist in the usual sense, rather visionary in his hope for an audience's involvement in a new language, new consciousness, and their power to transform. Possibly the fact that readers have had so much difficulty understanding the "meaning" of Trakl's poetry is tied to their formalistic responses, ways of reading

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or mindsets, which are clearly appropriate, but only partially successful. As Sharp maintains, the art and the madness of Trakl's poetry cause a break in the reader's "practical rule over reality" (Sharp, 44) and force the reader to take an altered perspective, one that is very different from logically coherent and grammatical constructs of the adult, rational mind.

In his own Austrian literature, Georg Trakl has always been difficult to place in a specific literary tradition. Initially, editors merely included his poetry with that of the German Expressionists, which resulted in generations of readers associating him with Georg Heym and August Stadler. This classification stuck when he was included in the best known anthology of German Expressionist poetry, *Men-schheitsdämmerung* (1920). There were indeed certainly characteristics that Trakl shared with the Expressionists, at least superficially, such as: "the destruction of conventional syntax, and poetic diction, the stresses on concrete images as the central unit of poetic meaning, and the fascination with themes such as death, decay and processes of transformation." 2 Yet, despite these similarities, Trakl did not see himself as a radical political activist; on the contrary, he was, if not passive, at least a pacifist. His would be a "radicalism" of consciousness and poetic language, an epistemological and poetic revolution, as was Rimbaud's before him.

Since Walter Killy's influential formalist reading, readers have had the habit of misreading Trakl's poetry, as they had that of Rim-baud, as if they were either "mosaic-like arrangements" of images and sentence fragments whose rational relationships are either hidden or absent, or as failed Symbolist texts.<sup>3</sup> As a result, criticism of Trakl's poetry referred to its images as ambiguous "ciphers" feebly pointing toward an illusive, hidden meaning, or to the absence of a unifying structure or idea. Herbert Lindenberger has argued that Trakl's poetry, like Symbolist poetry, must be read "as a complex of verbal structures and not, as earlier studies had implicitly assumed, as mimetic renderings of some personal experience or ideology or Zeitgeist" (L, 141). Although the phrase, "complex of verbal structures," is ambiguous enough (and may, in fact, be quite accurate in the proper context), it recalls purely Formalist approaches to Symbolist poetry. And in her illuminating essay on Trakl, Rimbaud, and the T'ang Dynasty poets, Pauline Yu describes the stylistic features that appear in Trakl's poetry which characterize the Symbolist and post-Symbolist:

Symbolist and post-Symbolist poets proceed in contradictory direc-

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tions, on the one hand straining the syntactic bonds between words through ambiguity of reference and difficult word order and the other dissolving them through increasing use of the copula and parataxis. Either effort produces poetry in which words and objects resonate in a multiplicity of possible relationships; noun heaviness and a general effect of simultaneity further impede the forward movement of time, causation, and logic . . . . (There also can be found) a tendency toward an impersonal poetry, one in which the rhetorical, gesticulating, egocentric Romantic self has left the center of the stage. 4

As Yu makes clear, there are stylistic similarities between Symbolist and post-Symbolist modes and, yet, they each proceed from contradictory impulses. The Symbolists used verbal ambiguity and unnatural word order to transcend the concrete text and to attain an abstract ideal. Furthermore, Yu uses the same Symbolist-New Critical assumptions to describe the poetry of both Trakl and T'ang Dynasty poets: "the reliance on concrete imagery and parataxis, and isolating syntax that thwarts expectations of linear, logical, causal, or temporal progressions," "the poem works more through the evocative power of juxtaposed objects than through direct propositional discourse," and "the liberation of the figure and the emphasis on suggestion rather than on statement" (Yu, 272). My point here is that by reading Trakl (or Rimbaud) in the Formalist way that Symbolist poems seem to "demand" being read, inevitably leads to conclusions such as: "words and objects resonate in a multiplicity of possible relationships" or about the "unlimited and changing relationships among elements of the poem" (Yu, 262, 272).

Conversely, Trakl as a post-Symbolist poetsensing the alienation of man both from his complete self and the totality of Beingwas, like Rimbaud, more interested in stylistically *enacting* dreamlike or altered states of mind that would verbally *recreate*, that is, that would put the poet and the reader back in touch with a strongly sensed state of an original unity with Being (Heidegger). Trakl's alienation, unlike the Symbolists' religious-aesthetic impulse, derived from an estrangement from nature, mankind, the sacred, as well as the dissociation of his own sensibility. The source of this dissociation was, as it had been for Rimbaud, largely the limits set by a culture of scientific rationalism on knowledge and understanding. As a result, both poets would turn to drugs in order to "recreate the world" as conventionally understood and to enact the creative process through the language of their poems. Therefore, the task of the poet, as both Rimbaud and Trakl conceived it, was to nullify discourse as

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traditionally understood, i.e., rational, logical, or scientific. The language of the new discourse would enact the dialectical tension in its mythic worldview, e.g., timeless simultaneity *versus* processes of change, and would defy propositional or referential "rules," thereby redefining how a poem means.

While Formalist readings alone would be only partially successful in understanding Trakl's poetry, certainly they would play a part. Out of such a reading, Yu (actually citing Lindenberger) discovers an important key to reading Trakl's poetry as a performative or recreative act. According to Yu, who is discussing the elements in Rimbaud's poetry that impacted upon Trakl,

the French poet was a catalyst for the Austrian's development of "free verse without explicit rhetorical connectives, and one directed to *dramatizing the processes of consciousness* by means of concrete images rather than by comments upon these images" (my italics). 5

Both Yu and Lindenberger recognized the importance of the processive or temporal unfolding of "processes of consciousness" in Trakl's poetry (clearly linking him with Rimbaud and the Surrealists). While his poetic style shares similarities with the Symbolists, as Yu astutely points out, notably his poetry differs diametrically from theirs (e.g., Mallarmé's) in its enactment of the tension between his mythopoeic longing for wholeness and the threat of those forces of change, "decay" and "transformation." In this context, Trakl's idea of wholeness comes closest to Goethe's concept of nature as *Gestalt* or Heidegger's Being-in-the-world. Consequently, the mind (consciousness) becomes what Wallace Stevens in "On Modern Poetry" refers to as the new theater or stage, where the struggle between these opposing forces takes place. Rather than a failed symbolist discourse with hidden meanings too private ever to be discovered, Trakl's poetry reenacts a search which tries to restore consciousness and language to a unity of Being. Especially in the later poetry, we witness the dialectic between the present fallen state, on the one hand, and the past idyllic and future selves restored to psychic unity, on the other.

Recently, two Trakl scholars, Francis Michael Sharp and Richard Detsch, have offered fruitful approaches to Trakl's poetry, especially when considered with respect to one another. Sharp presents an indepth study of Trakl's "madness," questioning the meaning of the term schizophrenia, then and now, pointing out the mental characteristics of the disease, and delineating its stylistic manifestations in Trakl's poetry. He cites psychiatrists who stress the positive, heal-

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ing processes involved in the schizophrenic's psychic disintegration as part of an on-going search for psychic reintegration and wholeness. In a complementary vein, Detsch argues that the underlying theme and creative force in Trakl's poetry is the search for a "new reality," a "world of unity," conceived in Heideggerian terms and enacted through the formal elements of his poetry. His Formalist, close-reading of many of Trakl's poems, albeit without regard to the psychological forces that may be at work through the language, offers convincing evidence to support both his Formalist and Sharp's psychological readings.

It appears, then, that the marriage of these approaches, that is, a psycho-linguistic reading, would be a most profitable one for increasing our understanding of the dynamics of Trakl's poetry. We may never be able to distinguish Trakl's poetic from his psycho-pathological creativity, and, in fact, the two were apparently mutually dependent and productive. Whatever the Ur-source of Trakl's inspiration, the result was the creation of the mythic type of thinking and metaphoric language. Roland Fischer in discussing the similarities between schizophrenic hyperarousal and creative arousal states: "While the chronic schizophrenics crowding the wards of State Mental Hospitals may be regarded as a 'genetic load,' the price we pay for the exquisite luxuries of creative brilliance and mystical exaltation, the hyperaroused schizophrenic in his fertile, manneristic period is the metaphorical representative of the mythical realm." Whether you call Trakl's mental disorder schizophrenia or metanoia, the connection between his hyperaroused mental state and mythic thinking has been treated either explicitly or inferred by a number of psychologists.<sup>7</sup>

#### Heidegger on Trakl

To further develop this last point, I would like to refer to Martin Heidegger's impressive interpretive essay on Trakl in 1959, called "Language in the Poem: A Discussion on Georg Trakl's Poetic Work." While Heidegger has some important things to say about Trakl's poetry, his essay must be read, I would suggest, in the context of Heidegger's own philosophy. His philosophy, like Trakl's poetry, envisions the *evolution* of mankind out of alienation with Being (false self) into a progressive re-communion of the authentic self with the "earth" or "being-in-the-world." Heidegger's philosophy has the tone

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of a mythic (earth-bound) treatment of Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit. Due to modern man's preoccupation with intellectual tasks and systematization (the rational-scientific), he has forgotten the inner unity of his nature, his communion with Being ("i.e., humanity has fallen out of Being") through his "forgetfulness." For Heidegger, the fallen state of man can be attributed to an intellectual, rather than a moral, failure. In the words of Joseph Campbell, "the brain (that is, the rational intelligence) is a secondary organ but wants to take charge of the whole self." 8 In addition, poetic language serves the magical function of restoring language to its primal power, which is to discover Being or to name the Holy. Heidegger has written, "Language is not simply one tool which man possesses along with many others; it is only language that makes possible our standing within openness to what is."9

There is, however, an important difference between Heidegger's philosophy (and the way it informs his reading of Trakl's poetry) and Trakl's poetry. This difference lies in Heidegger's optimistic view of man's processive becoming one with Being (especially through the restorative power of poetry) in contrast to Trakl's dialectical tension in states of being, which (in the later poetry) often ends in decline. Specifically, in Trakl's poetry there is often a dialectical play between: the transmutation from an idyllic state of oneness with Being (seen as pastoral) to the demonic fallen (dissolute) state of man in the modern world (war, city life, breakdown of family and traditional values, scientific-rationalism); the timeless, mythic harmony of that idyllic state of the past and the temporal, discordant and decaying (*Verwest*) state of the present. In the end, Trakl's poetry often succumbs to the darker vision of dissolution, destruction, and alienation in the corrupt present ("Helian" and "Elis"), as opposed to Heidegger's more optimistic resolution.

The distinction that I am trying to make here between Heidegger's and Trakl's worldviews can be illustrated further by looking at how Heidegger has actually adopted certain key images from Trakl's poetry and has enlisted them in the service of his philosophy.<sup>10</sup> The first image, the *Abendland*, connotes in Trakl's poetry the Western World which through its rationalism and technology has "fallen out of Being." The alienation of humanity from Being (i.e., from oneself, ones fellow beings and the "earth") is signified by the figure of the *Abgeschiedenen* (the leave-taker of the wandering stranger). While both of these images expresses Trakl's profound pessimism about the loss of continuities, his poetry, in contrast to Heidegger's philosophy, *only fleetingly* passes over this nihilism into

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the silent harmony of being-in-the-world. In contrast, Heidegger uses the *Abendland* image to show the progression of night (spiritual darkness), into the prelude of dawn (spiritual awakening). 11 When Trakl contrasts the night and the dawn, he often shows them in dialectical tension, often the present (night) and the past (dawn), and any process usually leads toward decline or darkness.

Karsten Harries has suggested that we read Trakl's poetry as occupying a transitional place "between the Platonic-Christian world and a world which remains to be established and whose shape and essence are still hidden. The poet lacks the strength to establish this world (or to attain psychic reintegration). He only prepares us for such an endeavor by calling us out of our decayed world back to the earth and its silence" (Harries, 507). In fact, it is Trakl's own lack of faith in the Platonic-Christian tradition (or its secularized forms), coupled with his deteriorating mental condition, that makes him unable to recreate this lost world with any finality. (See chapter six for a discussion of Hart Crane's similar inability to recreate this lost world.) The completed quest for unified being lies in the future. While in the *Illuminations*, Rimbaud's ecstatic visions ("*comédies*") dissolve into normal consciousness, Trakl's poems often "hover" or oscillate between idyllic and fallen states (recalling F. Schlegel's "ironic artist," who simultaneously creates and decreases).

For Trakl "silence" signifies the innocent, lost state of Oneness with Being, the "unnamed One-world," that becomes shattered by language (as with the emergence into literacy or rational thought). As Frank Graziano has written in his introduction to *Georg Trakl: A Profile*, "language bears the ultimate responsibility for the loss of innocence. One is drawn out of the perceptual, unnamed One-world by language and then made to not only function in a cognitive mode that artificially orders the world with grammar, but also to there be manipulated by the very instrument (language itself) which one had intended to master rather than serve."12 The "fall" into language, as in the acquisition of the pronoun *I*, for Trakl occurs simultaneously with the decent into the ego, which is for him a false self. "The process of self-discovery initiated by the acquisition of the pronoun I (and which is often enacted in the poetry) results in the termination of the not-yet-born state" (Graziano, 17). Language as the instrument of self-discovery and understanding brings to consciousness the awareness of separation from the integrated self and a self-reflective consciousness that is cursed with the knowledge of difference. The memory of this integrated state may refer to the infant's undifferentiated state with respect to the mother-other, and, in Winnicott's

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view, continues in healthy individuals after ego-separation has taken place and into adulthood. This part of the potential process of psychic reintegration or rebirth, the fall into self-consciousness, is, also, for Trakl the fall into the consciousness of the false self. Trakl's sense of a "false self" seems to correspond with the emergence into adult conceptual thinking.

Here, Trakl reconceptualizes in cognitive and linguistic terms the story of Adam and Eve or that of Lucifer who were doubly cursed with expulsion from Paradise while retaining the power to remember what they had forfeited. The dialectical nature of Trakl's poetry (especially the "Elis" poems, influenced by Hölderlin's "Hälfte des Lebens") has to do with the enactment in poetic language of his bifurcated and struggling self-reflective consciousness in the effort to discover his "true" (i.e., undifferentiated) self. He is, on the one hand, tormented by guilt over the incest with his sister, Grete, and a longing for the state of innocence he recalls prior to such corruption. In addition, his mental illness, diagnosed as "*dementia praecox*" (schizophrenia), seems to have exaggerated Trakl's involvement with unstable mental states, which took on moral significance in the imagery of his poetry (like Blake's allegorical figures). In the later poetry (such as "Elis," these images and figures often appear, as if randomly, in an unresolvable dialectical "play" and interchangeability that suggests a sought-after underlying unity.

#### The Early, Pre-"Helian" Poetry

Trakl's early poetry, from about 1909 to late 1912 (pre-Helian), bears the mark of the influence of the self-conscious *poètes maudits* (Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud), who deliberately create a poetry of derangement (*dérèglement*) in order to gain, in his own and in the reader's experience, "a unique reality through a change of mind." 13 As Francis Michael Sharp convincingly argues, much of the disconnectedness of Trakl's early poetry may be attributed to literary, bohemian conventions at the time.

The instances of splitting, the distortions, the challenges to conventional social and moral norms depend heavily during this period on models which Trakl found fashionable in German and French poets of the *fin de siècle* and their predecessors. Even where the theme of multiple selves appears to foreshadow the later poetry, there is

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plainly detectable manipulation taking place that draws its reason and guidance from convention. The toying with the limits of subjective and objective reality occurs within a language and mode of thought which Trakl found performed and ready to use. Only gradually does this posing yield to the imperative of his own poetic voice (Sharp, 50).

He was, as Rimbaud before him had been, in search of a new language that could express a new consciousness/reality, a language and mindset that would shatter bourgeoisie "consensus reality" with its foundation in Western rationalism and empiricism. This new mode of consciousness (mythic or "insane") would "blur the contours" (Detsch) between self and the world, the subjective and the objective worlds, as well as between individual images (objects) and figures. With regard to time, they wished to create a timeless present in which the logical distinction between past and future would be negated. 14

Trakl's comments about the insufficiency of language to break the silence of the "ineffable" in his fragmentary drama, *Don Juans Tod* (I, 449-453) echoes of *Symbolisme*, especially that of Mallarmé:

Dem Unfaßbaren hascht das trage Wort  
Vergeblich nach, das nur in dunklem Schweigen  
An unsures Geistes letzte Grenzen ruhrt.

[Straining futilely after the ineffable,  
The sluggish word touches only  
In dark silence the furthest bounds of the spirit.]

Trakl's lament about this crisis of language, above, ties him to contemporary strains of influence common to Hofmannsthal's poetry, as well as to widespread literary, philosophical, and scientific skepticism of *fin-de-siècle* Austria, and beyond national boundaries to become a characteristic of twentieth century culture in general.<sup>15</sup> For Trakl, as it was for Heidegger, language is inseparable from consciousness, and can serve as the enactment of either the forgetting or reunion with Being.

The crisis of language and consciousness would become more personal in his later poetry as the awareness of a false and alienated self became more pressing. His increasingly unstable mental states became the rich resource of his later poetry. The process of psychic dissolution through which he was forced to travel became the necessary path (*Weg*) for him to follow in order to be reborn into a new self, reintegrated and in harmony with Being. In imitation of Baudelaire's

and Rimbaud's changes of consciousness, which were self-induced (by drugs, alcohol, sex, or other means of consciousness altering), Trakl probably used drugs or, with or without altering his mind, deliberately imitated the style of their poetry: free verse, impersonal, paratactic, concrete imagery, absence of logical or rhetorical connectives. Later, however, the source of these disconnected and de-personalized techniques would be difficult to distinguish from mental states resulting from the onslaught of a degenerative mental psychosis. According to Sharp, Trakl was diagnosed as *dementia praecox* by several of the physicians attending to him at the time of his death by apparent cocaine overdose (Sharp, 34-35). He is reported to have had visual and auditory hallucinations, grandiose delusions, and erratically vacillating emotional states. Nevertheless, Sharp prefers to use the term "metanoia" to describe Trakl's madness, a madness which he says "pursues its own lines of reasoning which, in turn, the reader must pursue," and which "denotes a fundamental change of mind, a shift in the ontological center of the self, but is free of the burdens (i.e., the pejorative overtones) that the term schizophrenia today bears" (Sharp, 40).

"Im Winter" (1910-1912)

In one of Trakl's earlier poems, "Im Winter," we recognize the post-Symbolist style that will also characterize his later poetry: concrete images that approach the level of archetypes and convey an unmediated sense of reality (R. Grimm); the liberation from normal rules of syntax (grammatical, logical) with an increase in the use of the copula and parataxis, hence giving the impression of syntactic equations and simultaneity; and an impersonal expression where the "ego has left center stage" and the consequent loss of the unifying "eye"/perception. According to Pauline Yu, the presence of subjectivity in the selection or use of imagery is inescapable, so that the seeming impersonality or objectivity of the imagery is illusory (Yu, 272). Reflecting the intellectual fashion of the day, Trakl's and Hofmannthal's poetry show the intermingling of inner and outer realities and their inconstancy (Sharp, 59). Simple landscapes full of fruit and fauna, or ones devoid of these as "Im Winter," and animated by the Ur-forms of human existence become Trakl's private "landscape" or inscape. As in the Expressionist mode, concrete images take on expressive functions as man and nature become indistinguishable.

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Critics who have approached Trakl's poetry from the standpoint of rational discourse have been forced to retreat to a purely Formalist position, eschewing any hope of referentiality. Reinhold Grimm has described Trakl's world as "a fragile kaleidoscope of ciphers that shatters when one attempts to take it apart logically" hence, it resists logical/grammatical reconstruction. The meaning, Yu tells us, resides "in the images themselves or, to be more precise, in the relations among them, which the poets (Trakl and a Chinese poet) have left us as readers to discover. By omitting logical and syntactic connections, they choose to evoke rather than to explain" (Yu, 262). The use of parataxis conveys to the reader the sense that Trakl wishes to provide us with "some arbitrarily assembled elements in an unidentified landscape." 17 Why, one might rightly wonder, would Trakl wish to present the reader with "arbitrarily assembled elements" and how might the "unidentified landscape" signify a different realm of referentiality, such as that of the mind? Others looking only at the poem's surface of signs, Karl Schneider and Rudolf Schier, discuss the absence of logical connectives and hidden or obliterated rational relationships. For example, Schier describes "Im Winter" as a collage with "each element representing a recognizable part of reality, yet the connections between them may become perplexing" (Yu, 269).

With Schier's statement that the poem appears to be a collage, we can move beyond the discussions of what it is *not*, that is, a logically constructed narrative or description. Schier's analogy of the poem to a collage recalls Lévi-Strauss' analogy of mythic thinking to "*bricolage*," the reassemblage or recreation of a new work (or world) from the debris of the past. The poem, read in this sense, is a new whole (or world) constructed out of images taken from reality that are only seemingly arbitrary to the rational mind. The "logic" governing the arrangement and selection of images, however, defies (takes an alternate path) the propositional logic of normal discourse. We might recall from chapter three, for example, child complex thinking or *participation* in the thinking of the child, the primitive, and the schizophrenic (Vygotsky, 71).

Perhaps, rather than focusing on what the poem does not do, in Symbolist terms, let us explore what it does. In many ways, it seems in a self-conscious way to react against the agenda of Symbolist poems to evoke meaning (an idea) through a network of unified symbolic associations. The end-stopped lines, the seeming arbitrariness of the order of the images, and the failure of the poem to achieve even a unifying metonymic system of images all point to another possible

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purpose. First, I would say that the poem is not completely devoid of a progression; it seems to move from nearly objective description in the first two quatrains (the field glimmers, the jackdaws circle, the fire gleams, sleighbells ring, and the moon rises) to increasingly evocative imagery suggesting death and danger in the last one. For example, the "monstrous" sky, the "circling" jackdaws (vulture-like), the "descending" hunters, and references to cold, blood, bleeding, and trembling, all contribute to the poem's dominant tone: lonely dread and foreboding, which was a popular theme among Expressionists.

While Trakl has labored to give the impression of impersonality and the absence of a unifying and controlling "eye," the presence of the sequestered poet-observer becomes increasingly conspicuous in the imagery "tainted" by subjectivity. In the last quatrain, perhaps the step in the empty grove ("*ein Schritt im leerer Hain*") is even his own, thereby providing a startling intrusion of the self, after all, in this foreboding landscape. The aura of death and dying suddenly extends from the innocent deer as victim to include himself as he imaginatively participates in the deer's death. In short, he has created a symbolic landscape, using concrete images that approach the level of archetypes. These darker images overpower the fleeting images of joy and humanity (the fire's gleam, the sleighbells) and, in the end, evoke the condition of his own mental state. This mental state, suggested through the poem's imagery, consists of his estrangement (and more universally that of modern man) from the sacred or divine (lonely sky, empty grove), from the rest of humanity (he is outside the warm huts), and from nature which is dead and cold. The disconnectedness of the images and sentences, as a result of anaphora and end-stop, deliberately reinforces this sense of estrangement and isolation. It is as if Trakl wants the reader to adopt the altered perspective of suppressed egocentrism, the impression of images as things as they really are, and the blurring of the distinction between man and nature. Implicitly, the poem is, also, in part a cultural criticism addressing such issues as: the dissolution of sensibility as a result of Western rationalism and empiricism, the breakdown of structures of community in the isolation of the ego from others, as well as from wholeness.

The poem's meaning, I am arguing, emerges when we recognize that Trakl has used this winter landscape, with its array of metonymically related images as a symbol of the estrangement and isolation (alienation from Being) that he had experienced. This is the dark underside (the product of modern culture and his mental illness) of the ecstatic or childhood visionary state in the Romantic tradition,

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Figure 3.  
Winter Hunters in the Snow by Pieter Bruegel.  
Courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

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where he uses the Symbolist method to make an ironic statement with respect to its ideals and straining the "unity of effect" to the breaking point. From this perspective, the poem's stylistic disconnectedness makes a "statement" about the correspondence between language and Being, as Heidegger has said.

Pieter Brueghel's (the elder) painting called "Winter Hunters in the Snow" (*Kunsthistorisches Museum*, Vienna) contains nearly all of the images that appear in "Im Winter." While Trakl has not, to my knowledge, mentioned this painting anywhere or associated it with "Im Winter," there are remarkable similarities between the painting and the poem in imagery and mood. For example, in the painting we find a winter landscape with "brooding" sky and snow-covered hills and fields; a fire ablaze beside a peasant's hut; hunters, one of whom carries a slain deer over his shoulder, descending a hill in the foreground; a pond with what looks like a dam (weir) at the bottom of the hill; and a crow in flight (possibly circling) above the pond.

If Trakl's intention were to evoke the feeling of estrangement in modern times, impersonality (that is, the absence of controlling "eye" and rational "I"), and semantic disconnectedness in the poem, then it would probably have worked against this purpose to mention the painting as the source of his inspiration. For example, this would certainly have provided the reader with a unifying context and even an historical period in which to situate the disparate images in the poem. Therefore, I would argue that the Brueghel painting might be viewed as a source of images for Trakl's poetic "collage" which, through its loosely associated fragments (debris), he could evoke his impression the fallen state of modern man *vis-à-vis* nature and the divine.

The "Helian-Complex" Poems, Rimbaud's Legacy

The year 1911 marks the time when Trakl's poetry began to show the influence of Rimbaud's themes and style. 18 Several scholars have been quick to name specific poems whose themes and styles bear the influence of Ammer's translation of 1907, including such attributes as: using free verse without explicit rhetorical connectives; juxtaposing disparate, heterogeneous images (increasing in poems after 1911); yielding the initiative to words (Mallarmé's dictum to "*cède l'initiative aux mots*") and diminishing the presence of the poet as speaker in the poem; and dramatizing processes of consciousness by

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means of concrete images rather than by commenting upon these images (L, 63). The poems, "De Profundis" (1912) and "Helian" (1912-13) illustrate these characteristics from the early poetry, but more than that they show how Trakl has adopted these rhetorical and stylistic elements in order to express through the language of the poems (imagery and syntax) his concern with lost childhood innocence (undifferentiated state/mythic oneness) and corruption or disintegration in the present.

"De Profundis" (Out of the Depths) is an ironic rendering of the idyll or pastoral poem which evokes man's prior state of harmony and oneness with Being (like Blake's *Poems of Experience*). He has borrowed the style of Rimbaud's "Enfance" (in particular, the anaphora in part IV) in order to give the impression of an "unmotivated shift of focus" (Sharp), the absence of a "controlling self" or "focal-eye," so that the poem becomes like "the reflection of a prismatically divided beam of light which is cut off from its source of convergence"; the structuring consciousness is to be so radically fractured that it approaches non-existence" (Sharp, 74). (This is like the cubist technique found in "magical-cubist" paintings like those of Franz Marc, whose paintings Trakl admired). While Rimbaud's poetic statements record his conscious effort to destroy the egocentricism of normal consciousness ("*Je est un autre*"), Trakl only mentions in passing his impersonal aims in a letter of 1911 to Buschbeck. Yet, Sharp maintains that "his poetry vividly records the same struggle against the 'one-eyed intellect,' a struggle abetted by alcohol and drugs and increasingly by the metanoia of his madness" (Sharp, 74). And Trakl, like Rimbaud, "does not build a coherent anti-myth that attempts to embrace man's 'fallen' state within a demythologized nature or wasteland" rather Trakl and Rimbaud's poetry enact "the inter-meshing of a paradisiacal and a depraved realm" (Sharp, 75).

"De Profundis," like the poems "Unterwegs," "Untergang," and "Geistliche Dämmerung," follows a temporal progression from fall to winter, and evening to night, so that the seasons and time of day are associated with the stages of human life (Detsch, 22). As the title indicates, the poet is now immersed in the fallen world of black rain and hissing wind, himself now a shade or shadow of his former, integrated self. The "depths" from which he hopes to ascend is that of the consciousness of the dissociation of self in the fallen state of the present. Unfortunately, present consciousness retains the memory of the past idyllic or integrated psychic state. What is most pathetic, however, is his awareness of his fallen state (false self), which becomes clear through his choice of images, the isolation of each line as

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image unit (the anaphora in the first stanza further emphasized separation), and in the disparate and disconnected images and stanzaic clusters. The destiny of man-in-the-world is to be alienated from the earth and his fellows and to feel orphaned, in both human and metaphysical senses. If God is not dead, indeed he is silent and the "fallen" world only lends credence to his absence. Here is the entire poem:

Es ist ein Stoppelfeld, in das ein schwarzer Regen fällt.  
 Es ist ein brauner Braum, der einsam dasteht.  
 Es ist ein Zischelwind, der leere Hütten unkreist  
 Wie traurig dieser Abend.

Am Weiler vorbei  
 Sammelt die sanfte Waise noch sparliche Ähren ein.  
 Ihre Augen weiden rund und goldig in der Dämmerung  
 Und ihr Schoss harret des himmlischen Bräutigams.

Bei der Heimkehr  
 Fanden die Hirten den süßen Leib  
 Verwest im Dornenbusch.

Ein Schatten bin ich ferne finsternen Dörfern.  
 Gottes Schweigen  
 Trank ich aus dem Brunnen des Hains.

Auf meine Stirne tritt kaltes Metall.  
 Spinnen suchen mein Herz.  
 Es ist ein Licht, das in meinem Mund erlöscht.

Nachts fand ich mich auf einer Heide,  
 Starrend von Unrat und Staub der Sterne.  
 Im Haselgebüsch  
 Klängen wieder kristallne Engel.

[There is a stubble field on which a black rain falls.  
 There is a tree which, brown, stands lonely here.  
 There is a hissing wind which haunts deserted huts  
 How said this evening.

Past the village pond  
 The gentle orphan still gathers scanty ears of corn.  
 Golden and round her eyes are grazing in the dusk  
 And her lap awaits the heavenly bridegroom.

Returning home  
 Shepherds found the sweet body  
 Decayed in the bramble bush.

A shade I am remote from sombre hamlets.  
 The silence of God  
 I drank from the woodland well.

On my forehead cold metal forms.  
 Spiders look for my heart.  
 There is a light that fails in my mouth.

At night I found myself upon a heath,  
 Thick with garbage and dust of stars.  
 In a hazel copse  
 Crystal angels have sounded once more.]

His intellect, feelings, and language, the instrument of self-discovery and an integrated psyche, are all suggested by images that connote his fallen condition: "On my forehead cold metal forms./Spiders look for my heart./There is a light that fails in my mouth." His intellectual powers, judgment and analysis, have become numb ("*Auf meine Stirne tritt kaltes Metall*"); his feelings are fearful and threatened ("*Spinnen suchen mein Herz*"); and his ability to express those feelings or thoughts to others are wanting ("*meinem Mund erlöscht*"). Having lost the wholeness of self, he discovers that he has become in the present a ghost, emptied of the fullness of an authentic self. Not only are the central powers of his humanity destroyed or threatened, but they are dissociated and fragmentary parts of a once integrated self. The reference to the self as "I" further dramatizes that he can now reflect self-consciously as a separate, false self on his fallen state. In addition, he is sadly aware of the decaying body, the garbage, the dust of stars, and the silence of God.

At the same time, his reflective consciousness actually links past and future in the present, that is, negates our conventionally linear way of thinking about time. From a Nietzschean view of time as circular and repetitive in Trakl's early poetry (e.g., "Drei Traume"), in his later poetry he blends the beginning and the end in the same, present existence. In his essay on Trakl (*Unterwegs zur Sprache*), Heidegger makes two major points: first, that all of Trakl's poetry originates from a single poem (with which Killy concurs in *Über Georg Trakl*) and, secondly, the concept of *Abgeschiedenheit*, the "Ort des Gedichts," a mysterious state in which past and future are linked and which "draws into a whole all the stages of human existence symbolized by the various human figures of Trakl's poetry. Detsch explains further:

'*Abgeschiedenheit*' is, primarily, the unifying principle which draws

past and the future, birth and death, into a whole. It transcends time and makes time possible, but not as something eternal or supernatural. It belongs to this world and directs all existence in the temporal order, and yet in the final analysis it remains a mystery since it has nothing to do with reality as one is accustomed to comprehend it (Detsch, 78).

And,

(Heidegger's) concept of "*Abgeschiedenheit*" as the unifying center of Trakl's poetry is appropriate if one realizes that he means death in a nonphysical sense. It is a death which in some mysterious way informs all the acting figures as well as the landscape and the entire mood of Trakl's poetry. It is a death which stands not only at the end over the grave of the lovers but also at the beginning with the unborn one and the boy Elis; or, more exactly, it is a death which *nullifies* both end and beginning as valid concepts by creating a time-whole. (Detsch, 79).

This "ecstatic" view of time may explain the sudden tense shifts that juxtapose time periods suggested by various figures or masks of the poet, thus creating the co-presence of past and future with the present. As Detsch had stated: "For Heidegger, time is not primarily real but 'ecstatic': It is always beyond itself in such a way that the future, the essential time, gives rise to both the present and the past," and "Possibility (the future) is the primary category for Heidegger, contrary to the usual reasoning of philosophers which makes necessity primary" (Detsch, 82). In the poem, he simultaneously experiences what has been lost in the past along with its possible (hoped for) restoration in the future. However, as Detsch also maintains, Trakl's future-oriented longing for restoration is not directed toward transcendence, rather the soul ("*Seele*") is going forward toward the earth ("*auf die Erde*") (Detsch, 133). A couple of images in the poem suggest a possible future redemption, in a general way. First, the orphan girl with eyes that reveal her continuing innocence (golden and round her eyes) awaits, as did the Virgin Mary, the "heavenly bridegroom" and hence, through her, the world's savior. And, secondly, the "crystal angels," figures associated with the "unborn" state, can still be heard even now.

The "logical" progression of the poem might be said to move from the setting of nature in a fallen state (stanza one), to the orphan figure as innocence and hope which persists in the fallen world (second stanza). This opening is followed by the persona's growing aware-

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ness of the completeness of the effects of the fall upon his nature. The shepherds, watchers over Being, have discovered "*den sussen Leib/Verwest in Dornenbusch*." For example, in stanzas 3 through 6, the persona recounts his death (the sweet body/decayed); his separation from his fellowman (I am remote from sombre hamlets) and from God (the silence of God); and the dissociation of his intellect and heart, along with the failure of language. The three figures (masks) in the poem, furthermore, chart out the loose progression from innocence (orphan), to a transitional state (sweet body/decayed), and the completed fall (a shade). *Abgeschiedenheit*, the interplay of the idyllic past, the corrupt present, and future restoration, taking place in the poet's mind, is enacted in the landscape, the human and divine figures of the poem. Still, the persona is powerless to restore either himself or his world to their former innocence and wholeness, a "world" that recalls child complex thinking (Vygotsky) or the undifferentiated state (Winnicott). The orphan girl alone seems to hold the key to future "redemption." 19

"Helian" (1912-13)

"Helian" contains the most numerous echoes from Ammer's Rimbaud translation. In it, we see Trakl's discovery of a new mode of expression (language) in imagery, tone, syntax, progressions and organization, which will be representative of the remainder of his work. In particular, we see how Trakl uses imagery and the relationships among images, archetypal figures (masks), and the poetic sectioning of stages to convey the meaning of the poem. In the overall scheme of "Helian," an implicit narrative progression emerges through recurrent images and classes of images, their patterns of change, and the relationships among various images throughout the poem.

As Lindenberger says, in "Helian" "Trakl had now found a way of writing poetry that allowed him to explore the intricacies of the self more fully than any of his earlier poetic modes could do" (L, 77). Michael Hamburger and Francis Michael Sharp both point out the paradox of the increased impersonality of Trakl's mature poetry at the same time that he used poetry to explore the "intricacies of the self."<sup>20</sup> As Sharp says of "Helian": (Trakl) moved toward a more genuine confrontation with resources closer at hand" (Sharp, 82). He continues:

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the richest as well as the most painful of these was the labile psychic organization precariously contained by what one critic has called the "shell of convention, habit, and circumstance" comprising the empirical self. The act of writing brought Trakl into increasingly intimate contact with the stress points of his shell and was an act that was bound to bring crisis as well as poetry in its wake.

And, explaining the dynamic and dialectical, as well as the increasingly impersonal, nature of Trakl's mature poetry, Sharp says:

The growing impersonality of Trakl's verse was a direct expression of the vanishing "person" that the shell had defined. Yet, at the same time, the poetry delved more deeply and searchingly into the fissures and shifting structures of this shell. "Helian" reflects the probing of this amorphous self-entity. (Sharp, 82)

Viewed as a whole, "Helian" 's "narrative" descends from childhood bliss and innocence to a gradual "birth" in the fallen world (death, decay, and sadness in the present), the vacillation (dialectic) between the memory of the idyllic (now co-present with the fallen present) and the awareness of the fallen present, a nearly complete immersion into "corruption," ending with only the intimation of rebirth and resurrection in the future. As Sharp suggests, the poem enacts the healing "death" (*abgeschieden*) or dissolution necessary for the poet's possible psychic reintegration. To support this view, Sharp points out that the name, Helian, which may have been taken from a number of sources, appears only once at the end of the poem, and that Trakl had "fragmented his protagonist among a large number of guises," leaving the reference to Helian as a "bridging identity for the various figures in the poem" (Sharp, 83). As mentioned with regard to "De Profundis," the various human figures may symbolize the co-presence of facets of the poet at various times and mental states in this life.

In this way, "Helian" is more dynamic and dialectical (and apparently more optimistic and Romantic) than "Enfance," the poem's chief poetic model, which charts the gradual loss of childhood vision as the poet-as-adolescent confronts reality untransformed by the recreative imagination. "Helian, I" enacts the persona's mythopoeic state of mind as seen through images suggesting the harmony and totality of the natural, human, and the divine, as well as the blurring of subject/object and past/present distinctions. Harmony and wholeness is first suggested through the pastoral images (as in Blake's *Songs of Innocence*) of shepherds, stillness, harvest, and the communal, the

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first person, plural perspective in the social and religious senses. In this state of primal innocence, the speaker-protagonist is at one with nature (softly the footfalls ring in the grass; round eyes follow the flight of birds), with his fellowmen (we got drunk . . . happy laughing, calmed we wander, the countryman carries bread and wine), and with the divine ("we meet with shepherds and white stars," the designated watchers over Being), in the same way as the sacred converges with nature (in bare branches heaven celebrates). Here is the entire "Helian, I":

In den einsamen Stunden des Geistes  
Ist es schön, in der Sonne zu gehen  
An den gelben Mauern des Sommers hin.  
Leise klingen die Schritte im Gras; doch  
immer schläft  
Der Sohn des Pan im grauen Marmor.

Abends auf der Terrasse betranken wir uns mit  
braunem Wein.  
Rötlich glüht der Pfirsich im Laub;  
Sanfte Sonate, Forbes Lateen.

Schön ist die Stille der Nacht.  
Auf dunklem Plan  
Begegnen wir uns mit Harten und weissen Sternen.

Wenn es Herbst geworden ist,  
Zeigt sich nüchterne Klarheit im Hain.  
Besänftigte wandeln wir an roten Mauern hin  
Und die runden Augen folgen dem Flug der Vögel.  
Am Abend sinkt das weisse Wasser im Graburnen.

In kahlen Zweigen feiert der Himmel.  
In reinen Händen trägt der Landmann Brot und Wein  
Und friedlich reifen die Früchte in sonniger Kammer.

O wie ernst ist das Antlitz der teuren Toten.  
Doch die Seele erfreut gerechtes Anschauen.

[In the lonely hours of the spirit,  
Beautiful it is to walk in the sun,  
Beside the yellow walls of the summer.  
Softly the footfalls ring in the grass; but always  
The son of Pan sleeps in the grey marble.

Evenings on the terrace we get drunk with brown wine.  
Reddish the peach glows in the leaves;  
Gentle sonata, happy laughing.



Beautiful is the quiet of the night.  
 On a dark plain  
 We meet with shepherds and white stars.

When autumn has come  
 Sober clearness enters the grove.  
 Calmed we wander beside red walls  
 And the round eyes follow the flight of birds.  
 At nightfall the white water sinks in funeral jars.

In bare branches heaven celebrates.  
 In pure hands the countryman carries bread and wine  
 And the fruits ripen peacefully in the sunny larder.

O how earnest is the countenance of the dear dead.  
 Yet a just regard delights the soul.]

The progressions complement each other with each following its natural course: seasonally, from summer to autumn or early winter, diurnally from day to nightfall, and experientially, life fully lived followed by a peaceful death. Although these progressions follow a downward direction, all suggest natural processes without the negative associations attached to death and decline in later sections. What is especially unusual about Trakl's poetry, in general, is the co-presence here of the idyllic, pastoral, or mythic with the present tense, the here-and-now. Although having by now passed from innocence into the fallen world (Blake's "experience"), the poet (25 years old by now) imaginatively recreates and experiences this lost state with the immediacy of the present. This intense remembering in poetic form of recently lost childhood vision in adolescent poetry (discussed by Ahearn) was true of Rimbaud's earlier poetry, too (such as "Enfance," "Aube," etc.).

In "Helian, II," we see "scenes of increasing decay and devastation" (L, 74) or an "ascent toward death" (Sharp). Yet, death as *Abgeschiedenheit* (discussed with "De Profundis") is not the end of life, rather a transitional phase that potentially leads to self-awareness and to the birth of an authentic self. As in Rimbaud's "Enfance, II," the protagonist here experiences a growing consciousness of his separation from childhood innocence and harmony or an earlier unity with Being ("where earlier the holy brother walked"). The allusion to Eden after the Fall and expulsion in the first line (the silence of the ravaged garden) sets the tone of decline to be reflected in imagery of nature and the human. A transformation from innocence to experience has taken place and is enacted through imagery from both

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states. In addition, the protagonist's consciousness of his past and present selves is expressed through the various human figures (young novice, the beautiful man, the holy brother, the stranger, and the man with his head bowed), which represent change in states of being. Furthermore, the pervasive use of synecdoches (his temples, hands, cheeks, arms, legs, eyes, and, finally, his head) reinforces the notion of the symbolic dissolution (disappearing) of the self ("Sunk in the faint thrumming of his madness"). He associates himself in the present with the outcasts of society (strangers, madmen, lepers), in contrast with earlier sacred and communal ties (novice, holy brother). 21 Sharp refers to the meaning levels of "Helian" as blending "almost inextricably into one another as individual images and scenes are multiply determined and connected like those of a dream. They reflect the splintered and overlapping voices of the poet's empirical self whose brittle shell had begun to loosen and shift" (Sharp, 90).

In contrast with the movement toward destruction or dissolution, the poem brings together a variety of allusions that carry faint echoes of their original contexts while being woven into the fabric of the poem. Several allusions to biblical events and mythico-religious rituals (the garden of Eden, conjuring hands, vespers, the olive tree, the crucifixion on the Mount of Olives) combine loosely with autobiographical allusions (the sister, his madness). As Sharp says, "Trakl's imagery seems to seek the most fragiley distinct echoes of biblical events while, just as distinctly, it seeks to deform their familiarity by entwining them with extraneous material" (Sharp, 88). This technique recalls Hölderlin's mixture of Christian and pagan or secular images, and yet, as Sharp points out, ". . . by dint of associations with nature worship, pagan overtones here predominate over Christian ones" (Sharp, 88). These allusions come together to form the "debris" of the past and the present which is loosely appended to form the "bricolage" (Lévi-Strauss) of a new poetic creation. In support of my view of the poem as bricolage, Sharp refers to "the complex creation and shifting of variants that finally crystallized into the finished poem," as well as to the images and scenes "connected like those in a dream" (Sharp, 89-90). In other words, conventional logic and grammar have broken down into a kind of diffuse complex thinking, which Vygotsky associates with pre-conceptual thought processes in children, primitives, and the mentally ill. In Trakl's case, it is difficult to distinguish between the role of the voluntary (creative/ecstatic) and the involuntary (insanity) in his iconoclastic use of "dream thinking" and language; critics agree that both factors were probably co-present and mutually dependent.

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Critics have interpreted this section either as representing a birth taking place (or as the onset of death or insanity). 22 If madness is, as Sharp and others have suggested (e.g., Sullivan, Navratil, Laing), a healing and necessary path to psychic reintegration, then the speaker's madness does represent the death of the false (rational) self, as well as the tunnel (or birth canal) from which the true (mythic) self issues forth. First, there is the imagery of the idyllic that still persists in the present (e.g., blue waters, the young garlanded novice, the thrush singing) and becomes transmuted into reflecting a fallen state: in nature (ravaged garden, cold night, the darkness, black November destruction, rotted boughs beside leprous walls, lonely the evening wind, head bows in the dark of the olive tree); and in man through synecdoches that suggest varying degrees of fragmentation of the whole self and through archetypal figures who serve as masks that show stages of the decline (young novice's breath drinks icy gold, and the stranger is lost in madness where the holy brother once walked). Whereas Ahearn explains Rimbaud's use of masks in "Enfance, III" as "the invented roles through which an adult speaker now tries to recreate the child's world, and also the failure to do so" (Ahearn, 74), here Trakl uses these "masks" as invented roles to illustrate progressive stages of decline, as well as the fragmentation of the self. In addition, the sacred in nature and in man manifests itself only through its absence or silence ("at vespers, evening prayer, the stranger is lost . . . in his madness, immense is the silence in the ravaged garden"). Here is "Helian, II":

Gewaltig ist das Schweigen des verwüsteten  
 Gartens  
 Da der junge Novize die Stirne mit braunem  
 Laub bekränzt,  
 Sein Odem eisiges Gold trinkt.

Die Hände rühren das Alter bläulicher  
 Wasser  
 Oder in kalter Nacht die weissen Wangen  
 der Schwestern.

Leise und harmonisch ist ein Gang an  
 freudlichen Zimmern hin.  
 Wo Einsamkeit ist und das Rauschen  
 des Ahorns  
 Wo vielleicht noch die Drossel singt.

Schön ist der Mensch und erscheinend im Dunkel,

Wenn er staunend Arme und Beine bewegt,  
Und im purpurnen Höhlen stille die Augen rollen.

Zur Vesper verliert sich der Fremdling in  
schwarzer Novemberzerstörung,  
Unter morschem Geäst, an Mauern voll  
Aussatz hin,  
Wo vordem der heilige Bruder gegangen,  
Versunken in das sanfte Saitenspiel  
seines Wahnsinns.

O wie einsam endet der Abendwind.  
Ersterbend neigt sich das Haupt im  
Dunkel des Ölbaums.

[Immense is the silence of the ravaged garden  
When the young novice garlands his temples with  
brown leaves,  
His breath drinks icy gold.

The hands stir the age of bluish waters  
Or in cold night the white cheeks of the sisters.

Soft and harmonious is a walk past friendly rooms,  
Where solitude is, and the rustling of the maple tree,  
Where still perhaps the thrush is singing.

Beautiful is man and evident in the darkness,  
When marvelling he moves his arms and legs  
And silent in purple caves the eyes roll.

At vespers the stranger is lost in black November  
destruction,  
Under rotted boughs, beside leprous walls  
Where earlier the holy brother walked,  
Sunk in the faint thrumming of his madness.

O how lonely the evening wind desists.  
Fading, the head bows in the dark of the olive tree.

One senses a growing disquiet that will build into existential despair in the ejaculation at the end (O how lonely the evening wind desists. /Fading, the head bows). And, at the same time, the image of the olive tree suggests the hope for future regeneration.

The progression from harmony (in "Helian, I") to increasing disharmony in the previous section, now reaches its lowest depth in "Helian, III." The setting is the fallen world defined in terms of the family, the separation of its members, and its household ("Over-

whelming is the generation's decline," "the son steps into the empty house of his fathers," "the sisters have gone far away to white old men," "the servants with nettles thrashed the gentle eyes"), which become emblematic of the problems of a universal human condition. "Helian, III" follows:

Erschütternd Ist der Untergang des Geschlechts.  
In dieser Stunde füllen sich die Augen  
des Schauenden  
Mit dem Gold seiner Sterne.

Am Abend versinkt ein Glockenspiel,  
das nicht mehr tönt,  
Verfallen die schwarzen Mauern am Platz,  
Ruft der tote Soldat zum Gebet.

Ein bleicher Engel  
Tritt der Sohn ins leere Haus seiner Väter.

Die Schwestern sind ferne zu weissen Greisen  
gegangen,  
Nachts land sie der Schläfer unter den Säulen im  
Hausflur,  
Zurückgekehrt von traurigen Pilgerschaften.

O wie starrt von Kot und Würmen ihr Haar,  
Da er darein mit silbernen Füßen steht,  
Und jene verstorben aus kahlen Zimmern treten.

O ihr Psalmen in feurigen Mitternachtsregen,  
Da die Knechte mit Nesseln die sanften  
Augen schlugen.  
Die kindlichen Früchte des Holunders  
Sich staunend neigen über ein leeres Grab.

Leise rollen vergilbte Monde  
Über die Fieberlinden des Jünglings,  
Eh dem Schweigen des Winters folgt.

[Overwhelming is the generation's decline,  
At this hour the eyes of him who gazes  
Fill with the gold of his stars.

At nightfall bells die that will chime no more,  
The black walls on the square decay.  
To prayer the dead soldier calls.

A pale angel  
The son steps into the empty house of his fathers.

The sisters have gone far away to white old men.  
 At night the sleeper found them under the columns  
     in the hall,  
 Returned from their sorrowful pilgrimages.

Oh how their hair curds with filth and worms  
 When he plants his silver feet therein,  
 And from bare rooms they move with dead steps.

Oh you psalms in fiery midnight rains,  
 When the servants with nettles thrashed the gentle eyes,  
 The childlike fruits of the elder tree  
 Marvelling stoop over an empty grave.

Softly yellowed moon roll  
 Over the fever sheets of the young man  
 Before silence of winter comes.]

In the first two stanzas, antithetical images connoting degeneration and harmony exist side by side as if dramatizing both the irony and uncertainty of the present fallen state. It is uncertain whether the process of change: (1) will continue the decent, (2) has already bottomed out, or (3) now shows a subtle promise of regeneration. For example, in the eyes of the gazer (line 2), perhaps attending a sign of redemption, one sees the reflection of an inner, ethereal beauty ("the eyes . . . fill with the gold of his stars") which contrasts with the fallen world around him ("the nightfall bells die that will chime no more, the black walls on the square decay").

This section presents a "shattering" (*erschütternd*), apocalyptic vision. The term "shattering" in this context refers both to physical (violent, convulsive) and psychological responses (visionary, perceptual) to the apocalyptic destruction. The word "*Geschlect*" suggests the human race, the clan, and the sexual. For example, images that suggest the breakdown of kinship ties abound in this section. The family has been separated ("have gone to their dooms"; L, 74) and the sisters have gone to old men (alluding to Grete's marriage to an older man whom she did not love); they sleep under the columns in the hall (not in a warm bed) after returning from a loveless honeymoon ("sorrowful pilgrimages," "their hair curds with filth and worms," and "from bare rooms they move with dead steps"). The original mythic unity of the sexes (*Ein Geschlect*) or androgyny, has been lost. This original unity dissipates over time ("yellowed moons"), turning into "the fever sheets of the young man." While, agonizingly, this primordial or pre-existential oneness still persists in the poet's present

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memory ("his eyes . . . fill with the gold of stars"; "a pale angel, the son" a mask to recreate past harmony in the present state); "the childlike fruit of the elder tree (both vegetable and human generations)/Marvelling . . . "), the state of decline is, also, suggested through images of man's dissociation from nature and the sacred ("O you psalms in fiery midnight rains" and "Before silence of winter comes"). Despite the usual associations of winter and silence with peace, this is the season of nature's *Untergang*, which is reflected in the human race, in general, and in the family, in particular.

The fourth section is the most dynamic and dialectical (that of the ecstatic seer) of the five sections. As Sharp emphasizes, there are overtones of contriving or inventing (*hinabsinnen*, "to ponder down") insinuated into the lines of this section: "They support the sense of a new creation beginning its evolution in the imagery of lines 60-62. The speaker here more explicitly assumes the role hinted at earlier in the poem, that of conjurer whose gaze passes beyond mundane reality toward the threshold of a 'sublime destiny'" (Sharp, 96). The "logic" of this section follows a dialectical pattern of creation and decreation in alternating lines. For example, in lines 60-62 a new creation is introduced, while in lines 64-66 in a "nightmarish interlude," this creation dissolves into single images. In lines 67-70, the focus shifts this time "to a landscape of revitalized nature." In Sharp's words, ". . . the resurrected figures affirm the abrogation of death's finality. Nature, in its abundance, mature colors, sounds, and movement supersedes the wintry silence into which the seasonal sequence had progressed" (Sharp, 96). This dialectical play finally moves to rest in the ambiguity of the closing scenes where it is left unclear whether the lepers have found healing in nature ("The 'black waters' are incapable of reflection or response": Sharp, 96) or whether the servant girls, suspect in the purity of their search (they are "groping" . . . "through the night streets" or "the alleys of the night") will find the shepherd's or guardian's love (let us, also, recall that "shepherds" are the guardians of Being).

As Lindenberger has pointed out, the world represented in "Helian, IV" is "the New Testament world of lepers, shepherds, and cedars with intimations of resurrection" (L, 74). The world of the poet is still in a fallen state (the mad boy, the mouldering boy, the lepers, the saint's flesh on the glowing grill), and yet hopeful (his eyes are "bluish"; there is "quiet singing sounds in the huts"; and nature (in stanza 2) is abundant and sonorous ("sheaves of yellowed corn," "hum of bees," "the flight of the crane"). "Helian, IV" follows:

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Ein erhabenes Schicksal sinnt den Kidron hinab,  
 Wo die Zeder, ein weiches Geschöpf,  
 Sich unter den blauen Brauen des Vaters entfaltet,  
 Über die Weide nachts ein Schäfer seine Herde führt.  
 Oder es sind Schreie im Schlaf,  
 Wenn ein eherner Engel im Hain den Menschen antritt,  
 Das Fleisch des Heiligen auf glühendem Rost  
 hinschmilzt.

Um die Lehmhütten rankt purpurner Wein  
 Tönende Bündel vergilbten Kornes,  
 Das Summen der Bienen, der Flug des Kranichs.  
 Am Abend begegnen sich Auferstandene auf Felsenpfaden.

In schwarzen Wassern spiegeln sich Aussätzige;  
 Oder sie öffnen die kotbefleckten Gewänder  
 Weinend dem balmischen Wind, der vom rosigen Hügel weht.

Schlanke Mägde tasten durch die Gassen der Nacht.  
 Ob sie den liebenden Hirten fänden.  
 Sonnabends tönt in den Hütten sanfter Gesang.

Lasset das Lied auch des Knaben gedenken,  
 Seines Wahnsinns, und weisser Brauen und seines Hingangs,  
 Des Verwesten, der bläulich die Augen aufschlägt.  
 O wie traurig ist dieses Wiedersehn.

[A high destiny ponders down Kidron passing.  
 Where the cedar, tender being,  
 Unfolds beneath the blue brows of the father,  
 Over the meadow at night a shepherd leads his flock.  
 Or there are cries in sleep  
 When in the grove a brazen angel advances on man  
 And the saint's flesh melts on the glowing grill.

Round the clay huts purple vines abound,  
 Sonorous sheaves of yellow corn,  
 The hum of bees, the flight of the crane.  
 At nightfall the resurrected meet on mountain paths.

Lepers are mirrored in black waters  
 Or they part their filth-bespattered robes,  
 Weeping to the wind that blows with balm from the rosy hill.

Slim girls grope through the alleys of night,  
 To find the loving shepherd.  
 On Saturdays quiet singing sounds in the huts.



Let the song also remember the boy,  
 His madness, and white temples and his departing,  
 The mouldered boy, who opens bluish eyes.  
 O how sorrowful is this meeting again.]

The miracle of redemption appears to have already begun ("At nightfall the resurrected meet on mountain paths"). We, as readers, witness through the poem's imagery instances of reconciliation between the real and ideal, degenerate and idyllic, of the sacred (Christ-like) descending to meet nature and mankind ["the cedar /Unfolds beneath the blue brows of the father" (human or heavenly); "a brazen angel advances on man"] and mankind anticipating the coming redemption ("Lepers . . . / Weeping to the wind that blows with balm from the rosy hill"; "Slim girls grope through alleys of night, /To find the loving shepherd").

In the final section, Trakl recapitulates the images and themes from the earlier sections, yet without offering a resolution to them (e.g., the mirror/waters, the remembered boy, leprosy, crucifixion, eyes). The images of degeneration and decline open the first stanza (madness, black rooms, old men), only suddenly in the next two lines to transmute into a positive revision of the images of "lepers . . . mirrored in black waters" of section IV: "When Helian's soul regards itself in the rosy mirror / . . . snow and leprosy slide from his temples." The "past becomes present when the figure of the boy gains a life of its own in line 79, emerging from "the speaker's memory" (ll. 77-78) and assumes the identity of the poem's title figure in this final section. According to Sharp: "Since Helianthe 'boy' is a memory, however, it is both for him and for the speaker a reappearance of his past madness in the present tense of the poem" (Sharp, 98). Here is the entire section:

Die Stufen des Wahnsinns in schwarzen Zimmern,  
 Die Schatten der Alten unter der offenen Tür,  
 Da Helians Seele sich im rosigen Spiegel beschaut  
 Und Schnee und Aussatz von seiner Stirne sinken.

An den Wänden sind die Sterne erloschen  
 Und die weissen Gestalten des Lichts.

Dem Teppich entsteigt Gebein der Gräber,  
 Das Schweigen verfallener Kreuze am Hügel,  
 Des Weihrauchs Süsse im purpurnen Nachtwind.

O ihr zerbrochenen Augen in schwarzen Mündern,

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Da der Enkel in sanfter Umnachtung  
Einsam dem dunkleren Ende nachsinnt,  
Der stille Gott die blauen Lider über ihn senkt.

[The stairs of madness in black rooms,  
The shadows of the old men under the open door,  
When Helian's soul regards itself in the rosy mirror  
And snow and leprosy slide from his temples.

On the walls the stars have been extinguished  
And the white forms of the light.

From the tapestry bones of the graves descend,  
The silence of decayed crosses on the hill,  
Sweetness of incense in the purple night wind.

O you crushed eyes in black mouths,  
When the grandson in his mind's gentle night,  
Lonely, ponders the darker ending,  
The quiet god closes his blue eyelids over him.]

The boy in the previous section "gains a life of (his) own," emerging from the past into the present. He is actually Helian from the speaker's memory, but for both him and the speaker he is a reappearance and a reenactment of his past madness in the present tense of the poem (Sharp, 97).

This section illustrates the regenerative possibilities of a madness that goes deep into itself rather than escaping through the "open door," a self-denying journey to a false self (to the "shades of the old men"). Sharp talks about the section's "psychic interior" (steps, rooms, mirror, walls and tapestry) that functions as interior on two levels: as the house and family setting, and as Helian's soul gazing upon itself. The "steps of madness" become synonymous with the inward passage into the mirror of the soul. Here, Sharp merits quoting in full:

Instead of going out of the "black rooms" of his mind, Helian turns inward to the "mirror of the soul" and finds a reflected image from which the marks are free of blemish. Anticipating imagery of healing in the prose poems, the "rosy mirror" reflects an image cleansed of the marks of madness the mad boy was first introduced into the poem with "white brows" (1.78) and leprosy. The association of leprosy and madness not only ties Helian to the lepers who also seek their cure through self-reflection in the "black waters," but expresses a relationship which Michel Foucault has shown to be historically valid. Foucault sees the modern madman as the unfortunate

heir to the moral stigma and isolation once attached to the leper in medieval Europe (Sharp, 98).

Helian's healing inner vision is short-lived. The images of shattered perception or vision ["the eyes of him who gazes," the "gentle eyes" that are later "with nettles thrashed" and in V become "crushed (or shattered) eyes"] are also central to the section's idea of decline. The grandson's perceptual faculties are fragmented and multiple (dissolution of self); "multifocality is the hallmark of schizophrenic thought." The non-unified speaker of "Helian" is no embracing metasef of earlier poems ("broken visions intermingle and pluralized voices overlap)." Sharp writes that "Schizophrenic thought often bristles with different planes of meaning and is, as I call it, *multi-focal*, because it has no objective situations" (Sharp, 101).

The mirror image is important in its relationship to the discovery of the self through language. The language of the poem becomes metaphorically a "mirror" in which the lepers and Helian's soul come to recognize their separation from Being (the termination of the not-yet-born-state or its persistence into infancy and early childhood). This is akin to the "mirror stage" which Lacan speaks of as crucial to the sense of self and other. As Graziano writes in his introduction to Trakl's poetry: "Through language one eventually becomes one's self; it seems, an event in many cases unbearable enough without being complicated by the lingering aftermath of reflection that 'self-consciousness' demands, without being doomed, as we must, to the fact that 'One becomes one's self' implies two distinct beings, neither of which we fully or truly are." (Graziano, 17). As Helian's soul regards itself in the rosy mirror, we get a sense of his fleeting reintegration into a primordial state of oneness of the self, into a unified self called "Helian."

In the middle stanzas, we find remnants of the fallen world in imagery of extinction, silence, decay, loneliness and death. In addition, his childhood innocence, signified through his eyes (vision), seems forever lost in the image of "crushed eyes in black mouths," even as his earlier false self has been briefly transformed, as revealed in its reflection in the "rosy mirror." Negative images are undercut by those that suggest both suffering and redemption ("crosses on the hill"), or an earlier, more harmonious world, freed of madness ("rosy mirror," "snow and leprosy slide from his temples," and "sweetness of incense"). The last stanza, especially, is a *tour de force* of alternating moods or states of being, beginning with the hopeless ("crushed eyes

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in black mouths"), to the more positive ("grandson in his mind's gentle night"), back to the negative ("lonely, ponders the darker ending"), and ending with the ambivalent (possibly even positive) image of a peaceful death ("the quiet god closes his eyelids over him"). It suggests that the previous self (grandson, dead boy, unborn one to be "dead" is to be unborn, in the psycho-linguistic sense meaning prior to the "fall"), marked by a "gentle madness," suffering and, finally, redemption. As Detsch points out, the dead boy motif is related to other masks, e.g., the brother and the past self of the poet. The poem, "Helian" is about his figurative death and desired transformation. The unborn one is brought into relationship with the dead boy in "*Stundenlied*"; these figures, "*der Ungeborene*" and "*der Abgeschiedene*," become interchangeable, since "death stands at the beginning as well as the end of life" (Detsch, 72-75). Death, then, becomes a metaphor for the "fall" into adult, rational thinking from the prior state of "silence" and the mythic unity of the child's undifferentiated state.

#### The "Elis" Poems: Mythology in the Making

The "Elis" poems of late 1912 to early 1913 show a decreasing dependence on Rimbaud and an increased interest in Hölderlin (his dialectical style, for example) and Dostoyevsky. Observing the changes thematically, Lindenberger has written, "The latter poems consolidate a private set of images whose central terms a world polarized by idyllic landscapes and images of decay come more consistently to control the organization of his poems in the period after "Helian" (L, 81). This polarized world ought also to be viewed as an inscape representing the dualism in Elis' character. As we find in Hofmannsthal's Elis Frobom (in "The Mine at Falun") an "internal split in Elis' two selves, one drawing him back to the mountain queen and one impelling him toward ordinary wedded bliss" (Sharp, 112). There is an unresolved tension in his personality. While Hofmannsthal uses the legend of Elis "as a means of reflecting his notion of the poet's problematic existence," Trakl, in contrast, "dismembers the legend and selectively borrows from it" (Sharp, 113). As in the *bricolage* of newly created mythologies, the borrowings in Trakl's "Elis" poems are fragmentary and idiosyncratic. The major dualism in Trakl's version involves Elis (who in "An den Knaben Elis" falls

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downward toward another, atemporal level of existence) and the "speaker who remains behind, acting as commentator on this transition and a mediating eye into Elis' altered state" (Sharp, 113).

#### A. "An den Knaben Elis"

The first of these poems, "An den Knaben Elis" (Spring 1913), represents Trakl's blue world a set of related images which recur persistently in his work after "Helian": dark forests, rocks, a spring, a gentle animal, a blackbird, purple grapes, quietude, hyacinthian and moon-like things, blueness and night. These are images typical of the idyllic landscapes (and inscapes) with which Trakl contrasts scenes of disintegration. The idyllic world is prior to the fallen world, and remote in time and space; Elis has been dead a long time. As in Blake's idyllic "Beulah" and in Novalis' "night and under earthly things," Trakl's "blue world" appears to be a central part of a private mythology that he tries to create in poetic form. While his poems give the impression of being fragments of a larger, private and integrated mythology (language mirrors consciousness), a larger narrative or sequential development is never consistently developed in either the poetry or, we might assume, in Trakl's mind. What appears, then, in the "Elis" poems is a myth in the process of becoming complete; I say "in the process" because it is never completed and, furthermore, it may be that Trakl's more central concern is the dynamic process of myth-making. It is dynamic and dialectic, rather than coherent or linear, in its lack of integrative rhetorical, thematic, or experiential devices, in contrast to the relatively coherent visionary mythologies of Blake or Yeats.

Benign or pastoral imagery is associated with a past (and possible future or restored) state of innocence or wholeness, conceived in terms of psychic states (Platonic prior existence, Blake's Beulah, Wordsworth's and numerous other poets in the Romantic tradition, including Rimbaud childhood and ecstatic states), while the malign imagery (fallen state associated with dissolution, the rational-empiricist modes of thought in the modern world) intrudes in various ways from poem to poem. As Lindenberger has written, "Sometimes the malign images destroy a landscape of innocence while at other times benign images work to overcome a demonic landscape. Sometimes the balance remains precarious throughout a poem . . . the basic components are essentially the same, but their arrangement and the feelings with which they are presented change" (L, 86). Trakl's

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use of imagery here contrasts with the Symbolist method of moving the reader out of the poem to an abstract idea. Rather, Trakl's poems lead the reader through the surface of the poem's changing imagery and mood, i.e., through the experience of change in process. Language and consciousness have become mirror images or dual facets of each other.

Before turning to the "Elis" poems, let us remember the legend of Elis. Trakl's draws upon the legendary source of Elis Frohom, a seventeenth century Swedish miner "who fell into a mine shaft on his wedding day, and when his body was retrieved many years later, was found in a perfect state of preservation, with the full appearance of youth, while his betrothed had meanwhile become an aged crone" (L, 84). The Elis legend seems to have suggested to Trakl's imagination a timeless world untainted by degeneration, death, and decay. It is as if Elis, the youth, is on the way to another state of consciousness, passing through a non-violent transition ("gentle bleeding") (Sharp, 117). Trakl's imagery is dialectical and dramatizes shifting states of consciousness; the "forehead bleeding 'age old legends and dark interpretations of the birds' flight' is literally being emptied of structures and interpretations of reality (modes of knowledge or understanding) inherent to the stage of existence from which Elis has fallen" (Sharp, 117).

"An den Knaben Elis" (May 1913) dramatizes the poet's attempts to evoke a world in which "the destructuralization of consciousness, the rite of passage to the psychical underworld" (Sharp, 118) is taking place. The youth is on his way to "an altered state of consciousness" (Sharp, 118). The poem's form and imagery play the greatest part in this drama where the regularity of the tercets conveys the sense of harmony in Elis' world (preserved youth and innocence) and the imagery characteristic of this world transmutes throughout its twenty lines. The poem falls into two phases: lines 1-10 where the speaker observes Elis as an active participant in the process of "descent" and lines 11-20 where the speaker represents Elis as distanced that is, as physically, emotionally, and communicatively removed from the physical world. Here is the first part of the poem:

Elis, wenn die Amsel im schwarzen Wald ruft,  
Dieses ist dein Untergang.  
Deine Lippen trinken die Kühle des blauen Felsenquells.

Lass, wenn deine Stirne leise blutet  
Uralte Legenden  
Und dunkle Deutung des Vogelflugs.

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Du aber gehst mit weichen Schritten in die Nacht,  
 Die voll purpurner Trauben hängt,  
 Und du regst die Arme schöner im Blau. (II. 1-9)

[Elis, when the ouzel calls in the black wood,  
 This is your own decline.  
 Your lips drink in the coolness of the blue  
 Spring in the rocks.

No more, when softly your forehead bleeds,  
 Primaeval legends  
 And dark interpretations of the flight of birds.

But you walk with soft footsteps into the night  
 Which is laden with purple grapes,  
 And move your arms more beautifully in the blue.]

In this half of the poem, the idyllic world is evoked by directly addressing Elis and through imagery that places him in the blue world ["your lips drink in the coolness of the blue/spring in the rocks" (associated with source or origins); "you walk with soft footsteps into the night" and "move your arms more beautifully in the blue"]. Yet, this idyllic setting is interrupted by the word "Lass" (no more) which introduces images and statements about the process of Elis' "degeneration" (descent into the subterranean world): "This is your decline." The second tercet refers specifically to his mortality ("when softly your forehead bleeds") and oracular foreboding for the future ("dark interpretations of the flight of birds"). The third tercet returns to idyllic or benign images, answering the former one in dialectical fashion ["you walk with soft steps," (the night) is "laden with purple grapes," and (you) "move your arms more beautifully"].

Where Elis is depicted in the first half as dynamic, undergoing a transition between states of mind (lips drink, arms move, even forehead bleeds), in this section those images transmute into those of death and passivity, despite an air of vegetative beauty, "(While) conventional notions of religion and death are obliquely woven into the poem's imagery, their conventional significations are subordinate to their function delineating Elis' preternatural state" (Sharp, 121). His death is not an actual or human one, rather it is suggestive of the transformation he undergoes.

Ein Dornenbusch tönt,  
 Wo deine mondenen Augen sind.  
 O, wie lange bist, Elis, du verstorben.

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Dein Leib ist eine Hyazinthe,  
In die ein Mönch die wächsernen Finger taucht.  
Eine schwarz Höhle ist unser Schweigen,

Daraus bisweilen ein sanftes Tier tritt  
Und langsam die schweren Lider senkt.  
Auf deine Schläfen tropft schwarzer Tau,

Das letzte Gold verfallener Sterne. (II. 10-19)

[A thorn bush sounds  
Where your lunar eyes are.  
O Elis, how long you have been dead.

Your body is a hyacinth  
Into which a monk dips his waxen fingers.  
Our silence is a black cavern

From which at times a gentle animal  
Steps out and slowly lowers heavy lids.  
Upon your temples black dew drops,

The last gold of perished stars.]

Elis' body is like a hyacinth flower, associated with death, and into which a monk dips his fingers. The monk, like the Apostle Thomas who needed to touch the wounds of Christ in order to believe in his resurrection and divinity, dips his fingers into Elis' hyacinth-body in a "form of secular communion" (Sharp, 121). 23 In this part of the poem, Elis is literally and in the poem's structure buried (down under), but he is also preserved, as the legend tells us, from the onslaught of change (mortality, aging, death and decay), dramatized in the first three stanzas. The "dark interpretation of the flight of birds," foreshadowing Elis' natural decline, appears to be forestalled as the result of his premature death (and return to a preternatural state).

It is significant that the last line of the poem, isolated from the rest, foregrounds the dual perspective of the two selves in the poem, the earthbound Elis (the "I" of the speaker as mediating consciousness) and the Elis who descends to a subterranean realm free of the effects of mortality: "*Das letzte Gold*," the "buried" and preserved Elis, contrasts with the earthbound speaker, himself reflecting the realm of black dew drops ("*schwarzer Tau*") and of perished stars ("*verfallener Sterne*"). As with the other, numerous allusions in Trakl's poetry, the Elis legend provided him with a source and inspiration, yet was transfigured in the service of his personal, often impenetrable, vision. The duality of personality and the process of altered con-



sciousness remain central to Trakl's purpose in his variant of the legend. According to Sharp,

. . . the *You* of the poem embodies that one self of Elis pulled downward and letting the speaker embody the earthbound self. While Elis goes "down," the eyes which watch him remain above. Together the *I*, implied by the speaker's voice and visual perspective, and the *You* called Elis comprise both parts of that split character which legend and literature depict physically as one figure.

And,

. . . the reader is aware from the beginning of a dualism, a dualism between mediated figure and mediating consciousness. The mediating consciousness or the unspoken *I* of the speaker is as essential to Trakl's version of the Elis legend as the figure which it addresses as its counterpart *You* (Sharp, 121).

The blue world of the descending Elis the altered state of consciousness that this world represents becomes the creative source of the speaker's imagination, mythic consciousness, which at times issues "a gentle animal." While the "normal communicational modes between Elis and the speaker are closed" (Sharp, 122), still they converse through the organ of visual perception, ("the thorn bush sounds /Where your lunar eyes are") a "variation of synaesthesia" (Sharp, 120) that is, through the perception of altered consciousness or "vision."

B. "Elis"

While "An den Knaben Elis" was originally conceived as a prelude to "Elis," the latter poem gradually took its own direction in mapping out the processes by which an idyllic world gradually breaks down into its antithesis, the Symbolist method used ironically. In place of the Symbolist concern with unity of effect, "Elis" dramatizes the disintegration of an idyllic world and uses imagery for its power to evoke stages of this destructive transformation. The changes that take place are conveyed in several ways: through words of transition, tense shifts (present to past moments of harmony), and word placement, recording the changes taking place from moment to moment.

In "Elis," Trakl uses the methodological framework from Höl-

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derlin's "Hälfte des Lebens," that is, a dialectical arrangement of positive and negative visions evoked through specific images. According to Lindenberger:

Throughout Trakl's later poetry we gain the illusion of vast transformation, of benign forces in the process of disintegration, of demonic forces, in turn, supplanted by benign ones, of sudden intrusion of the past and equally sudden projections into unexpected future, of one vision of life vainly trying to stabilize itself against the presence of another. (L, 94).

Ironic forces of creation and decreation, as described by F. Schlegel, appear to be at work here. We see the idyllic state giving way to its opposite: "The moment of perfection at the opening is made to recede from us in both time and space" (L, 94). On its more literal level, "Elis" is a poem about the gradual extinction of Elis' world (a process of dissolution which often occurs suddenly in Rimbaud's ecstatic poems). But, Lindenberger points out that a statement of this kind does not ever begin to exhaust the poem's range of meaning, "for the poem deals at once with the process of physical death, the death of poetic inspiration (correlated to rejection of the metaphoric mode), cosmic disintegration, the change of season and the declining condition of man in human history" (L, 95). Furthermore, I would stress that the disintegration of Elis' world is itself a metaphor for the loss of imaginative creativity or poetic inspiration. Similarly, language (images as ciphers and syntax) becomes a mirror or reflection of the disintegration of mythic-metaphoric vision.

The thematic as well as the stylistic similarities between "Elis" and "Enfance" (and even Hart Crane's "Atlantis") are striking where the loss of a visionary state of mind is enacted imagistically. Trakl, however, relies less than Rimbaud and Crane on effects through the juxtapositions of images (as in a collage or *bricolage*) and their breakdown, than on tensions between and transformations of imagery throughout the poem.

The precious gold sought by the alchemist-magician through the processes of destruction and recreation bears some significance to the struggles of Elis to regain the harmony of the past golden days out of the destruction of the present dark ones. The transposition from the "golden day" to "lonely sky" passes through benign and malignant states which are dramatized by images of the gradual dissolution of his past idyllic world or the poetic imagination. Here is the first part:

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Vollkommen ist die Stille dieses goldenen Tags.  
 Unter alten Eichen.  
 Erscheinst du, Elis, ein Ruhender mit runden Augen.

Ihre Bläue spiegelt den Schlummer der Liebenden.  
 An deinem Mund  
 Verstummen ihre rosigen Seufzer.

Am Abend zog der Fischer die schweren Netze ein.  
 Ein guter Hirt  
 Führt seine Herde am Waldsaum hin.  
 O! wie gerecht sind, Elis, alle deine Tage,

Leise sinkt  
 An kahlen Mauern des Ölbaumes blaue Stille,  
 Erströbt eines Greisen dunkler Gesang,

Ein goldener Kahn  
 Schaukelt, Elis, dein Herz am einsamen Himmel.

[Absolute is the stillness of this golden day.  
 Under old oak trees,  
 Elis, you appear one resting with round eyes.

Their blueness reflects the sleeping of lovers.  
 Against your mouth  
 Their rosy sighs died down.

At nightfall the fisherman hauled in his heavy nets.  
 A good shepherd  
 Leads his flock along the forest edge.  
 Oh how righteous, Elis, are all your days

Softly sinks  
 The olive tree's blue stillness on bare walls,  
 And old man's dark song subsides.

A golden boat  
 Sways, Elis, your heart against a lonely sky.]

The images of absolute stillness and a golden day, references to the oracular and longevity (old oak tree), as well as the direct invocation to Elis to reappear in the fallen world evoke the ideal past of perfect harmony.

In the second tercet, however, the positive associations of Elis' blue eyes, reflecting the sleeping lovers and their rosy sighs, are undercut by the negative image "sighs died down," which is carried over to the first image in the next line, "at nightfall . . . ." This quat-

rain, with the exception of the opening foreboding image, is the most consistently benign and appears in the past tense: the fisherman with his heavy nets, the good shepherd leading his flocks (both with allusions to Christ and redemption), along with the exclamation, "Oh, how righteous, Elis, are all your days." And yet, the last line dramatizes the pivotal point of this first section, since it indicates in positive terms the immediate presence of Elis and the world he represents. The next line dispels this illusion, returning to the present tense: for "Softly sinks /The olive tree's blue stillness on bare walls." The olive tree, symbol of peace and suffering, in addition to death and rebirth is shown here to lose its idyllic quality (blue, rebirth, and peace) and Elis is replaced by "*eines Greisen*" (an old man) whose dark song subsides. The shift from seemingly positive to the negative imagery clearly dominates this tercet ("sinking stillness on bare walls") in contrast to the preceding one.

While the general movement of the poem is toward decline (the end of golden day, setting sun, songs subsiding), the final stanza presents antithetical images held in unresolved tension in a syntactic construction that defies coherent translation or meaning ("A golden boat /Sways, Elis, your heart against a lonely sky"). The impermanence of the idyllic state is conveyed, then, by the progression of images connoting the idyllic to decline, by the first existing in the past tense and the later in the present tense, and by the images themselves of permanence (old oak, the archetypal figures of the lovers, the old man, the fisherman and the shepherd, and the phrase "all of your days") and redemption or the holy (good shepherd, righteous Elis, olive tree, golden day, blue) in contrast to impermanence (rosy sighs of lovers died down, nightfall, softly sinks, song subsides) and the absence of the holy (lonely sky).

The fallen world is depicted here completely in its ravagedness, with only hints of what had been: day has become permanent night, the blue deer bleeds, blue doves drink icy sweat, and various aspects of nature reflect the fallen state (brown tree aloof and separate, stars softly go down, winter has come, the lonely wind sounds). It begins with images of the idyllic ("gentle chiming of bells resounds in Elis' breast), but quickly reverts to those images that suggest decline ("At nightfall, /When to the black pillow his head sinks down"). Here is the second part:

Ein sanftes Glockenspiel tönt in Elis' Brust  
 Am Abend,  
 Da sein Haupt ins schwarze Kissen sinkt.

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Ein blaues Wild  
Blutet leise im Dornengestrüpp.

Ein brauner Baum steht abgeschieden da;  
Seine blauen Früchte fielen von ihm.

Zeichen und Sterne  
Versinken leise im Abendweiher.

Hinter dem Hügel ist es Winter geworden.

Blaue Tauben  
Trinken nachts den eisigen Schweiß,  
Der von Elis' kristallener Stirne rinnt.

Immer tönt  
An schwarzen Mauern Gottes einsamer Wind.

[A gentle chiming of bells resounds in Elis' breast  
At nightfall,  
When to the black pillow his head sinks down.

A blue deer  
Bleeds in the thorny thicket quietly.

Aloof and separate a brown tree stands,  
Its blue fruits have fallen away.

Symbols and stars  
Softly go down in the evening pond.

Behind the hill winter has come.

At night  
Blue doves drink the icy sweat  
That trickles from Elis' crystal brow.

Always  
God's lonely wind sounds on black walls.]

First of all, the state of dissolution is enacted through the increase in one and two line stanzas from the previous section, a kind of structural or stanzaic falling apart of Elis' world. Each image cluster stands in a highly subjective, nevertheless metonymic relationship to the others, all suggesting parts of Elis' fallen world. Some of the same images relating to nature and the idyllic have simply been transmuted into their fallen counterparts: the old oak becomes the aloof brown tree; the golden day becomes nightfall and winter; the sleeping lovers become Elis alone with sweaty brow; Elis' blue eyes reflecting the sleeping lovers become the evening pond in which "symbols and

stars /Softly go down"). The hint of the loss of the sacred (divine) in the first section ("a lonely sky") reappears even more explicitly as, "Always /God's lonely wind sounds on black walls."

In the presence of this overwhelming vision of dissolution, traces of the inextinguishable (or unforgettable) innocence and idyllic persist: at night "blue doves" drink, not the cool blue spring from the rocks ("An Knaben Elis"), but "icy sweat that trickles from Elis' crystal brow." The "golden brow" from "An Knaben Elis" has become the fragile (and transient?) crystal brow of Elis. The poem closes with a final sense of hopelessness, both through the images and the rhythmic weight given to the last line ("*Immer tönt /An schwarzen Mauern Gottes einsamer Wind*"). The permanence of the desolation and metaphysical isolation contrast with "*den gelben Mauern des Sommers*" of "Helian," the image of the irretrievable idyllic past: irretrievable because once innocence is lost, with its childhood visionary powers, it cannot be regained, and can only be recalled (or recreated) through the tainted filter of the fallen state.

#### Conclusion

Trakl, like Rimbaud, forged a different route from that of the Symbolists or Expressionists, while nonetheless adopting some of their stylistic techniques: the impersonality of the poet, the use of free verse without explicit rhetorical connectives, the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate images (diffuse complexes), and the use of images and structure to convey the meaning. Both poets used the image presentationally or as ciphers, rather than as symbols, and focused on the poem as dramatization of the imaginative creative act, a second creation in *imitatio dei*.

In Trakl's poetry, the stylistic enactment of processes of coming into harmony or dissolution, occur as if in the natural (external) world, when they actually reflect his unstable states of mind. For Trakl, the "idyllic" state (seen in terms of images that depict this mental state as external world) might be a combination of all of these: childhood innocence (usually prior to guilt about sexuality), mythic wholeness and totality, or the ecstatic state of the visionary experience gained through drugs or insanity (schizophrenia). In "Helian," Trakl is most like Rimbaud (in "Enfance") in his concern with achieving and losing the poetic visionary experience. The "Elis" poems are more concerned with enacting processes of change: timelessness and

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temporality through sensory experiences; death and decline in man and in nature; physical disease or ugliness and health or beauty as an analogue for morality and immorality. In these later poems, the poet's imaginative sphere has become increasingly circumscribed by the earthy and time-bound. While the "worlds" that Rimbaud creates in *Illuminations* reflect real and present experiences of the ecstatic state in all its beauty and strangeness (as well as, its loss in the present), Trakl's poetic "worlds" recall and lament a state that he can no longer fully experience and which are sadly remembered within the context of the fallen present.

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## Chapter Six

## Hart Crane: A New Consciousness of "The Whole"

*I circle around, I circle around*

*The boundaries of the earth,  
The boundaries of the earth*

*Wearing the long wing feathers as I fly,  
Wearing the long wing feathers as I fly.*  
(Sung by Arapahoe Ghost Dancer)

According to Helge Nilsen, *Hart Crane's Divided Vision* (1980), Crane belongs in the tradition of "artistic and philosophical nationalism of American Romanticism," and, furthermore, that this was a "mystic nationalism" harkening back to Walt Whitman and passionately articulated in Crane's own time by his long time friend, Waldo Frank. 1 In this chapter, I wish to extend Nilsen's thesis, which focuses on *The Bridge*, by focusing on three areas of concern to the mythic mode. First, I would like to show that Crane belongs to that particular scion of the Romantic Tradition that might rightfully claim its origins in Herder's mythic episteme, rather than in Neo-Platonic Idealism or Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, through close-readings of selected poems that span Crane's poetic career ("The Wine Menagerie," "Voyages," IV and VI, "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen," and from *The Bridge*, "The Dance," "The Tunnel," and "Atlantis"), I will discuss their mythic characteristics both in themes and in language. And finally, throughout my analyses of the poems, I wish to show that Crane's desire to achieve a new mythic consciousness (a "new synthesis") applied not only to himself as poet-mystic, but also to the reader's recreation of a mythic experience of Wholeness, enacted through the dynamics of metaphor.

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Nilsen has given an extensive overview of Crane criticism, providing several categories which serve as useful touchstones against which to define what we mean by the mythic mode. Among the "Platonic Idealist" critics, we find L. S. Dembo who equates myth with the "Absolute in the modern world," R. W. B. Lewis who refers to *The Bridge* as "apocalyptic literature" in the tradition of English Romantic poetry (Shelley's visionary themes), Bernice Slotte who talks about Crane's "American Romantic mysticism," and (in addition to Nilsen's list) Robert Combs who places Crane in the Hegelian philosophical tradition. For all these Platonic Idealist critics, the mistaken assumption, in my view, is that the goal of Crane's mystic synthesis is transcendent, beyond the earth-bound or "fallen" state of human experience. In the next group, the "Christian critics," who are, of course, philosophically related to the Platonic Idealists, critics like Sister Bernetta M. Quinn and Glauco Cambon make the Christian faith the central issue of Crane's poetry. <sup>3</sup> As Nilsen rightly points out, Crane may have used biblical references as he also used allusion to Plato's works but that they "do not betoken any attempt on his part to write a Christian poem" (Nilsen, 17). Next, for a time a group of critics read *The Bridge* as a failed mythic epic or "an abortive attempt to create an American *Aeneid* or *Divine Comedy*" (Nilsen, 13). Others use the term "myth" to mean "an ahistorical, synoptic ordering of experience by means of which a spiritual reality of esthetic dimension" (which, then, comes up for grabs by the particular critical practitioner) "is revealed through images and symbols" (Nilsen, 13).

In the final group of critics, whom we might call the "mystic," "religious," or "ecstatic" critics, we find those who express insights in the nature of the mythic mode of experience informing Crane's poetry.<sup>4</sup> For example, Dembo (shifting focus) refers to Crane as Nietzsche's tragic poet who "combined Apollonian dream-inspiration with Dionysian ecstasy in his creative activity" (Nilsen, 15), Robert Andreach talks about Crane's attempt to recapture the Medieval Christian mystical vision, "the theophany of Columbus in the modern industrial world" which is no longer possible "because the modern universe is not unified and intelligible like the medieval one" (Nilsen, 15), and R. W. Butterfield refers to the religious impulses informing *The Bridge* and the "spiritual synthesis of the American experience" (Nilsen, 15). In this group, I would also include (although Nilsen does not) those who have written about how Crane developed "a scientific and cosmic consciousness based on Einstein's physics and P. D. Ouspensky's mysticism" (Hyatt Waggoner and James Cowan). Nilsen shows that Waggoner comes from a distinctly Christian, metaphys-

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ical orientation (on Crane's "transcending" the American past and present and on *The Bridge* as "an attempt to achieve a vision of divine order by an assimilation of the latest scientific theories of the nature of reality so as to bring about a new metaphysical experience" (Nilsen, 14). Nevertheless, Waggoner's investigations into the "mysticism" of modern physics have important implications for a full understanding of the mythic mode (see Whitehead's influence on Frank and Einstein's and Ouspensky's influences on Crane in this chapter, and Whitehead's and Heisenberg's influences on Charles Olson in chapter seven).

The key to Crane's epistemology of the mythic mode can be found in the works of Waldo Frank (*Our America*, *The Re-Discovery of America*, and "Notes on Method"), as well as in Crane's translation of Frank's ideas in his poetry. 5 In her chapter, "Walt Whitman and Waldo Frank: Parallels and Influences," Nilsen talks about Crane's mythic vision as "a divine, all-pervading presence which the poet relates himself to in his moments of ecstatic inspiration" (Nilsen, 19), harkening back to Whitman. Frank advocated the creation of a vision of America (a "sense of spiritual unity"). As Nilson writes: "Frank held that American culture was chaotic and fragmented, and that the American people must learn to conceive of reality as an organic whole of which each individual feels himself a part" (Nilsen, 21). Religion was for Frank, in its original state, a "revealed, mystical consciousness," presently lost in America, revived by Whitman, whom he considered "the main American prophet of the Great Tradition" of mystic consciousness of "the Whole." Frank called this worldview "naturalistic monism," which he attributes to Spinoza.<sup>6</sup>

Frank's method of achieving a new synthesis of the spiritual and social disintegration of American culture would begin with the redefinition of the self, which though fragmented in modern industrial America, senses that it should be whole. In *Our America*, Frank ends with a discussion of Whitman whose doctrine of the "the generic I" would complement Frank's aim for Americans to experience the mystic's sense of the "cosmic self." In this way the poet as mystic can "make it possible for his audience to gain an insight equivalent to his own. Thus the individual may become a participate in the creation of his consciousness of 'the Whole'" (Nilsen, 25). In *The Re-Discovery of America* (1929), Frank writes:

The true mystic meditation is the deed. Prayer and art are one. The Whole exists through its enactments, and its enactments are we creatures of sense . . . it is not for you and me, save as our lives

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create it; not for America save as America creates it. *It is not 'up there' like a heaven or god; not an object like a golden apple to be seen or, unseen, believed in . . . The organic Order which makes the Whole is a matter of ordering is the experience of ordering by you and me. Our knowledge is our participation.* (Frank, *Re-Discovery*, 245; my emphases)

The similarity of Frank's thought (italicized passages above) to our earlier discussion of Herder's organicism and his application of myths of creation to an epistemology of the creative mind in the act of understanding (in chapter one) is striking and further illustrates the common philosophical ground of the mythic mode in this study. Frank's assertion that "Our knowledge is our participation" would have far-reaching implications in terms of Crane's reliance on reader participation in reconstructing the consciousness of "the Whole" through the dynamics or "logic" of metaphor (discussed more fully below).

Frank advocates the recreative activities of the *bricoleur* (Lévi-Strauss) as the method of achieving this new synthesis and mythic consciousness. He writes, again, in *The Re-Discovery*, "The thinkers in psychological, political and social orders build from the debris of worlds a new foundation for the future culminant Whole our true religion" (*Re-Discovery*, 31). This new synthesis involves a "cultural consciousness," "the consciousness of America as a mystic whole," "a vision of integration and harmony" which "does not express any devotion to the hereafter. His poetics of faith aimed at a state of illumination of the quotidian, and his religiosity was undogmatic and catholic in the true sense of the word" (Nilsen, 33). His method would be "simple" (Nilsen): "First one must become fully aware of one's body as an organic whole and 'prehend' it" (Nilsen, 28). Frank took the verb "prehend" from Whitehead's concept of "prehension" (*Science and the Modern World*, 1926): "the ability to see reality as mysterious entities that are related and whose exact nature no single faculty, such as the scientific intellect, for example, can explain" (Nilsen, 28).

#### Reader-Participation and the "Dynamics" of Metaphor

Crane, like Rimbaud in his ecstatic *Illuminations*, would adopt the role of the poet as recreator of a new world, who would use images of bridges, towers, trapeze swings and airplanes to suggest a widened perspective or consciousness capable of perceiving the "intrinsic

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Myth," the "simple, compact, well-join'd scheme." Crane describes the tremendous force of will exerted in his efforts to reconstruct and transform the fragmentary debris (materially and spiritually) of modern life into a unified whole:

What I am really handling, you see, is the Myth of America. Thousands of strands have had to be searched for, sorted and interwoven. In a sense I have had to do a great deal of pioneering myself. It has taken a great deal of energy. 7

And yet, Crane's mythopoeic goals would always be subject to doubts and the despondency that his poetic project would not succeed due to his own weaknesses and to the forces of history that worked against it.<sup>8</sup>

The language of metaphor would play the central role in Crane's vision of synthesizing the whole, a kind of magical or alchemical role. Through the language of poetry, "technique fused organically with sense," Crane hoped to dramatize the struggles of the imagination in the process of overcoming the chaos of modern existence.<sup>9</sup> His idea of language's power was derived from a dialectic he created between denotative (discursive) meaning and the connotative meaning (its emotional associations), that is, between scientific discourse (information transmission) and poetic discourse. This dichotomy, turned into dialectic, recalls Kant's opposition of *Verstand*, or the reasoned ordering of perceived experience, and *Vernunft*, the intuitive grasp of truths beyond ordinary sense perceptions. Crane applies this Kantian dichotomy to semantics and enacts evolving states of mind that move from the prosaic/denotative to the poetic/connotative.

Crane's idea of the "logic of metaphor" can be explained by the use of the alchemy metaphor as it applies to the denotative and connotative aspects of meaning. The poet-chemist begins with words understood in their conventional discursive senses and, through the transforming power of the imagination, breaks them down from "surface forms" into a "deep structure" which forms a chain of associations (as in what Vygotsky describes as chain associations in children's pre-conceptual complex thinking). As John Irwin has pointed out (in "Hart Crane's 'Logic of Metaphor' "), "The characteristic surface form of many of (Crane's) short, highly compact poems is simply a linked series of complex vehicles for a suppressed tenor. And the dynamics of these poems hinge on the reader's discovery, through his knowledge of connotations, of one tenor to which all the vehicles can possibly refer. It is a process that Crane, with his

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sense of melodic phrase, called "the dynamics of inferential mention" (Crane, 229). In this way, the "alchemical" process of destruction (from denotations to connotations) and recreation of a "network of associations" (Irwin, 210) is analogous to the production of meaning through what Crane calls the "logic of metaphor." 10 Like Rimbaud's semantic destructions and recreations through the "reasoned disordering of all the senses," so through the "logic of metaphor" Crane attempts to create continuously new and "living" metaphors.

Unlike Rimbaud's ironic reversal of the two step metaphoric process in a poem like "Le coeur volé" (that Bearsley describes as leading to surreality or the inaccessibility of visionary imagery), Crane's metaphors make sense if pursued through a two step process that involves both primitive complex thinking (*participation*) and abstract symbolization (hidden tenors.) Here, in a well-known letter to Harriet Monroe, Crane explains how his idea of logic of metaphor works in "At Melville's Tomb":

The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath An embassy.

Dice bequeath an embassy, in the first place, by being ground . . . in little cubes from the ones of drowned men by the action of the sea, and are finally thrown up on the sand, having "numbers" but no identification. These being the bones of deadmen who never completed their voyage, it seems legitimate to refer to them as the only surviving evidence of certain things, experiences that the dead mariners might have had to deliver. Dice as a symbol of chance and circumstance is also implied.<sup>11</sup>

In this example, Crane expects the reader to recognize that the "surface forms" of dice and bones ("dice of drowned men's bones") function as part of a complex of metaphorical vehicles which together point toward a hidden tenor. On the surface level, they belong to the same complex or class of objects that shares similar physical characteristics, such as, cubic shape, ivory color, and possibly calcified (boney) substance. (The comparison might also appropriately bring to mind stories of the use of bones for dice in some "primitive" cultures.) These two seemingly unrelated objects, then, are forced into *participation* with one another, as in childhood or primitive complex thinking.<sup>12</sup> This process mirrors the "regression" from conceptual thought to a more primitive level of mentation. Storch believes that the use of concrete images instead of abstract concepts is one of the distinctive characteristics of primitive thought (see Vygotsky in chapter 3 and Ong in chapter 7).

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The second stage of this process involves the transfer of associations from the concrete vehicle to the abstract tenor where dice (in Western culture) often symbolizes Chance or Destiny, as in the popular expression used in gambling, "Your number is up." (Crane mentions "chance and circumstance." ) Here, the hidden tenor, Chance, which is usually associated with dice, is then transferred through pre-conceptual complex thinking of participation to bones. The image of bones, which are normally associated with the idea of death, but have nothing to do with chance *per se*, is now in this context linked with the idea of Chance through its surface association with dice. Here is one way that the reader might construct a discursive statement from this seemingly indeterminate cluster of images: The idea of games of chance (using dice) suggests the risk that the first sea explorers to America took. Some of them would die at sea as a result of that risk (Crane was notorious for reverting to puns: on "die" and "di" here), thereby "bequeathing" by their deaths an "embassy" of survivors to the New World (the theme of death and regeneration here?). One may also recall the associations of "games of chance" to high risk (life-and-death) games. Irwin talks of the "aristocratic aesthetic" of Crane's "logic of metaphor" which relies on the reader who has "sensitively read, seen, and experienced a great deal" (Irwin, 208). Despite the hermetic quality of Crane's metaphors, neither are they logical absurdities, nor indeterminate or non-referential riddles. Rather, by asking the reader to reconstruct a chain of commonplaces (similar to the chain complexes of pre-conceptual thought), a predominantly concrete and largely preconceptual form of "logic" emerges. Thus, Crane's "logic of metaphor" serves as the major instrument in the recreative act of shaping a New Consciousness of the American experience as a whole.

Like Rimbaud, whom Crane had most likely read in translation in *The Dial* (1920), Crane shared the belief in the recreative powers of language. For Rimbaud, language would serve as a means to reach the "never before spoken and impossible to actually enunciate":

These visions from another world will, however, be impossible to render in the ordinary outworn language, at the poet's disposal and therefore a new language must be discovered which will be capable of expressing *l'ineffable*, a new language not bound by logic nor grammar or syntax. "A new language must be found!" (Starkie, 125)

Discursive language, scientific expression, must be replaced by a new language and consciousness, the "logic of metaphor," or the language of mythicmetaphoric thinking. On this point, the epigraph to "For

the Marriage of Faustus and Helen" (1923), ironically from Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*, expresses the role of the alchemist-poet, symbolized by Faustus, himself an alchemist and necromancer:

And so we may arrive by Talmud skill  
And profane Greek to raise the building up

Of Helen's house against the Ismaelite,  
King of Thogarma, and his habergeons  
Brimstony, blue and fiery.

As Brom Weber points out in discussing "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen": "the medium of preservation (of beauty against the attack of the Philistines) and ennobling is to be language." 13

Crane's poetic style, specifically his way of creating metaphors stylistically, sheds a great deal of light on the mythical role he defines for himself as poet. As Irwin has pointed out, Josephine Miles in her study *Renaissance, Eighteenth Century, and Modern Language in English Poetry* (1960) has isolated three stylistic modes, which "represent various emphases in the proportions of nouns, verbs, and adjectives contained in a poet's work." According to this scheme, Crane's is a "phrasal style," noted for the "large proportion of nouns and adjectives to verbs." This semantic and syntactic disproportion contributes to the preponderance of "elliptical noun phrases that represent on the level of surface form the embedding of multiple metaphoric relationships" (Irwin, 212).

The importance of these language features lies in what they reveal about Crane's perception of the poet's role. As Irwin notes, "For Crane the ultimate act of the poetic imagination is a special naming that creates an ordered world in opposition to the chaotic world of physical nature. In fact, names and the act of naming are a frequent subject of his verse." Irwin notes "A Name for All," "O Carib Isle" and the extended process of naming in "Atlantis" in which the Bridge is called successively the "Tall Vision-of-the-Voyage," "O Choir, translating time," "Psalm of Cathay," "O Love, they white, pervasive paradigm," "O Thou steeled Cognizance," "Swift peal of secular light, intrinsic Myth," "O River-throated," "Diety's glittering pledge," "Diety's young name," "whitest Flower, O Answerer to all, Anemone," and "One Song, one Bridge of Fire." In "Voyages, IV," he notes the Cranian theme of "poetic incarnation of the word." The reader will recall the discussion in chapter one of the cosmologies (creation myths) that emphasize the role of the spoken word in primordial acts of creation (i.e., perception/consciousness), in addition

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to Cassirer's comments on the act of naming in mythic thinking as the basis of metaphor and, subsequently, of all thought.

The ritualistic act of naming, which creates an accretion of nouns and a network of metaphoric relationships, becomes a kind of poetic *fiat*, an act of the poet's creative will or, as R. P. Blackmur has called "created observation:" "The freshness (e.g., of an image like "peonies with pony manes") has nothing to do with accurate observation, of which it is devoid, but has its source in the arbitrary character of the association: it is created observation" (cited in Irwin, 215). But, as Irwin points out, this particular image is only "arbitrary" on the level of the real, physical objects, "but on the level of language the words 'peony' and 'pony' are related by an obvious similarity in surface form" (Irwin, 215). In numerous examples, Irwin shows that

language in Crane's poetry attempts to break a purely mimetic relationship to the external world and to establish in its place a creative relationship where the conjunction or juxtaposition of words on the basis of wholly linguistic features enables us to build new relations between the things they name" (Irwin, 216).

In this way, Crane is creating a "counterworld" (a term from Spengler, a major influence on Crane) which employs a different language from that of science. In discussing Crane's letter on this subject to Gorham Munson in 1926, Irwin states: "The sense of his remarks is that though science and poetry both represent hypothetical orderings of the world, the language of science reproduces the structure of an external-correspondence logic while the language of poetry embodies the structure of a logic of internal coherence" (Irwin, 217). Crane's "logic of metaphor," paradoxically, "attempts to do away with one kind of logic in the name of another" (Irwin, 217). For Crane, these issues center on the question of human values; scientific claims to objective truth deny that human values have any objective basis or truth value. "Scientific order is moral and ethical chaos," for it denies that human values have any objective basis,

Though the counterworld of the poem (*The Bridge*) is not, as we said, a denial of objective reality, it *is* a questioning of the status of objective reality as the sole criterion of value. If a scientific ordering of the world denies the objective basis of human values, then Crane's poetic ordering of the counterworld suggests that external reality may in fact have nothing to do with human values. Since the moral absolute has been shattered by the material absolutes of mass and motion, Crane attempts to reconstitute a specifically hu-

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man absolute within the poem, the poem which embodies the immutable structure of the creative imagination. (Irwin, 218-219).

Alcohol would provide the means that Crane, like Rimbaud, would employ to shatter the old world and to recreate it in the new imaginative order of the poem, a new mythopoeic world in itself. In a mind-altered state (like the primitive shaman), consciousness could break beyond the artificially binding faculties of logic or empirical observation over language and thought, and thereby release the imagination to create new syntheses.

#### "The Wine Menagerie"

The term "imagination" had been adopted by the Romantics in reference to the poetic sphere; but, in recent times in the works of Cassirer and Langer, it has been expanded to describe all creative faculties of mind involved both in acts of perception and understanding. "In the new 'state of consciousness' toward which the poem strives, Crane says, "there may be discoverable under new forms certain spiritual illuminations, shining with a morality essentialized from experience directly, and not from previous precepts and preconceptions" (Irwin, 219, 221). Crane's logic of metaphor, like the Surrealists' free association, involves "a shattering of the surface-form relationships of normal lexicon and syntax in order that a more basic structure may erupt into consciousness from the very depths of the human psyche" and "(The) human imaginative order that opposes itself to the moral chaos of the external world is then in turn embodied in the associative structure of the poem" (Irwin, 219). As the readings of the poems to follow illustrate, the associative structure of the poem may surface in themes (marriage, bridging, linking of all types in time and space), or lexical and syntactic forms of association and dissociation.

"The Wine Menagerie" (Autumn 1925), expresses Crane's dionysiac poetics of destruction and recreation on the way to ecstatic vision. Wine, long associated with sacred rituals of communion and sacrifice, temporarily produces an ecstatic state of mind ("wine redeems the sight," producing "a vision in a slumbering gaze"). Its effects are to take the poet out of himself (depersonalization), even hinting of his transformation into the sacred eagle of the shaman's ritual ("Wine talons" and "within another's will"). Here are key passages from the poem:

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Invariable when wine redeems the sight,  
 Narrowing the mustard scansions of the eyes,  
 A leopard ranging always in the brow  
 Asserts a vision in the slumbering gaze.

And later,

New Thresholds, new anatomies! Wine talons  
 Build freedom up about me and distill  
 This competency to travel in a tear  
 Sparkling alone, within another's will  
 Until my blood dreams receptive smile  
 Wherein new purities are snared; where chimes  
 Before some flame of gaunt repose a shell  
 Tolloed once, perhaps, by every tongue in hell.  
 Anguished, the wit that cries out of me:

"Alas, these frozen billows of your skill!  
 Invent new dominoes of love and bile. . . . 14

There is the sense of the destruction of the old self (empirical and rational consciousness) through physical or mental suffering ("Anguished, the wit that cries out of me" and "wherein new purities are snared" through the "frozen billows of yourthe wine'sskill"), followed by the emergence of a new self (the wine "Invent(s) new dominoes of love and bile . . . .").15

According to R. W. B. Lewis, "the consumption of much wine has thus suddenly clarified the poet's vision and greatly increase his interpretive and creative powers." To expand upon Lewis' comment, one might add that the effects of alcohol, at least initially, are such that new syntheses are conceived in his visual imagination, new worlds that are, in turn embodied in language. The language of metaphor had become for the poet an act of interpretation and understanding through the recreative powers of his new consciousness of realityhence, "new thresholds" and "new anatomies." The temporarily transformed consciousness induced by drink creates "a fused impression of freshly opening and expanding possibilitythat is, of perceptual and spiritual and creative possibilities; he will cross new doorways like the 'spiritual gates' the loss of which Crane had mourned in 'Emblems of Conduct'" (Lewis, 198).

At about the same time (1925), Crane recapitulated again Rim-baud's poetics of new creations and illuminations in "General Aims and Theories":

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(The) poem's evocation will not be toward decoration or amusement, but rather toward a state of consciousness, and "innocence" (Blake) or absolute beauty. In this condition there may be discoverable under new forms certain spiritual illuminations, shining with a new morality essentialized *from experience directly*, and not from previous precepts or preconception. It is as though a poem gave the reader as he left it a single, *new word*, never before spoken and impossible to actually enunciate, but self-evident as an active principle in the reader's consciousness henceforward. 16

For Crane, the role of the poet as divine creator involves bringing into being "new forms" which embody a "new consciousness," akin to Cassirer's "naming" at the heart of mythic thinking (uttering a "new word"), which reflects a consciousness capable of bridging subject/object, self/other. (See Cassirer on this aspect of mythic thinking).

As early as *Voyages* (1926), Crane would equate the goal of his voyage-quest with language and visionary consciousness: "the genetic basis of all speech, hence consciousness" and "the incarnate Word" (*Ursprache*). The idea of the poetic act as a creative naming appears in "Voyages," IV, where "the incarnation of the word is a metaphor for the love of the partners adrift on the sexual ocean" (Irwin, 214).

In signative of the incarnate word  
 The harbor shoulder to resign in mingling  
 Mutual blood, transpiring as foreknown  
 And widening noon within your breast for gathering  
 All bright insinuations that my years have caught  
 For islands where must lead inviolably  
 Blue latitudes and levels of your eyes,

And in "Voyages," VI, he speaks of his sought-after Belle Isle (or Cathay in *The Bridge*) as "The imaged Word":

Creation's blithe and petalled word  
 to the lounged goddess when she rose  
 Conceding dialogue with eyes  
 That smile unsearchable repose

Still fervid covenant, Belle Isle,  
 Unfolded floating dais before  
 Which rainbows twine continual hair  
 Belle Isle, white echo of the oar!

The imaged Word, it is, that holds  
 Hushed willows anchored in its glow.

It is the unbetrayable reply  
Whose accent no farewell can know.

Such recurrent references in Crane's poetry to "the Word""imaged" meaning concrete, as opposed to abstractions suggests the mythological drama of cosmic creation seen as the emergence of understanding or consciousness (i.e., taking form) out of the Chaos of sensory perception. A similar reference appears in "Ave Maria" (in *The Bridge*) when Columbus says, "The Word I bring, O you who rein my suit . . . I bring back Cathay!" The word "Cathay" itself evokes and creates the new reality or world. The goal of his search, Cathay, is the Word or the single symbol that can synthesize all diversity into the totality of a cosmic consciousness. For Crane, "the word" takes on epistemological, as well as semantic significance, since to his way of thinking the two have become indistinguishable.

"For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen"

With the tripartite poem, "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen" (1923), Crane began to put into practice his idea of "technique organically fused with sense." Here, unlike in previous poems, he was able to dramatize stylistically his longing to transform the ugliness and disharmony (chaos) of modern life into wholeness. As Sir Sidney Colvin, speaking about the Keatsian aspects of the poem, has said (albeit with Christian overtones), "the poem is a playful meditation of the poetic soul in man seeking communion with the spirit of essential Beauty in the world" (cited in Lewis, 80). Crane hoped to accomplish the feat of uniting self and world by adopting the role of Faustus, the alchemist and blasphemer who chose the world's treasures over the transcendent. Crane describes himself in the role of poet-chemist, master of destruction and recreation, in this way:

I was building a bridge between so-called classic experience and the *many divergent realities* of our *seething chaos* of today, which has no formulated mythology yet for classic poetic reference or for religious exploitation (GAT, 217; my emphasis).

"Faustus and Helen" reflects the kind of mythic structure that Crane would describe in "General Aims and Theories" as: "The entire construction of a poem (being) raised on the organic principle of a logic of metaphor, which is the genetic basis of all speech, hence conscious-

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ness and thought-extension" (GAT, 221). About the structure of "Faustus and Helen," in particular, Crane has said:

. . . it gave me a series of correspondences between two widely separated worlds on which to sound some major themes of human speculation—love, beauty, death, renascence. It was a kind of grafting process that I shall doubtless not be interested in repeating, but which is consistent with subsequent theories of mind on the relation of tradition to the contemporary creating imagination (GAT, 217).

The epigraph of the poem from Jonson's *The Alchemist* (cited above) alludes to the poet Faustus as Jonson's Mannon, "misunderstood, ridiculed, sensuous, anxious for beauty and wealth" and the poet "who persists in his role despite the abuse and contempt which are heaped upon his head(?)" (Weber, 180). Rather than viewing the figure of Faustus as representing the failed poet ironically—that is, used to provide a contrast between the classical and the modern (as Weber implies), Crane identifies with Faustus. They are both misunderstood in their poetic or epistemological aims, as well as in their desire for union or wholeness in the worldly (mythical), rather than metaphysical sense. The positive and revolutionary role that Crane attaches to Faustus in this poem becomes clear as he achieves a harmonious reconciliation with Helen, that is, a marriage in the mythic sense of unity of opposites (the sexes and self-world).

Crane's use of ironic stylistic devices has generated some critical discussion about their appropriateness in the context of the poem. For example, Lewis states, "Affirmation was indeed the persisting theme of "Faustus and Helen," yet Crane's structural technique of telescoping the idyllic past and the corrupt present implied a kind of cultural criticism. In such instances as the juxtaposition of fallen Troy and a scene from World War I, the aspiring visionary poet-persona tries to come to terms with present realities, to allow the real (fallen present) to lead one out to the ideal (mythic unity). Lewis sees this ironic structuring device—adopted from Joyce and Eliot—as a major flaw in the poem, since its intent is toward reconciliation:

. . . paradoxically the affirmative impulse was almost undermined in advance by devices at the start of the poem that reflect Eliot's continuing influence . . . . Crane has not fully perceived the way in which Eliot's "erudition and technique" were inseparable from that very sense of cultural and spiritual decay that Crane was bent on denying, that they had been developed to convey that sense and

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could not readily be applied "toward an opposite goal" (Lewis, 89-90).

On the contrary, Crane appears to have been acutely aware of Eliot's ironically mythic structuring (as in *The Waste Land*) and his world-view of "cultural and spiritual decay." Crane was engaged in a direct dialectic or rebuttal with Eliot when he refers to his technique in "Faustus and Helen" as a kind of "grafting process" which involved "a series of correspondences." What occurs in the poem is the gradual transformation of the poet-persona's perspective from irony to the reconciliation of "divergent realities" that take him beyond irony into a mythic awareness of the unity of being. Notably, in the final stanzas of "Faustus and Helen," III, the speaker is engaged in what sounds like a direct rebuttal to Eliot's pessimism:

That saddled sky that shook down vertical  
Repeated play of fireno hypogeum  
Of wave or rock was good against one hour.

We did not ask for that, but have survived.  
And will persist to speak again before  
All stubble streets that have not curved  
To memory, or known the ominous lifted arm  
That lowers down the arc of Helen's brow  
To saturate with blessing and dismay.

.....  
Distinctly praise the years, whose volatile  
Blamed bleeding hands extend and thresh the height  
The imagination spans beyond despair,  
Outpacing bargain, vocable and prayer.

What began with the image of poor Mannon-Faustus ends here with the image of "The hands (of) Erasmus dipped in gleaming tides / (that) Delve upward for the new and scattered wine." What began somewhat cynically ends in a song of praise. A transformation of consciousness has taken place as "The imagination spans beyond despair," foreshadowing Crane's ambition in *The Bridge* to build "a bridge between the many divergent realities," to bind in an altered consciousness of mythic unity and timelessness the world Eliot had rendered with irony and alienation.

Crane seems to have adopted Eliot's ironically mythic method for contrastive purposes, that is, to reflect the corrupt state of America reduced to a "stock-market culture" (Lewis, 92), which Faustus would

find the inner strength to transcend. From this perspective, the poem's structure actually complements its diction and syntax which progresses from the dissociative to the synthetic. One might say that they reflect the poet's shifting awareness away from the "many divergent realities" to a gradual reconciliation (as opposed to transcendence) when Faustus meets Helen. For example, in the image of "the baked and labeled dough" (also, a pun on consumerism), Crane suggests the "dissociation of sensibility" that acts as an objective correlative for the rational-analytical mind. Later, the poem takes a metaphorical turn (line 31), where the bread image transmutes into "the white wafer cheek of love," a positive image of both physical and spiritual communion that coincides with Faustus and Helen's meeting. Just as the priest is believed to be capable of transforming ordinary bread into the body of Christ (through the miracle of transubstantiation), so is Faustus empowered by love with the ability to transform reality and, thereby, to achieve union with Being.

At this point (line 31), the poem itself undergoes a transformation from predominantly dissociative imagery to the associative or metaphoric. For example, in the first subdivision of the poem, the reader gets a sense of the thematic stress on fragmentation which is pervasive in the first two stanzas (lines 1-30). The appropriate diction and images have been placed in italics in the passage below from lines 1-15:

The mind has shown itself at times  
 Too much the baked and *labeled* dough  
*Divided* by accepted multitudes.  
 Across the stacked *partitions* of the day  
 Across the memoranda, baseball scores,  
 The stenographic smiles and *stock quotations*  
 Smutty wings flash out equivocations.

The mind is brushed by sparrow wings;  
*Numbers*, rebuffed by asphalt, crowd  
 The *margins* of the day, accent the *curbs*  
 Convoying *divers* dawns on every corner  
 To druggist, barber and tobacconist,  
 Until the *graduate* opacities of evening  
 Take them away as suddenly to somewhere  
 Virginal perhaps, less *fragmentary*, cool. (11. 1-15).

On one side of the picture, we see a world fragmented into disparate parts and constrained by its materialism ("margins" and "curbs"),

physically and spiritually oppressed ("baked and labeled dough"), and replacing spiritually with self-indulgence ("druggist, barber, and tobacconist"). But, Crane infuses hope into this dreary scene with subtle images of hope ("equivocations"), transcendence ("smutty wings" to the "mind brushed by sparrow wings"), and purification ("dawns" and "virginal perhaps, less fragmentary"), thereby fore-shadowing the changes to come.

Finally, with the appearance of Helen (l. 34) who is viewed synecdochially ("eyes," "hands," "cheek," etc.), a state of timeless unity and mythical consciousness transforms the chaos of the modern world. Here is the ecstatic middle section of the poem:

*There is the world dimensional for  
those untwisted by the love of things  
irreconcilable . . . .*

And yet, suppose some evening I forgot  
The fare and transfer, yet got by that way  
Without recall, lost yet poised in traffic.  
Then I might find your eyes across an aisle,  
Still flickering with those prefigurations  
Prodigal, yet uncontested now,  
Half-riant before the jerky window frame.

There is some way, I think, to touch  
Those hands of yours that count the nights  
Stippled with pink and green advertisements.  
And now, before its arteries turn dark  
I would have you meet this bartered blood.  
Imminent in his dream, none better knows  
The white wafer cheek of love, or offers words  
Lightly as moonlight on the eaves meets snow.

Reflective conversion of all things  
At your deep blush, when *ecstasies* thread  
The limbs and belly, when rainbows spread  
Impinging on the throat and sides . . .  
Inevitable, the *body of the world*  
Weeps in inventive dust for the hiatus  
That winks above it, bluet in your breasts. (II. 16-40)

Through Faustus' act of imagination ("reflective conversion" recalls Herder), even the fragmentedly or synecdochially perceived Helen can be transformed into a unity (a rainbow arching above the "body of the world" a cosmological image reminiscent of Native American



and Egyptian creation mythology) above the world yet still of it. The tendency of critics has been to interpret the figure of Helen as a transcendent presence which contrasts with the "fallen" state of the material world (Neo-Platonic dualities). For example, Lewis argues:

. . . as the vision of Helen comes into view, the actual world reveals by contrast its qualities of ugliness and desperation. For now it is morally and spiritually measured ('counted') by the emerging figure of Helen . . . . The world's body weeps because, in the hiatus between Helen's breasts that winks far above the world, it recognizes the hiatus between the actual and the ideal and longs to close the hiatus through love. (Lewis, 100)

Another way of interpreting the meaning of Helen, one that complements Crane's mythopoeic project (i.e., his search for a new world or *muthos*), would be to see Helen as the embodiment of mythic consciousness. The rainbow, an archetypal shamanic symbol, in this context functions as the bridge does in the later poem, that is, as an image of the reconciling or synthesizing (rather than the transcending) imagination.

The mythic mode of consciousness that begins about the same time that Faustus sees Helen (line 31) is reflected in the diction and tropes suggesting integration and synthesis. On lines 32 and 33, Crane introduces the first smile and metaphor in the poem ("As moonlight on the eaves meets snow" and "white wafer cheek of love"), signaling the beginning of the "reflective conversion of all things"; these particular images suggest the reconciliation of various dualities (celestial and earthly: moonlight reflected on the snow; substantial and divine: eucharist; and male and female: love) and prefigure the symbolic marriage of Faustus and Helen.

In the next section (ll. 38-54), catachresis or radical metaphors evoke the ecstatic state of mind as Faustus' visionary powers reflect sexual excitation. For example, Helen's body is compared with the ethereal or cosmic, such as rainbows and the blue of the heavens:

Reflective conversion of all things  
 At your deep blush, when ecstasies thread  
 the limbs and belly, when rainbows spread  
 Impinging on the throat and sides . . . .  
 Inevitable, the body of the world  
 Weeps in inventive dust for the hiatus  
 That winks above it, bluet in your breasts. (ll. 38-44)

In Faustus' imagination, her body (limbs, throat, sides, belly) blushes with rainbows, thus creating an arch combining the earthly and sacred, and similarly her breasts reflect both the ethereal blue of the heavens and an earthly flower (bluet). Together, these images suggest the symbolic union of dualities through Faustus' imaginative power and not, as Lewis argues, the "hiatus" or gap between the real and the ideal.

In addition to these images of reconciliation, this first section of the tripartite poem ends with catachresis (ll. 51-54) that affirms Faustus' ability to "close the gap" through the ecstatic experience provoked by sexual-aesthetic experience (of love and beauty). Here are the closing stanzas of the first section in their entirety:

The earth may glide diaphanous to death;  
 But if I lift my arms it is to bend  
 To you who turned away once, Helen, knowing  
 The press of troubled hands, too alternate  
 With steel and soil to hold you endlessly.  
 I meet you, therefore, in that eventual flame  
 You found in final chains, no captive then  
 Beyond their million brittle, bloodshot eyes;  
 White, through white cities passed on to assume  
 That world which comes to each of us alone.

Accept a lone eye riveted to your plane,  
 Bent axle of devotion along companion ways  
 That beat, continuous, to hourless days  
 One inconspicuous, glowing orb of praise. (ll. 41-54).

The image of the arch reappears in transmuted form as the eye and the axle, and ends with the completed circle ("glowing orb") of perfect continuity. The bridging and welding metaphors ("bent axle of devotion along companion ways" and "Lone eye riveted to your plane") enact the height of Faustus' cosmic vision, which reaches its climax or completion with the image of the "glowing orb of praise." Therefore, through the progression from imagery that suggests the fragmentary and materialistic (i.e., the rational-empirical), Crane traces the path of the evolving ecstatic-visionary experience to imagery showing the linking of uncommon correspondences, catachresis, and dynamic metaphors for forging dualities into a completed whole. 17

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## The Bridge

In *The Bridge* (1925-30), Crane expanded and developed both the theme and the stylistic techniques that would dramatize the "marriage" (Frank's "mystical synthesis") of the earth-bound and the cosmic (Faustus and Helen), which was first explored in "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen." In the earlier poem, Crane had used the transmutation of diction from dissociative to associative images and tropes and from simile and metaphor to catachresis in a progression that dramatized Faustus' imaginative transcendence of dualities. Continuing this search in *The Bridge*, Crane would further extend the processes of logic of metaphor to include structure and personae. As Crane would say in "General Aims and Theories": "The entire construction of a poem is raised on the organic principle of logic of metaphor, which is the genetic basis of all speech, hence consciousness and thought-extension." This means that the organization of events in the poem would be based upon mental processes similar to those followed in logic of metaphor, that is, processes of association on the concrete level, leading to an abstract one.

The archetypal pattern of the exploration of New Worlds (of the mind and of language) becomes the deep structure of *The Bridge* as a whole, whether seen through Christopher Columbus in "Ave Maria," through the hobos hopping a ride on the Twentieth Century Limited in "The River," or through the Wright Brothers' triumph over vertical space in "Cape Hatteras." Irrespective of time or place, the underlying pattern remains the same. Similarly, underlying the shifting masks of various personae throughout the poem, one archetypal figure emerges, the Explorer of New Worlds in various times and places. Whether actually migrating west or east across the American continent or the oceans, above the ground in flight or below in the tunnel, or psychologically back into memory or imaginatively projecting forward into the future, the epistemological quest is the conquest of New Worlds (new modes of consciousness, perception, and understanding).

*The Bridge* reflects the sharpening and focusing of Crane's mythopoeic quest since "Faustus and Helen" in ways significantly different from the earlier poem. Whereas Faustus' quest had aimed at transcending the real in a moment of transitory ecstatic consciousness, the personae's quest(s) in *The Bridge* became the attempt to sustain that moment of timeless unity indefinitely, that is to convert historical time into a permanently sustained (and sustainable) mode of

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mythic consciousness. Discriminating between two ways of defining the concept of "myth," Lewis states that:

. . . the bridge is not, of course, a myth in the familiar sense of a story, about life, death and rebirth of some god. It is a myth in the alternate but no less valid and traditional sense of revelation: a revelation in the form of what Whitman called a national and original literary archetype (Lewis, 255).

Lewis' reference to myth as "revelation" (probably in the Neo-Platonic sense) supports Crane's radical aims to affect a revolution in consciousness both in himself and, if possible, in American society as a whole that is, to create from the fragments (debris) of the pluralistic American experience "one synoptic arc" which is the "intrinsic Myth," the revelation of unity. Unlike the timeless moment of epiphany only glimpsed in "Faustus and Helen," in *The Bridge* the persona tries to sustain this epiphany by annulling time and conquering space. In this way, Crane's mythopoeic epic differs from similar literary works that, also, rely on a pattern of mythic recurrence, notably Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*.<sup>18</sup> In these works, the cyclical pattern suggests experience without change or time annulled, while in *The Bridge* the pattern of experience suggests linear recurrence or the quest (from *quaestus*, to seek or ask) in the phenomenological sense. From this perspective, *The Bridge* represents an "act of faith" and a quest not unlike that for the Holy Grail; one plagued by doubts and despair, yet in the end a testament to fortitude.

Because *The Bridge* concerns the poet-persona's attempt to achieve and sustain a mythic mode of consciousness embodied in language, images and symbols relating to time and space take on special significance. They are important in themselves in individual sections, as well as in the way that they transmute throughout the poem as a whole, thereby dramatizing the poet's evolving mythic consciousness.<sup>19</sup> Several critics have pointed out the "temporal and spatial schemes" in the poem (John Unterecker), and the eagle and serpent symbols in particular (Butterfield and Dembo). Their observations contribute most, I believe, to our understanding of the poem when read in relationship to the poem's larger scheme, the epistemological "revolution" or the quest for mythic consciousness.

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## A. "The Dance"

In his efforts to integrate past and present American experiences in his own consciousness, Crane needed to overcome the geographical and historical alienation inherent in modern American life. To do so, he enacts thematically a series of fusion processes that occur from "Ave Maria" to "The Dance," treating time and space as separate entities. In this first part of *The Bridge*, Crane is concerned, for the most part, with images of time in an attempt to integrate psychologically disparate events in history. The continental crossing from east to west via ship, river boat, train, canoe and pioneer wagon coincides with the temporal linking of past and present. The climactic moment occurs when time and space (Maquokeeta and Pocahontas) come together (are literally married) in "The Dance." Subsequently, in the section of the poem from "Indiana" to "Atlantis," the theme revolves around the problem of spatial or geographical separation, therefore the abundance of images such as planes, trapezes, the tunnel and, finally, the Brooklyn Bridge.

In the section from "Ave Maria" to "The Dance," the transmutation of images of time and space dramatizes the poet's evolving consciousness of the American experience, especially through images of the serpent and the eagle. 20 In "Van Winkle," for example, the poet's childhood memory transports him back in time: ". . . we stoned the family of young garter snakes under . . . / Recallrecall." Later, the first reference to time as a serpent and space as an eagle appears in "The River": "Time like a serpent down her shoulder, dark, / And space, an eaglet's wing." In the same section, a more subtle image of time and space, "fire and snow," prefigures Maquokeeta (burnt at the stake) and Pocahontas ("glacier woman," and "Winter queen of the Continent") in "The Dance": "Time's renderings, time's blendings they construe / As final reckonings of fire and snow." At the end of "The River," time and space become more closely related as the Twentieth Century Limited accelerates, until in "The Dance" they symbolically merge in the nuptial fire and emerge as "the serpent *with* the eagle in the boughs" (my emphasis).

"The Dance" centers on the poet-persona's search for origins in our ancestral (Native American) past, taking us to an Algonquian village atop a plateau. There the geographically and psychologically ascending personadepersonalized and fused with the shaman himselfobserves and participates in the nuptial ritual for Maquokeeta, the chieftain and shaman, and the princess Pocahontas, who (critics agree) symbolize time and space respectively. The "mar-

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riage" (as in "Faustus and Helen") takes on symbolic and mythic significance as Maquokeeta, consumed by the flames, becomes fused with the elements of the earth (fire, water, air, soil) and, symbolically, with Pocahontas (earth-mother-origins). In addition, the poet-persona participates with Maquokeeta in his ritually induced suffering which breaks down the barriers of self and other (subject-object), past and present, ending in sexual union (see Eliade on dance as erotic, 73, 79). Lewis describes "The Dance" as "the long-sought-after vision" which by its nature must occur in an entirely new scene, "for new insights require crossing new thresholds, and the supreme visionary act requires (by the very nature of art) its own supreme location: the apocalyptic ground of the journey's climax" (Lewis, 307). Although the poet-persona appears, judging from the imagery, to achieve the sought-after mythic consciousness in "the Dance," he cannot sustain it and, consequently, must succumb to the forces of change and history that follow.

Crane's language enacts the climactic moment of mythic consciousness in "The Dance," where associative diction (imagery and tropes) and sentence structure appear to a degree not found elsewhere in *The Bridge*. The enactment of mythic simultaneity, time fusing with space, occurs thematically, as well in the poet's mind, when Maquokeeta (time) appears to merge with the elements during his ritual dance, when the "elements of reality—the divine, the human and the natural—seem to move in intoxicated concert." 21

Maquokeeta's fusion with the elements, as the components of the Continent, signifies his symbolic and marital union with Pocahontas. His immolation dramatizes symbolically the experiential wedding of time and space which is characteristic of a mythic mode of awareness as he merges concurrently with the four elements (fire, air, water, and earth). References to fire when describing Maquokeeta signals the first stage in the process of the symbolic integration of dualities, i.e., self and other, space and time:

And every tendon scurries toward the twangs  
of lightning deltaed down your saber hair.  
Now snaps the flint in every tooth; red fangs  
And splay tongues thinly busy the blue air . . .

Dance, Maquokeeta! snake that lives before  
That casts his pelt, and lives beyond! Sprout, horn!  
Spark, tooth! Medicineman, relent, restore  
Lie to us, dance us back the tribal morn!

Spears and assemblies: black drums thrusting on

O yelling battlements, *I, too, was liege*  
 To rainbows currying each pulsant bone:  
 Surpassing the circumstance, danced out the siege!

And buzzard-circleted, screamed from the stake;  
 I could not pick the arrows from my side.  
 Wrapped in that fire, I saw more-escorts wake  
 Flickering, spring *up the hill groins like a tide*.

I heard the hush of lava wrestling your arms,  
 And stag teeth foam about the raven throat;  
*Flame cataracts of heaven* in seething swarms  
 Fed down your anklets to the *sunset's moat*.

Image clusters showing elemental and human-nature fusion abound in this section ("rainbows currying each pulsant bone," (fire) "spring(s) up the hill groins like a tide," "hush of lava wrestling your arms," "stag teeth foam about the raven throat," "fiame cataracts of heaven . . . / Fed down your anklets to the sunset's moat"). Maquokeeta, suffering in self-immolation, dies to his former self and truly eagle-like ascends to the heavens ("flame cataracts of heave" and "sunset's moat") while becoming integrated with nature. As Eliade writes of the combined mystical and carnal aspects of shamanic ascent (Eliade, 79), there is a strong erotic component to Maquokeeta's pyrogenic suffering and death ("up the hill groins like a tide," "wrestling your arms," "about the raven throat," and "Fed down your ankles").

Maquokeeta is consumed by the sacrificial fire (either actual or ritualistic) in several stages as enacted through the imagery of the poem. In the first stage, Crane focuses on imagery of fire in "Lightning deltaed," "Now snaps the flint in every tooth," "red fangs / And splay tongues thinly busy the blue air," and "Spark, tooth!" In the second stage of this process, Maquokeeta, now consumed by fire, interacts imagistically with water, despite their seeming incompatibility ("heaven with flame cataracts") and the fire draws sustenance from the air in the next stage ("blue air" can suggest blue flames or water). This fire-air unity also suggests the fusion of the elements of water and earth, since fire needs oxygen to burn. Finally completing the process of total elemental integration, air merges with water in the images of "foam" and "*heaven* with flame cataracts."

As with the images of elemental integration, the rainbow which is associated with the shaman's "ascent" and the *axis mundi* (Eliade, 490, 492), combines the prismatic colors in a form which simultaneously transcends and bridges (connects).

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. . . I, too was liege  
 To rainbows currying each pulsant bone:  
 Surpassed the circumstance, danced out the siege!

The rainbow, signifying both transcendence and transience (combining space and time), appears during the ritual dance ("black drums" and "I, too, . . . danced out the siege!"), which is itself the pathway to "ascent" of consciousness.

The central image or vehicle to mythic consciousness (unity of time and space, self and other) in "The Dance" is the ritual dance itself. The dance is a common part of the shamanic ritual of ascent (Eliade). The circling dance acts as a "curveship" in that the act of dancing, like memory, transports the poet *cum* Maquokeeta back in time ("dance us back the tribal morn"). And just as the poet's arcing path "danced" him back to the primordial time of psycho-linguistic wholeness, so too does the ritual dance transport both the Indian shaman and the poet (apparently still bound in sustained mythic identification) forward and eastward:

We danced, O Brave, we danced beyond their farms,  
 In cobalt desert closures made our vows . . .  
 Now is the strong prayer folded in thine arms,  
 The serpent with the eagle in the boughs.

Now the poet-persona and Maquokeeta-Pocahontas (time and space) dance forward into the present (pioneer times) and eastward from the Southwest (perhaps) to Indiana. 22

The moment of metamorphosis, achieved through fire, occurs in lines 61-64 (sentence 23) where Maquokeeta, engulfed in flames and dancing his nuptial of the "eternal return," transports the poet-persona back in time in an act of mythic identification (subject-object barriers fall):

Dance, Maquokeeta! snake that lives before,  
 That casts his pelt, and lives beyond! Sprout horn!  
 Spark, tooth! Medicine-man, relent, restore  
 Lie to us, dance us back the tribal morn! (ll. 61-64)

Eliade talks about the shamanic experience as following the pattern of suffering-death-resurrection (often in mock fashion) in order to achieve mythic consciousness, to "restore" that primal experience of wholeness with nature and mankind. In the initiatory ceremony, the shaman undergoes experiences that enact suffering, death, and res-



urrection. He experiences a symbolic dying to the old self (ego), a depersonalization of consciousness, and in this new mental state, the restoration of the original state of unity with Being. The frenetic dance becomes the method in Crane's poem to achieve this altered state of consciousness; Eliade talks about other means, such as actual sickness or suffering (torture), dreams, or narcotics. He makes clear that the "sickness-vocation" fills the role of an initiation, but that it also corresponds to initiatory tortures. In the case of Maquokeeta, shamanic initiation occurs through torture and suffering by fire.

. . . all the ecstatic experiences that determine the future shaman's vocation involve the traditional scheme of an initiation ceremony: suffering, death, resurrection. . . the imminence of death felt by the sick man (pain, unconsciousness, etc.) recalls the symbolic death represented in almost all initiation ceremonies (Eliade, 33).

Ecstatic unity is enacted stylistically where the appositive, "Snake that lives before," and the relative clause, "That casts his pelt, and lives beyond," function as radical metaphors where the snake that "lives before" and "lives" beyond suggest simultaneity. The act of dancing, also, serves as a vehicle for transporting the poet into the past, and then into the future. In addition, the very nature of the dance is defined by the rhythm in time and movement in space, thereby combining in one image the two essential elements of experience, unified during ecstatic vision.

At the climax of the poet-Maquokeeta's ecstatic experience, sentence structure reveals the accretion of more images and thought clusters juxtaposed to suggest the metonymic relationship of parts to the whole (*pars pro toto*). 23 Ideas and syntactic units in metonymic relationships to one another show the mythic associative processes of consciousness at work, which begin around line 33. For the purposes of illustration, I would like to contrast that sentence (line 33) with the two that proceed it:

I left the village for dogwood. By the canoe  
tugging below the mill-race, I could see  
Your hair's keen crescent running, and the blue  
First moth of evening take wind stealthily. (ll. 17-20)

The main clauses here are clearly defined as active voice constructions in a chronological sequence of events that reflect logically discursive thought. Anticipating the beginning of mythic awareness (ll.

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33-40), the pace noticeably quickens as image upon image rushes into the persona's field of perception. In addition, punctuation signals the blending processes of mindan impression that dramatizes the metonymic or associative thought processes that characterize the ecstatic experience:

O Appalachian Spring! I gained the ledge;  
 Steep, inaccessible smile that eastward bends  
 And northward reaches in that violet wedge  
 Of Adirondacks! wisped of azure wands,  
 Over how many bluffs, tarns, streams I sped!  
 And knew myself within some boding shade:  
 Grey tepees tufting the blue knolls ahead,  
 Smoke swirling through the yellow chestnut glade . . . (ll. 33-40)

The "ledge," like a "smile" bending eastward, metaphorically fuses the natural and the human, while the predominance of s-alliteration in these lines imitates the sounds of the dynamic (fusion) processes of nature and anticipates the hissing of Maquokeeta, snake-man, to follow. The quick succession of images bluffs, tepees, swirling smoke, etc. rush by as the frenzy of the dance intensifies the experience of "ascent."

Toward the end of "The Dance," due to Crane's internally reflexive technique of logic of metaphor, the reader confronts densely configured clusters of images and clauses that rely upon earlier associations within the poem for their meaning or symbolism. In this way, the reader is drawn into the ecstatic experience along with the poet-persona through the language of the poem. The symbolism of the poem is self-reflexive in that it divulges its meaning within the context of the poem, not on some transcendent plane of abstraction. In lines 49-52, Crane uses independent clauses without logical connectives to force the reader to make the necessary connections, thereby imitating the mythic mode of thinking. The following passage from the end of "The Dance" serves as a good example:

A birch kneels. All her whistling fingers fly.  
 The oak grove circles in a crash of leaves;  
 The long moan of a dance is in the sky.  
 Dance, Maquokeeta: Pocahontas grieves . . . (ll. 49-52)

This stanza describes the building climatic moment of "ascent" during Maquokeeta's dance when his consciousness achieves the impression of totality. Imagery in itself suggests the fusion of nature (tree)-

man-animal (bird) in the personifications ("birch kneels" and "her whistling fingers") and animism ("oak grove circles" and the birch's "fingers fly"). Images of his fusion with nature appear simultaneously with those that suggest his "ascent" ("fingers fly," "oak grove circles," and "a dance in the sky"). In addition, the dance is equated with the experience of suffering (referring to pain, pleasure, or both) that leads to illumination ("The long moan of a dance") and results finally in his death ("Pocahontas grieves" )to the old consciousness/self.

To cite one more example of Crane's use of metaphor reflexively within the poem, in the third to the last stanza (ll. 61-64) of "The Dance," Maquokeeta and the poet-persona merge in mythic identification:

Spears and assemblies: black drums thrusting on  
 O yelling battlements,I, too was liege  
 to rainbows currying each pulsant bone:  
 Surpassed the circumstance, danced out the siege! (ll. 61-64)

The first two lines begin with four metonymies associated with "the tribal morn," all possibly associated with war (spears, assemblies, drums, and battlements). In the main clause of this sentence, "I, too, was liege," the persona becomes an active participant in the Indian past ("Surpassed the circumstance") and, nevertheless, surviving the "siege." The radically metaphoric association of the images of "rainbows" (fused with Maquokeeta, i.e., "currying each pulsant bone") and "dancing out the siege" becomes clear within the context of the earlier part of "The Dance" where the reader has come to identify both images with the ecstatic experience.

In his discussion of shamanism, Eliade refers to the significance of both rainbows and drums in shamanic initiations. In a number of cultures, the rainbow represents the restored "bridge" between sky and earth, "which was once accessible to all mortals" (Eliade, 134). In shamanic initiations it often symbolizes "the shaman's journey to the sky" and the shamanic drums are often decorated with "drawings of the rainbow represented as a bridge to the sky" (Eliade, 135). Interestingly, according to Eliade, some peoples even at one time regarded the drum as a

"celestial bridge" (rainbow) over which the shaman made his ascent. This idea forms part of the complex symbolism of the drum and the bridge, each of which represents a different formula for the same ecstatic experience: celestial ascent. It is through the musical

magic of the drum that the shaman can reach the highest heaven" (Eliade, 135).

Crane combines these images of shamanic ascent which have, over the course of this section, become associated with the poet-Maquoqueeta's growing consciousness of unified space-time and mythic totality.

#### B. "The Tunnel"

Every pattern of ascent in human experience must inevitably be followed by descent or return to the human/fallen state. While working on "The Tunnel," Crane wrote: "If only America were half as worthy today to be spoken of as Whitman spoke of it fifty years ago there might be something for me to say." 24 Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (1865), for example, embraces both "Brooklyn of ample hills" and "the streets of Manhattan island," the countryside of his childhood days and the "teeming city" of his youth. According to Trachtenberg, There is no apparent conflict in Whitman's poetry between the two ways of life, between Long Island and the cities" (Trachtenberg, 36).

"The Tunnel," in contrast to "The Dance," is heavily dissociative in diction, tropes and sentence structure, leading the reader into the persona's infernal inscape. Here, the tunnel image serves as the metaphor for the "fissures of the (modern) mind," or the dissociation of sensibility of which Eliot wrote. The "descent" of consciousness of which Lewis speaks below, suggests a return in time to the mythologized chaotic state of mind ("this unseeing world of meaningless noise") prior to the emergence of the creative imagination ("vision"). Here is the entire passage from Lewis:

the journey remains Romantic and Cranian, and it consists of a descent of consciousness leading to another self-encounter, but the opposite in nature to that of the "The Dance." Indeed, the experience in general here is opposite to that of The Dance." The death-land traversed is characterized by the total, if temporary, defeat of the instruments of vision. Eyes and ears fail utterly in this unseeing world of meaningless noise: . . . Worst of all, the poet arrives at a moment of greatest doubt about his own visionary and poetic capacities, his entire creative achievement (Lewis, 355).

While the course he follows has literal signposts (as Dante's journey

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did), it also charts the persona's psychological pilgrimage through his loss of faith in the dream of *The Bridge* ("word Incarnate") to its restoration symbolized by Lazarus' resurrection. As in the initiatory pattern of suffering-death-resurrection that the shaman must experience in order to be "reborn" to a new self, i.e., consciousness, so here the reference to Lazarus symbolizes a death of one kind (body/senses) and a rebirth of another (spirit / consciousness).

Crane's "Spengler" letter to Waldo Frank (June 20, 1926) reflects his growing loss of hope in the wholeness of American experience, a reversal of the ecstatic experience enacted in Maquokeeta's dance. Crane wrote:

Emotionally I should like to write *The Bridge*; intellectually judged the whole theme and project seems more and more absurd. A fear of personal impotence in this matter wouldn't affect me half so much as the convictions that arise from other sources (Frank, 231).

Crane's recurrent loss of faith in *The Bridge*, as poem and symbol, as well as his (or, the persona's) struggle to regain it, can be traced stylistically. The language of the poem reflects the evolution and degeneration of consciousness from the chaos of random sense impressions to the recreative power of the imagination.

"The Tunnel" sustains a sense of despair through the use of dissociative diction and tropes clearly up to line 115, where the subway train begins its uphill ascent to the Brooklyn shore of the East River at which point Crane refers to Lazarus' resurrection. At this point, instances of common, as well as more radical metaphors, appear in testimony to the persona's reborn mythic consciousness. In contrast with metaphoric diction in "The Dance," the first sentence (ll. 1-5) of "The Tunnel," begins with an apparently random impression, only loosely linked metonymically with Times Square. Other than their common location, they share neither logical, nor imaginative associations with one another or the cluster:

Performance, assortments, résumés  
Up Times Square to Columbus Circle lights  
Channel the congresses, nightly sessions,  
Refractions of the thousand theatres, faces  
Mysterious kitchens . . . . You shall search them all. (ll. 1-5)

This section with its echoes of Eliot and Poe enacts the persona's fragmented mental state ("fissures" or psychic flux) through disso-

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ciated metonymies (performance, assortments, résumés etc.) and synecdoches (faces, knees). Parodying the mood and style of T. S. Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" and even *The Waste Land* (which Crane had in the beginning originally set out to refute), Crane uses synecdoche dissociatively, here and elsewhere to suggest the psychic disintegration ("dissociation of sensibility") of modern humanity:

You'll find the garden in the third act dead,  
Finger your knees and wish yourself in bed  
With tabloid crime-sheets perched in easy sight. (ll. 8-10) 25

In a similar vein in lines 36-49, the persona has passed through the turnstile entrance to the subway that "bridges" Manhattan with Long Island in the lower depths, the antithetical image to the Brooklyn Bridge in "Atlantis." When the persona descends into the subway tunnel, symbolic of Hades, the most incoherent or discontinuous section of the poem begins. It is wrought with snatches of overhead conversations, run-on sentences punctuated with dashes and colons, dissociative metonymy and synecdoche, all of which show us raw experience devoid of ethical or aesthetic order. In this subterranean world, devoid of both literal and imaginative "vision," only faceless voices are overheard in the dark and limited perception thwarts all possible understanding.

. . . the monotone  
of motion is the sound  
of other faces also underground

"Let's have a pencil Jimmy living now  
at Floral Park  
Flatbush on the fourth of July  
like a pigeon's muddy dream potatoes  
to dig in the field traveling the town too  
night after night the Culver line the  
girls all shaping up it used to be"

Our tongues recant like beaten weather vanes  
This answer lives like verdigris, like hair  
Beyond extinction, surcease of the bone;  
And repetition freezes (ll. 36-49)

Through language, Crane dramatizes the flux of experience ("seething chaos") devoid of the coherence of an underlying value system or

congruenceall (patriotism, hunger, entertainment, romance) are equally without value or special significance: the fourth of July, Flat-bush, potatoes, nights in town and girls, etc. And when an occasional associative device, like the similes below, do appear, they connote the absence rather than the emergence of mythic vision: "(living now at Floral Park) like a pigeon's muddy dream," "(tongues) like beaten weather vanes," and "(This answer lives) like verdigris (i.e., greening of copper), like hair / Beyond extinction."

Thus, the descent into the tunnel becomes a metaphor for the persona's private hell: the failure or inability to order, either imaginatively or ethically, to make meaning of the fragments (random sense impressions) of experience. The phonograph with its pattern of repetitive circularity becomes the image of a psychological hell, as well as the ironic reversal of the circularity and ascent of the earlier shamanic dance. In language, we witness what Crane calls "the phonographs of Hades in the brain / . . . tunnels that rewind themselves" (ll. 58-59). This confined circularity and repetitiveness provides the antithetical image of mythic expansiveness of mind which carries the persona beyond the self, time and space.

Two deceased poets (one classical and one modern) act as reminders to the persona of the fate of those who lose faith in their poetic visions. First, he meets Orpheus, dismembered by the Tracian maidens whom he had repulsed:

Whose head is swinging from the swollen strap  
 Whose body snakes along the bitten rails,  
 Bursts from a smoldering bundle far behind  
 In back forks of the chasms of the brain  
 Puffs from a riven stump far out behind  
 In interborough fissures of the mind. . . ? (ll. 66-71) 26

Orpheus' decapitated body ("swinging head" and "riven stump") presents a grisly visualization of the mind-body duality that Crane at least at this point, like his contemporary T. S. Eliot, believed characterized the modern sensibility. It is as if Crane adopts or duplicates the Eliotic vision in order to illustrate further the persona's inevitable "descent" characterized by the limitation of vision, both literally and cognitively. This basest level of perception is marked by the absence of the imaginative transformation of raw sense perceptions into some form of understanding. The second poet, the ghost of Edgar Allen Poe, appears with "eyes like agate lanterns" and trembling hands," confronting his abductors, "their eyes like unwashed plat-

ters" (ll. 73, 76). The dissociative synecdoches (anatomical parts) and negative similes contribute to the nightmarish quality of the persona's hallucinatory visions, the inversion of that in "Atlantis." In addition, they evoke the horror of Poe's tragic and senseless death: "When they dragged your retching flesh, / Your trembling hand that night through Baltimore."

The subway stops briefly "For Gravesend Manor Change at Chambers Street," followed by an influx of images, several of failed vision ("each eye attending its shoe," "the train rounds, . . . / And somewhat emptier than before, / Demented," "blank windows gargle signals through the roar," and "newspapers wing, revolve and wing"), bombarding his senses with a perceptual potpourri:

The intent escalator lifts a serenade  
 Stilly  
 Of shoes, umbrellas, each eye attending its show, the  
 Bolting outright somewhere above where streets  
 Burst suddenly in rain. . . . The gongs recur:  
 Elbows and levers, guard and hissing door.  
 Thunder is galvothermic here below. . . . The car  
 Wheels off. The train rounds, bending to a scream,  
 Taking the final level for the dive  
 Under the river  
 And somewhat emptier than before,  
 Demented, for a hitching second, humps; then  
 Lets go . . . . Toward corners of the floor  
 Newspapers wing, revolve and wing.  
 Blank windows gargle signals through the roar.

In the next section (ll. 106-114), imagery that connotes rebirth or the creation of new worlds is continuously undercut by those of decline and death ("the slaughter of a day in birth," "worlds that glow and sink," "The conscience navelled in the plunging wind, / Umbilical to calland straightway die!").

Just when things seem bleakest in the subway ride into the psyche, the dawning imagination slowly brushes the darkness away. The subway's arching path, the inversion of the soaring bridge, leads to "brinking dawn," "a day in birth," and the ascent upward and out of the depths of failed vision and despair begins. Predictably language takes a positive turn in the passage cited above (ll. 104-05 and l. 111) where the poet-persona imaginatively transforms (albeit, in the form of a question rather than as an assertion) the "Wop washerwoman, with the bandaged hair" a few lines later into "O Genoese, do



you bring mother eyes and hands / Back home to children and to golden hair?" This image recalls Helen's transformation from flapper to goddess in "The Marriage of Faustus and Helen," (II). Then, on lines 111 to 114, the reader comes across the first instance in this section of radical metaphor concurrent with the subway's ascent and signalling the awakening or rebirth of imaginative consciousness:

To spoon us out more liquid than the dim  
 Location of the eldest star, and pack  
 The conscience navelled in the plunging wind,  
 Umbilical to calland straightway die! (ll. 111-114)

The allusion here, possibly to "The Proteus Chapter" of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, involves Stephen Daedalus fantasizes about calling Eve (archetypal mother) on the umbilical cord of Mrs. Purefoy's ("pure faith"?) newborn baby. This allusion suggests the desire for the as yet unattained mythic fusion, or at least communication with our Biblical and ancestral past and the present.

With the subway beginning its ascent to daylight, both in the temporal (dawn) and in the spatial (out of the inverted arch of the tunnel) senses, language sustains the momentum toward cognitive synthesis through associative diction, and similes and radical metaphors:

O caught, like pennies beneath soot and steam,  
 Kiss of our agony thou gatherest;  
 Condensed, thou takest all-shrill ganglia  
 Impassioned with some song we fail to keep.  
 And yet, Lazarus, to feel the slope.  
 The sod and billow breaking, lifting ground.  
 A sound of waters bending astride the sky  
 Unceasing with some Word that will not die . . . ! (ll. 115-122).

As the train breaks into daylight, language reveals the renewal of associative powers in the third person "Kiss of our agony thou gatherest." From the negative simile, "like pennies beneath soot and steam," which describes the riders, his outlook takes a positive turn ("And yet, Lazarus," resurrected miraculously by Christ) in three complementary ways: physically ("lifting ground"), spiritually (faith), and epistemologically ("bending astride the sky"). To "see the light" in all three senses, especially the last one, is to regain the imaginative power to associate, to create continuities among oneself, the world, and the mythic past. In both linguistic and epistemological senses,

this also means to discover "some Word (and experience of sustained unity) that will not die. . . !" Characteristically, Crane introduces radical metaphors here in appositive constructions: "Kiss of our agony," "condensed," and "shrill ganglia / impassioned with some song." The referent for these appositives remains implicit, but one may assume that Crane / the persona is addressing the subway tunnel as a metaphor for the epistemological quest for a sustained mythic consciousness.

The final lines (ll. 123-39) foreshadow the ultimate ascent on the Brooklyn Bridge to the heights of vision in "Atlantis." Allusions to this scene on the placid East River early in the morning reflect the inner harmony that the persona now feels: "a tugboat . . . / Lunged past, with one galvanic blare," "echoes assembling, one after one," "the star pooled the sea," and "thou gatherest, O Hand of Fire / gatherest." Here, the "Kiss of our agony" and the "Hand of Fire" recall Maquokeeta's initiatory dance which begets a sense of mythic unity, achieved through immolation, destruction and rebirth in the nuptial pyre. All these images of convergence themselves point toward the sought-after articulation of "some Word," a mythic primordial utterance, the focal point of all creation / consciousness.

Appositive constructions ("nouns in abundance", Irwin), though fewer, serve an important metaphoric function in "the Tunnel," just as in "The Dance" and in "Atlantis." In the first section of "the Tunnel" (ll. 1-114), they occur only three times and in those instances, ironically, only to reinforce the dissociative effect by piling random images together:

And so  
 Of cities you bespeak  
 subways, rivered under streets  
 and rivers . . . . In the car  
 the overtone of motion  
 underground, the monotone  
 of motion is the sound  
 of other faces, also underground

The function of the appositive, "rivered under streets / and rivers," is mainly descriptive and in a metaphorical sense even redundant, thereby suggesting the paucity of imagination. Overall, there are about fifty percent fewer appositives in "The Tunnel" (14) than either in "The Dance" (32) or in "Atlantis" (32), and fewer still used metaphorically, that is, as radical metaphors. 27

Even the image of peacefulness ("I counted the echoes assembling, one after one"), however, is disturbed as the section ends with a question that divulges the persona's doubts, as "hands drop memory": "how far away the star had pooled the sea Or shall the hands be drawn away, to die?" (ll. 135-36). Imploringly, the last sentence, an imperative one, repeats its entreaty to both the Tunnel and the bridge to act as "hands" that unite the persona with his vision of America:

And this thy harbor, O my City, I have driven under,  
Tossed from the coil of ticking towers . . . .  
Tomorrow,  
And to be . . . Here by the River that is East  
Here at the waters' edge the hands drop memory;  
Showless in that abyss they unaccounting lie.  
How far away the star has pooled the sea  
Or shall the hands be drawn away, to die?

Kiss of our agony Thou gatherest,  
O Hand of Fire  
gatherest (ll. 129-39)

It would always seem to Crane that despite his gargantuan efforts, he would be unable to transform the "seething chaos" of modern life, that is, to sustain his vision of America. He wrote this while writing *The Bridge*:

Rimbaud was the last great poet that our civilization will see he let off all the great cannon crackers in Valhalla's parapets, the sun has set theatrically several times since while Laforgue, Eliot and others of that kidney have whimpered fastidiously (GAT, 232).

To Crane, Eliot and Laforgue represented the prevailing spirit of destructive skepticism borne out in bitter irony that he wished to annul with his imaginatively constructive act of faith. On the one hand, Eliot had followed that path of skepticism opened by the ironic tension present in consciousness and in the very nature of metaphor itself (i.e., the play of difference in the desire for symbolic unity the difference as well between the mythic (dialectical) and the metaphysical (symbolic identity). In that gap between reality and desire, presence and absence, and sign and reference, Eliot would emphasize the metonymic and dissociated functions of mind and language, thereby enacting the failure of Romantic Idealism. Crane would become en-

gaged in a dialectic directly with Eliot and the pessimism of *The Waste Land*, struggling to reconstruct a consciousness of connectedness and continuity in the American experience, and to do so through the language of metaphor. He longed to restore America to the more laudable time of Whitman, who was able to envision "the simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, everyone disintegrated, yet part of the scheme" ("Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"). In "Atlantis," the persona will temporarily sustain the momentum of his visionary ascent gained at the end of "The Tunnel." In this way, he will attempt to create one myth, or "some Word that will not die," through the associative powers of both his and our conspiring imaginations.

### C. "Atlantis"

"Atlantis" is the imaginative pentacle and condensed vision of *The Bridge* in that it depends for its symbolic meaning upon the metaphoric foundation (as with an actual bridge) of the images that precede it. Bringing to mind the poem's metaphoric strategies and reader-response, Nilsen has written: "All these things are gathered up and presented in a combination in 'Atlantis' which Crane, in a letter to Otto Kahn (March 18, 1926), referred to as 'the mystic consummation toward which all the other sections of the poem converge' " (Nilsen, 34). The journey toward mythic unity leads to the understanding of the Bridge as "unfractioned idiom" (language); the actual bridge must be understood as, must be imaginatively transformed into, a metaphor. The reader, as well as the poet-persona, becomes involved in this imaginative act of recreation. Irwin writes about the "conscious movement from a language of external correspondence to a language of internal coherence" and about how in the "Proem"

We do not understand the appropriateness of the names that are drawn from the language of internal coherence and applied to the bridge, but in "Atlantis" we do understand their appropriateness because in the course of the poem Crane has created the network of associations on which these complex metaphoric names depend (Irwin, 218).

Along the same vein, Lewis talks about how the poem of the bridge comes into being through "the enormous pressure of imagination":

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The poet's gaze rises literally and physically following the vertical suspenders of the bridge till (in stanza three) it reaches "the twin monoliths," the two granite towers that loom at the center of the bridge. This is the peak of actual perception, the loft of vision";

And, here is the point I wish to highlight,

but at the same time, the poet's spiritual vision has been ascending, transfiguring the bridge at every step . . . and under the enormous pressure of imagination, as the elements envisioned are converted like lightning into immense symbols, the long curve of the bridge appears as "one arc synoptic" which unites all tides beneath it; while those tides, in turn, represent all the phases of history bound together by vision (Lewis, 367).

The poet reaches the height of vision at the same time he arrives at the highest point on the bridge's arc over the East River. But this ecstatic moment (ll. 33-56) is exactly that, a transient vision which gradually dissipates (ll. 57-88) apparently due to the nature of the experience, as well as his wavering faith in his ability to sustain mythic awareness: "A fear of personal impotence in this matter wouldn't affect me as much as the convictions that arise from other sources" (Frank, 231). This wavering is reflected in the intrusion of dissociative diction and sentence structure. Although "Atlantis" ends more-or-less ecstatically, it is nonetheless "tainted" by intimations that this as a temporal experience must, also, pass.

From the first thirty-two lines, "Atlantis" abounds in diction denoting fusion, connection, and in tropes such as similes and metaphors, catachresis (radical metaphors), and metonymies. The first sentence (ll. 1-4) refers to the bridge as "bound cable strands," "the arching path," "upward, veering with light," "the flight of strings," "telepathy of wires," thus through the "logic of metaphor" associating these names (metaphors) with the bridge as symbol of mythic unity and communication:

Through the bound cable strands, the arching path  
 Upward, veering with light, the flight of strings  
 Taut miles of shuttling moonlight syncopate  
 The whispered rush, telepathy of wires.  
 Up the index of night, granite and steel  
 Transparent meshesfleckless the gleaming staves  
 Sibylline voices flicker, waveringly stream  
 As though a god were issue of the strings . . . (ll. 1-8)

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Since "arching path" and "flight of strings" makes commonly understood comparisons with the ideas of ascent to a mythic vision and to musical harmony, they then function as conventional metaphors. On the other hand, an appositive like "telepathy of wires," makes the association between the silent communication achieved through mythic awareness and the bridge as symbol of this experience, thereby working as a radical metaphor in two steps. In addition, all the images of fragmentation in modern culture stand unified here in their combined effort to support the metaphorical, as well as the literal bridge.

In the second and third octaves, the bridge as symbol of the mythic unified awareness (especially of time and space) is stated explicitly:

And through that cordage, threading with its call  
 One arc synoptic of all tides below  
 Their labyrinthine mouths of history  
 Pouring reply as though all ships at sea  
 Complighted in one vibrant breath made cry,  
 "make they love sure to weave whose song we ply!"  
 From black embankments, moveless soundings hailed,  
 So seven oceans answer from their dream. (ll. 9-16)

The bridge is described in visual and auditory terms, as harp-like with its cordage humming in the wind, combined with the symbolic ("one arc synoptic," "labyrinthine mouths of history/Pouring reply. . .").

On lines 17-24, three radical metaphors, and simple nouns and verbs, play upon the allusion from Crane's epigraph to "Atlantis": "Music is then the knowledge of that which relates to love in harmony and system" (Plato), of music as harmony, and therefore as an integrative form of the mythic mode of the imagination:

And on, obliquely up bright carrier bars  
 New octaves trestle the twin monoliths  
 Beyond whose frosted capes the moon bequeaths  
 Two worlds of sleep (O arching strands of song!)  
 Onward and up the crystal-flooded aisle  
 White tempest nets file upward, upward ring  
 With silver terraces the humming spars.  
 The loft of vision, palladium helm of stars. (ll. 17-24)

Several of these images combine the concepts, by way of "logic of

metaphor," of time (musical images) and space (nautical images): "octaves trestle," "strands of song," "humming spars," "nets ring." In this same stanza, the bridge as a "curveship" (i.e., a curved vessel that transports one to a new world /consciousness) undergoes transmutation, too, in lines 17-37 from "loft of vision" and "helm of stars" to loom that flies with "seagulls stung with rime," entwining:

Tomorrows into yesteryearand link  
 What cipher-script of time no traveller reads  
 But who, through smoking pyres of love and death,  
 Searches the timeless laugh of mythic spears. (ll. 29-32)

The allusion here to the ritual nuptial pyre ("smoking pyres of love and death") from "The Dance" builds upon the mythic significance of that experience and now asks that the reader apply this meaning to the bridge as symbol and as poem. In addition, verbs relating to processes of fusion affirm the associative processes at work: "translating time into multitudinous Verb," "recast in myriad syllables(one) Psalm and Paradigm," and "suns and synergy of waters ever fuse."

One might ask at this point, do the persona's mythic experiences succeed in weaving together a sustained integrative mode of consciousness, a reintegration of sensibility? Looking back over the various movements in the poem as a whole, one wonders if the geographical isolation of the sections of the American continent (mirrored in the architecture of the poem) and the disparateness of American historical experiences seem to defy the persona's attempts to order the temporal and spatial "chaos" under "one arc synoptic." It seems so, yet, momentarily a sense of integration surfaces in images of music and light:

From gulfs unfolding, terrible of drums,  
 Tall Vision-of-the-Voyage, tensely spare  
 Bridge, lifting night to cycloramic crest  
 Of deepest dayO Choir, translating time  
 Into what multitudinous Verb the suns  
 And synergy of waters ever fuse, recast  
 In myriad syllables,Psalm of Cathay!  
 O Love, thy white, pervasive Paradigm . . . !

We left the haven hanging in the night  
 Sheened harbor lanterns backward fled the keel.  
 Pacific here at time's end, bearing corn,  
 Eyes stammer through the pangs of dust and steel.

And still the circular, indubitable frieze  
 Of heaven's mediation, yoking wave  
 To knelling wave, one song devoutly binds  
 The vernal strophe chimes from deathless strings! (ll. 41-56)

Here the images of song, light and the bridge join discrete elements into one coherent, mythic experience. Without this sense of fusion, the unsuccessful flights in "Cape Hatteras," the view of three states from the cupola of old Mizzentop in "Quaker Hill," and the subterranean passage in "The Tunnel" would remain diffused and alienated experiences.

The light image, as a spatial and experientially unifying "vehicle", appears frequently in "Atlantis", especially in image clusters that include music (the temporal image of unity) and the bridge (the spatially linking structure). Together light and music forge a "bridge" in time and space, thereby becoming images for the processes of mythic unity. Lewis talks about the significance of the synaesthetic images of music and light, in reference to the phrase, "swift peal of secular light."

If the bridge can be described, synaesthetically, as a "swift peal of secular light," the poem aspires precisely to that quality to a revelation of perfect beauty to the outer and the inner ear and eye (Lewis, 371).

But, whereas Lewis' reading of Crane here (and in "MFH") is more symbolist /aesthetic (i.e., beauty and transcendence), Crane's "argument" in *The Bridge* is mythic, that is, aimed at experiencing the "Unity of Being" through the internal referentiality of "logic of metaphor" which imaginatively fuses disparate entities (such as "peal" of music here and "secular"not metaphysicallight"). Several of these light-music-bridge metaphoric clusters appear in the first stanzas of "Atlantis," illustrating the integration of time and space into a mythic mode of consciousness:

Through the bound cable strands, *the arching path*  
 Upward, *veering with light*, the flight of strings (ll. 1-2)

Transparent meshes fleckless the *gleaming staves*  
 Sibylline *voices*, flicker, waveringly stream  
 As though a god were issue of the *strings* (ll. 6-8)

And on obliquely up *bright carrier bars*  
*New octaves* trestle the twin monoliths (ll. 17-18)



. . . (O arching strands of song!)  
 Onward and up the *crystal-flooded aisle*  
 White tempest nets file upward, upward *ring*  
 With silver terraces the humming spars, (ll. 20-23)

Sheerly the eyes, like seagulls stung with rime  
 Slit and propelled by glistening *fins of light*  
 Pick biting way up *towering looms* that press (ll. 25-27)

These image clusters show that in "Atlantis," as in "The Dance," the ascent to vision corresponds with images of fusion or integration, associated with the bridge as a symbol of mythic awareness (of "Unity of Being"), made meaningful through the internally self-referential process of "logic of metaphor" throughout the poem. As such, these images reflect in language the persona's evolving ascent to the Totality (as opposed to the Height) of vision in which the attuned reader also participates.

Later in this section (ll. 57-88), we witness the gradual disintegration of the persona's mythic awareness through the dissociation of image clusters also containing references to music, light and the bridge. As early as line 50, for example, diction relating to the failure of vision begins to insinuate itself into the text, albeit in the presence of associative language: "backward fled the keel" (l. 50), "pangs of dust and steel" (l. 52), "In single chrysalis, the many twain" (l. 60), and "with sound of doom" (l. 62). More telling, around lines 57-80 the deterioration of vision is translated into language where light-music-bridge image clusters disintegrate:

*O Thou steeled Cognizance* whose leap commits  
 The agile precincts of the lark's return;  
 Within whose lariat sweep encinctured sing  
 In single chrysalis the many twain,  
 Of stars Thou art the stitch and stallion glow  
 And like an organ, Thou, with sound of doom  
 Sight, sound and flesh Thou leadest from time's realm  
 As love strikes clear direction for the helm.

Swift peal of secular light, intrinsic Myth  
 Whose fell shadow is death's utter wound,  
 O River-throated-iridescently upborne  
 Through the bright drench and fabric of our veins;  
 With white escarpments swinging into light,  
 Sustained in tears the cities are endowed  
 And justified conclamant with ripe fields  
 Revolving through their harvests in sweet torment,

Forever Deity's glittering Pledge, O Thou  
 Whose canticle fresh chemistry assigns  
 To wrapt inception and beatitude  
 Always through blinding cables, to our joy,  
 Of thy white seizure springs the prophecy;  
 Always through spiring cordage, pyramids  
 O silver sequel, Deity's young name  
 Kinetic of white choiring wings . . . ascends. (ll. 57-80)

Addressing the bridge in a profusion of names characteristic of mythic thinking (ll. 57-72), the persona also combines imagery of music, light and the bridge: "O Thou steeled Cognizance" and "Swift peal of secular light, intrinsic Myth." But, unlike the early tripartite image clusters, here seven lines separate the bridge image (l. 57) from those of light and music (l. 65). Similarly, in stanza 10 (ll. 73-80), light and bridge images exclude those of music: "Whose canticle fresh chemistry assigns," and two lines later, "blinding cables, . . . / . . . silver sequel, . . . / Kinetic of white choiring wings . . . ascends." Later, in stanzas 11 and 12, single, isolated references to these three image-types reappear, making the final stages in the disintegration of mythic vision.

Although momentarily the "mechanics of myth" (associative diction and tropes, especially radical metaphors, and image clusters) appear to sustain the persona's ecstatic vision, in the end a permanently binding force evades him. It is as if a sudden realization, and with it a loss of faith, triggers the epistemological and stylistic disintegration we see, as if he achieves only a dooming epiphany. It appears that the unattainable, sustaining power is love, as he tells us: "Music is then the knowledge of that which relates to love in harmony and system." As Crane had learned from Ouspensky, one can achieve the highest realm of consciousness ("fourth dimension") in which "opposites were reconciled and creative activity was accomplished through the motive force of love." Only love can preserve the myth and mythic awareness: "Unspeakable Thou Bridge to Thee, O Love." Love, it might be instructive to recall, is a human experience of oneness or reconciliation as recounted, for example, in Plato's myth of divided lovers (*The Symposium* not one of transcendence of the human.) Consequently, as helpless as the persona is after his dreary epiphany, the reader watches the components of the "intrinsic Myth" disintegrate: music into "whispers antiphonal," light into "rainbows ring," and love to "pity steeps the grass." He ends with a question: is the "One Song, one Bridge of Fire" the New World sought

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("Is it Cathay"); has his poem achieved the transformation of consciousness he has searched of through the "journey" through language and the whole scope of the American experience? Mythic consciousness' sense of the infinite in time and space ("The serpent with the eagle in the leaves") reverts to the historical sensibility and the failure of love ("Thy pardon for this history" and "pity steps the grass").

What remains, then, of Crane's myth or "Unfractioned idiom"? Can the persona preserve it despite this final scene reminiscent of fallen Troy: "silence rivets Troy" ? It appears that mythic consciousness is doomed to become "Migrations that must needs void memory, / Inventions that cobblestone the heart" (ll. 81-82). With the absence of love, only pity, an emotion of superiority/inferiority, survives. Only the radiant, white anemone that signifies the attainment of vision (whether in Paradise or the sought-after-Atlantis) seems to survive amid the persona's crumbling illusions and his return to normal consciousness.

To sustain his vision and his optimism, Crane finds that he must place the Bridge outside of historical time to make it impervious to the natural processes of change: "So to thine Everpresence, beyond time." By doing so, he implicitly acknowledges the mutual exclusivity of historical and mythic experience, or of life and vision. These must remain "irreconcilable opposites" that not even the "motive force of love" can join. The bridge as a product of history (rather than as symbol) is but "an invention that cobblestones the heart" and "Migrations that must needs void memory." But, like the symbol of Atlantis (the mythological place), the Bridge can remain "Everpresent" and "beyond time," "one telling star/ That bleeds infinity One Song, one Bridge of Fire!" It will remain the symbol of that which can only exist outside of time:

Forever Deity's glittering Pledge/ . . .  
 Always through blinding cables, to our joy,/ . . .  
 Always through spiring cordage . . . /  
 Kinetic of white choiring wings . . . ascends. (ll. 73, 76, 78, 80)

The poem ends with an contrast of the Bridge as everpresent ideal beyond time and the consequence of its failure in time:

pity steps the grass and rainbows ring  
 The serpent with the eagle in the leaves . . . ?  
 Whispers antiphonal in azure swing. (ll. 94-96)

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The persona asks if the vision is lost, and responds through the imagery of the final lines. The bridge's bright, white light fragments into the still-arching rainbow's color spectrum; the bridge's upward arc (and the rainbow's, too) plunges into the trapeze's downward swing; the harmony of "One Song" drones off into "whispers antiphonal": while pity in the grass (earthbound) replaces love's flight.

Crane struggled to create his, as well as the reader's, transformed, mythic consciousness, one that would reconcile the disparities of modern life into a new vision of Wholeness and that would embrace the fullness of the American experience in time and space. And, his attempt to bring this about through the naming and synthesizing power of mythic thinking place him in a tradition fundamentally different from either mainstream Romantic Idealism or Symbolist aestheticism. Rather, Crane belongs to a poetic tradition that harkens backthrough Rimbaudto Herder and the mythic vision of Totality.

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## Chapter Seven

## Charles Olson: Mythopoesis and the Poetics of Orality

*Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves.*

Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*

*O the great Way o'erflows  
And spreads on every side!  
All being comes from it;  
No creature is denied.  
But having called them forth,  
It calls no one its own.  
It feeds and clothes them all  
And will not be their lord.*

Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching (The Way of Life)*

Like Rimbaud, Crane, and Trakl, Olson was deeply troubled by the values of Western civilization, with its aggrandizement of power, abstraction and ego, and like these earlier poets, he set out to explore a new vision of reality and to enable us to capture its being through the language of poetry. However, while these earlier poets often expressed some ambivalence over the decline of a metaphysical tradition in a growing positivistic and scientific one, Olson asserts unequivocally the need to replace the "worn out" Western onto-theological tradition with a "New Humanism." He became the major poetic spokesman for the epistemological revolution of the twentieth century, a revisionist performing funerary rites over "a hardened logocentric and metaphysical tradition which began with Plato and Aristotle." 1

Olson critics have been stalwart in their efforts to explicate in-

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dividual poems, to research his staggering breadth of knowledge, and to situate his work in the Postmodernist, anti-Symbolist tradition of mid-twentieth century American poetry. Scholarly research in the past decade and a half has focused on a number of distinct and, to date, unrelated topics: the New Epistemology or the "New Realism"; the American epic; Romantic, Modernist, or Transcendentalist Traditions; language and poetics; mythology and psychology. Among critics of the new epistemology or new Realism, a few refer to Heidegger and Phenomenology, to Whitehead or to modern physics and math, or to the pre-Socratics (Bové, Christenson, Paul, Spanos, and von Hallberg). Critics concerned with the American poetic tradition (Transcendentalism, Modernism, and Postmodernism) discuss Olson's work (including its "originality") in relation to the poetry of Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, or Hart Crane (Charters, Christensen, Merrill, Perloff, Ross, and von Hallberg) or with the British (Romantic and Modernist) and French (Symbolist) poetic traditions (John Keats, Samuel Coleridge, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, or Arthur Rimbaud (Paul, Perloff, and Spanos). A number of critics have focused upon Olson's poetic language ("illiteracy"), style ("open field," "organistic," "Hesiodic," or "preliterate"), or poetics ("the American epic" or "the long poem") (Byrd, Christenson, Merrill, Perloff, von Hallberg, and Waldrop). Still fewer critics have been concerned with mythology, in particular myths of creation or the rebirth of the self, cosmology (mythic time and space), and communal cultures and initiation rituals; some of them relate the mythic to Jungian psychology and issues surrounding the Collective Unconscious, Individuation, and alchemy (Aiken, Byrd, Merrill, Paul, von Hallberg). A still smaller subset of "myth" critics has discussed Olson's mythic thinking or parallels with preliterate or oral modes of expression (Byrd and Paul). 2

Despite what might appear to be a comprehensive treatment of Olson's work above, Olson criticism has remained fragmented, having failed to discover meaningful relationships among the numerous and disparate topics in Olson's thought and practice. For example, what connections might exist among Olson's sources for a new epistemology: Heraclitus, Taoism, Heidegger, Whitehead, and quantum physics (Heisenberg) and non-Euclidean geometry (Riemann)? And, secondly, what is the relationship between his "new epistemology" and mythic conceptions of the self, creation myths and cosmology? Similarly, how does Olson's poetics of breath, the body, and movement (dance) relate to his mandate to return to *muthologos* (speech

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act) and to the language and epistemology of the pre-Socratics and preliterate /oral cultures (Mayan, Hittite, Egyptian, Sumerian, Native American, African, Continental Indian)? Finally, little has been done to show how these ideas in Olson's essays and poetry have informed the style of specific poems. Clearly, this represents a formidable task, but one, I believe, worth undertaking. In the spirit of initiating such an undertaking, I will argue in this chapter that Olson's worldview was consciously and deliberately mythopoeic (hence eclectic and recreative) and that the style of his poetry was shaped (especially in the later *Maximus Poems*) by a poetics of orality.

#### New Humanism and New Concept of the Self

The search for a New Humanism led Orson initially outside of the Western tradition (to the Chinese, Sumerian, Hittite, and Mayan civilizations) where he found new ways of understanding the self, reality, and culture. With regard to the self, Olson opposed the older humanistic way of conceiving the individual as isolate, estranged from the natural and from his true natureegocentric, abstracting, and power-driven. In *Call Me Ishmael*, a work on Melville, Olson uses the figure of Captain Ahab (in *Moby Dick*) to represent the quintessential Western vision of the self as ego and rational mind. In contrast, the new humanist view of the self was characterized by the instinctual, sensory (bodily, sexual), participatory in the "field" with nature, concerned with particulars and the familiar, and "open." This "openness" reflected the subordination, perhaps even the denial, of the ego in its authentic stance of attentiveness to the world. It is important to keep in mind, here, that Olson's concept of the self (prior to *Maximus*, volume two) strongly favors "natural physical existence" ("eye," "ear," "breath," "skin," as we will see below) and downplays the cognitive functions of "nostalgia," "memory," and "intellect." In *The Maximus Poems*, he struggles with the problem of becoming "judgmental" or "nostalgic," weaknesses associated with Pound's *Cantos*, a stance which, as discussed below, imposed certain limitations on his art.

The second issue for Olson, the older, Cartesian view of reality, had to be revised according to the insights from a number of different, but complementary worldviews: pre-Socratic (Heraclitean), Taoist, phenomenological (Husserl and Heidegger), and modern quantum physics and non-Euclidean mathematics. He conceived of the path

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that he must take initially in Eastern terms (Pound's influence), derived from Fenollosa's discussion of the Chinese character, which reflects a worldview perhaps best described as Taoist. Olson seems to get the idea of Tao (the way of confronting reality) from the Chinese philosophy of organicism (Taoism). The first of two important concepts of Taoism that relates to Olson's poetics, yin and yang, depicts nature as being composed of eternally opposed, yet interacting elements or forces: "all universal phenomena result from the interactions of these dualistic cosmic principles." 3 However, rather than being viewed as hostile and incompatible, Taoism regards them as mutually necessary and complementary. A second aspect of Eastern correlative thinking important of Olson's poetic is the view of the essential oneness of Man and Nature, the close interrelationship of the human and natural worlds. In the West, since Descartes in particular, the predominant view has been the opposition ("estrangement") of the subjective and the objective, man and world what Olson refers to as "partitioned reality."

In addition to Chinese organicism, Olson drew upon the philosophy of phenomenology from Husserl and Heidegger. Like organicism, the phenomenological view of reality showed the self and the world to be inter-involved and inseparable. According to this view, reality is conceived as mediated or the lived-world (Husserl's *Lebenswelt* or Heidegger's Being-in-the World) where self and world interact a co-equals. The "Wholeness of Being," according to Heidegger, had been fragmented in Greek post-Socratic philosophy, and only rationality, and along with it logical discourse, had been cultivated.

Unexpectedly related to both Eastern and phenomenological worldviews, the discoveries of modern quantum physics and mathematics receive close attention in Olson's later essays: "Equal, That is to the Real Itself," "Letter to Elaine Feinstein," and "Projective Verse, Part II." According to Olson, the New Humanism actually began, at least in the Western scientific tradition, with the pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus. Heraclitus represented for Olson a phenomeno-logically-based philosophy, and surprisingly, as Fritjof Capra in *The Tao of Physics* has pointed out, an essentially Eastern outlook:

The monistic and organic view of the Milesians (Thales and Anaximander of Ionia) was very close to that of ancient Indian and Chinese philosophy, and the parallels to Eastern thought are even stronger in the philosophy of Heraclitus of Ephesus. Heraclitus believed in a world of perpetual change, of eternal 'Becoming.' For him, all static Being was based on deception and his universal

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principle was fire, a symbol for the continuous flow and change of all things. Heraclitus taught that all changes in the world arise from the dynamic and cyclic interplay of opposites and he saw any pair of opposites as a unity. This unity, which contains and transcends all opposing forces, he call the Logos. 4

It was the dualist and mechanistic worldview of the "Old Humanism" that arose in the fifth century B.C. in Greece (Leucippus and Democritus), evolved into the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle ("Aristotle & Augustine /clearly misunderstood Anaximander," *Maximus*, V, volume two) and continued through René Descartes (mind-body duality) and Isaac Newton, which Olson hopes to replace with a "New Humanism." This new worldview that harkened back to Heraclitus and Eastern philosophy, would then be supported by discoveries in modern physics and math.

Another scientific influence on Olson's poetics was Alfred North Whitehead (*Process and Reality*, 1929), who expressed a worldview not unlike that of the Eastern /Heraclitean view of reality as process and man as an integral part of nature. In his essay, "Olson, Whitehead, and the Objectivists," Robert Von Hallberg contrasts Objectivist poetics (notably that of William Carlos Williams) with Olson's "kinetic" poetic. Von Hallberg maintains that Objectivist poetics were "aesthetic in the sense that the aesthetic object (poem) transcends its maker and gains its value from an independent state of being, not from its origin or effect. In contrast, Olson's poetic is humanistic: making is not less valuable than what is made."5 Olson's "kinetic" aesthetic grows out of a phenomenological principle that reality is a process, thus taking priority over form, and the poet must enact this process in order to confront reality: "Art does not seek to describe, but to enact" (*Poetics*, 169). Von Hallberg adds that:

Unlike the Objectivists . . . , Olson's poetry not only relies on the equality of the subject and the object, as Whitehead would have it, but more importantly on their reciprocity and symmetry (VH, 90).

The idea of "reciprocity and symmetry" both points back to monistic views of man and world (subject and object), to Williams' "edge to edge" to describe the poet and the world, and ahead to Werner Heisenberg's "Uncertainty Principle."

Olson saw the problem of "partitioned reality" in terms of the opposition of proponents of Mind (Kant, the Symbolists, and T. S. Eliot) and the proponents of the World or Things (the Positivists,

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Imagists, Objectivists, and Pound). In "Projective Verse, Part II," Olson writes:

It is no accident that Pound and Williams both were involved variously in a movement which got called "objectivism." But that word was then used in some sort of a necessary quarrel, I take it, with "subjectivism." It is now too late to be bothered with the latter. It has excellently done itself to death, even though we are all caught up in its dying (Poetics, 155).

Olson believed that it was "too late" to be bothered with the distinction between mind and matter, because science has revealed man's true relationship to things. According to Heisenberg's "Uncertainty Principle," the only way that an individual can know a thing is by interacting with it; subject cannot be divorced from object, or as Olson says in "Human Universe," like Herder, who (interestingly) also used the skin metaphor: "the skin itself, the meeting edge of man and external reality are so involved with one another that, for man's purposes, they have better be taken as one" (Poetics, 168). Heisenberg expresses this idea in the following way: "Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves." 6 By interacting with an object, man influences its "behavior," thus thwarting any possibility of a purely objective description.

By application to poetry, a person becomes an "object" in one's poem: "it comes to this: the use of man, by himself and thus by others, lies in how he conceives his relationship to nature . . . in this sense the projective act, which is the artists' act in the larger field of objects, lead to dimensions larger than the man," 7 In "Letter to Elaine Feinstein," Olson talks about "the use of the Image," in the past as only "referential to reality. Nothing was happening" (Poetics, 160). Through the analogy of an image to a bisected parabola, Olson was attempting to expand the concept of image from object-referent to Heisenberg's "knowable reality" (mediated reality from Herder to Heidegger), that is, where human being and the world (object) meet. Hence, Olson's statement that "Image, is a vector" (Poetics, 160) uses the parabola as an ideogram for the intersection of the two values of x at point y or world and mind. Olson's idea of an essentially mediated reality (a "human universe") is analogous to Herder's "reflectiveness," Husserl's *Lebenswelt*, Whitehead's "penetration" of world and mind, Fischer's play of world and brain-mind, or Gadamer's "play" (discussed in chapters one through three).

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## New Discourse Language as the Way

Olson pioneered a new path in poetry, one which explored a new discourse through the destruction of the older "Universe of Discourse." In a *Bibliography on America for Ed Dorn*, Olson talks about his "method" (*meta hodos*) of recovering "being" through language as "the way after: Tao." Similarly, in "Human Universe," he says, if the way is dead ("*Der Weg stirbt*"), then it must be recovered or re-discovered by attending closely to the "roots," the etymon of language. Such a method would search for a path leading back to the thing in itself:

But let's go back to root: to *methodos*, and look! with the way with a via, with a path (*weg*, that which died, and does not die, which it is any man's job and the more so now, when the old way is dead, long live the methodology in other words, the science of the path what could be more exactly what we are involved in it is not the path, but it is the path discovered!

Following this path meant adopting a radical stance with regard to the old "Universe of Discourse" passed down from the Greeks. It may be interesting to note that Olson's quarrel with post-Socratic discourse revives the debate in Plato's *Republic* between the oral, preliterate poets (*muthologoi*) and the literate, rational philosophers (*logoi*). The debate revolved around who should be allowed to control the Greek educational system, which was responsible for preparing male youths for citizenship in the *polis*. Despite the lapse of twenty-three centuries, Olson takes up the defense of the *muthologoi* whom Plato would exile from the ideal city.

Post-Socratic discourse had been governed by rules of logic, grammatical constructions, and verbal abstractions that, in Olson's view, had served only to cover over authentic being. For example, in "La Torre" he uses the image of the tower (suggestive of Babel) to connote the old discourse as rigid rationality and transcendence that is estranged from the truth of particulars: "The tower is broken, the house where the head was used to lift"; "When the structures go, light comes through"; "To destroy is to start again." On a similar note, in "In Cold Hell, in Thicket" he writes: "how abstract (as high mind, as not lust, as love is) how strong . . ., how cold can a man stay (can men) confronted thus?" And in a longer passage worth citing.

as in this thicket, each  
smallest branch, plant, fern, root

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roots lie, on the surface, as nerves are laid open  
 must now (the bitterness of the taste of her) be  
 isolated, observed, picked over, measured, raised  
 as though a word, an accuracy were a pincer!

    this  
     is the abstract, this  
     is the cold doing, this  
     is the almost impossible

Is this form of poetic discourse, as Olson's critics have argued, best described as the language of "illiteracy" or does language serve some other purpose than logical discourse for Olson? I would submit that it does, because for Olson language has the power to attend to the true nature of reality as lived. Olson's view of the poem as projective act, meeting place, and "field" where the natural world and human beings (subjective and objective) interact reinforces the notion that language discloses a new understanding of reality, that is, the relationship between self and world.

The crux of the matter concerns "the very ontological foundations upon which language rests" and "the nature of 'being' that language attends." On this topic, Merrill talks about the reactions of Chad Walsh and Frank Davey to Olson's lecture at Beloit College. Interestingly, both described Olson's style in cosmological terms: "a *world* of 'complex simultaneity,' a handleless *universe*." Merrill queries, "Is that world of 'complex simultaneity' without handles the familiar kind of Euclidean reality to which grammar and syntax of our conventional language has been accommodated, or is it a new conception of 'being' so remote from Euclid's orderly universe that it renders traditional expressive structure obsolete?" (Merrill 39-40). Olson's project appears to be precisely this: to break out of the confines of an artificial 'universe of discourse' that perpetuates our false consciousness of reality. Olson got from Riemannian, non-Euclidean geometry the notion of a "continuous" conception of reality characterized by process and change rather than by substance and properties (the Greek "error"). In "Human Universe," Olson sounds exuberant, truly free from the stranglehold of the old discourse and epistemology:

all things were there for feeling, to promote it, and be felt; and man, in the midst of it . . . was suddenly possessed or repossessed of a character of being, a thing among things, which I call his physicality. It made a re-entry of or to the universe. Reality was without

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interruption and we are still in the business of finding out how all action, and thought, have to be refounded. (HU, 118)

In a seminal article in *Contemporary Literature*, William Spanos discusses Olson's "phenomenological understanding of language," which harkens back to Heidegger and even further back to the pre-Socratics:

In assuming presence (i.e., Form over process; the static over the dynamic; the visual over the oral /aural) encloses language with a 'UNIVERSE of discourse' thus making it a tool of confirmation (and mastery) rather than an activity of disclosure or discovery. Put positively, in deconstructing the metaphysical tradition, Olson is attempting to retrieve for the present a phenomenological understanding of language as the act of its occasion, as a process of discovering (Spanos, 41).

In other words, Olson's quarrel with the post-Socratic Greeks was based upon the distinction that he, and Heidegger before him, made with regard to the meaning of language and *logos*. Olson ruminates on the historical changes in the idea of the *logos* in "Human Universe" as follows:

We have lived long in a generalizing time, at least since 450 B.C. And it has had its effects on the best of . . . things. Logos, or discourse, for example, has in that time, so worked its abstractions into our concept and use of language that language's other function, speech, seems so in need of restoration that several of us got back to hieroglyphs or to ideograms to right the balance. (The distinction here is between language as the act of the instant and language as the act of thought about the instant.)

The distinction that Olson makes between *logos as* discourse (post-Socratic) and as speech (pre-Socratic) underscores his search for "some alternative to the whole Greek system" (HU, 5). This would be a search for a new ground of discourse, an alternative to that of the post-Socratic philosophical tradition. Spanos explains that

Originally, according to Heidegger, the 'logos' meant 'speech' from the Greek word *λογος*, 'to talk.' In the process of the Western philosophical tradition, however, it came increasingly to mean 'reason,' 'judgment,' 'concept,' 'definition,' 'ground,' or 'relationship,' thus covering over and eventually forgetting its essential temporalopen-

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ended and eccentric nature in favor of an interpretation of the word that emphasized its fixity and centeredness (Spanos, 42).

Logos, the spoken word or speech act, becomes the method of disclosure of the authentic nature of being, and so the means to inaugurate a New Humanism.

In *The Special View of History*, Olson has returned to the pre-Socratic understanding of *logos* as synonymous with *muthos*. In either case, it meant "what is said," rather than the abstractions "word" or "reason" in the post-Socratic tradition. In Olson's words, "What it all comes to is this, that to those who listened to the Stories a *Muthos* was *Logos*, and a *Logos* was a *Muthos*. They were two names for the same thing" (SVH, 20). According to Olson, with Aristotle ("Hairystottle") Western culture experienced the breakdown of *muthologos* (what is said, "his-tories") into the separate discourses (science, myth, history, poetry), driven away from the "center" which was the lived experience (the "actual" or "familiar"). For the human being who is, according to Olson, defined as essentially a speaking (*muthos*) and a motor animal (ritual, dance), this breakdown inaugurated the false consciousness which has characterized the entire Western tradition.

#### Projective Verse

Olson's essay "Projective Verse" (1950), like "Human Universe" (1951), is an important statement of his views about the phenomenological character of language, the relationship between the "speech act," an "act of the instant," and the fundamentally phenomenological character of being, i.e., its interactive and temporal nature. For the formulation of his ideas in this essay, Olson was indebted initially to Ernest Fenollosa's *Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (1908), first indirectly through Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams and later directly from the essay itself. It appears that what Olson derived for his poetics from Pound and Williams what most interested him were those ideas that his predecessors had themselves adopted from Fenollosa. These ideas were, specifically, the phenomenological nature of the ideogram, the image (and poem) as the "transference of force," and the importance of breath (suggesting world-man interpenetration) in the projective act.

The first important discovery that led both Pound and Olson out

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of the static (spatial) and visualist tradition of Imagism and Symbolism had to do with Fenollosa's insights into the phenomenological character of the Chinese ideogram. What this meant was that the Chinese character represented the original temporal and processive nature of reality and the interaction between the individual (subject) and the world (object) as reflected in language (originally speech). Here are a few important passages from Fenollosa's essay pertaining to this "new" (pre-Socratic) view of reality as reflected in the ideogram:

Chinese notation is something much more than arbitrary symbols. It is based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature.

Chinese poetry has the unique advantage of combining (the element of natural succession and the fundamental reality of time). It speaks at once with a vividness of painting, and with the mobility of sounds. In reading Chinese we do not seem to be juggling mental encounters, but to be watching things work out their own fate.

It might be thought that a picture is naturally the picture of a thing, and that therefore the root ideas of Chinese are what grammar calls nouns. But examination shows that a large number of primitive Chinese characters, even the so-called radicals, are shorthand pictures of actions or processes. 8

The processive quality of all ideograms, which apparently Fenollosa had greatly exaggerated, become for him and for Pound and Olson, the paradigm for the phenomenological character of language (mimetic of a dynamic and temporal reality) in opposition to the abstracting and generalizing character of logical, discursive discourse. Olson writes in another essay, "Why Fenollosa wrote the damned best piece on language since when, is because, in setting Chinese directly over against American, he reasserted these resistant primes in our speech, put use back to the origins of their force not as history but as living oral law to be discovered in speech as directly as it is in our mouths."<sup>9</sup> Olson's desire to return to an "original," non-discursive form of speech, believed capable of disclosing the "thing in itself" or the authentic experience of reality, surfaces early with his interest in the Chinese ideogram.

Secondly, and closely related to this first point about the relationship between language and reality as process, was the idea of the poem as a place ("field") where action occurs, where there is a "trans-

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ference of force" (verbal energy) from the agent (poet) to an object (reader). According to Fenollosa's diagram, this is a "syntax of process":

Fenollosa:

term from which	transference of force	term to which
agent-farmer	actions-pounds	object-rice
(subject)	(verb)	(object)

Olson:

poet	poem	reader
------	------	--------

Isolated things ("a true noun"), according to Fenollosa, do not exist in nature, rather only as "meeting points," "cross-sections cut through actions" (F, 10). Pound appears to have appropriated this idea when, in discussing "In a Station of the Metro," he says, "In a poem (hokku) of this sort one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective." 10 Notice how Pound shifts the agency to the thing "darting," in contrast to the Romantic view of the creative imagination (of the poet-agent) or Fischer's findings on the active role of brain /mind in the creation of meaning.

Hugh Kenner reveals another significant fact about the composition of this poem. He tells us that Pound instructed Harriet Monroe of *Poetry* to print the poem in two lines and five phases of perception, as follows:

The apparition	of these faces	in a crowd
Petals	on a wet, black bough.	11

Although the *hokku* is mainly imagistic (composed of nouns), the idea of presenting five phases of perception shows Pound's early interest in the processive and the metaphoric "nature and growth of language" (Fenollosa), which recalls what Cassirer, and Herder before him, imagined to be the nature of the origins of language (discussed in chapter two). His comment, also, reflects what Olson would later call a "projectivist" stance toward reality, the dramatic interaction of the subjective and objective (Herder's "reflectiveness," Whitehead's "penetration," and Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle"). It may be useful to keep in mind, however, that both Pound's and Olson's views of the "subjective" at this time (and for Olson into the 1950s) meant "natural man" (sensory being) as opposed to reflective consciousness or mind. (Discussed more fully later in this chapter.)

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It is highly probably that Pound began work on the Fenollosa manuscript as early as 1914 having received it from Fenollosa's widow in 1913 and, therefore, that ideas about the processive nature of language and of language as a transference of force contributed in large measure to his Vorticist aesthetic in *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916). In this work, the earlier aesthetic of "direct treatment of the thing" from the Imagist Manifesto (1912), expressing the tenets of a positivist and static-mimetic tradition, gave way to the image as vortex: "a radiant node or cluster from which and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" (hence, sounding a bit like Fisher's notion of brain "excitation" as opposed to mind in sensory perception). Not only has the image as vortex become dynamic, but also has poetic form: "The organization of forms is a much more energetic and creative action than the mere copying or imitating the effects of light on a haystack" (GB, 92). This new phenomenological conception of poetic form reappears in Williams' idea of the poem as a "field of action" ("Introduction to *The Wedge*," 1944), as well as later in Olson's "open verse" ("Projective Verse, I"): "The kinetics of a thing, a poem is energy transferred from where the poet got it . . . , by way of the poem itself, all the way to the reader" (Poetics, 148). (See the discussion of the role of the reader in the creation of meaning in the section on hermeneutics in chapter three.) With respect to Olson's "The Kingfishers," an essentially Poundian poem, Sherman Paul in *Olson's Push* has said of ideogrammatic form or "open verse":

Ideogrammatic form . . . permits the poet to explore the field of thought, to cluster and hold in tension the many elements cast up by thought in its movement. Such form exposes thought, and when we enter the poem and become participants in its activity, as we must, we discover that what makes it a large (and important) poem is the extent of its field, the number of elements that in fact comprise it and, finally, meaningfully cohere and bring the poem to resolution, not only to closure but to the decision to act. For the poem, above all, is an action as most of those who have exegeted it forget, and what matters is the movement of thought that makes it "a starter," that moves Olson to further action (Paul, 11).

The third emphasis that Pound, Williams and Olson derived from the Fenollosa essay, has to do with the idea of the "projective act," a speech act that conveys the sense of the poem as meeting place where the subjective and objective, individual and world interact. Olson could have gotten the idea of "the thing outward darting inward" from Pound or the idea of the poem as the meeting of the "edge

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to edge" from Williams (in *The Wedge*). Both Pound and Williams, also, stressed the importance of breath (the act of inhaling and exhaling) in the syntax and syllables of the poem to show this interchange of individual and world. However, Olson goes even further back, to Fenollosa's discussion of the etymological roots of the infinitive "to breathe" in order to formulate his poetics of the projective act. Again, I cite Paul's valuable discussion:

Olson copies accurately, but arranges Fenollosa's sentences to serve the immediate need of his discussion . . . what he omits and what he could not have failed to notice is the sentence that spells out the deepest reason for his insistence on breath: "There is (Fenollosa writes) in reality no such verb as a pure copula, no such original conception: our very word *exist* means 'to stand forth,' to show oneself by a definite act. 'Is' comes from the Aryan root *as*, to breathe. 'Be' is from *bhu*, to grow." Fenollosa's sentences contain the logic of tropos and typos: to breathe is to act, to act is to stand forth, to stand forth is to grow. To breathe is the self-act by which we take from the world and give ourselves being. But "to stand forth" is also an action of the projectile kind enabling the resistance that is so much a part of Olson's sense of being-in-the World (Paul, 40).

The importance of breath, both literally and metaphorically, to Olson's idea of the projective act relates directly to the emphasis that he places on the "speech act" and on the aural and oral (listening and speaking) over the visual and spatial (tyranny of sight). Notice, again, Olson's emphasis on the physical self (ear/eye/breath/skin) when he refers to the individual, and his favorite verbs ("dance" and "act") describe physical, performative acts, as opposed to acts of mind.

Both Pound and Williams, before Olson, spoke of the importance of breath in poetry. In "Projective Verse, I" Olson refers to the "possibilities of breath, of the breathing man (sic) who writes as well as his listenings," and "speech is as swift as synapse." He opposes speech to formal (logical) discourse "where spatial form answers to his awareness of having all things present at once in the act of writing" (Paul, 36.) For Olson, Pound came to represent what was rejected in *ABC's*, "verse": "Pound /is verse." In *ABC of Reading*, Pound's insistence on the "musical phrase" meant for Olson passive listening over active speech: "LISTEN to the sound that is makes" and "Prosody and melody are attained by the listening ear." 12 In contrast, Olson's stress on breath was closer to Williams' belief "that movement in verse, which is characterized by speech, is 'a physical more than a literary character,' and that each speech having its own character the poetry

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it engenders will be peculiar to that speech also in its own intrinsic form." 13 Notice, also, in this quote, Olson's use of the procreation metaphor ("engenders" and "intrinsic form") associated with the speech act and the "birth" of understanding (discussed in chapter one).

### "Moebius Strip"

The poem, "Moebius Strip" (1946), earlier entitled "To Corrago Cagli" after a painter whose work Olson admired, illustrates the application of Olson's poetics of projective verse to date. What probably interested him in the image of the moebius strip, both literally and metaphorically for his "new" epistemological stance, was the shape's unorientable surfaces, that is, the impossibility of distinguishing inside from outside surfaces. As such, it served as a paradigm for Olson's belief in the reciprocity and interchange that exists between the poet and the world, in this case possibly Cagli's or another's artwork. Paul has noted about the poem (published on the occasion of an exhibition of the painter's work) that it is based upon Cagli's drawings "chiefly for the sense of reality they inspire, Olson's recognition of a world-in-motion where outside is inside and militant resistance is the requisite stance" (Paul, 6). Here is the entire poem:

#### "The Moebius Strip"

Upon a Moebius strip materials  
and the weights of pain  
their harmony

A man within himself upon an empty ground.  
His head lay heavy on a hugh right hand  
itself a leopard on  
his left and angled shoulder.  
His back a stave, his side a hole into the bosom of a sphere.

His head passed down a sky (as suns the circle of the year).  
His shoulder, open side and thigh maintained,  
by law of conservation of  
the graveness of his center,  
their clockwise fall.  
Then he knew, so came to apogee  
and earned and wore himself as amulet.

I saw another man lift up a women in his arms

he helmeted, she naked too, protected as Lucrece by her alarms.  
 Her weight tore down his right and muscled thigh  
 but they in turn returned upon the left  
 to carry violence outcome in her eye.  
 It was his shoulder that sustained, the right,  
 bunched as by buttocks or by breasts,  
 and gave them back the leisure of their rape.

And three or four who danced,  
 so joined as triple-thighed and bowed and arrowed folk  
 who spilled their pleasure once as yoke  
 on stone-henge plain.  
 Their bare and lovely bodies sweep, in round  
 of viscera, of legs  
 of turned-out hips and glance, bound  
 each to other, nested eggs  
 of elements in trance. 14

The poem is concerned with the interplay of internal and external involving two art works (conceivably Rodin's "The Thinker" and Ruben's "Rape of the Sabine Women") and the poet, and is structured as a prelude followed by two movements, and ending with a dance. The "subject" of the poem is neither the poet-observer, nor the artistic images themselves, but rather the interaction of them all. The words "moebius strip," "weights," and "harmony" in the first three lines introduce the themes that follow throughout the rest of the poem. The second group of five lines establishes the form and movement of an imaginary moebius strip: "man within himself" has the double meaning of contemplation and the shape of one bending forward, both senses of the phrase being important to the poem's meaning. The word "weights" is enacted both in content and in sound, as the reader notes the heavy, exhaling breath created by the accumulation of aspirant h's in "His head lay heavy on a hugh right hand," as if the man depicted in the drawing ("The Thinker"?) were sighing under the burden of thought. The words "lay" and "heavy" reinforce the image of "weights of pain" and begin to suggest the position of the man. From the right had, we are guided in the fourth line to "left and angled shoulder," thereby forcing our attention from right to left in a clockwise motion, notably enacting the poet-observer's perspective as participant with the drawing(s). We now follow the "moebius strip" downward "His back a stave" to his left side, which is "open," facing toward the poet-observer. At this point, Olson creates the effect of more deep breathing by the number of syllables that produce a four-count rhythm: "His back a stave /his side a hole /into the

bosom/of a sphere." We as readers are being asked to recreate Olson's (the poet's) experience of these artworks, which has been transformed into the world of the poem.

The second part of the first movement is comprised of seven lines. The first, "His head passed down," again relates to the downward motion of the moebius strip while the line of the right hand to the head creates an elliptical orbit. The "Other shoulder" indicates that his left is on the open side of his body. In the phrase, "open side and thigh maintained," long "i" 's contrast with the double "ai," while the linguistic stop "ed" gives a triple end-stop to the line in order to reinforce the sense and sound of the word "maintained." On the fifth line of this group, "their clockwise fall" seems to refer back to "side" and "thigh," which ironically are "maintained" while they create a downward sweeping line. "Clockwise" is a well-chosen word since it relates several circular forms with the implication of the mental state: "hole into the bosom of the sphere," "circle of the year," "graveness of his center," and anticipates "wore himself as amulet." From the external description of his head in the first line of this group, later in line six "Then he knew" shifts to the internal progression which is also about the "thinker's" gradual epiphany. From "graveness" he has arrived at perhaps a degree of self-realization, since he wears himself as amulet (man as object). Therefore, "so came to apogee" and "earned" combine the description of his head at the apogee of the ellipsis of the imaginary moebius strip. Complementing this progression, the sounds "ea" and "e" signal a lighter tone as if the burden of thought has been gradually lifted with self-knowledge. Therefore, to summarize the reader's participation in this section (that is, Olson as "reader" of unidentified artworks and myself as a reader of Olson's "readings"), the poem has moved from "weights of pain" to "lay heavy," "head passed down," "graveness of his center," and "clockwise fall," with the downward motion and weight reinforced by the sounds and syllables, as well as by the elliptical shape that reveals the internal and external stances of the figure.

In the second movement, as in a musical score, "I saw" affirms the poet's presence as observer-participant here, and later in the "dance" seemingly as actual participant. The focus shifts to "another man" who is "lifting up" (in contrast to the downward motion of the previous section). The tension is more apparent in this section, which I will refer to as "Roman and Sabine" (after Ruben's painting), where "lifted up" is countered by "weight tore down" in the third line. In addition, direction comes into play as it did with "the thinker," as here the reader's mind's eye moves from (let's say) "the Roman's"

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right thigh, to the circular motion created by the repetition in "they (man and woman) turned and returned upon the left." The fifth line shows the relationship between the internal emotions and the external features in the words, "violence in her eye." Interestingly, the movement here is either upward or sustained, while in the first movement the contrasting motion was downward and maintained, thereby when taken together tracing the shape of the moebius strip.

The third and last movement, which I will call "the dance," shows the enactment of the poet-observer, now as participant in the imaginary worlds of two works of art. What was depicted earlier as discrete experiences, those of the two works of art and of each of these as separate from Olson's experience of them, now flows into a continuous one "And three or four who danced." Olson changes his mind in the midst of this process, from three to four "who danced," because at first he thinks only of the "thinker" and the "Roman and Sabine" as being involved in this imaginary dance, until he suddenly realizes that he must now act as a fourth party. This is enlightening given that Olson maintained an interest in the "kinetics" of dance throughout his poetic career. 15 Paul has this to say about the significance of the idea of "dance" to Olson's poetics:

Projective verse is not only a poetics of presentation but a poetics of present experience, of enactment. It replaces spectatorism with participation, and brings the whole self the single intelligence: body, mind, soul to the activity of creation. Dance, which Olson appreciated because it recalls us to our bodies and "we use ourselves," is a correlative of this poetics; and so are action painting and jazz, which poets at this time turned to because they offered the instruction they wanted (Paul, 39).

The rhyme, abb/ cde/ cea, carries the movement in a sweeping motion beginning with the circular repetition of ce/ce, and ending with a return to "a." The dance is the poem and the poem is a dance, that is the enactment of the poet-participant engaged imaginatively and physically in the immediate and creative experience: "body, mind, soul(in the) activity of creation." The poem ends with the "dance" between internal and external "worlds" in the lines, "in round /of viscera, of legs /of turned out hips and glance /each to other," while also completing the imagined movement of the moebius strip as literal and metaphoric form. The poem, finally, enacts the lived-moment in a dizzying distillation of sensory experiences, action-participation, and poetic creation.

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## The Kingfishers

Sherman Paul, asking what was new in Olson's "Projective Verse," reminds us that more than any of his predecessors, Olson's was a poetics of enactment and of stress upon breath: "The HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE/The HEART, by way of the BREATH, to the LINE." Breath, which for Olson determines the line, not only *shapes* the poem, but also "allows all speech-force of language back in" (SW 20). Clearly, Olson was indebted to his predecessors, Fenollosa by way of Pound and Williams, in particular in their emphases upon the anti-symbolic mode, the ideogrammatic method, and the image and form as the enactment of speech-force. However, one can also find distinct points of resistance to his forbearers and the need to escape the smothering confines of past tradition, dominated by Pound. In "Projective Verse, I," and in the other *essays* and poems that followed it, Olson fought hard to breathe free, exhaling the residue of the past, while searching for a "push forward, self-action." Most notably in *ABC's*, he rejects the great triumvirate Pound, Eliot and Williams especially *The Cantos* and *Paterson*, in favor of Rimbaud; he writes: "ABC's (3for Rimbaud)."

The best statement in poetry of Olson's rejection of Pound (and the past poetic tradition he represented) in favor of Rimbaud as a sympathetic ancestor appears in "The Kingfishers" (1949). Paul maintains that "the Kingfishers" is at once a Poundian poem and a statement of Olson's rejection of Pound's "faith in historical renewal, his reactionary backward-looking stance, tied to the classical tradition, the world of power and abstraction" (Paul, 10). Pound's faith for Olson "forecloses the future and demands that he (Olson) *open* it not only by hunting among the stones by becoming an archaeologist of morning but by an attack on Pound nothing less than destructive" (Paul, 9). In contrast, Rimbaud became a model who also searched outside of the classical tradition for poetic renewal. Here the first two parts of section I of the poem:

"The Kingfishers"

1

What does not change /is the will to change

He woke, fully clothed, in his bed. He  
remembered only one thing, the birds, how  
when he came in, he had gone around the rooms  
and get them back in their cage, the green one first,

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she with the bad leg, and then the blue  
the one they had hoped was a male

Otherwise? Yes, Fernand, who had talked  
lispily of Albers & Angkor Vat.  
He had left the party without a word.  
How he got up, got into his coat,  
I do not know. When I saw him, he was  
at the door, but it did not matter,  
He was already sliding along the wall of the night, losing himself  
in some crack of the ruins. That it should have  
been he who said, "The Kingfisher!  
who cares  
for their feathers  
now?"

His last words had been, "The pool is slime," Suddenly everyone,  
ceasing their talk, sat in a row around him, watched  
they did not so much hear, or pay attention, they  
wondered, looked at each other, smirked, but listened,  
he repeated and repeated, could not go beyond his thought  
"The pool the kingfishers' feathers were wealth why  
did the export stop?"  
It was then he left

2

I thought of the E on the stone, and of what Mao said  
la lumière"  
but the kingfisher  
de l'aurore"  
but the kingfisher flew west  
eat devant nous!  
he got the color of his breast  
from the heat of the setting sun!

The features are, the feebleness of the feet  
(syndactylism of the 3rd & 4th digit)  
the bill, serrated, sometimes a pronounced beak, the wings  
where the color is, short and round, the  
tail inconspicuous.

But not these things were the factors. Not the birds.  
The legends are  
legends. Dead, hung up indoors, the kingfisher  
will not indicate a favoring wind,  
or avert the thunderbolt. Nor, by its nesting,  
still the waters, with the new year, for seven days.

It is true, it does not nest with the opening  
year, but not on the waters.

It nests at the end of the tunnel bored by itself in a bank. There,  
six or eight white translucent eggs are laid, on fishbones  
not on bare clay, on bones thrown up in pellets by the birds.

On these rejectamenta  
(as they accumulate they form a cup-shaped  
structure) the young are born.  
And, as they are fed and grow, this  
nest of excrement and decayed fish becomes  
a dripping, fetid mass  
Mao concluded:  
nous devons  
nous lever  
et agir!

The poem, "The Kingfishers," is in general terms about the collapse of Western Civilization and the poet's need to act, which is suggested by the Heraclitean summons to action in the first line, "What does not change /is the will to change." Echoes from T. S. Eliot ("favoring a wind" and "the waters") and Hart Crane ("the end of the tunnel") appear, reminders of poems about the failure of Western Civilization. Olson, also, probably has in mind a pointed allusion to Eliot's Kingfisher bird in "Burnt Norton": "After the kingfisher's wing /Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still /At the still point of the turning world." 16 Discounting the bird's symbolic, Christian significance, Olson uses it here to repudiate Christianity which he believes "is cause not cure of the waste land (the sterility of the West)" (Paul, 17).

Hart Crane is, also suggested in setting European against American (Mexican) culture, particularly in Crane's desire to find imaginative renewal in Mexico before his death.<sup>17</sup> In any case, Mexico in this poem represents a once admirable, now fallen and exploited culture whose history can be used to make a statement about contemporary Western Civilization (post-World War II). We are reminded of both Creeley's and Olson's poems dedicated to and about Hart Crane.<sup>18</sup> Against the sun setting on Western Civilization (recalling, perhaps, the German Expressionist's *Menschheitsdämmerung*), Olson contrasts the rise in the East of a new Chinese civilization under Mao. In the poem, Olson's quotation from a contemporary speech of Mao's affirms his own belief in the need to act and to begin again, to destroy and recreate from the debris of the past, the pri-

mordial mythopoeic act: "the light of the dawn is before us. Let us rise up and act." This, as Sherman Paul points out, is the motto of the "archaeologist of morning," the need for rebirth and renewal. Paul continues:

Mao is an example of the very thing Olson advises: he does not (necessarily or wholly) destroy civilization, . . . but renews it by going outside its traditions, in this instance by bringing western thought (Marxism) to bear on the East. Again, this does not mean that Olson is a Marxist or sanguine about revolution, though he thought, as he later told Creeley, that "Mao makes Mexico certain." What Olson approves is stand and method (Paul, 16; my emphasis).

It may be important to remember that however the Maoist Revolution of the 1940s is viewed today (both inside and outside of mainland China), for Olson writing this poem in 1949, it meant the possibility of hope for mankind in the present in contrast to the despair in the past. He illustrates this dialectical interweaving ideogramatically (akin to metonymy or *pars pro toto*) in the following lines which alternate Mao's words (in French) with the image of the kingfisher in section I:

la lumière'  
 but the kingfisher  
 de l'aurore"  
 but the kingfisher flew west  
 est devant nous!  
 he got the color of his breast  
 from the heat of the setting sun!

Sherman Paul offers insightful commentary of these lines in observing that they "skillfully accomplish the association of the Christian legend of how the kingfisher acquired its reddish breast and the present decline of the West. They make us realize that from the East, as Mao sees it, the setting sun is a rising sun, "*l'aurore*" that gives him hope" (Paul, 16-17).

Section III introduces Rimbaud as the restorer of the tradition destroyed by Socrates and represented in the modern age by Pound ("shall you uncover honey /where maggots are? /I hunt among stones" ). For Olson, the Socratic tradition of static, classical Beauty (spatial and visualist) must be replaced by a Heraclitean (pre-Socratic) view ("In the same river no man steps twice," in "Kingfishers, II"). The poet who, to Olson's mind, best represents this restored

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worldview was Rimbaud, "who had to toss Beauty off his knees." 19 Olson enacts this juxtaposition of contrasting (declining and rising) traditions (static Beauty vs. vital Change) in the closing section of the poem:

I am no Greek, hath not th'advantage.  
 And of course, no Roman:  
 he can take no risk that matters,  
 the risk of beauty least of all.

But I have my kin, if for no other reason than  
 (as he said, next of kin) I commit myself, and,  
 given my freedom, I'd be a cad  
 if I didn't. This is most true.

It works out this way, despite the disadvantage.  
 I offer, in explanation, a quote:  
 si j'ai du goût, ce n'est guères  
 que pour la terre et les pierres  
 Despite the discrepancy (an ocean courage age)  
 this is also true: if I have any taste  
 it is only because I have interested myself  
 in what was slain in the sun

I pose you your question:

shall you uncover honey/ where maggots are?

I hunt among stones

Here Olson rejects Pound's restriction to the classical tradition's notion of Beauty. In Paul's words: "Olson had stepped outside this tradition and taken other risks ("despite the disadvantage"), and has found another model in Rimbaud, . . . a forbearer to whom Pound himself once turned" (Paul, 27). In this particular passage from "Fêtes de la faim" (1872) ("si j'ai du goût ce n'est guères / que pour la terre et les pierres"), Rimbaud says that he hungers only for earth and stones, like Trakl's soul going forward "auf die Erde" and like Olson, who as "archaeologist of morning" digs among primordial forms, engaged in the processes of discovery, recreation, and understanding. This is what Olson himself has said in *The Special View of History* (1956):

It is this which Heraclitus meant when he laid down the law which was vitiated by Socrates and only restored by Rimbaud: that man is estranged from that (with) which he is most familiar (SVH, 31).

The poem, "The Kingfishers," ends then in directing the "will to change" ("*nous devons / nous lever / et agir!*") in a direction other than the beauty of classical tradition and, like Rimbaud, outside of the European tradition.

### Olson 's "New Mythology"

Although Olson used the term "mythology" time and again in his essays during the 1950s and 1960s, his most succinct discussion of the subject appears in *The Special View of History* (1956) where he announces: "I am a mythologist." As a "mythologist," his goal in *The Maximus Poems* (volume one, 1953 and 1956; volume two, 1968) would be to restore Gloucester, Massachusetts, as *polis* (volume one) and to "rediscover the earth" (volume two) in a way that would be unprecedentedly inclusive, that is, in geological, mythical, psychological, and cultural senses. 20 *The Maximus Poems* (volumes one and two) would serve as both the poet's and the reader's mythic rites through which to restore humanity to wholeness both in the public (*polis*, community) and in the private (personal and collective unconscious) senses of the term. Olson's progress toward "wholeness" or "totality" through mythic thinking and language would be a slow one, spanning over a decade.

In his first explicit discussion of the topic, "The Science of Mythology" (1953), Olson denigrates the mythology of the Greeks as being "a beautiful wall," that is, a form of discourse that blocks original perception. He inaccurately associates Greek mythology in this essay with the type of narration that he calls chronicle (*logoi*), an act of intellect, as opposed to narration (*muthos*) that is like "a river running," an act of now (PC, 136). In the same year, he adopts a more accepting view of myth in "The Gate and the Center" where he writes about how "we long ago lost the POINT & PURPOSE of what we call - and thus kill - the act of myth" (GC, 39). Here he associates "the act of myth" with the "WILL TO COHERE." On an individual level, this apparently means to explore archetypal connections (figures and events) in human history and on a public level to cultivate the experience of *polis*, that is, the shared knowledge and values in a culture.

In "A Special View of History," Olson closes his lecture on the "Kosmos," the physical order of the universe, by announcing that next time he would turn to "another order, man's." He goes on to explain that "neither the Mud of the world nor the Egg of the world.

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Not that Kosmos. But one of his own. And it is at this point that his mythology a new mythology is of interest" (SVH, 52). In that next lecture, entitled "Muthos," he defined the new mythology as "the kosmos inside a human being the order harmony universe which we usually call our individual or personal experience" (SVH, 53). Although he admits that this describes the "private life," Olson stresses that "the passage of acts is a two-way circuit, in and out" (SVH, 53). Olson describes the relationship between mythology and cosmology, the interior and the exterior worlds of experience, with the schematic of two inverted, intersecting cones penetrated by a single, vertical shaft. Olson calls the individual cone the "cone of creation" which suggests the movement from "the elementary principle of *Chaos* via Spirit to Desire." The "Order of the Kosmos," then, includes "a succession of events moving from the widest to the narrowest, and so back, in fact, the circuit, or double movement, makes a double cone" (SVH, 54). The vertical shaft or "the person's own private quantum" passes through the center of both cones at a single point which Olson denotes as "Desire or Eros." It is at this point that "man is kosmos" in the dual-circuited motion (moebius-like) between interior and exterior worlds.

If according to Olson, "man is kosmos" and "order is man" (SVH, 47), then mythology refers to the order (variously called "history," "HIMagination," "Muthos," or "art") that humans impose on their experiences. The individual's "will to cohere" takes on both social (*polis*) and cognitive (*muthos*), public and private aspects, including the desire to impose order on chaos through one's personal acts of creation. Such a process, according to Olson, involves three stages that I want to relate, because they parallel so closely Fischer's description of the process of transforming perceived data into experienced meaning (discussed in chapter three). Olson's first stage, "the chaos of physical enjoyment," is analogous to what Fischer describes as sensory data:

In the first stage of feeling, the chaos of physical enjoyment is both the reality and the process, but as process (in other words, as in motion) already Spirit (which is pneuma and means breathwind, air) is operative.

The next stage shows one to be engaged in the process of selection (Hesiod's "desire," Herder's "reflectiveness," Husserl's "intention" and Olson's "attention") of particular objects or images out of the "chaos" of sensory perception. This is a process for the "brain" ("per-

ceived data") although as Olson suggests here, acts of "mind" ("the vision of form" or "experienced meaning") are already engaged:

In the second stage, when the individual impresses his or her sense of order on the multiples, already Desire or Eros has begun to leaven the matter; already the vision of form (kosmos, order harmony the world) is operative.

And finally, the process is completed when the object of desire, "Kosmos, order harmony the world," has been attained and momentary "satisfaction" has been achieved. The poet-as creator replaces the idea of God in explaining primordial acts of creation:

And in the last stage, satisfaction, when both the enjoyment and the desire are one (the desire for form is the creative force, or what has been usually called God). . . . (SVH, 51-52).

Olson's concept of the poet (which, in a general sense, includes anyone engaged in meaning making acts of mind) corresponds closely with mythologies of cosmological creation discussed in Part I that, in turn, informed various theories of meaning-making. (See earlier discussions about F. Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Fischer, Iser, and Gadamer.)

When Olson writes that "suddenly, kosmos is history" (SVH, 49), he means that history is "the reality we create ourselves by our acts." (SP, 109) Furthermore, history is *muthos* ('istorin' or "his-story") because it is the speech act whereby one attends to, orders, and gives form to the particulars of experience. It "re-presents" man's participation both in the exterior facts, persons, events of existence and the interior "record" of the human species, the archetypes of the collective unconscious. At this point, it may be instructive to recall Fischer's discussion (in chapter three) about how the sympathetic (attentional) and arousal systems will "intensify the meaning of signs that stand for values that were acquired through past experiences of the individual and the species," thereby yielding the archetypal patterns and imagery in literary and mythico-religious thought. In either case, whether through exterior or interior "facts," the individual's goal or the end sought is "to be inclusive and that all, though each are discrete, shall also be inclusive in the exact sense that they should cover, by their content and form, all experience as a continuum" (SVH, 53). The poem becomes the place ("kosmos") where the creative

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process of 'istorin' (telling your story as you have experienced it) occurs, that is, where a "human universe" takes shape.

Olson's idea of history can be described as mythical, but it is so in a new sense. According to Eliade, mythic time is cyclical and past-oriented, allowing events from past and present to occur simultaneously in a timeless realm that allows for the imaginary identification of two people. In contrast, Olson's idea of history exists in the poet-persona's present understanding of past events and involves an on-going process of feedback and change processive and recursive (or looping) recalling Fischer on the hermeneutic circle. This involves a present stance of "openness" both in terms of time and space: "scope" or the expanse of vision that can take in as much of the "landscape" as possible (akin to Crane's "synoptic gaze") and "millennia," a way of seeing discrete historical facts in different contexts and from different perspectives. Since history is known only through a recursive process and in the present, Olson's mythopoetic persona, Maximus, experiences discrete historical (past) events as if they occur simultaneously in the present. Unlike the dialectic between timeless simultaneity and processive change (i.e., between ecstatic vision and its loss) enacted in the poetry of Rimbaud, Trakl, and Crane, Olson's concept of history makes mythic recreation synonymous with hermeneutic understanding. This process of making "his-story" is enacted in *The Maximus Poems* when the eternally present poet-persona the archetypal meaning-making Self attaches personal significance ("form") to the past.

Whether conceived externally as the local, *polis*, Gloucester (in volume one), internally as personal memory, dream, or the collective unconscious (in volume two), or as the poem as healing place, the idea of space plays an important part in the mythological scheme of *The Maximus Poems*. In fact, Maximus' search for wholeness, possibly the poem's dominant focus, spans public and private realms of experience, analogous to the moebius strip or the "cone of creation." With regard to the public realm, in the same year that Olson published the first volume of *Maximus* (1953), he wrote "The Gate and the Center" for *Origin* #1. There, he speaks of Sumer as the lost "ONE CENTER" of civilization, an example of the idea that: "a city was a coherence which, for the first time since the ice age, gave man the chance to join knowledge to culture and, with this weapon, shape dignities of economics and value sufficient to make daily life itself a dignity and a sufficiency" (GC, 37). He continues: "Suddenly, by such a smallness of time, seen as back there 3378 to 2500 B.C., the nature of life is made

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available, seems suddenly not at all history, seems what is was, men falling off the original impetus but still close enough to the climax of a will to cohere to know what CENTER was" (GC, 38).

The idea of city (*polis*) as "a coherence" provided a setting and stance whereby to join knowledge to culture, the personal to the communal. Olson seems to envision the following process as taking place. Each individual's "his-tory" becomes a form of knowledge about the actual. Then, the cumulative knowledge of individuals makes up what Olson calls "culture" and "culture," in this special sense, re-presents "Totality" or the "Actual" (SVH, 36). At rare times, select individuals with common values come together to share their knowledge (Olson's own small, elite following itself forms a culture): "both: the attention and the care / however much each of us chooses our own kin and concentration" and "so few have the polis in their eye" (M, 28). Finally, their collective knowledge and values make up what Olson calls "culture," which he opposes to Pound's "Kultur" (Western Tradition) and to political propaganda:

("KNOWLEDGE either does to the CENTER or it's inevitably a State Whore which American and Western education generally is, has been since the beginning" and "it's a question of re-establishing a concept of knowledge as culture rather than a question of what's wrong with the schools, I mean that already anyone who wants to begin to get straight has to, to start, a straight man has to uneducate himself first, in order to begin to pick up, to take up, to get back, in order to get on" (GC, 35).

Olson's idea of "culture" interestingly maps with Lawrence Cahoon's in *The Dilemma of Modernity* where he writes that "culture connects human beings not only with things, but with each other and with dead generations whose products are reinterpreted and reinvested with meaning by the living" and human beings are "the kind of beings who endlessly recreate and reshape materials in ways that carry interpretations of the world which guide individual action and community life" (Cahoon, 254). For both thinkers, then, "culture" represents that region of experience wherein subjective and objective dichotomies are overridden and an integrated psychic state emerges. Olson is comprehensive in his view of "culture" and "polis" as both social and epistemological aspects of coherence, existing simultaneously.

In volume two, the mythic locus shifts from the public to the private, from Culture as *polis*, communal knowledge, and the father to Nature conceived as the "the Earth," the Great Mother, the per-

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sonal and collective unconscious, and individuation (Jung). Maximus' progress through the public to the private marks yet another step along the way ("tao") toward wholeness, that is, reintegration with the Earth (in geological, mythological, psychological, and cultural senses) and with the self. Volume two "presses beyond historical founding to the origin of life as told in cosmological myth," (Paul), from "Pa the city" to "Ma the Morphic." In "MAXIMUS, FROM DOGTOWNII," Maximus invites the reader to "come down to Earth / of Us All, the Many who/know/there is One!/One Mother/One Son."

Reintegration on several levels comes about through the poetic act as healing rite which weaves and interlocks dualities into a new whole. Some of the dualities restored to wholeness include: nature/culture, self/world, past/present, and masculine/feminine. Stressing the poetic speech act as reintegrative force, Olson writes in "for Robt Duncan, / who understands/ what's going on/written because of him / March 17, 1961": "lovely lying muthos/ we breed again right out of our cunt-loving cock-sucking mouths" (M, IV). Later, in Maximus VI, Olson introduces the Egyptian god, Ptah, out of whose formative utterances the universe comes into being: "Nut is over you / Ptah has replaced the Earth / the Primeval Hill/ has gone directly/from the waters/ and the mud / to the Cow of Heaven /the Hill stands /free" (M, VI).

The first strand of this poetic tapestry that Olson is weaving (hence, bringing into being) is composed of recurrent images of "rifts." There are the geological rifts of the East African continent and, closer to home, of Gloucester's cliffs and waterways. In "Letter #41 [broken off]" (M, IV), Olson writes: "Like, right off the Orontes? The Jews /settled astride /the East African rift." And concerning Gloucester geology, Olson writes in Maximus further on (December 28th 1959)": (sic) fifisherman's FIELD'S rocks with Gen Douglas lying /(having swum from Cressip out to, with his sister/ a kelp/ ledge bed split when the rock cooled." In two poems about "The River," geology becomes personified in a way that conveys mythic overtones): "The River1": Into/ In the fiord the diorite *man obstrudes* . . . /Into the granite this inlet /of the sea *to poke and jam the Cut and fight / the sand off*" (my emphases) and in "The River2": "the diorite /with the granite/ of the Poles/-&/the Basin/ (fiord, the overlapping, both ways:/ up and down and the Closed Wrinkle, /Open."

In another thematic strand, we find geo-mythology more explicitly expressed in narratives of "chthonic femininity" (Paul), divine and human re-union with Earth throughout time. First, the origins of earth and life (mythological time) begin with the narrative of

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Okeanos forcing himself upon Earth: "Encircling Okeanos tears upon the earth to get love loose, / that women fall into the clefts / of women, that men tear at their legs / and rape until love sifts / through all things and nothing is except love as stud / upon the earth" (in "Maximus, at the Harbor," M, IV). Secondly, Merry from Gloucester history merges with a goddess myth in "MAXIMUS, FROM DOGTOWNII": "She is the goddess / of the earth, and night / of the earth and fish / of the little bull / and of Merry / Merry had a wife / She is the heavenly mother" and "then only / after the grubs / had one him / did the earth / let her robe / uncover and her part / take him in" (M, IV).

Finally, the healing process takes place in a psychological sense in instances where the masculine and feminine sides of the personality (Jung's *anima* and *animus*) unite in a new, balanced whole. Scholars have shown that Olson was well-read in Jungian psychology (Paul and Merrill), and that in *Maximus* (volume two) he wished to enact the process of individuation, a psychological theory which, it might be useful to note, is analogous to myths of androgenous origins. The process of individuation takes place in volume two on three levels: in mythic narrative, in Gloucester history, and in references to Olson's autobiography. In mythic narrative, Earth is synonymous with the feminine (*anima*), as we have seen in the Olson's recreation of the Hesiodic version of Okeanos' union with Earth above. In Gloucester history, in death James Merry unites with the Earth Goddess as "wife" and, more recently, Gloucester fishermen go "whoring" in Maximus of DogtownI."

One of the autobiographical references to Olson's mother relates a memory of her being sexually pursued by Rexall conventioners visiting Gloucester. Here is the passage from "*Maximus to Gloucester, Letter 27* [withheld]":

I was so young my first memory  
is of a tent spread to feed lobsters  
to Rexall conventioners, and my father,  
a man for kicks, came out of the tent roaring  
with a bread-knife in his teeth to take care of  
a druggist they'd told him had made a pass at  
my mother, she laughing, so sure, as round  
as her face . . . (M, IV)

This personal anecdote, "withheld" as were his mother's sexual favors, is followed immediately by: "This, is no bare incoming / of novel abstract form, this," thus linking the passage with mythological and

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historical narratives of sexual pursuit and conquest. For Olson's poetic purposes, all of these sexual situations suggest reintegration in the psychological (Jungian), as well as in the physical sense. The individuated self (the integration of *anima* and *animus*) emerges in "MAXIMUS, FROM DOGTOWN-II" as "Him-Her-Self" and, even more inclusively, as "Child-Made-Man-Woman is / Mary's Son / . . . MONOGENE," a composite figure that suggests the unity of self with the opposite sex (or personality type), as well as with one's personal and ancestral past.

Another quality of the mythic mode that becomes increasingly visible in Olson's poetry is the sense of the sacredness of Being. In a 1929 review of Cassirer's "Mythical Thought" (in *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, volume 2), Heidegger discusses the "original division of space" into two "regions": the "holy" region and the "common" region. In Heidegger's words, "a 'holy' region is singled out, correspondingly cared for and protected, and a 'common' region is available at all time to everyone." 21 The "holy region" corresponds to the "mythic world" (or "mythic Dasein"). This spatial discrimination, originating in mythic "object-consciousness," would lead to an awareness of an overpowering presence or "uncommonness" of certain objects, referred to as "mana" or "mana-representations." The universe that Olson describes in "The Escaped Cock: Notes on Lawrence and the Real," is sacred (the object of Olson's "intent & attention") and, as Sherman Paul points out, "the sacred is permitted to remain as an essential resonance in spite of Olson's emphasis on the profane" (Paul, 75) or the "common."

While Heidegger and the earlier poets in this study conveyed a sense of the sacredness of Being through Judeo-Christian symbols or ideas (Biblical allusions, religious images, figures, care, etc.), they also looked to the Earth and to natural images. Over his poetic career, in contrast, Olson's thought and practice concerning the mythic-sacred seemed to change. In the earlier poetry and poetics, he paid close attention to "particulars," the "familiar," and "facts" ("Projective Verse," *Archaeologist of Morning*, and generally in volume one of *The Maximus Poems*). In volume one, Maximus' quest focuses on a specific city situated in history (Gloucester), the figures he refers to are drawn from Gloucester's past and present, and the recurrent images that attract his attention emanate from the local region and economy (ships, sea, fish, flowers, birds, etc.). Only occasionally do these "facts" take on "sacred," "uncommon," or archetypal significance. This occurs, to cite one example, in "Letter 7" which clearly contains Biblical allusions. The poem is about the American

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artist and poet, Marsden Hartley, who painted the Gloucester landscape in 1931; his vision ("eyes / polis") is associated with "that carpenter's" (M, 30). Like other biblical allusions to the Whale's Jaw, Jonah, Jehovah, the apostles, and "a meal of fish a final supper," and "transubstantiations" (M, 32-33), the "carpenter" carries with it connotations both to Christ as salvation and to culture as human transformation or re-creation.

In addition, in volume one the idea of "care" becomes synonymous with heightened "attention," that is heightened perception rather than mythic vision: "Eyes, / & polis, / fisherman, & poets / or in every human head I've known is / busy / both: / the attention, and / the care" (M, 28), and "Nowhere in man is there room for carelessness (M, 32). And yet, it may be useful to recall what Cassirer has said about "mythic ideation" as the "concentration of attention" or the "distillation of perception" of the "essence" or "significance" of an object (discussed in chapter two). We find parallel ideas in Northrop Frye's concept of "centripetal force" which is associated with mythic thinking in *The Anatomy of Criticism* and in Heidegger's reference to a "holy region" and "mana representation" in *The Piety of Thinking*.

In "Maximus, to Gloucester, Letter 19 (A Pastoral Letter)" (volume one), we find an example of mythic sacredness associated with the image of the child as Olson's young daughter. Olson deliberately uses the image of the child to contrast with that of the pious preacher. The general tone of the letter is defamatory to members of the clergy: "For I am no merchant / Nor so young I need to take a stance / to a loaded / smile" (M, 88). But, in contrast to the religious hypocrisy ("false face") he assigns to organized religions (" 'Pardon me, but /) what church / do you belong to, / may I ask?' " (M, 87), he juxtaposes the image of his young daughter: "And a bird sings / loudly / And my daughter, naked / on the porch, sings" (M, 88). In this natural state and setting, she represents a genuineness and perhaps even an integrated psychic state, lost to adults:

She wears her own face  
 as we do not,  
 until we cease to wear  
 the clouds  
 of all confusers,  
  
 of all confusions,  
 who wear the false face  
 He never wore, Whose  
 is terrible. Is  
 perfection (M, 88)

Whether we take "the clouds / of all confusion" to be allusions to the Socratic (rational), the Platonic (metaphysical), or the Neo-Platonic (Christian) traditions, Olson suggests here that the child is at one with Being. This notion, of course, recalls Romantic visions of the child / primitive, as well as Donald Winnicott's belief that "the undifferentiated state" so prevalent in childhood, persists (though often unrecognized) into adulthood. (See earlier discussions of Vygotsky in chapter three and of Winnicott in chapter one about childhood thinking and the mythic.)

In volume two (*Maximus IV-VI*), images and archetypes associated with the sacred in a variety of mythologies and religions abound. Here, Maximus has turned to his *anima* or "feminine" side (interior, nature, personal and collective unconscious, archetypes, the mythological). Maximus' spiritual quest toward reintegration with "Earth" and "Self" leads him through geological, mythological, and multicultural settings in which he evokes archetypes drawn from a wide range of human cultures and experiences. For example, in volume two we find images of fish and fishermen carried over "interwoven" from volume one, but now they connote spiritual searching and salvation as from the New Testament (Merrill 208210). In addition, water images that suggest Maximus' "scope" of vision in volume one, here become images of restoration and return to an earlier state of wholeness. In addition, the historical figure James Merry is linked with Christ and these two are included with the primordial matriarchal figures of the Great Goddess and the chthonic monster, Typhon. Maximus as the archetypal meaning-making Self now includes: the *polis*, consciousness and collective unconscious, child and adult, man and woman, father and mother: "Him-Her-Self," "Polis," and "Child-Made-Man-Woman is / . . . MONOGENE" ("MAXIMUS, FROM DOGTOWNII").

Finally, Olson's sense of the mythic expands upon that of the other poets in his concept of "Totality." While Rimbaud, Crane, and Trakl sought a mythic state of totality achieved through altered states of consciousness and enacted in the language of the poem, Olson's Maximus seeks totality on several levels of consciousness: epistemological (Whitehead), psychological (Jung), and poetic. This includes the experience of totality sought through cultural (*polis*), epistemological ("millennia" and "scope," the collective unconscious and individuation), and poetic (mythic "inclusiveness") senses. For Olson, the experience of "TOTALITY" emerges from *muthologos*, the spoken immediate experience, which restores our perception of the "actual" or (in Heidegger's term) Being. It finds expression in Maximus as archetypal self, in Gloucester (volume one) as *polis* signifying

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shared knowledge and culture, or in "Earth" (volume two) as restored wholeness in geological, mythological, historical, cultural and spiritual senses. In short, Maximus' search for community, inclusiveness, or wholeness puts him on a trajectory aimed toward a mythic experience of totality, albeit one that involves an open-ended process.

#### OriginalityRe-creation From Origins

Thomas Merrill has observed the *The Maximus Poems* joins those works in search of an "American equivalent of the epic" which include *Columbiad*, *Song of Myself*, *The Cantos*, *the Bridge*, and *Paterson* (Merrill, 161). Olson himself was candid in pointing out his indebtedness to prior long poems, especially those of his American literary forefathers, Pound and Williams. While some critics have dismissed Olson's *Maximus Poems* as being largely derivative, von Hallberg and Merrill make convincing cases that this is not a legitimate criticism. One finds this to be true for several reasons, the most obvious ones being that Olson himself declares his origins in a number of different contexts, and in his allusions to both Pound and Williams in *The Maximus Poems*.

Secondly, as von Hallberg points out, Pound and Olson (as teachers) seek truth, not novelty. Both emphasize the dictum: "Make it new!" rather than "Be original." One way that I believe this idea might be interpreted is to say that prior literary forms or knowledge need to be submitted to imaginative re-creation in order for the poet to arrive at any personal "truth" or understanding. In this sense, the poet seeks "originality" as eighteenth century scholars understood the term: the return through the poetically re-creative act to the origins, the primordial models of thought and language. The brand of originality that Olson seeks, then, entails "breathing-in" a prior tradition and "exhaling" it in re-created form. Notably, this is a characteristic mode of composition of the pre-Socratic rhapsodies (e.g., Homer and Hesiod) and the lyrical dramatists who submitted earlier myths to their civic-ideological ends.

The range of Olson's interests and resources extended well beyond the American tradition or, for that matter, beyond Western culture, to include a wealth of materials from other cultures and disciplines. In volume two, in particular, the "scope" of Olson's mind is maximally global, multicultural, and interdisciplinary. It incorporates (psychology and mythology) C. G. Jung's *Aion*, *The Integration of Personality*, and *Psychology and Alchemy*, Jung and Kerényi's

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*Essays on a Science of Mythology*, Erich Neumann's *The Great Mother*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, *The Homeric Hymns*, Anthenaeus' *The Deinosophists*, allusions to Algonquin, Egyptian, and Nordic mythologies, Jane Harrison's *Themis*; (philosophy and religion) Heraclitus, Whitehead's *Process and Reality*, Hermann Weyl's *Philosophy of Mathematics*, Henri Frankfort's *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*, and *Before Philosophy*, Hans Jonas' *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, Henri Corbin's "Cyclical Time in Mazdaism and Ismailism," in Joseph Campbell's *Man and Time*, and *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, James Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*; (local history) Joseph Garland's *The Gloucester Guide*; and (American and British authors) Melville, Thoreau's *Walden*, Whitman, Pound's *The Cantos*, William Carlos Williams' *Paterson*, Hart Crane's *The Bridge*, James Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, D. H. Lawrence's "The Man of Tyre" and "Chrysanthemum" to name the more conspicuous examples. 22

Olson owed perhaps the largest debts for his overall conception of *The Maximus Poems* to three poet contemporaries: Pound (*The Cantos*), William Carlos Williams (*Paterson*), and Hart Crane (*The Bridge*). Like Williams' *Paterson*, Olson uses an expanded, omniscient persona; focuses on one place (city); and makes the poem a repository (nests, baskets, etc.) for "particulars" (Merrill 16263). According to Olson, Williams (like Joyce who created a universal language of the unconscious) "HAS an emotional system which is capable of extensions & comprehensions the ego-system . . . is not" (*Mayan Letters*, 27). In terms of negative influences, Olson criticized *The Cantos*, saying that the "beak of Pound's EGO" defeats historical time, and *Paterson* because the scope is too limited, "provincial" and without an historical sense (history "re-presenting" itself in the NOW).

Olson apparently, also, had Crane in mind while composing *Maximus*. We already know about his admiration for Crane in his poem "You, Hart Crane" (as well as his familiarity with Creeley's poem, published in *Origins* #1). Like *Voyages* and *The Bridge*, Olson uses the archetypal pattern of the voyage or quest, and the goal of Maximus' quest is the "Actualfacts unadulterated by capitalist commercialism: "mu-sick, mu-sick, mu-sick" (M, 3) and "those who use words cheap, who use us cheap" (M, 9-10) as opposed to "They sing: / euphoria" (M, 35) and "love is form, and cannot be without / important substance" (M, 1). This view of the corrupted state of

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language, recalls Crane's "fractured idioms," advertisements, subway din, jazz rhythms, etc. As in *The Bridge*, for Maximus language can be misused to obscure Being or Totality: "dirty / postcards / And words, words, words / all over everything" (M, 13) and "o my people, where shall you find it, how, where, where shall you listen / when all is become billboards, when, all, even silence, is spray-gunned? (M, 2). While Crane's poet-persona ultimately seeks a "Myth of America" (the One or community-in-multiplicity) which can be forged by "Love," Olson's Maximus seeks an experience of the "Actual" or "Totality," albeit glimpsed through fleeting particulars and achieved through the "will to cohere." In addition to these similarities, we find references to "love is form" (M, 1) which recall Crane's visionary efforts in "Atlantis" where love is the cohesive force binding together the Myth of America, the poem itself.

#### Olson's Poetics of Orality

Originality, as applied to Olson's poetry and poetic, connotes the return to a primordial language and integrated consciousness, that more accurately associated with preliterate or oral societies. While the style of oral or preliterate speech (what Olson's critics refer to as "illiteracy") will be a topic of discussion below, suffice it to say here that Olson's idea of return to "origins" clearly includes this notion of a primordial speech act, i.e., *muthologos*. In "Letter 23," Maximus laments the decline of *muthos* (spontaneous speech) in favor of *logos* (rational discourse, literacy), from Homer's "sweet-versing" to Pindar who is reputed to have said: "Poesy / steals away men's judgment/by her *muthoi*" (M, 100). This important passage follows in its entirety:

*muthologos* has lost such ground since Pindar

The odish man sd: "Poesy  
steals away men's judgment  
by her *muthoi*" (taking this crack  
at Homer's sweet-versing)  
"and a blind heart  
is most men's portions." Plato

allowed this divisive  
thought to stand, agreeing

that *muthos*  
is false. *Logos*

isn't was facts. Thus  
Thucydides

I would be an historian as Herodotus was, looking  
for oneself for the evidence of  
what is said:  
(M, 100)

It is important to remember that one of Olson's concerns in *The Maximus Poems* is with creating a community (or "culture") of people who share common knowledge and values: "both: / the attention, and / the care / however much each of us / chooses our own / kin and / concentration" (M, 28). Originality for Olson is a value, then, only within the context of "culture," "his-tory," and the new understanding that results from mythopoeic recreation.

The idea of the spoken word's power to bring a world or cosmos into being, central to Olson's references to *muthologos*, was recurrent in creation myths, which I argued served as symbolic narratives for hermeneutic understanding. Earlier (in chapter one), I argued that creation myths may be interpreted as representing symbolically the stages of a cognitive process associated with the emerging understanding of a primordial, reflective self. This takes place through the linguistic act of forming (i.e., naming, defining, classifying, etc.) associated with the transition from primary orality to literacy. Olson's Maximus may be seen as a "primordial, reflective self," who (like the gods of many creation myths) creates anew an understanding of the cosmos through the formative and mimetic powers of language (e.g., epistolary poems): "form only comes / into existence when / the thing is born" (M, 3). As Ong points out, the process of sounding and naming exercises a "power over things" in oral cultures (Ong, 33).

Olson's poetry consciously draws upon the preliterate traditions of oral thought and expression, which, in turn, characterize the style of the mythic mode of discourse (e.g., Homer and Hesiod). The return to preliterate ("primordial") thought and expression meant the recovery of language from the abstract and from the false consciousness of rational discourse, or in Heidegger's words, from the covering over of Being. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer discusses that crucial moment in the history of Western thought, Plato's *Cratylus*, when the truth of being became situated in the abstract sign (*onoma*), rather than "placing being in a relationship" or in a specific context as in a speech act (or *logos*, to be consistent with Olson's terminology, *muthologos*). Here is an important passage from *Truth and Method*:

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the association that is logos is much more than the mere correspondence of words and objects, as would ultimately correspond to the Eleatic doctrine of being and is assumed in the copy theory. Precisely because the truth contained in the logos is not that of mere perception (of *noein*), not just letting being appear, but rather always places being in a relationship, assigning something to it, it is not the word (*onoma*), but the logos that is the bearer of truth (and also of error) (Gadamer 373).

Earlier in the same work, in "Language as the medium of hermeneutical experience," Gadamer maintains that "we must recognize that all understanding is *interwoven* with concepts and reject any theory that does not accept the intimate unity of word and object" (Gadamer, 365; my emphasis). In the same vein, Cassirer (discussed in chapter two) has pointed out that in mythic thinking, the quintessentially hermeneutic or recreative act, the importance of naming is associated with the notion that the word and what it denotes are identical.

As Walter Ong in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* points out, the name as "label" (out there) is an impossible concept in oral cultures, because the difference between sign and signified arises only in chirographic or typographic cultures. 23 Interestingly, writing is believed to have emerged in Greek culture just shortly before Socrates and Plato, who were the main proponents of *logos* as decontextualized word rather than as speech act. It bares repeating that Plato's decision to replace the poets (*muthologoi*) with philosophers (*logoi*) in his ideal city, the Republic, reflects the politics of education (the language and ways of knowing in authority) of his day.24

The written word, as opposed to the spoken word, has fallen away from reality both in the sense of the abstracting quality of written word, as well as the misuse of language to deceive. Olson has written:

What we have suffered from is manuscript, press, the removal of verserom its producer and its re-producer, the voice, a removal by one, by two removes from its place or origin and its destination (HU, 57).

*The Maximus Poems* makes a number of references to the corruption of language, usually in written form ("The habit of newsprint / are the limits of / literacy," M, 17), but sometimes as modern song ("mu-sick"). In Letter 1, Maximus alludes to the need to return to the

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spoken word (the ear, listen) in a time when the written word is used mainly to promote commercialism:

By ear, he sd.  
 But that which matters, that which insists, that which will last,  
 that! o my people, where shall you find it, how, where, where shall  
     you listen  
 when all is become billboards, when, all, even silence, is spray-gunned? (M, 2).

And,

o kill kill kill kill kill  
 those  
 who advertise you  
 out (M, 4)

And,

Let those who use words cheap, who use us cheap  
 take themselves out of the way  
 Let them not talk of what is good for the city (M, 9)

Appropriately in the epic tradition, the first poem in *Maximus*, volume one, begins on a mythological note with the appearance of the bird as figure of discovery (the poet), gathering the stray particulars (sticks) of the sea-side town, Gloucester, Massachusetts, as historical fact. History as "his-story" or *muthologos* can only take shape out of the "particulars" (feathers, bits of hair and string, street-pickings, weeds, bones, straw, etc.) of Gloucester and must be carefully woven in a new form, a "nest" (also, later referred to "kylix" and "vase"). The poem as nest underscores the idea of the forming out of desire (love), the mythological paradigm for the meaning-making process out of the past and the present: "form only comes into existence when the thing is born / born of yourself, born of hay and cotton struts, of street-pickings, wharves, weeds you carry in, my bird" (M, 3). As Byrd states, albeit overlooking the mythological implications: "The design of the poem arises from the effort to inhabit the eternity which opens to one who, in the heat of attention, *realizes the form of his eros in the present*" (B, 68; my emphasis). This recalls Hesiod's narrative of the creation of the gods, the *Theogony*, in which the divine genealogy is set in motion only in the presence of the "Void" and "Desire."

Seen as a nest made of "stray particulars," *The Maximus Poems*

recall Lévi-Strauss' notion of mythic discourse as "bricolage" or Herder's call for "new mythologies" (discussed in chapter one): the creation of a new structure or a new understanding ("born of yourself") out of the "debris" of the past: "o Gloucester-man, / weave / your birds and fingers / new, your roof-tops, / clean shit upon racks / sunned on / American . . ." (M, 3). Although Plato equated myth (*muthos*, speech act) with *doxa*, separate units that one has failed to integrate, the pre-Socratics (hence Olson) regarded myth-as-*doxa* ("gathering stray particulars") as reflecting the true nature of reality as immediate and dynamic through spoken language. As Byrd points out, "doxa is knowledge of a world which, seeming to betray some unifying wholeness, reveals itself only partially. The wholeness can only be suggested by repeating incident after incident in a series of incidents which is endless. The Way is of necessity open-ended and dynamic" (Byrd, 37).

The poetic method that Olson uses in *The Maximus Poems* (volume one) to give form to the "actual" is derived from the Greek word, *hyphainein* or "weaving," the root of *hymnos* which originally meant "woven" or "spun" speech. As Maximus says in "I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You": "o Gloucester-man, weave your birds and fingers new, your roof-tops" and "braid with others like you, such extricable surface as faun and oral, satyr lesbos vase" (M, 3-4). His method, however difficult at first to surmise, is of one piece with his phenomenology of language and epistemology. In addition, it recalls Fischer's idea about the recursive looping of the brain in creating meaningful signals and the idea that understanding a text means "to weave it into your own mode of existence."

The "fabric" or design of the poems in volume one is made up of recurrent strands, that is, topics related to Gloucester that, in turn, take on an archetypal significance. These include: references to the poetic act as forming, weaving, braiding and to stances of "care" and "attention"; references to the activities of fishing, exploring, discovering, voyaging that parallel Gloucester's birth, growth, and decline, in addition to serving as metaphors for the projective act; examples of language as either corrupted by greed or disclosing the "actual"; references to historical figures who may be explorers/settlers or exploiters of Gloucester's resources (e.g., John Smith, John White, Roger Conant, Christopher Levett *versus* Miles Standish, the Puritans, John Hawkins, Shea); fishermen, weavers, and explorers who become archetypal figures representing authentic ("cultured" or "centered") man; references to Olson's personal biography and dreams, as well as his acquaintances described in mythological terms (e.g., as Niké,

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Athena, Adam, Charybdis); and images from Gloucester's flora and fauna from the earth, sea, and air (flowers, fish, birds). Olson's goal in these poems is to restore the fabric of the "familiar" by focusing on the local, the city Gloucester, viewed over time from its settlement to today, through the personal, epistolary form. These letter-poems, then, express the shared values and knowledge of "others like you" (M, 4), and, by doing so, heroically attempt the founding of a "polis" (the poem) of kindred spirits.

The verbal and linear design of the poem often imitates the process of weaving that takes place on a structural level in the poem as a whole. Olson uses verbal repetition or backlooping to enact the activity of woven speech and thought, and (to be discussed below) to enact the dynamics of oral speech (*muthologos*). Here is an example of woven speech from "I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You":

one loves only form,  
 and form only comes  
 into existence when  
 the thing is born  
     born of yourself, born  
     of hay and cotton struts,  
     of street-pickings, wharves, weeds  
     you carry in, my bird  
         of a bone of a fish  
         of a straw, or will  
         of a color, of a bell  
         of yourself, torn (M, 3)

The examples of verbal repetition reflect simple redundancy, but also, parataxis and parallelism, all of which are characteristics of oral speech. The visual pattern of this passage emphasizes the clustering of units of thought without the constraints of logical or grammatical connectives. This visual patterning acts as a form of parataxis that stresses the additive rather than the analytical on the formal level of the poem, as does the anaphora with the preposition "of" on the syntactic level. The design of volume two, also recursive and interwoven, changes to a generally sparser paratactic style, one that Olson describes as "a complex of occasions" and "tesserae / commissure" (pieces that fit as in a mosaic opposed to rubble).

In volume two of *The Maximus Poems*, in "A Later Note on Letter #15," Olson as Maximus articulates his poetics of orality and its relationship to the new epistemology of Herodotus and Whitehead (as

opposed to Descartes and Thucydides). The entire poem follows:

In English the poetics became meubles-furniture-thereafter  
(after 1630)

& Descartes was the value

until Whitehead, who cleared out the gunk  
by getting the universe in (as against man alone

& *that* concept of history (not Herodotus's,  
which was the verb, to find out for yourself;  
'istorin, which makes any one's acts a finding out for him or her  
self, in other words restores the traum: that we act somewhere

at least by seizure, that the objective (example Thucydides, or  
the latest finest tape-recorder, or any form of record on the spot

live television or whatis a lie

as against what we know went on, the dream: the dream being  
self-action with Whitehead's important corollary: that no event

is not penetrated, in intersection or collision with, an eternal  
event

The poetics of such a situation  
are yet to be found out

(January 15, 1962)

Olson's linguistic revolution signaled a return to the language and epistemology (self/nature, communal nature of experience and knowledge) of primary oral cultures (pre-Socratics, Mayan, Hittite, Sumerian, Chinese, African) what scholars in the eighteenth century called "primordial speech" or the *Ursprache* as opposed to language "closed (from Being) by literacy." Walter Ong discusses mnemonic patterns and stylistic traits that characterize oral speech, patterns which pervade the *Maximus Poems*. Some of these characteristics include: heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns; alliterations and assonances; epithetic and other formulaic expressions; parataxis in clusters of parallel or antithetical constructions; redundancy or repetitions; homeostatic or concrete definitions; the situational rather than the abstract; and participatory and communal identification with the known, rather than "objectively distanced" knower from the known in writing (Ong, 34-57). In addition, Ong mentions studies that show the connection between "rhythmic oral patterns, the breathing process, gesture, and the bilateral symmetry of the human

body in ancient targums" (Ong, 34), aspects of oral speech that recall Olson's poetics of breath, rhythm, and motion (dance), discussed earlier.

In volume one, "Letter 1" is self-reflexively about the poetic act of forming, that is, the process of understanding gained through the act of composing the poem, an activity that in its immediacy Olson aligns with speech act over the written word. It declares itself a speech act over against the written word in the first line: "I say, to you, I Maximus, say/ under the hand." Here is an excerpt from "Letter 1":

The nest, I say, to you, I Maximus, say  
under the hand, as I see it, over the waters  
from this place where I am, where I hear  
can still hear

from where I carry you a feather  
as though, sharp, I picked up,  
in the afternoon delivered you  
a jewel,  
it flashing more than a wing,  
than any old romantic thing,  
than memory, than place,  
than anything other than that which you carry

than that which is,  
call it a nest, around the head of, call it  
the next second

than that which you  
can do! (M, 4)

The poem demonstrates the poetics or orality in several ways. Characteristics of all the *Maximus Poems*, first, this epistolary poem shows a noun-heaviness which carries with it the insistence on the identity of the word and the thing: "There may be no more names than there are objects / There can be no more verbs than there are actions" (M, 36). Byrd has called Maximus "the noun-magician" and "'the man in the word,' the flesh made Logos" (Byrd, 55). There is a non-discursiveness in the naming process and the use of concrete nouns that attempts to recover language from abstraction.

Related to the naming process, the poem can be read as an extended, homeostatic definition of the poem as nest, a definition that applies to all the *Maximus Poems*. "Letter 1" defines itself self-



reflexively *in situ*, that is, in the context of being written ("that which you can do!") and in terms of what it says about itself. Olson seems to conceive of the poem as nest both as noun ("that which is" and "The nest . . ." (more) "than anything other than that which you carry") and, paradoxically, as verb ("it flashing more than a wing," (more) "than that which is," "call it / the next second / (more) "than that which you / can do!"). In addition to the idea of poem as nest (object and action), Olson defines it by opposing it to that which it is "more than" ("wing," "romantic thing," "memory," and "place"):

it flashing more than a wing  
 than any old romantic thing,  
 than memory, than place,  
 than anything other than that which you carry

than that which is,  
 call it a nest (M, 4)

Conversely, the poem is made up of a cluster of "stray particulars" collected through paratactical juxtapositions, grammatical incrementation, and anaphorain short, *bricolage*. Von Hallberg expresses this idea well: "Maximus' language gathers its particularity linguistic bit by bit, like a bird collecting for a nest" (von Hallberg, 36). Like the pre-Socratic form of oral discourse, *doxa*, the poem captures the immediacy of concrete experience through the speech act.

Secondly, verbs and verb tenses function in a way that prevents the abstraction of time or the past. Tenseless verbs "prevent the past from remaining abstract, where it is separated from the act of creation by the temporal gulf in a verb tense" (Byrd, 32). Notice, for example, the accretion of verbs relating to the sensory in the first cluster: "I say," "I see," "where I am," and "where I hear." Later in the poem, Olson emphasizes active, transitive verbs which underscore the importance of taking action: "I carry you a feather," "I picked up . . . a jewel," and "that which you can do!" As Byrd tell us, "Verbs occur as manifestations not of abstract time but of the contemporary interaction of noun-objects, so historical material is free for present use, free from the rigid chronologies of absolute pastness" (Byrd, 33). Real time, on the other hand, is conveyed through rhythm ("rhythim") and breath, through one's immediate sensory experiences.

To cite one more example, "Letter 5" illustrates another important aspect of the poetics of orality, participation in the communal. This epistolary poem is about situating the historical "fact" of Glouce-

ster as *polis*, that is, re-discovering its authentic existence that is lost in the present. The poem evinces the poetics of orality in a number of ways, that is, in: its use of alliteration, balanced patterns (anaphora) with repetition ("as fine as / as fine as fins are / as firm as / as firm as a mackerel is"), and parenthetical inserts to suggest afterthoughts ["as firm as a mackerel is / (fresh out of water)"]. Most striking in this poem, however, are the clusters of concrete objects, juxtaposed so as to suggest their unspoken, but understood participation in a communal whole (see *pars pro toto* in chapter three). These parts participate in the idea of Gloucester as *polis* (past and present): "Gloucester," "fins," "mackerel," "no owner," and "as I am." Here is an excerpt from "Letter 5":

It is enough Gloucester,  
to say where it is,  
had you also the will to be as fine as

as fine as fins are

as firm as

as firm as a mackerel is  
(fresh out of water)

as sure

as sure as no owner is  
(or he'd be to sea)

as vulnerable

(as vulnerable as I am  
brought home to Main St  
in such negligible company)  
(M, 20)

Just as the idea of *polis* involves the process of participation "gathering thought bit by bit" and the communal identification with the known: "had you also the will to be as fine as fins are, . . . as firm as mackerel is, . . . as sure as no owner is, . . . as vulnerable as I am . . ."), so does Olson try to involve himself ("as I am") and the reader as participant in the poem as *polis*. In truly ritualistic fashion, the reader is asked to participate in the process of recreating the lost sense of *polis* or a community of known values. And like most ritualistic acts of initiation, only a handful of stalwart souls elect to endure the test. Thus, has it been with Olson's readers, participants on a pilgrim's progress toward mythic wholeness.

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## EPILOGUE

## THE MYTHIC MODE: THE PRIMORDIAL RECREATIVE ACT

"If we bring ourselves together, they said, we can build a city and tower, its top touching the sky to arrive at fame. Without a name we're unbound, scattered over the face of the earth."

(David Rosenberg, tr., *The Book of J*)

With this quote from *The Book of J*, which is David Rosenberg's translation of the J-text, the oldest written text of the *Pentateuch*, we conclude by returning again to origins, to the *Genesis* account of the "Tower of Babel." It may be fruitful to think about the Babel story as it appears within the isolated context of the J-text, a version that is quite different in its message from that story included in the later redacted versions. We close with the Babel J-text, because it eloquently articulates in mythological narrative form ideological tensions that would reappear in eighteenth century Enlightenment culture. Like the Babel story (and very likely with it in mind), eighteenth century scholars searched for and hoped to restore the original unity of language and consciousness (*Ursprache*) by returning to what they believed to be the origins (Homer and the Bible).

According to *The Book of J*, human beings were originally "bound" together culturally and linguistically in a way that reflects what we now know about preliterate tribal societies: "all the earth uses one tongue, one and the same words"; "We can bring ourselves together," they said, "we can build a city and tower." As the result of this people's desire to transcend human limits, as they perceived them ("they conceive this (tower) between them, and it leads up until no boundary exists to what they will touch"), Yahweh (not a transcendent deity as much as "the monistic life force") decided that they must be "scattered . . . over the whole face of the earth; the city there came unbound"). 1

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Read from an anthropological perspective, this story could be interpreted as the mythological response to cultural and epistemological changes resulting from increased literacy, which is believed to have occurred at the time of its composition. The idea of a people "conceiving" a city and a tower by putting together the bricks they have formed (and not, as later reactors added, for the purpose of challenging the authority of the deity) suggests the urbanization of an earlier tribal society and, related to these social changes, the increase in literacy. The psycho-linguistic transformations from concrete to abstract, conceptual thought ("they conceive this tower") that are known to result from increased literacy, as well as the breakdown of the social order from tribal society ("all the earth uses one tongue") to urban center ("we bring ourselves together") could be symbolized in the Babel narrative.

It is precisely the desire for restoration and return to an imaginary "pre-Babel," integrated social and psycho-linguistic state that motivates the scholars, philosophers, and poets from the eighteenth century to the present in this study. Each from his unique vantage point viewed Western culture (literate, rationalistic) in terms reminiscent of Babel: intellectually arrogant, individually isolated, and culturally dissolute. This, it appeared, was the price that Western culture must pay for "progress," and yet a small group of radical thinkers saw that there might be a way to recoup this loss. Herder and his followers set a corrective course through the epistemological and linguistic revolution that they inaugurated, a counter-ideological revolution that would be carried forward into the twentieth century by the poets and thinkers in this study.

Since the invention of the printing press, literacy had been growing and, as a direct result, abstract and analytical modes of thought. By the eighteenth century, Enlightenment culture had produced symbol-systems that expressed the dominant ideologies of rational-empiricism and Neo-Platonism. These philosophies or ideologies functioned, in many instances, as symbol-systems that expressed new ways of thinking in dualistic, hierarchical, and abstract terms. A number of research studies in the past half century have demonstrated that literacy can actually transform consciousness. For example, Terence Hawkes has written, "Literacy produc(es) patterns of thought which to literates seem perfectly commonplace and 'natural' but which are possible only when the mind has devised and internalized, made its own, the technology of writing." By contrast, thought and expression in oral cultures "calls for organization of a sort unfamiliar to and often uncongenial to the literate mind. It is

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aggregative rather than analytic, participatory rather than distanced, situational rather than abstract." 2

Perhaps as a direct result of increased literacy, and with it analytical and abstract modes of thought, Enlightenment thought manifested a proliferation of ideas conceived in terms of dualities and hierarchical and transcendent types of organization. These ideas reshaped concepts of the self, reality, and language, recasting them analytically in terms of the dualities of reason/mind vs. body/senses, ideas (noumena) vs. sensory data (phenomena), civilized vs. savage/primitive, ideal as opposed to real, eternal vs. temporal, self vs. other (world), and hierarchies of thought and being ("The Great Chain of Being") which relegated a higher value to the transcendent than to the earthly.

Conversely, for Herder and his followers the mythic mode represented an ideological rebuttal or counter-assertion to the claims of these Enlightenment ideologies to truth concerning the nature of the self, reality, and language. Like Gramsci mentioned earlier, Clifford Geertz's thoughts about conflicting ideologies in culture may shed light on the dynamic at work where conflicting ideologies (e.g., Rational-Empirist vs. oral-mythic) emerge in response to psychological and social tensions or "strains" within a culture.<sup>3</sup>

First, Geertz convincingly argues that humans lack the inborn genetic templates that lower animals possess, so that "cultural patterns religious, philosophical, aesthetic, scientific, ideological are 'programs,' that is, they provide a template or blueprint for the organization of social and psychological processes, much as genetic systems provide such a template for the organization of organic processes" (Geertz, 216). Since, according to Geertz, human innate response capacities are "inherently extremely plastic" (in other words, they are general, diffuse, and variable), human behavior is guided predominantly by cultural rather than genetic templates. In this way, ideologies act as "symbolic templates" (structures, patterns of meaning, etc.) needed to chart unfamiliar social, cognitive, or emotional territory.

Ideologies emerge in response to the strain of conflicting or contradictory blueprints cultural, as well as social and psychological strains. Geertz writes, "The responses to strains in a culture take the form of thought that involves the interpenetration of culture, personality, and social system" (Geertz, 214). Socio-psychological stresses in a culture, then, cause ideologies to emerge and to take shape in the public arena as symbol-systems. Furthermore, these symbol-systems, "composed from extrinsic sources of information by which

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human life can be patterned," are "extrapersonal mechanisms for the perception, understanding, judgment, and manipulation of the world" (Geertz, 216). Both rational-empiricist philosophers, and the mythic philosophical and poetic responses to them, embodied unique and culturally bound symbol-systems established in order to reshape thinking concerning the self, reality, and language.

### The Nature of the Mythic Mode

What was the nature of the mythic mode that Herder and his followers attempted to restore in response to the excesses or perhaps more accurately, the limitations of Enlightenment thought? While to many of Herder's "enlightened" contemporaries the return to the mythic must have seemed regressive, what he and his followers attempted was the creation of an alternative symbol-system that would embody counter-Enlightenment ideas about the self, the world, language, and the poet. The ideology of the mythic, then, emerged through the concepts and language associated with some of the following concerns: the *Ursprache*, the noble savage, the child as visionary, organicism, myths of creation, the poet as creative genius, the creative imagination, and "negative capability."

For Herder and his contemporaries, interest in the mythic meant the restoration of the lost primordial language and consciousness associated with Homer and the Hebraic Bible. These texts were thought to embody a lost primordial, but recuperable, integrated form of consciousness and language (poetic, metaphorical), which anthropologists today understand to characterize preliterate or oral societies. By reaching back to these origins in terms of an imaginary primordial language and consciousness, the poet would create "new mythologies" and, thereby, become an original, "creative genius" in ritual imitation of the first cosmic creation.

The mythic mode, as seen in the poetry and research presented in this study, can be characterized in psycho-linguistic terms as the breakdown of ego boundaries (psychologically as the ecstatic or undifferentiated state or culturally as the preliterate or counter-literate), thereby producing a perception of the wholeness or totality of Being and the expression of this perception through the language of metaphor and related stylistic strategies (discussed below). The mythic self perceives itself as "enlarged" and depersonalized, experiencing a heightened sense of the interconnectedness of human beings, animals, and other living things, as well as a sense of time-

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lessness or the simultaneity of events in human history. In addition, the mythic self conceives of itself as androgynous, like Aristophane's mythological proto-human who is simultaneously both male and female, thereby dissolving gender distinctions. As this study has shown, the mythic sense of self and reality may occur for a variety of reasons related to: culture (preliterate, primitives, subcultures in Western culture), psychology (children, ecstasies), or a combination.

The stylistic strategies that characterize the mythic in this study center on concrete language and figures of speech that suggest connectedness and on additive or paratactic syntax calling for reader participation. One finds the tendency for poets to use concrete diction through the accretion of image clusters, metonymy (e.g., *pars pro toto* and synecdoches), and strings of appositives that suggest identity among things. Diction is often metaphoric, and in extreme cases of ecstatic vision, employs the radical metaphors of catachresis. In addition, the language of the mythic mode may rely upon synaesthesia, animism, or personification in an effort to forge connections across conventional categories (as, for example, according to a totemic worldview).

Finally, sentence syntax may be characterized by the absence or scarcity of logical or rhetorical connectives, often relying instead on stark juxtapositions or repeated patterns, akin to modes of expression found in oral cultures. While the separate elements (words, phrases, clusters) may appear to be dissimilar, they often suggest metaphoric connections. Interestingly, the poets in this study (especially Rimbaud and Crane), also use this technique in an ironic way to suggest the dissolution of mythic consciousness. While these connections may appear hidden to normal (logical, linear) consciousness, as the close reading of the poetry has shown, they become clear when viewed from the perspective of a mythic-ecstatic state of mind. Repeated sentence patterns may appear in these poems in the form of anaphora or other balanced, rhythmic phrases that suggest natural, body rhythms in dance, song, or breathing.

Nearly two centuries after Herder re-discovered the mythic, anthropologists, developmental psychologists, and neurobiologists in the twentieth century have linked the mythic mode of thought and expression with "primitive" people (pre-Socratic, preliterate, or oral thought), children regardless of cultural background (child complex thinking, the undifferentiated state), and the naturally or artificially induced ecstatic state of mind (shamanic or metaphoric thinking). In addition to these groups, we might include women (from both Western and non-Western cultures) whose thought and expression have

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historically been associated with that of "savages" and children (for reasons discussed below).

Western culture (rational, logical, abstract, male-dominated) has historically viewed the thought and expression of these groups as inferior by using the experiences of literate males as the standard against which these other modes would be measured. (Recall how in "The Gate and the Center," Charles Olson talks about the need to "uneducate" ourselves.) This view, which has dominated Western culture throughout the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, was expressed succinctly by Gustave Le Bon, a highly-respected nineteenth century scientist, in an article published in *Revue d' Anthropologie* in 1879:

All psychologists who have studied the intelligence of women, as well as poets and novelists, recognize today that they are closer to children and savages than to an adult, civilized male. They excel in fickleness, inconstancy, absence of thought and logic, and incapacity to reason. Without doubt there exist some distinguished women, very superior to the average man, but they are as exceptional as the birth of any monstrosity, as, for example, of a gorilla with two heads. 4

It seems clear that the strong interest in the child, the primitive, and the mythic mode in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be related to the search for alternatives to the constraints and misperceptions of rational discourse. It is important to note that a common ground does appear to exist that connects the experiences of children, primitive people, and women; they share experiences either of cognitive (the child) or cultural exclusion (primitives and women) from participation in the rational discourses commonly associated with literacy.

#### Female Subculture and the Mythic Mode

It might seem odd to some people to include women, especially Western women, with preliterates (child and primitive). This idea is based upon the research of feminist critics who have looked at women's experiences, especially Western women writer's experiences, as that of a subculture within a dominant male, literate culture. It is very likely that what feminist critics have been calling "*écriture féminine*" or distinctively women's voices is less a matter of biology or

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gender, than of ideological "strains" within Western culture. 5 As Elaine Showalter has pointed out, a feminist poetics needs to align itself with anthropologists in studying "the newly visible world of female culture" and "to develop hypotheses of a female subculture." What Showalter believes we will discover is a women's literature that "reflects symbols and social resources on which to build a society of their own" and "feminine values (that) penetrate and undermine the masculine systems that contain them" (Showalter, 131). And as Estella Lauter writes: "Whether that experience (of female writers) is *purely* female is less important than the fact that it marks a boundary of the dominant culture and therefore belongs to one of the 'muted' cultures" (Lauter, 213).

Women's literature, then, may best be understood historically as women's responses or answers to questions raised by the situation of their oppression in a male-dominated culture, and the values and discourses of that culture. It should not be surprising, then, that the symbol-systems or stylistic strategies that women have employed to express their counter-ideologies (that is, beliefs based upon their own experiences as women) share a common ground with those of mythic or preliterate modes and, therefore, with the male poets in this study. Some of these similarities include: the female self as an enlarged self (Estella Lauter's "permeable boundaries," Gloria Bonder's "transitionality," Susan Griffin's "interweaving" of "the knower and the known," Hilde Hein's "interpenetrative female epistemology"), a distrust of rationalism, the identification of the I and the Other, and the convergence of past and present.<sup>6</sup>

There may be several credible, and interconnected, explanations to account for the distinctively "feminine" style and epistemology of women's literature. First, there is the possibility that women's writing may reflect a deliberate (if not always a fully conscious) undermining of traditionally Western (i.e., masculine) modes of discourse (thus, literacy). This idea would agree with Geertz's explanation of ideology and symbol-systems in terms of the "strain" theory, discussed earlier. Then, there exists the possibility that women's writing reflects the very real social and psychological differences in growing up female in Western culture (Belenky, Chodorow, Gilligan, Griffin, Lauter).<sup>7</sup> And finally, historically there are the vast differences in cultural experiences for men and women such as, educational opportunities and curricula, job opportunities, marriage and domestic responsibilities, images of and expectations for women, etc). Any one, or a combination, of these explanations might account for the specific differences and stylistic strategies that we find in women's literature.

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While it does not fall within the compass of this study, a cultural-ideological approach to women's literature (briefly sketched out above) would definitely be a worthwhile focus for future feminist research. However, my intention here has only been to point out similarities between the stylistic strategies found in women's literature and in mythic-oral texts and to explore briefly possible explanations related to the issues raised in this study. In summary, both literary strategies may be understood in terms of their counter-ideological responses to the dominant ideologies in modern Western culture (rational-empiricism and Neo-Platonism) and in terms of their searches for alternative forms of discourse, stylistic strategies, and epistemologies.

#### Mythic Consciousness and the Competent Reader

The poor reception that the poets in this study received in the past from members of leading critical schools (New Humanists, New Critics, Symbolists, et al.) puts into perspective critical biases that persist to this day against non-Western and women writers; biases perhaps based upon the under-valuation of oral, preliterate, or mythic modes of thought and expression. Therefore, it is important in the context of reading the poets in this study or the literature from preliterate (oral) traditions and from female subcultures, to remember Elaine Showalter's insight (which has been corroborated by feminist research in other fields): "Too many literary abstractions which claim to be universal have in fact described only male perceptions, experiences, and options, and have falsified the social and personal contexts in which literature is produced and consumed" (Showalter, 127).

To be a competent reader, according to feminist critic Annette Kolodny, one must share, minimally, "the code language," as well as "the codes of custom, of society, and of conceptions of the world" 8 Kolodny continues that "males ignorant of women's 'values' or conceptions of the world will, necessarily be poor readers of works that in any sense recapitulate their codes" (Kolodny, 156). For the purposes of this study, it is important to add that not only "males ignorant of women's 'values' or conceptions of the world," but anyone, of any gender, race, culture, creed, or historical period, who is ignorant of a writer's values and conceptions of the world, will be doomed to be poor readers. As discussed in the introduction and throughout the chapters on the poets in part two, readersmale and female

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alike have often proven to be poor readers of the mythic-oral texts in this study. It is important to recall, in this context, that one of the primary implicit values held by the poets in this study was to restore the lost mythic sense of oneness, which is enacted poetically, through its re-enactment in the present by the reader as participant.

### Ideology and Science Signs of Convergence

Geertz stresses the differences in how science and ideology work as cultural systems in terms of the sorts of symbolic strategies each uses to encompass situations that they represent. According to Geertz, there is a natural tendency for the two to clash, particularly when they are directed to the interpretation of the same range of situations, but (he continues) the clash is not inevitable and the findings of (social) science will not necessarily undermine the validity of the beliefs and values that ideology has chosen to defend and propagate. As part one discusses, research in the sciences (physics, abnormal and developmental psychology, neurobiology, and anthropology), as well as in philosophy and philosophical anthropology (Herder, Heidegger, Cassirer, Langer, Ricoeur, Cahoon, et al.), corroborated with one another on the issue of "mythic thinking." Furthermore, these more empirical or logical approaches appear to corroborate the more symbolic and ideological approaches of the poets in this study.

The combined authority of the sciences and ideology (philosophy and poetry) on the subject of mythic thought and expression may only succeed in challenging rational-empiricism's claims to truth. Mythic thought has been and may continue to be viewed negatively by those entrenched in the dominant ideology of Western culture as a nostalgic longing to restore (from childhood or from our ancestral past) a lost experience of connectedness, regrettable but necessary in our "progress" toward "adult," "mature" thinking. However, it may, also, be viewed positively as the long awaited antidote to the excesses and misconceptions wrought by the epistemological authority claimed by Rational-Empiricism.

In closing, I would like to emphasize the word, "antidote" here, as opposed to "replacement." In the past half century, research on human creativity has argued with convincing evidence that what we call holistic (right brain, mythic, metaphoric) thinking is, in fact, an integral part of the complex process of creative thinking found in all areas of thought (Arieti, Berthoff, Bronowski, Sagan, Winnicott, et

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al.). While creative thought, discovering new connections or ways of looking at problems or situations, clearly depends upon rational and empirical thought, it appears that even more fundamentally it thrives upon the insights provided by sudden flashes of *metaphoric* thinking. Most prevalent in children's thinking, the ecstatic state, and preliterate cultures, mythic-metaphoric thinking survives as a rich resource in all adult creative thinking. Mythic thinking, then, is the enduring resource of all humankind (male and female) and a necessary pre-condition of all meaning-making acts of mind.

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## NOTES

## Introduction

1. Herder's "revolution" did, indeed, represent a paradigm shift (Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962) from rational-empiricism, but it also harkened back to a pre-Kantian (Renaissance, Spinoza, and Leibniz) integrated worldview. See Herder critics.
2. Jim M. Jordan, *Paul Klee and Cubism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, 190; also, see Douglas Kellner in chapter one.
3. Werner Haftmann, *The Mind and Work of Paul Klee*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967, 122. Haftmann refers to Heidegger in this discussion, where in Klee's drawing the "division between Individual and Reality [this 'destiny-neurosis of the West' (Gottfried Benn)] is nonexistent," 122. Also, see Klee's "Wege des Naturstudiums," in *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar, 1919-1923*, Bauhaus-Verlag, Weimar-Munich, 1923, or *Notebooks*, Vol. 1, *The Thinking Eye*, Jurg Spiller, Lund Humphries, London, and Georg Wittenborn, New York, 1961.
4. Haftmann, 123. Jung's theory of psychic unity as Self in "Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self" (1951) in *Collected Works*, vol. 9.ii, pars. 1-42; translated from the first part of *Aion: Untersuchungen zur Symbolgeschichte Psychologische Abhandlungen*, VIII; Zurich, Rascher Verlag, 1951.
5. Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, New York: The Free Press, 1938, 43, 164. "Nature Lifeless" and "Nature Alive" comprise Part III, which is entitled "Nature and Life."
6. Roland Fischer, "Emergence of Mind from Brain: The biological roots of the hermeneutic circle," *Diogenes*, no. 138, Summer 1987, 1-25.
7. See *The Preminger Encyclopedia*, under "Romanticism" where Herder is discussed as follows: "Herder's irrationalist search for a common bond of humanity, his organic concept of history and the universe, (had) far-reaching consequences for all branches of criticism," p. 718.

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8. Wulf Koepke, *Johann Gottfried Herder*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, p. 95. The indirect influence of Herder's ideas, especially his expressivist theories and revival of folk literature and interest in comparative mythology on the Romantics is well-documented, although it is acknowledged that he was hardly read during the nineteenth century.
9. See Koepka, especially 93-98, and F. McEachran, *The Life and Philosophy of Johann Gottfried Herder*, Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1993, 61-62.
10. See James H. Stam, *Inquiries into the Origin of Language: The Fate of a Question*, New York: Harper and Row, 1976, on Rousseau's *versus* Herder's view of the primitive, 89-93.
11. Stam, 61. Also, see Stam's discussion of the differences between the Ancients of the earlier part of the 18th century and the primitivists who were in reality an extension of the ancients side of the Ancients vs. Moderns quarrel. While the Ancients could agree on poetical and philosophical standards, the primitivists were more interested in "energies" or creative powers, and their renewal. This search for "reawakening meant that the primitivists tended to have one eye toward the past and one toward the future," 62.
12. I. A. Richards, following Coleridge, sees the "esemplastic" imagination as the agent of understanding. Richards has influenced the thinking of learning and composition theory of Ann E. Berthoff, *Forming / Thinking / Writing: The Making of Meaning; The Composing Imagination*.
13. For more on the New Humanism see Irving Babbitt, *Literature and the American College* (1908), and Norman Foerster, ed., *Humanism and America* (1930).
14. The battle of Verdun has been viewed as testimony to the "natural" consequences of 19th century Neo-Hegelian visions of the "progress of reason." The anachronistic battlefield strategies, premised upon linear formations against automatic machine guns, also show the limits of reason to reconsider both the methods and the purpose of such a war. The spectre of this "rationalization of method" over the predictably high loss of human life reappears in arguments over whether or not to use the hydrogen bomb on Japan in WW II. (These are some reflections following a chat with Professor John Murphy at University of Colorado at Boulder.)
15. Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), 300.
16. Babbitt situates the Rousseauist outlook in the intellectual tradition harkening back to "Chinese primitivism" (the Taoist movement) and ahead to Bergson's philosophy in the twentieth century. While he may be correct in seeing Bergson in the Rousseauist philosophical tradition, he seems to misrepresent Taoism which seeks a balance of subjective and objective. See Charles Olson's taoist epistemological affinities in chapter eight.

17. Yvor Winters, *Primitivism and Decadence: A Study of American Experimental Poetry*, New York: Arrow Editions, 1937, also included in *In Defense of Reason*, New York: The Swallow Press and William Morrow and Co., 1947, along with "The Significance of *The Bridge* by Hart Crane or What Are We to Think of Professor X?"
18. See Stam's discussion of Auguste Comte, 201-202.
19. Silvano Arieti, *Creativity: The Magic Synthesis*, New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1976, maintains that these primordial processes do not derive from the Jungian collective unconscious and have little to do with *content*, rather they deal with *processes* and *forms*, 66. Also, see R. Fischer on schizophrenia and ecstatic states of mind and F. Sharp on Trakl's schizophrenic symptoms in chapters three and five.
20. While Arieti mentions the rarity of paleological thinking in normal adults, he fails to acknowledge its high incidence in young children during the early years of speech development or in "primitive" (preliterate, non-Westernized) peoples living today.
21. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 15-16.
22. Lévi-Strauss acknowledges the applicability of the ideas of *bricolage* and mythic thinking to surrealist art, 21. Discussed further in chapter one.
23. Lévi-Strauss maintains that the elements of mythical thought are like the sign (Saussure) that functions as a link between images and concepts. "Signs," he writes, "resemble images in being concrete entities but they resemble concepts in their powers of reference" (Lévi-Strauss, 18, 22).
24. Lillian Feder, *Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). Also, of interest is *Totem and Taboo*, "The Return of Totemism in Childhood," where Freud characteristically focuses on animal phobias in selected cases, while only mentioning the possible positive aspects of totemism in childhood in a fleeting comment.

#### Chapter One

1. Douglas Kellner, "Ideology, Marxism, and Advanced Capitalism," *Socialist Review* (42), 1978, 51-52; Kellner cites Karl Korsch's definition of ideology from *Marxism and Philosophy* (1923) as: "a social-material reality that is a constituent of everyday consciousness" (Kellner, 49).
2. In canonical Romantic poems, the poets reveal a skepticism, wavering, or ironic outlook through the natural tension of desire with reality, as, for example, in Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" and Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale." See especially Hans-Georg Gadamer's general discussion in part one, "the subjectivization of aesthetics in the Kantian cri-



tique," *Truth and Method*, and, for a specific application, Ann Mellors' discussion of Keats' poetry in *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). In addition, M. H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism* cites examples of this ironic outlook in the works of Hölderlin, Blake, and Coleridge.

3. Lawrence E. Cahoone, *The Dilemmas of Modernity: Philosophy, Culture, and Anti-culture*, op. cit. Hereafter cited in the text as (Cahoone, page).
4. Herder's ideas filtered into England and France mainly through an indirect network of influences carried by Frederick Schlegel or F. W. J. Schelling. This process has been discussed either generally, in histories of the Romantic Period, or specifically in works on German Idealist thinkers. See especially René Wellek's *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, vol. 2: The Romantic Age, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, on Herder, Frederick Schlegel, and F. W. J. Schelling.
5. The major poets who might be included in such a study would include: Hölderlin, Novalis, Coleridge, Carlyle, Nerval, and Victor Hugo. Edward Ahearn's comparative approach to Rimbaud, discussed in chapter four, includes references to a number of these poets.
6. Ironically, Locke still believed the "faculties of the soul" to be "innate qualities" and he "did not suspect that they could have their origin in sensation itself" (from Condillac, *Extrait raisonné du Traite des Sensations*, ed. Georges Lyon, Paris, 1921, 33).
7. The emphasis on the creative imagination was an important step toward the democratization of the epistemology of knowing. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Ann E. Berthoff, *Thinking / Forming / Writing*, and the empowering of knowing through all facets of experience, including the senses, passions, and intellect. However, since for the Romantics this power resided in the privileged poet-genius, full democratization of meaning-making as a fundamental human faculty remained for philosophers and psychologists of the twentieth century to recognize.
8. James H. Stare, *Inquiries into the Origin of Language: The Fate of a Question* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 75-76.
9. F. McEachran, *The Life and Philosophy of Johann Gottfried Herder* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 61-62.
10. Descartes in a letter to Mersenne of Nov. 20, 1629 in *Correspondance*, ed. Adam-Tannery, I, 80 if, cited in Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 1, p. 128. Cassirer remarks: "Since only the One identical, fundamental form of knowledge, the form of human reason, recurs in all branches of knowledge really deserving the name, all speech must be based upon the one, universal, rational form of language, which, though cloaked by the abundance and diversity of verbal forms, cannot be hidden entirely. For

just as there is a very definite order among the ideas of mathematics, e.g., among numbers, so the whole of human consciousness, with all the contents that can ever enter into it, constitutes a strictly ordered totality," 128.

11. Leibniz, *Philos. Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, 4, 563; also, cited in Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 1, 131. For possible Chinese influence on Leibniz's monadology, see fn. 21 in chapter seven.
12. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 3, chapter 9, section 21, a work that Cassirer calls "the fundamental systematic thesis upon which all empiricist discussion of the problem of language is directly or indirectly based" (Cassirer, vol. 1, 133).
13. As Cassirer points out, a major shift in signification took place in the term "idea" from Leibniz to Locke, a shift that had a major impact on Herder's concept of the "reflectiveness" of mind and experience: "On the one side, the idea is understood in its objective-logical (transcendent) sense, on the other side, in its subjective-psychological sense; on the one side, stands its original Platonic concept, on the other, its modern empiricist and sensationalist concept" (Cassirer, vol. 1, 135).
14. Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, in *Sammtliche Werke*, vol. V, 24.
15. Herder, *Abhandlung*, 26.
16. Herder's use of the terms "genetic proof" and "the necessary genetic basis for the development of language" may have come from Leibniz's monadology or the term "genetisch" from the writings of H. S. Reimarus. See H. B. Nisbet, *Herder and Scientific Thought*, (Cambridge: The Modern Humanities Research Assoc., 1970, 66). It anticipates Gregor Mendel's (1822-1884) discovery of genetic science in the nineteenth century, as well as Allan Wilson's (biochemist) and Luigi Cavalli-Sforza's (geneticist) 1980s theories that a genetic mutation in a woman in Africa ("Eve") around 200,000 years age resulted in the human capacity for speech.
17. See samples of Herder's concept of "primitive language" in his fanciful *The Oldest Document of the Human Race* (1774) which Stare describes as "amassed nouns, attempting to recreate the mood of pregrammatical language. Shifting between poetry and prose, and changing topics rapidly, Herder gave the distinct impression that rationality was not a necessary prerequisite for the invention of speech" (which was a different stand from that in "Essay on the Origins of Language"). Also, see Edgar Schick's discussion of "Herder's Interest in the Metaphoric and Concrete-Sensuous Character of Primitive Language" in *Metaphorical Organicism in Herder's Early Works*, Paris: Mouton, 1970.
18. Stare, 73. It was conjectured that Homer composed at a time when language was free of the (Socratic, and later Derridian) ambiguities introduced later by the everyday discourse of the streets and trades and the

logical discourse of philosophy. See Plato's *Cratylus*, which is also discussed in Gadamer, 366-378. This evolutionary or developmental view of human thought from the mythic to the logical and discursive reappears in Cassirer and Vygotsky, while Lévi-Strauss and Arieti argue to the contrary. A plausible explanation for the dominance of the logical over the mythic mode of thought in Western culture in terms of cultural and/or educational preferences has been discussed in the research of Joseph Bogen, Robert Ornstein, G. Prince, Carl Sagan, and others cited in Sally Springer's and G. Deutsch's *Left Brain / Right Brain* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1981). The impact of literacy on thought and expression seems to be a most fruitful line of investigation; see Ong, Goody, Havelock, et al., in chapter seven.

19. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958), 79-82.
20. The Romantic theory of the imagination reconciled problems of language and understanding under the aegis of mythic-metaphoric thinking. See especially the works of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley on poetic language. During the Enlightenment, Hobbes's view of imagination as "decaying sense" was softened by the psychologists of association, Hartley and Hume, for whom imagination was an active mental faculty which combines images from associated ideas: "Thus the concept of imagination changed from image retention (and gradual loss of accurate retention) to image composition (albeit, by merely combining rather than truly synthesizing)" (Stam, 76).
21. F. M. Barnard, *Herder's Social and Political Thought: From Enlightenment to Nationalism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965, on Herder's theory of the organic unity of mind, 33 and 42.
22. Herder, *Sammtliche Werke*, XV, ed. B. Suphan, Berlin, 1877-1913, 528; see Barnard, 34.
23. Herder, *Sammtliche Werke*, XXI, p. 87; see Barnard, 35.
24. Barnard, 36; growth takes place from within, as in the organic nature of understanding in Hart Crane's logic of metaphor. See connections to Irwin's essay on "logic of metaphor" cited in chapter six on Crane.
25. Robert Clark Jr., "Herder's Conception of 'Kraft'," in *PMLA*, 57, 1942, discusses the derivation from the medieval concept of *vis* and *potestas*.
26. Herder, *Sammtliche Werke*, XXI, 228; see Barnard, 38.
27. See Barnard on differences between Spinoza and Herder: "If Substance is the same as God, as Spinoza maintained, change is equally inconceivable. For there cannot be change other than movement from one state towards another. If, therefore, we mean by God that which is wholly perfect, we would, by postulating a changing Substance, either have to admit that God is other than Substance or that He is not wholly perfect. This impasse is not resolved in Herder's 'ambivalent theological thinking'" (Barnard, 45).

28. Herder, *Werke*, XVI, 458, 549, and XIII, 273-6; see Barnard, 38.
29. Herder, *Werke*, XXI, 19, 83 and IV, 28; see Barnard, 40.
30. Herder, *Werke*, V, 29; see Barnard, 41.
31. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. II, ch. 1, sect. 4, 10, 24; see Barnard, 42.
32. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 1: Language, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 154.
33. Wulf Koepke, *Johann Gottfried Herder* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 28 and 31. And, Cassirer writes: "language is never merely made Herder uses the term invention but grows in a necessary process from within. It is a factor in the synthetic structure of consciousness itself, through which the world of sensation becomes a world of intuition. . . ." (Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 153).
34. This "Self" has been conceived as divine Other (Campbell, *Hero With A Thousand Faces*), as Primordial Self (Cassirer, *Language and Myth*), or as a "depersonalized" and enlarged Self (Jung, "Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self" (1951) in *Complete Works* and R. Fischer in "A Cartography of the Ecstatic and Meditative States" in *Science*, vol. 174, no. 4012, 1971).
35. Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, tr., Susanne K. Langer (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1946), 46 (my emphasis).
36. Don Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), 181. Ihde makes this point in the context of discussing Ricoeur's model of language.
37. In earliest Egyptian theology, Cassirer tells us, the primary force of "the heart and the tongue" is attributed to the creation-god Ptah and in Egypt, the time before creation is called the time when no god existed and no name for any object was known" (Cassirer, 46, 82). Campbell, op. cit., 278, from *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad*, 1.4, 1-5). The symbolic representation of understanding as the simultaneous emergence or construction of selfhood (through understanding) and language suggested by these and other creation myths reemerges as a ruling metaphor in the philosophical anthropology of Cassirer. See Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, 78-90. Cassirer has, in turn, had a profound influence recently on the composition theory and pedagogy of Ann Berthoff through the work of Suzanne Langer.

To elaborate briefly on this point, *The Composing Imagination*, *The Making of Meaning*, *Reclaiming the Imagination* are titles that reflect this "Romantic-mythic" orientation from Coleridge and I. A. Richards. In discussing the composing imagination, Ann Berthoff in "Learning the Uses of Chaos" unknowingly harkens back to Hume's and Herder's views of cognition in terms of formative powers of mind. "It is the discursive, generalizing,

forming power of language that makes meanings out of chaos," and "Our students, because they are language animals, because they have the power of naming, can generate chaos; they can find ways out of chaos because language creates them. Language itself is the great heuristic" (*The Making of Meaning*, 70), and, "In composing we make meanings. We find the forms of thought by means of language, and we find the forms of language by taking thought" (*The Making of Meaning*, 69). So that, out of the "chaos" of preconsciousness, the symbolizing mind shapes its own meaning of the world, that meaning itself being the world, as Gadamer would say. This process of "reading" the world described in theories of learning, as well as in myths of creation, shows how innate the process is by which all of us as "learners" become engaged in making meanings. Also, see Ihde on Ricoeur's model of language as "essentially mediation," 168-172.

38. Alan Dundes, "The Flood as Male Myth of Creation," in *The Flood Myth*, ed. Alan Dundes (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988), 167-182.

39. See Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism* on Romantic narrative forms, and Douglas Bush in *Mythology and Romantic Poetry* on mythological themes in Romantic and Victorian poetry; they adopt, for the most part, thematic (Bush) or archetypal approaches, focusing on narrative patterns (Abrams), rather than taking an epistemological orientation.

40. W. Taylor Stevenson in *Myth and the Crisis of Historical Consciousness*, 5-6.

41. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. C. Emerson and M. Helquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 279.

42. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1982), 42-43; trans. from *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960). Gadamer astutely points out how the etymology of the German word *Bildung* (culture, education) discloses the common ground in the concepts of culture, education, and the artist's desire to form something new. Both Gadamer and Frye (in *Anatomy of Criticism*) have elucidated how the concepts, culture and education, are related both etymologically and conceptually in the eighteenth century to the desire to form (*Formtrieb*), i.e., to create or to conceive which lies at the heart of the Idealist/Hegelian idea of progress toward the Ideal or regaining the Center (*Logos*) in art and civilization; see *Truth and Method*, 12). "Progress toward the Ideal" or Center as *Logos* suggest a radically different teleology than that of the "mythic," as I have been defining it in this chapter and book.

43. Northrop Frye, *Creation and Recreation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 54.

44. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), tr. from *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962); Lévi-Strauss cites Franz

Boas' *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, vol. 6, 1898, 18). Lévi-Strauss goes on to make the point that "rites and myths, like *bricolage*, take to pieces and reconstruct sets of events (on a psychical, socio-historical or technical plane) and use them as so many indestructible pieces for structural patterns in which they serve alternatively as ends or means" (pp. 32-33). The important difference between games and rituals is that: "games are disjunctive and end in establishing difference where originally there was no indication of inequality." Conversely, ritual conjoins, "for it brings about a union (one might say a communion in this context) or in any case an organic relation between two initially separate groups, one ideally merging with the person of the officiant and the other with the collectivity of the faithful" (p. 32).

45. See Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Romanticism and Anti-Self-Consciousness" in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1970, on Romantic and Victorian views of "thought as a disease," 47, fn. 2.

46. See Springer/Deutsch, op. cit., especially A. Koestler, *The Act of Creation*; C. Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden*; M. S. Gazzaniga and J. E. LeDoux, *The Integrated Mind*, among others who have written on the complementarity of these two modes of thought, especially during creativity.

## Chapter Two

1. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1982, tr. from *Wahrheit und Methode* (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1960), 71). Even though the term "symbol" emerged as the dominant mode in the late eighteenth century, leading thinkers still either used the term "allegory," e.g., F. Schlegel: "all beauty is allegory" or "symbol" in the same sense as "allegory" (e.g., Hegel, Creuzer); see Gadamer, 71.

2. Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, tr. Catherine Porter from *Théorie du symbole* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982); on p. 206 is a very good discussion of the differences between allegory and symbol, and on p. 204 Todorov describes "symbolic density" as opposed to "discursive expansiveness," which is analogous to Cassirer's distinction between "condensation" and "expansion" in the discourses of myth or metaphor and logical, discursive thinking, and Frye's "centripetal" and "centrifugal." Allegory is based on the separation of the image (nature) and the mind (meaning maker), whereas the mythic-symbolic is based on the interaction or relationship between subject and object in the meaning making process.

3. Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) and *Attitudes Toward History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

4. Burton Hatlen, "Old Wine and New Bottles: A Dialectical Encounter Between the Old Rhetoric and the New" in *Only Connect*, ed. Thomas Newkirk (Upper Montclair, New Jersey: Boynton/Cook, 1986), 78.
5. Burton Feldman and Robert Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology (1680-1860)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), Douglas Bush, *Mythology in the Romantic Tradition*; Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* and *Natural Supernaturalism*; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*; and Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*.
6. Ann Mellors, *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); my emphasis.
7. M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 179.
8. See Gadamer on the ironic gap (Greek: *apechie*) as an inevitable result of sign-referent disparity (as opposed to image-referent identity).
9. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, tr. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951) on the Enlightenment as religious program.
10. Burton Feldman and Robert Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology (1680-1860)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 307; hereafter cites as (F and R, page).
11. See Hartmann on "anti-self-consciousness" and the idea of the Fall in an epistemological sense.
12. See D. Bush, op. cit., 53, 55, and 60.
13. See Hartmann on *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and Ahearns on "Kubla Kahn," for example.
14. See Gadamer, op. cit., on *eikon* and *symbolon*. Schelling's concept of the symbol goes back to the Greek symbolon not the use of signs but the union of two things that belong to each other. And all symbolism "rests on that 'original connection' between gods and men" (Creuzer in *Truth and Method*, 70).
15. As Todorov has explained, Schelling's theory of the symbol emerged from the dialogical combination of Kant's schematic/symbolic opposition and Goethe's allegorical/symbolic one, whereby he attains a three-term series.
16. Friedrich Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke* (Stuttgart and Augsburg), vol. V, 407.
17. Schelling, op. cit., vol. V, 452-453 and 554-555). Still Schelling does not go as far as Moritz on this point, for while Schelling, at least, recognized that the symbol does signify, Moritz believed the symbol existed *instead of* signifying, thereby making it more like the image (*eikon*) which leaves no residue in sensible perception. See Todorov, op. cit., 209.

18. Schelling, op. cit., vol V, 409.

19. Schelling, op. cit., vol. V, 411.

20. René Wellek, "Romanticism Reexamined," in *Romanticism Reconsidered*, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 129-130.

21. Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, tr. Suzanne Langer (New York: Dover Publishers, 1946), 32-33. Cassirer's quote from Jean Paul is worth repeating here: "It seems to me that, as animals drift through the outer world as though it were a dark undulating sea, so man, too, would be lost in the starry vastness of external perceptions, could he not divide that vague brightness into constellations by the agency of language" (LM, 81). The idea of forming constellations is interesting in the light of the forming imagination and creation of new mythologies/new worlds.

22. Henry Remak, "A Key to West European Romanticism?" in *Colloquia Germanica*, 1968, 45. Regarding this sustained tension, Gadamer has written,

The symbol does not simply remove the tension between the world of ideas and the world of the senses: there can be a disproportion between form and essence, expression and contents. In particular the religious function of the symbol lives from this tension. The possibility of the instantaneous and total coincidence of the appearance with the infinite in a religious ceremony on the basis of this tension assumes that it is an inner harmony between the finite and the infinite that fills the symbol with meaning. Thus the religious form of the symbol corresponds exactly to its original nature, the dividing of what is one and reuniting it again. (TM, 70).

Gadamer calls this disproportion "that indeterminate quality, that undecidedness." It is this undecidedness that is the foundation of his idea of play (similar to Ricoeur). As I discuss in this chapter, I regard Ricoeur's view of the tension between image and meaning in metaphor as a dialectical play as more compatible with Schiller's aesthetics and F. Schlegel's ontology and literary criticism.

23. Abrams' concession may result from the statements of the writers Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, and Hölderlin, themselves. They, too, subordinate their fears that the dream of transcendent unity can be neither achieved nor sustained in this lifetime. In Schiller's *Der Pilgrim*, the traveler's ascending path on which earth and heaven appear to merge can never reach the golden gate ("*das dort ist niemals hier*"). And, in his influential essay on aesthetics, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1796), he talks about the design of human development and destiny (civilization as the spiritual journey of the human race), yet the unity we seek is infinitely higher than that which we abandoned at the beginning and, therefore, con-



tinuously receding from our grasps, never to be completely attained (see NS, 215). While, he maintains hope in the prophetic powers of the poet-genius who reflects man's highest achievement through his education (*bildung*), he concedes that the poet is unable to sustain this level of consciousness.

Similarly, in Fichte's *The Vocation of the Scholar*, the goal is "utterly unattainable" so that the end of the journey of life lies in the experience of the journey itself (hence, it is temporal) (NS, 216). This falling short, then, comes to represent for these thinkers and poets, the promise of progress toward the ideal, albeit an unattainable ideal as conceived within the bounds of human history. In addition, Schelling in *The Ages of the World* (1811), tells about how he awaits a new Homer, a poet-prophet speaking in the undivided language of mythology, singing a new epic of reunited age: "What holds back the anticipated golden age when truth becomes fable and fable truth?" And, "men have hitherto been unable to sustain 'this state of vision,' for 'what was indivisibly together in the origin unfolds and is spread out piece by piece in this present life'" (Schelling in NS, 224). The golden age will restore the lost unity of the human intellect with itself and with nature (NS, 224-25). Man holds within himself the "archetype" (Schelling) of the "primordial beginning of things" and, thus "periodically rejuvenates himself by feeling the unity of his nature" (NS, 224-25).

As Schiller writes, "This road (*Weg*) upon which the modern poets are travelling is the same which mankind must take, collectively and as individuals. Nature makes him in unity with himself; art divides and cuts him in two (i.e., alienation of aesthetic consciousness). But because the Ideal is an infinite which he can never reach, so the cultivated man (*gebildet*) can never become perfect in his mode (in *Natural Supernaturalism*, 215, and his discussion of Schiller, 505-506.

24. Cyrus Hamlin, "The Temporality of Selfhood: Metaphor and Romantic Poetry," *New Literary History*, 6 (Autumn 1974), 176-77; my emphasis.

25. Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, op. cit., 3-5.

26. Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosephy," *NLH* 6 (Autumn 1974), pp. 8-9; here he cites a quote from Nietzsche that shows his probable indebtedness to him for the usure metaphor: "What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage, seen to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions; worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses (*die abgenutzt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden sind*), coins which have their obverse (*Bild*) effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal" (from "On Truth and Falsity in their Ultramoral Sense," 1873).

It seems that the revived usage of Nietzsche's metaphor actually contra-

dicts the case that Derrida is trying to make here for philosophies "effaced" metaphors. Also, see Dan O'Hara's review of Walter Ong's *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) and Paul Ricoeur's *Rule of Metaphor*, in "The Irony of Being Metaphorical," *Boundary 2* (Winter 1980), pp. 329-48. O'Hara discusses Derrida's concept of effaced ("dead") metaphor: ["In his 'White Mythology' Derrida expands Martin Heidegger's assertion (from *Der Satz vom Grund*) that 'the metaphorical exists only within the boundaries of metaphysics' (as the imaginary focal point does within a circle) by claiming that in philosophical discourse 'dead' metaphor, whose figurative lineaments have been effaced by chronic wear and tear, is actually a central device for transposing the sensible into the non-sensible the major performance of philosophical discourse and so for reproducing the still-born metaphysics of presence, which Derrida sees as haunting all Western thinking" (IB, 337).]

27. Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, (from *La métaphore vive*) tr. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, S. J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 324.

### Chapter Three

1. Ernst Cassirer's mythico-philosophical inquiries into the origins of thought and language revived the eighteenth century debates over the origins of language (speech), and in particular Herder's belief that the origins of language are linked to a species-specific kind of thinking and expression. These inquiries from Herder to Cassirer are especially interesting with respect to current anthropological research into the relationship between the emergence of speech and a specific genetic mutation that may have occurred about 200,000 years ago.
2. See in Hartman's "Romantic 'Anti-selfconsciousness'," in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, fn. 2 and 3 on pg. 47 on "thought as a disease" in the Romantic and Victorian traditions, as, for example, in Novalis, Schelling, Goethe, Carlyle, Kierkegaard, Wordsworth, Blake, Coleridge, Benjamin Constant, and Hegel.
3. *The Logic of Hegel*, tr. from *Encyclopedia of the Sciences* by W. Wallace (Oxford: 1904), 54-57, cited in Hartman, 49, fn. 5.
4. Hartman, 54; this point also pertains to Ruskin on childhood as a reminder that the life of the mind "purchased with death," Arnold on "the buried life, and Yeats on the "anti-serf" or recovering deeply buried experience poets seeking a return to "Unity of Being," 50-51.
5. Hartman goes on to talk about the "shadow of cyclicity," the paralysis of endless introspection, "false lures" at risk in this journey. This brings

to mind Eliot's "Waste Land" imagery of ego-centeredness, dissociation of mind and feeling, and cyclical repetitiveness or boredom.

6. Coleridge's "Dynamic Philosophy" (Abrams, 119), the generative power of the conflict of opposites (straight from Schelling), depicts the creative imagination in imagery similar to that in the creation myths discussed earlier as the creative principle of the universe, the "prime Agent," and "the infinite I AM." Coleridge's mythic metaphors appear in Abrams' discussion of the Primary Imagination:

All genuine creation everything that is not a mimicking of given models, or a mere reassemble of given elements into a whole which is novel in its pattern but not in its parts derives from the generative *tension* of opponent forces, which are synthesized, without exclusion, in a new whole. The imagination, in creating poetry, therefore echoes *the creative principle underlying the universe*. Conversely, the whole universe, both in its continuous generation 'in the *infinite I AM*' and in *the repetition of that act in the process of perception by individual minds*, may be said to consist, just as a great poem does, in the productive resolution of contraries and disparate (Abrams, 119; my emphases).

According to Coleridge, then, the synthesizing activity of the imagination finds expression through "a process that is at once spontaneous and deliberate, natural and artful" (Abrams, 121) "There must be an interpenetration of passion and will, of *spontaneous* impulse and of *voluntary* purpose. . . . those figures of speech which in their primitive origin were entirely the natural expression of passion must be employed according to different and more complex standards in the artful discourse of a poem, which is directed toward the end of yielding aesthetic pleasure" (Abrams, 121). It is important to my later discussion to note the similarities between Coleridge's view of the tension of opposites in the creative imagination and Schiller's notion of the aesthetic experience of "freedom" described as the urge to play (*Spieltrieb*), the dialectical play of opposing forces or activities of mind. See Richards' and Vygotsky's dialectic in concept formation and Coleridge's *Biographia*, I, 196, 179-85, 183, 202, and II. Also, note that the line "the repetition of that act in the process of perception by individual minds," anticipates cognitive theories of thought originating in perception/cognition. See Vygotsky on "participation," Lévi-Strauss on "bricolage," and Gregory's *The Intelligent Eye*.

7. Lawrence E. Cahoon, *The Dilemma of Modernity: Philosophy, Culture, and Anti-Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988). 251.

8. For example, when Cook talks about the first phase of myth in mother "unicity," the relationship of myth to childhood and language development emerges; this idea is enacted in poems like Wordsworth's lost "vi-

sionary gleam" in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" or Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill."

9. Lev Vygotsky, chapter five: "An Experimental Study of Concept Formation," in *Thought and Language*, ed. and trans. by Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1962). Vygotsky states, "Due to a paucity of well-apprehended objective relations, the child relies on an overabundance of subjective connection," 60. This may be viewed as a form of mythic thinking reenacted through "ecstatic" states of mind in the poets in Part II.

10. In chapter five, Vygotsky distinguishes between the following modes of pre-conceptual thinking: associative, collections, chains, diffuse complexes, and pseudo-concepts.

11. Vygotsky, like Berthoff who was influenced by him, acknowledges the recursive nature of adult thinking from syncretism and complexes to pseudo-complexes and "adult concepts," 75.

12. Roland Fischer "A Cartography of the Ecstatic and Meditative States," in *Science*, no. 4012, vol. 174 (26 November 1971), 897-903; hereafter cited as (Fischer, I, page) in the text. Also, see *Altered States of Consciousness* (1972), ed. Charles T. Tart, "Implications of LSD and Experimental Mysticism," Walter Pahnke and William Richards. According to Pahnke and Williams, the mythic or "mystical consciousness" associated with drug-induced altered mental states has been characterized as follows: an experience of undifferentiated unity, with external-internal or subject-object dichotomies being transcended; normal sense impressions and the empirical ego fade away while consciousness of what is being experienced seems to expand; time and space are transcended; the sense of sacredness or an awareness of infinitude which evoke feelings of awe and respect; a deeply felt positive mood with feelings of joy, love, blessedness, and peacefeelings ranging from the spiritual to the erotic which have been described as: "cosmic tenderness, infinite love, penetrating peace, eternal blessing and unconditional acceptance, unspeakable awe, overflowing joy, inexpressible gratitude and boundless devotion," 414-415); and paradoxically as with the Chinese koan, or aspects of mystical consciousness that violate the laws of Aristotelian logic, e.g., life and death, or emptiness and fullness, singleness and plurality (the One and the Many) experienced as simultaneous; sense of the transiency of mystical consciousness which distinguishes it from psychosis. According to this research (late 1960s)and of interest in the context of the communal nature of the poet's mission to create a new consciousness, persons who have experienced the categories described above, reported concomitant changes in attitudes towards themselves, others, life, and mystical consciousness: "Changed or enlarged attitudes toward life are reported in the areas of deeper sensitivity to values that are felt to be eternal, increased

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sensitivity to an inner imperative that seeks expression through other-centered behavior, increased vocational commitment, loss of fear of death coupled with an expanded awareness of the significance of historical existence, and an enriched appreciation for the whole of creation." (p. 417) The duration or permanence of such changes and "the extent to which they are manifested in everyday existence" are still in need of extensive research.

13. This meaning is often associated with the experience of unity, resulting from the integration of interpretive (cortical) and interpreted (sub-cortical) structures. The only way to convey the intensity of this "mythic" experience of Unity with Being, Fischer maintains, is through the language of metaphor, that is, "only through the transformation of objective sign into subjective symbol," 902.

14. From the allegorical interpretation of scriptures, the secularization of hermeneutics took place with Schleiermacher for whom it became the "science of understanding" (Gadamer, 164). For Schleiermacher, however, the focus of interpretation was on restoring in the psychology of the reader, that is, in the experience of the work, the fullest understanding of the 'Thou' (author) from whom all textual meaning originated. In this way, the reader would make interpretation a kind of divinatory process, i.e., the placing of oneself within the mind of the author, an apprehension of the 'inner origin' of the composition of a work. Therefore, total restoration of the original meaning, for Schleiermacher, an attainable goal, comes from the reader's imitative restoration of the author's psychology (intentions).

In contrast, for Hegel the restoration of the historical spirit of a text did not consist in the restoration of its past, but in a thoughtful mediation with contemporary life. "To place (texts) in their historical context does not give one a living relationship with them, rather one of mere imaginative representation" (like the restored building). As Gadamer tells us, Hegel and later Heidegger, define hermeneutic thinking and "the historically operative consciousness" dialectically interacting with tradition as transmitted through the text. In other words, interpretation is the disclosure of the Being of the text: "Being that can be understood in language and hermeneutics is an encounter with Being through language." (TM, 42-43) The basic interpretive process is the bringing to understanding what is foreign, strange, unintelligible into the medium of one's own language." (Gadamer and Bakhtin). In this sense, the reader is a translator, like the Greek messenger god, Hermes, or like the officiant at a ritual who mediates between one world and another. Recreation, whether in "new mythologies" or in hermeneutics, represents the process of the individual's bring forth of Being through understanding (i.e., mediating between his world and another world).

15. *De l'interpretation*, translated as *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976); hereafter cited as (Ricoeur, II, page). This quote is from

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Don Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), 44.

16. Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," in *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963).

17. William Spanos, "Charles Olson and Negative Capability: A Phenomenological Interpretation" in *Contemporary Literature*, 21, no. 1 (Winter 1980).

18. See Wolfgang Iser, op. cit., and G. E. Moore, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barret (Berkeley, 1972), cited in Altieri.

19. Barthes' metaphor for the poem as "onion" (in "Style and Its Image," *Literary Style*, ed. S. Chatman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) refutes the New Critical claim for the unity of the text, while operating under the same positivistic assumptions about the objective nature of the literary text:

"If up until now we have looked at the text as a species of fruit with a kernel (an apricot, for example), the flesh being the form and the pit being the content, it would be better to see it as an onion, a construction of layers (or levels, or systems) whose body contains, finally, no heart, no kernel, no secret, no irreducible principle; nothing except the infinity of its own envelopes which envelop nothing other than the unity of its own surfaces," 10.

20. Charles Altieri, "The Hermeneutics of Literary Indeterminacy" in *New Literary History*, 10 (Autumn 1978). Also, of central importance to my subject are Altieri's "The Poem as Act: A Way to Reconcile Presentational and Mimetic Theories," *Iowa Review*, 6 (1975), 103-34, and "From Symbolist Thought to Immanence: The Ground of Postmodern American Poetics," in *Boundary 2*, 1 (1972/73), 605-637.

21. Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (New York, 1971), 10, cited in Altieri, 73. Altieri talks about de Man's departure from Holland and Fish on "the necessary imaginative recreation of mere objective marks on the page. Natural signs always have clear and repeatable meanings because they hide nothing and follow established laws, while human utterances are always intentional, always both uttered from a point of view not entirely evident in the signs and depend on the intentions of the interpreter, and therefore always problematic" (Altieri, 73).

22. The notion of play or dialectic in Schiller's theory of beauty seems to have anticipated issues concerning the romantic theory of the imagination, as well as, nineteenth and twentieth century philosophies of understanding (hermeneutics).

23. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in *The Structuralist Controversy*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 247-48."
24. Fischer refers to the "ontogenetically and phylogenetically acquired system of values that commands central sympathetic arousal to 'translate' a particular configuration of signsthe pretextinto another sign system, the context of experienced meaning," 7; the idea that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" forges a connecting link between childhood thinking and primitive thinking, and in their shared ground, helps us to understand the Re-mantic interest in both forms of cognition/understanding.
25. Fischer, 8, cites Corbin, *Eranos Jahrbuch 26* (Zürich: Rhein Verlag, 1957), 58.
26. Fischer, II, 9-12, 15, 22 and Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns in Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).
27. Although, in general, Mellors gives Abrams a fair reading, she does not mention where Abrams does recognize the skeptical side of several of the more canonically idealist poets and philosophers in *Natural Supernaturalism*; I cite some of his examples of skeptical Romantic Idealists in chapter two.
28. The acts of understanding might include: perception, reading, composition. See Ann E. Berthoff, *The Making of Meaning* (1981), Susan Horton, *Thinking Through Writing* (1982) and I. A. Richards' *How to Read a Page* (1942), just to name a few.
29. Northrop Frye, *Creation and Recreation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 63.

#### Chapter Four

1. See Edward J. Ahearn, *Rimbaud: Visions and Habitations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), chapter one, "Childhood and the Origins of Poetry," especially pp. 18-19, 20, 22, 25, 49, and 74 on mythical childhood experiences.
2. References to Suzanne Bernard are from her still informative *Le Pòeme en Prose du Baudelaire jusqu' à nos jours* (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1959), especially "Le Monde Recréé," 186-209.
3. See Marjorie Perloff's *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), chapter two: "Trouver une langue." In addition, the Symbolist idea of *les correspondances* and

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their use of synaesthesia support a monist, idealist poetic or aesthetic.

4. Yves Bonnefoy, *Rimbaud par Lui-même* (Paris: Écrivains de Toujours series, Éditions du Seuil, 1961): trans. Paul Schmidt in *Rimbaud* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1973), 4. Quotes in this paper are from Schmidt; hereafter cited as (R, page) in the text.
5. From the "Voyancy Letters" in *Illuminations and other Prose Poems*, trans. Louise Varèse (New York: New Directions, 1975), especially the letter to Paul Demeny of May 15, 1871, in which Rimbaud writes: "The poet makes himself a visionary through a long, prodigious and rational disordering of all the senses. Every form of love, suffering, or madness; he searches himself, he consumes all the poisons in him, keeping only their quintessences" (p. xxx).
6. See Rimbaud's letter to Paul Demeny, May 15, 1871, where he discusses Musset: "Musset achieved nothing. There were visions behind the gauze curtains; he closed his eyes" (p. xxiv), and the letter to George Izambard, May 13, 1871, where Rimbaud discusses his preference for objective over subjective poetry: "As a matter of fact all you see in your principle is subjective poetry: your obstinacy is going back to the pedagogic trough pardon me improves it." And further down, "Some day I hope so too I'll see objective poetry in your principle" (p. xxvi). The quote is from Richard Coan, *Human Consciousness and Evolution*, op. cit.
7. The term "ecstatic" which Ahearn used and which I have adopted from him is derived from Roland Fischer's research, cited in chapter three. Ahearn refers to the child's mythic experience on the following pages: 18-19, 20, 22, 25, 27, 34, 49, and 74.
8. See Ahearn on Freud's primary narcissism and the tension between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, pp. 25, 27, 31.
9. See Mellors, op. cit. on Keats.
10. Dan O'Hara's review of Walter Ong's *Interfaces of the World: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) and Paul Ricoeur's *Rule of Metaphor*, in "The Irony of Being Metaphorical," *Boundary 2* (Winter 1980), 341.
11. For a definition of the terms "radical metonymy" or "ironic mythic," see L. D. McNeil, "Toward a Rhetoric of Spatial Form," *Comparative Literature Studies*, 17 (Winter 1980), 355-67. Briefly, the term "radical" attached to metaphor and metonymy refers (both on a figural and structural level) to those logical relationships that are based on the private associations of the poet (rather than on culturally shared experiences), such as dream, hallucination or vision; the attachment of "ironic" to mythic refers to a poetic structure like that of *The Waste Land* where cycles of recurrency reveal change that implies contrast (rather than mythic integration or harmony) as a contrast to the idyllic past with the corrupt present.



12. W. M. Frohock, *Rimbaud's Poetic Practice: Image and Theme in the Major Poems* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 84-85.

13. See Ahearn, op. cit. 49-50. I am referring to Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill" here.

14. According to Cyrus Hamlin, in "The Temporality of Selfhood: Metaphor and Romantic Poetry," *New Literary History*, 6 (Autumn 1974), 173-93), there is a tension in Romantic poetry and theory between, on the one hand, the idealism of reconciling the subject and the object seen in the symbolic, and on the other hand, the disjuncture between them seen in the allegorical or ironic. The symbolic implies a harmonious union, while the allegorical or ironic reveal the gap between the desired timeless experience and the actual temporal one. Although Hamlin's essay deals specifically with the German and English philosophical roots of Romanticism the connection with the French through the influence of Mme. de Staël has been well-documented (see *D'Allemagne*). In either case (German, English, or French), the key philosophical links were A. and F. Schlegel (especially the latter).

Expanding upon this idea, Anne Mellors in "On Romantic Irony, Symbolism and Allegory," *Criticism*, 21 (Summer 1979) shows how Schlegel's view of Romantic irony resolves the polarization between symbolism (unity) and irony (disparity) by: (1) the view of *dédoublement* of the self into two personae: the empirical self acting in the world and the ironic, separate and observing self; (2) the idea that the mind can transcend phenomenal, structuring experience (*Verstand*) insofar as it tries to discover the noumenal. By doing so, it functions as Kant's *Vernunft* (pure reason), able to perceive "pure being" beyond temporal phenomena; (3) and the idea that a work of art should imitate or represent the ontological becoming of noumena (seen in a state of chaos or *Fülle*) in contrast to Kant's view of a static noumenal reality. The similarity to Rimbaud is striking in the ironic *dédoublement* of his personality (in *Derniers Vers* and *Une Saison*) as an attempt to perceive "pure being." This splitting of the self is apparent in *Saison*, but seems to become reintegrated in an enlarged self in the later *Illuminations*. For more on this, see Mellors on F. Schlegel's "ironic artist," 226-27.

15. M. H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," from *Romanticism and Consciousness*, ed. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford, 1965), 527-28. In terms of both philosophy and literary criticism, there has been division along the lines of "pure" Romantic idealism which stresses the unification of self and world (i.e., noumena or "pure living") and, in turn, pure being and language (e.g., the Fichtean and Hegelian belief in world as mind) and the view that language records the authentic meeting of the individual imagination with universal consciousness. On the one hand, M.H. Abrams supports the view of an "achieved synthesis of subject and object" in *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971), while on the other hand, Paul De Man represents the other side of the Kantian antimonies by arguing for the "absolute unknowability" of the noumenal world: "The only truth that man can ever know is the ironic awareness of the

falsity of all linguistic or conceptual constructions or 'mystifications' describing the empirical world" (see Anne Mellors, "On Romantic Irony, Symbolism and Allegory," 218).

16. This refers to Coleridge's "esemplastic" power of the imagination which he believed reconciles separate and opposite parts of experience/poem into a coherent whole, from *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Shawcross (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), I, 107. Henri Peyre in *The Poem Itself*, ed. Stanley Burnshaw (New York: Schocken Books, 1967) talking about "Mémoire," makes the distinction between the meaning of the words *mémoire* and *souvenir* in French"; he describes memory as a "faculty of mind, as it was then called in psychology, as a power which stores up and transfigures the impressions and emotions of childhood, (and, thus) becomes creative," 26-27 (as it will in Proust's *Chez Swan as in* the experience of the Japanese paper fragments out of which a whole "world" emerges).

17. John Porter Houston, *The Design of Rimbaud's Poetry* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

18. Wallace Fowlie, *Rimbaud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). Henri Peyre, with respect to this passage of "Mémoire," discusses how "this memory ranges beyond the life of the child himself and encompasses the experiences of his parents." In this way, the lyrical self portrayed in "Mémoire" shows signs of *élargissement* (enlargement) which is characteristic of the mythic-ecstatic mode of experience (discussed more fully later in the section on *Illuminations*).

19. Pierre Petitfils, *Rimbaud*, tr. Alan Sheridan (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), 49-50, on the father's and son's desertion.

20. See Charles Altieri's "Objective Image as Act of Mind," *PMLA* 91 (January 1973). 101-14, in which he discusses the idea of, what I have called in "Toward a Rhetoric of Spatial Form," the "dissociative metonymic": "Prufrock" embodies both the esthetic strategies of the objective, presentational image and the problems created by these strategies. Once the writer denies both the discursive and Romantic symbols, he finds himself trapped in a consciousness like Prufrock's, maintaining a delicate balance between a variety of metonymic images, all suffused with a nagging sense of how much *these images seek to participate in larger wholes or structures of meaning*, and a peculiarly empty decadent sense of knowing all, of taking these fragments as a total order," 106; my emphasis. Of course, perhaps what Altieri means instead of the images (as active agents) "seeking to participate in larger wholes or structures of meaning," is that the reader who aspires toward a mythic reintegration of these parts (images) with their absent, implied wholes?

21. The text of "A Season in Hell" is from the bilingual edition with translations by Louise Varèse, *A Season in Hell and the Drunken Boat by Arthur Rimbaud*, (hereafter cited as SH).

22. See Paul Ricoeur's *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) from the French *De L'interprétation. Essay sur Freud* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1965).

23. Ironically, through (or beyond?) this "*dédoublement du moi*," viewed impersonally like F. Schlegel's "ironic artist," he discovered an enlarged, primordial Self (Jung and Fischer) which the "I" (ego), with its natural tendency to impose its own order and "vision" on reality, could observe as if from a distance. (See Olson's Maximus as archetypal Self in chapter seven.) In this way, he hoped to release the imagination's potential to disclose Being through the destructive-recreative powers of the imagination and language. Also of interest is *Rimbaud Multiple: Colloque de Cerisy*, ed. Alain Borer, et al. (Dominique Bedou et Jean Touzot, 1985); especially relevant were the essays, "L'itinéraire alchimique d'Arthur Rimbaud" by David Guerdon, "La tentative de 'je-autre' ou l'approche de 'L'inconnu,'" by Hiroo Yuasa, and "Stratégies pour une lecture du texte rimbaudien" by Jacques Plessen.

24. Marc Eigeldinger in "Notes sur la poétique de la voyance," *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 193, 1984 (1), 25); he cites Novalis in *Henri d'Ofterdingen* and the *Fragments* and Victor Hugo's poetic practice in *Les Contemplations, Dieu, William Shakespeare, Les Travailleurs de la mer, and L'Homme qui rit*. Eigeldinger's argument revives that of Albert Béguin, *L'Ame romantique et le Rêve*, who also saw the influence of German Romanticism on the "second generation" of French Romantics, but whereas Béguin focused on the "cult of dream," poetic mysticism, illuminism and occultism (the search for an ultimate reality or unknowable "Absolu") in Nerval and Hugo, Eigeldinger seems to be referring to another tradition entirely, an "objectivist" or what I would call a mythopoeic tradition. In addition to the importance of Novalis and Hugo to Rimbaud's poetics, there was Jean-Paul in Germany from whom Rimbaud may have taken his famous, "Je est un autre" declaration. Anna Balakian in *The Literary Origins of Surrealism* (1947) also discusses the German influence on French Romanticism, but in a way that fails to distinguish between earthly (i.e., mythic) and spiritual (idealist) goals. She does, however, seem to be talking about what I have been calling the mythic here in the quote from Hugo's "Les quatre vents de l'esprit" (*Oeuvres complètes, Poésies, XVI*):

O mon âme, en cherchant l'azur ton vol dévie . . .

Revenons à la terre

Pour retourner au ciel.

25 Like Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Rimbaud disagrees with the common conception of the lyric as subjective, rather it is an 'unselving'; see Ahearn, op. cit., 162-63).

26. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 177 and 2 (respectively); hereafter cited in the text as (Said, page).

27. Abeam, op. cit., 154, 215, 291 on the copresence of contradictions.

28. See Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: First Part*, tr. Walter Kaufmann (Penguin Portable Nietzsche, 1968) on the eternal return, 133, 212.

29. See V. P. Underwood's discussion of the image of the angel of Charity in London, in *Rimbaud et Angleterre* (Paris: Nizet, 1976), 71, and various other reproductions of scenes from London of the 1870s.

30. Enid Starkie, in *Arthur Rimbaud* (New York: New Directions, 1961), 225: "I do not believe that, in *Une Saison en Enfer*, Rimbaud meant to say farewell to literature in general, but only to visionary literature; and I feel that he intended to compose, and did compose, further poems in prose he had probably finished with verse of a different nature. I believe that among such poems are *Soir Historique*, *Democratie* and *Villeto* commit oneself to some titles. They are more intellectual and hermetic, less emotional and passionate, than some of the earlier poems. They are composed after a mathematical or musical pattern musical contrapunctually that is, and not 'melodiously.'" Starkie appears to be referring to those parodies of "illuminés" poems (my terms) written probably after *Une Saison* that could also reflect his renewed dalliance with drugs, not the "new realism" that Bonnefoy describes in such poems as: *Jeunesse*, *Enfance*, *vie*, *Conte (I, II, III)*, *Guerre*, *Cénie*, *Solde*, *Mouvement*, *Angoisse*, and *A Une raison*; see Bonnefoy's Appendix II, 141-42.

31. Ahearn, op. cit., 151-153.

32. In Ahearn, see references to Fischer, William James, Aldous Huxley, N. K. Chadwick, and Mircea Eliade, 362.

33. Ahearn, op. cit., describing the ecstatic, shamanistic, and dionysiac characteristics of the *Illuminations* and on shamanism, 156-57.

34. This corresponds to Whitehead's idea of "penetration" or Gadamer's idea of "world" as mediated reality.

35. Ahearn, op. cit., 140, has argued convincingly that many of the *Illuminations* can best be understood in the tradition of Romantic ecstatic poetry from Blake, Hölderlin, Nerval, Coleridge (especially "Kubla Kahn") and Yeats. According to Ahearn, Eliade, Chadwick, and Nietzsche "locate the roots of the major art forms of music and literature in the mantic, shamanistic, or Dionysian state", 179; many of these ecstatic lyrics are, as Ahearn admirably shows, "presentational-spectacular realizations" or "narrative-dramatic-musical celebrations." Ahearn describes the characteristics of the ecstatic lyric as follows: archetypal imagery in psychological terms (e.g., city-cosmic mountain-palace complexes, rainbow bridges, etc.); near space is foreshortened with space-time transformed until the spatial-temporal disappear entirely; complex and living geometrical patterns that are extremely absorbing and may be responsible for the intense yet artificial quality of the imagery; the experience of larger-than-life figures, angels,

divinities; and, total de-individualization, transcendence of the subject-object dichotomy, the experience of undifferentiated being, expressed in imagery of dissolution and motifs of universal totality" (see "Fêtes de la patience," "Génie," and "Barbare", 179-80). See Fischer in chapter three on the features of the ecstatic mode of experience.

36. Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetic of Indeterminacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 17-18. It is the reader adopting the perspective of a normal state of consciousness, not Rimbaud, who is unable to decide what the poem describes or means. These poems enact a radically altered state of mind and, as Fischer reminds us, knowledge or understanding is usually "state dependent." Therefore, to make sense of these poems the reader needs to approach them from their perspective as altered mental states.

37. Antoine Adam in "L'Enigmes des 'Illuminations'," *Revue des Sciences Humaines* (December 1950) and V. P. Underwood, "Rimbaud et l'Angleterre," *Revue de Littérature Comparée* (January-March 1955).

38. Perloff's "indeterminacy" or "undecideability" theory, is itself grounded, ironically, in assumptions of a symbolic, i.e., dichotomous referential/non-referential, theory of meaning. For example, see Perloff's discussion of *The Waste Land*: "However difficult it may be to decode this complex poem, the relationship of the word to its referents, of signifier to signified, remains essential intact," there is "no external referent," and ("the symbolic evocations generated by words on the page are no longer grounded in a coherent discourse" and "phrases refuse to cohere in a consistent referential scheme") Also, see her fn. 19, p. 17, and the quote from Todorov's *Symbolisme et interpretation* which is also symbolic-referential: "the object (that the phrase) evoked is never named and one therefore hesitates as to their identification" p. 33, which ignores a psychologically mimetic or speech act theory of language.

39. As Perloff herself has written, in "Enfance" the poet alternately appears as "I" or as "you"; but the narrator can just as easily disappear *into* the world of objects, which nevertheless bears *the imprint of his presence*. The language that embodies mythic consciousness is largely the image (name) and paratactic or non-discursive syntax. According to Perloff, in the *Illuminations* the word becomes a free-standing sign (Barthes' "un signe sans fond", p. 55. And, "Freed from their 'normal' channels of reference, words can shed their natural and conventional associations" (Perloff, 55). Later, she states that Rimbaud "no longer believed in the efficacy of the symbol," that Rimbaud had rejected "Baudelairean *depth*" (pp. 65-66). A close reading of "Villes," however, reveals Rimbaud's propensity for concrete images (names) and, especially, archetypal language (see Ahearn)the language of the mythic mode.

40. "Enfance" is translated by Varèse, 6-15.

41. Reiner Schürmann, "Situating René Char: Hölderlin, Heidegger, Char and the "There is'," *Boundary 2*, 2 (Winter 1976), 530.

42. Anna Balakian, *Literary Origins and Surrealism: A New Mysticism in French Poetry* (New York: New York University Press, 1947), 82. To generalize, the major differences between the epistemologies of surrealism and the mythic are: (1) the extreme subjectivity (in dreams or the subconscious) of the former as opposed to the mediation of self and world in the mythic mode, and (2) the goal of a transcendent Unknown (Inconnu) or Absolute in the former as opposed to a phenomenological experience of Wholeness in the myth mode.

#### Chapter Five

1. Francis Michael Sharp, *The Poet's Madness: A Reading of Georg Trakl* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).
2. Herbert Lindenberger, *Georg Trakl* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), 137-47; see 139, in particular.
3. Walter Killy, *Über Georg Trakl*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967).
4. Pauline Tu, "The Poetics of Discontinuity: East-West Correspondences in Lyric Poetry," *PMLA* 94, no. 2 (March 1979, 264).
5. In his book, *Georg Trakl*, op. cit., Lindenberger states that Rimbaud's influence upon Trakl gave rise to his developing "a free verse without explicit rhetorical connectives, and one directed to dramatizing the processes of consciousness by means of concrete images rather than by comments upon these images," 63.
6. Richard Detsch, *Georg Trakl's Poetry: Toward a Union of Opposites* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983): hereafter cited as (Detsch, page) in the text.
7. The quote is from Roland Fischer's "On Creative, Psychotic, and Ecstatic States" in *Art Interpretation and Art Therapy*, ed. Irene Jakab (New York: S. Karger, 1969), 59. See, also, R. Fischer ("A Cartography," op. cit.), R. D. Laing (*The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, 1971), Ernst Kris (*Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, 1964), Winfried Kudsus, ed. (*Literature und Schizophrenie: Theorie und Interpretation eines Grenzgebiets*, 1977), Leo Navratil (*Schizophrenie und Kunst: Ein Beitrag zur Psychologie des Gestaltens*, 1968), A. Storch (*Das archaisch-primitive Erleben und Denken in der Schizophrenie*, 1922), Vygotsky (*Thought and Language*, 1962), et al.

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8. From Campbell's interviews with Bill Moyers in the PBS series on mythology (1987-88), recently published as *The Power of Myth* (1988).
9. Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterung zu Holderlins Dichtung* (Frankfurt, 1944), 35.
10. See Karsten Harries, "Language and Silence: Heidegger's Dialogue with Georg Trakl," *Boundary 2* (Winter 1976), 495-512; hereafter cited as (Harries, page) in the text.
11. See Detsch's discussion of the *Abgeschiedenen*, 78-79. The word twilight in German, *Dämmerung*, could signify either state, rising (dawn) or setting (twilight). The double play of meaning was intended, in fact, by the editors of *Menscheitsdämmerung* who chose the title for the collection of Expressionist poetry to mean both the twilight and the dawn of Man (perhaps decreation and recreation?).
12. Frank Graziano, *Georg Trakl: A Profile*, 17.
13. According to Sharp, Celan used the term "*Neigungswinkel*" in a letter reprinted in *Über Paul Celan*, 40.
14. Trakl's view of time or history here is similar to that of Nietzsche and Heidegger on eternal present. See Detsch.
15. See Sharp, 56, especially fn. 5 on T. Ziolkowski.
16. See Reinhold Grimm's "Georg Trakls Verhältnis zu Rimbaud," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, 9 (1959), 288-315; also, cited in Yu, 268.
17. See Hermann von Coelln (*Sprachbehauptung und Bildstruktur in der Lyrik Georg Trakls*, 1960) on parataxis is parallel with the retreat of the "T" form" cited in Yu, 264. Navratil, op. cit., has stated that "The assumption that the artistic creation of a schizophrenic is incomprehensible and abstruse when compared to that of a healthy artist is untenable." And Fischer in "On Creative, Psychotic and Ecstatic States," op. cit., states that "Quite a few writers, scientists and poets display superior performance after a schizophrenic episode with some of them manifesting true creativity for the first time after the schizophrenic experience," 55.
18. Discussed in R. Grimm, op. cit., in H. Linderberger, op. cit., and in Bernhard Boschenstein, "Wirkungen des fränosischen Symbolismus auf die deutsche Lyrik der Jahrhundertwende," *Euphorion* 58 (1964), 375-95. Trakl read Rimbaud in translation by Karl Klammer under the name K. L. Ammer; see *Arthur Rimbaud, Leben und Dichtung*, tr. K. L. Ammer (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1907).
19. This theme of the lost innocence and mythic-creative vision of childhood was a recurrent theme in Romantic poetry through Rimbaud; Abeam mentions Höderlin, Wordsworth, Hugo, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud.

20. Michael Hamburger, *The Truth of Poetry: Tensions in Modern Poetry from Baudelaire to the 1960's* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969), 147.
21. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, tr. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage, 1973); Foucault views madness as disease, unlike Sharp here.
22. See Grimm, "Die Sonne," p. 236. Sharp points to the variants of line 30 to support the later reading: "O how beautiful dying man is and manifest in the darkness" and "O how pale in madness man is and manifest in the darkness", II, 453.
23. Sharp suggests that the allusion here is to the soldier's lance that pierced Christ's side, but I think the "doubting Thomas" reference is more plausible in this context.

## Chapter Six

1. Helge Normann Nilsen, *Hart Crane's Divided Vision: An Analysis of The Bridge* (Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), 21. While Nilsen and I share fundamental ideas about the mythical (what Nilsen calls "mystical") quality of Crane's vision, she stresses the political motive ("utopian, national meaning of the mysticism") more than I think is necessary.
2. Nilsen states that neither the Christian faith, nor Platonic Idealism are the issues in Crane: A Platonic reading gives the impression that "the poem is an attempt to express an abstract, otherworldly ideal," 17. She cites Crane's letter to Gorham Munson, Mar. 17, 1926, in which Crane states that he knew the works of Plato but it was mainly the "architecture of his logic" and the "grace" of his language that appealed to him.
3. Among the Platonic Idealist critics we find: Robert Combs, *Vision of the Voyage: Hart Crane and the Psychology of Romanticism* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1978); Lawrence Dembo, *Hart Crane's Sanskrit Charge: A Study of The Bridge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960); R. W. B. Lewis, *The Poetry of Hart Crane: A Critical Study* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); Bernice Slote, in *Start with the Sun: Studies in the Whitman Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960); and Alan Trachtenbert, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965; rpt. 1979). And see Joseph Arpad's "Hart Crane's Platonic Myth: The Brooklyn Bridge" in *American Literature*, 34 (1967), 75-86. Among the "Christian faith" critics: Sister Bernetta M. Quinn, *The Metamorphic Tradition in Modern Poetry* (New Brunswick, 1955), and Glauco Cambon, *The Inclusive Flame: Studies in Modern American Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965).

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4. Critics on myth-related issues include: Richard Chase, *Quest for Myth* (Baton Rouge, 1949); R. W. B. Lewis, op. cit.; L. S. Dembo, op. cit.; Robert Andreach, *Studies in Structure: The Stages of the Spiritual Life in Four Modern Authors* (Fordham University Press, 1964); Deena Metzger, "Hart Crane's Bridge: The Myth Active" in *Arizona Quarterly* XX (1964), 36-48. Those writing on modern science: Hyatt Waggoner, *The Heel of Elohim: Science and Values in Modern American Poetry* (Norman: Iowa University Press, 1950); and James Cowan, "The Theory of Relativity and *The Bridge*," in *Hartford Studies in Literature*, 1978. Also, central for Crane and scientific "mysticism," see P. D. Ouspensky, *Tertium Organum: The Third Canon of Thought: A Key to the Enigmas of the World* (New York, 1922).

5. For Frank's influence on Crane see the short, incomplete, but worthwhile, study by Robert L. Perry, *The Shared Vision of Waldo Frank and Hart Crane* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Studies: New Series, 33, 1966) and Nilsen's chapter on "Waldo Frank and Walt Whitman: Parallels and Influences."

6. Nilsen, 22 on Spinoza's idea of God as the Whole, Frank's idea of the "organic, mystic whole," and influence of *The Education of Henry Adams* on Spinoza's "T" as an absolute entity; Nilsen, 28.

7. Letter to Otto Kahn, September 12, 1927, in *The Collected Poems and Selected Letters and Prose of Hart Crane* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), 249; hereafter cited as (CP, page) in the text.

8. With regard to his flagging faith in sustaining *The Bridge* (both poem and vision), he writes:

Emotionally, I should like to write *The Bridge*; intellectually judged the whole theme and project seems more and more absurd. A fear of personal impotence in this matter wouldn't affect me half so much as the convictions that arise from other sources (cf. Spengler). . . . I had what I thought would have been a pleasurable-agony of wrestling, eventuating or not in perfection at least being worthy of the most supreme efforts I could muster (W. Frank, 241).

9. Those who have contributed the most to the study of the relationship between Crane's style and thought have been: Stanley Coffman, "Symbolism in *The Bridge*," *PMLA* (March, 1951); Bernice Slotte, "Transmutation in Crane's Imagery in *The Bridge*," *Modern Language Notes* (January, 1958); R. W. Butterfield, *The Broken Arc: A Study of Hart Crane* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969); and L. S. Dembo, *Hart Crane's Sanskrit Charge: A Study of *The Bridge** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960). More recently, John

T. Irwin's "Hart Crane's 'Logic of Metaphor,'" *Southern Review*, 11, no. 2 (April, 1975), 284-99; David Bleich's "Symbolmaking and Suicide: Hart Crane (1899-1932)," *Hartford Studies in Literature*, 10 (1978), 70-102; and Allen R. Grossman's "Hart Crane and Poetry: A Consideration of Crane's Intense Poetics with Reference to 'The Return'" which was written for, and included with, the Irwin essay in *Critical Essays on Hart Crane*, ed. David R. Clark (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall and Co.).

10. Crane's ideas with regard to the distinction between discursive and connotative modes of discourse, as well as his own "logic of metaphor" is remarkably similar to I. A. Richard's distinction between scientific and poetic modes of discourse and the psychological associative processes of both the poet and the reader which lies at the heart of Crane's wish for reader-participation in constructing this new consciousness of "the Whole." See I. A. Richard's *Principles of Literary Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1925).

11. Crane's letter to Harriet Monroe, editor of *Poetry*, dated 1926, in *Hart Crane: The Complete Poems and Selected Letters*, ed. Brom Weber (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 238.

12. See Vygotsky, 71: "This trait which Lévy-Bruhl was the first to note in primitive peoples, Storch in the insane, and Piaget in children is usually called *participation*. The term is applied to the relationship of partial identity or close inter-dependence established by primitive thought between two objects or phenomena which actually have neither contiguity nor any other recognizable connection."

13. Brom Weber *Hart Crane: A Biographical and Critical Study*; corrected edition (New York: Russell and Russell, 1948), 90.

14. Some examples of radical metonymies in "The Wine Menagerie" are: "forceps of the simile," "transepts around the eyes," "window pane guile drags a face," and "decanters wear me on their bellies." Things from two distinct and usually unrelated classes of objects combine in a "strained" comparison; and the last example represents the personification of an inanimate object, in this instance creating a surrealistic image. Much more can be said, of course, about the content of the comparisons, for example, the association of "forceps" to a spiritual birth as the result of the woman's smile, or the religious connotations of "transept" (of cathedral) associated with her eyes. In either instance, both the smile and the glance serve as catalysts for the poet's visionary awakening.

15. Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, tr. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 16. See Eliade on the shamanic significance of the eagle: 33, 69, 105, 156, and on shamanic initiation: suffering, death, and resurrection, 33.

16. "General Aims and Theories" in CP, op. cit.

17. When I began this study a number of years ago, I conducted a quantitative analysis to discover the distribution of dissociative and associative diction in the three sections of "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen."

18. See William Spanos' "Repetition in the Wast Lane: A Phenomenological Destruction," *Boundary 2*, 7, no. 3 (Spring 1979), 225-285, esp. 255.

19. Although the importance of time and space images has been discussed (Dembo, Coffman, and Slote) and the transmutation of imagery in general has been traced (Slote), little attention has been given specifically to the transmutation of the time and space images throughout *The Bridge* and their relationship to the persona's evolving mythic consciousness. The persona begins his transmutation of time and space images with the borrowed eagle and serpent symbols in "Rip Van Winkle" as a tiny garter snake and a toy airplane, then later the "eagle" in "The River," thereby connoting the awakening of his mythic awareness in childhood. He expands further upon these symbols when he shifts to the use of natural phenomena as the symbols of time and space. In addition to the eagle and the serpent, we find thunder (temporal) and lightning (spatial) images in "The Dance." Mythic awareness grows, and finally in "Atlantis," he turns to the Platonic images of music (temporal) and light (spatial) to symbolize the bridging of time and space, or the achieving of a fully-realized mythic consciousness of the whole of the American experience (past and present, and geographically).

20. Consistently, throughout the first section of *The Bridge*, the serpent and eagle images represent time and space; Crane may have derived this imagery from one or more of several sources: Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, the Mexican Quetzalcoatl myth, in D. H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*, or Blake's "America: Prophecy." See Dembo and Crane's Letters for specific references.

21. Lewis, 311. See Ahearn and Eliade on narcotics and ecstatic vision and erotic elements of the ritual dance; suffering takes one out of one's old self/ego.

22. In "The Dance," thunder, a temporal image, becomes equated with Maquokeeta who becomes married to (merges with) Pocahontas, following a ritual shamanic dance. When the marriage of Maquokeeta and Pocahontas is "consummate," "the thunder and lightning images reflect this union: thewed of the levin, thunder-shod and lean," or lightning as a spatial image. Crane's treatment of space and time in the second half of *The Bridge* (after "Indiana") shows a shift in emphasis from time (historic reconstruction) and space (geographic bridging): "Now the eagle dominates our day" in "Cape Hatteras." Nonetheless, space is still mythically bound in time as we can see in numerous references to the space-time unity carried over from "The Dance": "To conjugate infinity's dim marge/Anew"; "continental folded aeons"; "Space instantaneous, /flickers in a moment," and others.

23. In sentences 15-17 in "The Dance", there are: 5 semi-colons, 2 colons, 6 dashes, and 9 commas. In terms of grammatical types of sentences in sentences 13 through 17, all are compound with multiple single sentences separated by semi-colons, with the exception of sentence 15 which is compound-complex. A similar pattern is repeated in the group of sentences 20-23, which are all compound. This, of course, syntactically reflects the radical processes of synthesis of mythic-ecstatic thinking (See R. Fischer, "A Cartography," op. cit, and L. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, op. cit.).

24. Crane's letter to Waldo Frank, June 20, 1926, CP, op. cit., 232.

25. Crane's "logic of metaphor" seems to have deliberately offered a corrective to Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility" and ironic rhetorical strategies by replacing his fragmentation and proliferation of dissociative metonymies with metaphoric syntheses divined through the reader's participation in constructing "the Whole."

26. Butterfield has advanced the reading of this figure as Orpheus, which makes sense when one recalls that Orpheus' looking back to see Eurydice in Hades was a sign of his lack of faith in Eurydice's return to life. In punishment for his lack of faith, he was dismembered by the Thracian maidens.

27. Sentence 33, the pivotal point with regard to the poet's growing "visionary" awareness, is the longest by far (72.2 words where 24.2 is the average in "The Tunnel"). The length, of course, is significant in that it illustrates the imagination accretion of once disparate images and thoughts at the height of mythic-ecstatic awareness.

In addition, there are fewer appositives here than in "The Dance" or in "Atlantis"; of the total number of appositives, this many were used metaphorically, that is with implied associations between the appositive and its referent. The increased use of appositives is, also related to the vigorous activity of naming which characterizes ecstatic consciousness.

## Chapter Seven

1. Charles Olson, "Human Universe," in *Human Universe and Other Essays*, ed. Donald Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 3-4; hereafter cited as (HU, page).

2. Here is a list of sources in alphabetical order: Aiken, William, Charles Olson and the Vatic, *Boundary 2* (1979/74), 2 (1/2): 27-34; Bové, Paul A., *Destructive Poetics: Heidegger and Modern American Poetry* New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Byrd, Donald, *Charles Olson's Maximus* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980); Charters, Ann, *Olson/Melville: A Study in Affinity* (Berkeley: Oyez, 1968); Christensen, Paul,

*Charles Olson: Call Him Ishmael* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); Hallberg, Robert von, *Charles Olson: The Scholar's Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), and "Olson, Whitehead, and the Objectivists," in *Boundary 2* (Fall 1974/1974); Merrill, Thomas F., *The Poetry of Charles Olson: A Primer* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1982); Paul, Sherman, *Olson's Push: Origin, Black Mountain* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973); Perloff, Marjorie, "Charles Olson and the 'Inferior Predecessors': 'Projective Verse' Revisited," in *ELH*, 40 (1973), 285-306; Ross, Andrew, *The Failure of Modernism: Symptoms of American Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Spanos, William, "Charles Olson and Negative Capability: A Phenomenological Interpretation," in *Contemporary Literature* 21, no. 1, (Winter 1980); Waldrop, Rosemarie, "Charles Olson: Process and Relationship," in *Twentieth Century Literature* 23 (December 1977): 467-86. Hereafter all authors will be cited as (last name, page).

3. Derk Bodde, *China's Cultural Tradition: What and Whither?* (Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press), 34; hereafter cited as (Bodde, page) in the text.

4. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1975), 20. Other recent books that treat this topic are: G. Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters and The Stone Monkey*. Also, see Hamilin's discussion of the ontological shift from a Kant's static *noumena* to F. Schlegel's dynamic *Fulle* cited in chapter one.

5. Robert von Hallberg, "Olson, Whitehead, and the Objectivists," *Boundary 2* (Fall 1973/Winter 1974), 90; hereafter cited as (VH, page) in the text.

6. Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 81; hereafter cited as (H, page) in the text. Although unacknowledged, Herder was first to use the skin metaphor to suggest the meeting place of self and world in "Essay on the Origins of Language".

7. Donald Allen and Warren Tallman, *The Poetics of the New American Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1973), 148; hereafter cited as (Poetics, page) in the text.

8. Ernest Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character as Medium for Poetry* (New York: City Light Books, 1936); hereafter cited as (F, page) in the text.

9. Charles Olson, "The Gate and the Center," *Human Universe*, op. cit., 18. Also, see the discussion of poem as meeting place (Schurmann) in chapter four. Fenollosa, 9, overstates the case here, for this applies to only 10% of the characters; (see Lin).

10. Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska* (New York: New Directions, 1970), 89.
11. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 197; later typesetters ignored Pound's instructions to Harriet Monroe.
12. Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1960), 201, 206.
13. William Carlos Williams, *The Wedge, The Collected Later Poems of William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1963), 4.
14. "The Moebius Strip" and "The Kingfishers" are from Charles Olson's *Selected Writings*, ed. and intro. by Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1951, 1966); hereafter cited as (SW, page).
15. See "A Syllabary For a Dancer," in *Maps*, no. 4 (1971), "Dance With Some Words," "Apollonius of Tyana," and *The Maximus Poems*, "Letter 9."
16. The full context of the kingfisher quote from Eliot's "Burnt Norton" in *Four Quartets* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1943), 7, is most interesting as a contrast to Olson's direction in "The Kingfishers".
17. Paul discusses Creeley's admiration for Hart Crane and his dedication of a poem, "Hart Crane," to the poet in *A Quick Graph*, 68, as well as Olson's unpublished poem to Crane in *Notebooks*, "EnniscorthyJune, 1946."
18. See Creeley's in *Origin #1* (1953), "Hart Crane" and Olson's "You, Hart Crane" in *Archaeologist of Morning* (1940).
19. Charles Olson, *Special View of History*, ed. Ann Charters (Berkeley: Oyez, 1970), 31; hereafter cited as (SVH, page).
20. Charles Olson, *The Maximus Poems* (New York: Jargon / Corinth Press, 1960), includes *The Maximus Poems / 1-10 and 11-22* (Stuttgart: Jonathan Williams, 1953, 1956); *Maximus Poems IV, V, VI*. London and New York: Cape Goliard Press / Grossman Publishers, 1968.
21. Martin Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 35.
22. Also, see Sherman Paul, *Olson's Push* op. cit., notes on pp. 274-282.
23. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologization of the Word* (New York: Methuen, 1982), 33.
24. Other works on the transition from orality to literacy include: Jack Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (1968), *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (1977); Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (1963), *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* (1982), B. Malinowski, *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language Upon*

*Thought* (1923); Charles Segal, *Interpretation of Greek Tragedy: Myth, Poetry, Text* (1986).

## Epilogue

1. Harold Bloom's interpretation, *The Book of J* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990); Bloom discusses Yahweh as a "monistic" life force, not "holiness" or righteousness, i.e., not a metaphysical being, pp. 276-277. I am not convinced by Bloom's argument that the J-author was a woman in light of the similarities I point out here between mythic-preliterate expression and women's thought and writing.
2. Walter Ong, op. cit., p. i. Also, see Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy" in *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1968) and Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Language" in *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and the Science of Symbolism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1923).
3. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Book, Inc., 1973); hereafter cited as (Geertz, page).
4. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981) in "Measuring Heads," cites Le Bon's "Recherches anatomiques et mathématiques sur les lois des variations du volume du cerveau et sur leurs relation avec l'intelligence," in *Revue d'Anthropologie*, 2nd series, vol. 2, pp 60-61.
5. E. Showalter, "Toward a Feminist Poetics," in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), pp. 125-143, and Ann Rosalind Jones, "Writing the Body: Toward and Understanding of *L'écriture féminine*" in *The New Feminist Criticism*, pp. 361-377; hereafter cited as (Showalter, page). Also, Estella Lauter, *Women as Mythmakers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), and Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).
6. Alicia Ostriker, "The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking," in *The New Feminist Criticism*, pp. 314-338, on defining the female self (enlarged self), distrust of rationalism, the identification of the I and the Other, and the convergence of past and present; also see Mary Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, eds., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1986): "that women are less inclined to see themselves as separate from the 'they's' than are men may also be accounted for by women's rootedness in a sense of connection and men's emphasis on separation and autonomy," p. 45.

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7. Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1978), and Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982) on defining and forming the female self and the relationship of the self to the other (male and female), problems with ego formation, etc.

8. Annette Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Poetics of a Feminist Literary Criticism" in *The New Feminist Criticism*, pp. 155-156. Also, see chapter three on biases formed in reading.

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