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THREE PAPERS ADDRESSING THE ROLE
OF POETIC LANGUAGE
IN PAINTING AND LITERATURE.

By

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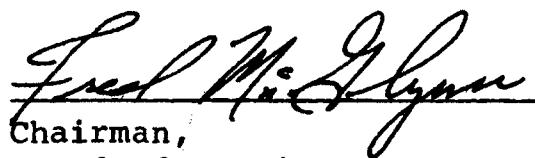
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VERMEER'S GAZE AND PROMISCUOUS VISION:
A STUDY OF MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY'S
PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEORY OF PERCEPTION

The scientist, Thomas Kuhn tells us, "can have no recourse above or beyond what he sees with his eyes and instruments." [1] His perception, refined and specialized through observational tools, serves as the "final authority." This view, which he attributes to a philosophical paradigm first initiated by Descartes, is dependant upon the presupposition that sensory experience is "fixed and neutral." [2] We all share the same sense data; it is only our judgements about that data which differ. Science interprets this neutral data, formulating theories and explanations which fit the data as precisely as possible. In this manner we find the best picture of the real world that we can obtain.

But Kuhn also points out that this viewpoint concerning the primordial fixedness of perception "no longer functions effectively, and the attempts to make it do so through the introduction of a neutral language of observations now seem to me hopeless." [3] He points to modern experiments in psychology which show "two men with the same retinal impressions can see different things." [4] Further, he points out that any attempt to formulate a language of "pure percepts" inevitably "embodies a host of expectations about nature and fails to function the moment these expectations are violated." [5] He concludes:

Therefore, though they are always legitimate and are occasionally extraordinarily fruitful, questions about

retinal imprints or about the consequences of particular laboratory manipulations presuppose a world already perceptually and conceptually subdivided in a certain way. In a sense such questions are a part of normal science, for they depend upon the existence of a paradigm and they receive different answers as a result of paradigm change.[6]

Like Kuhn and other modern philosophers of science, Maurice Merleau-Ponty has questioned traditional conceptions concerning the neutrality of sense data. But unlike other philosophers, Merleau-Ponty has argued that the very concept of sense data is an invention, having no basis in our actual perception of the world. In The Phenomenology of Perception, an early philosophical work, he points out that according to various authors pure sensation "corresponds to nothing in our experience." [7] Nevertheless, science still speaks as if there are pure sensations hidden somewhere beneath our more organized, "theory-laden" perceptions. These pure sensations are most often characterized as a flux upon which we impose various paradigms which organize that flux into our conscious perceptions. Merleau-Ponty's critique of this philosophical doctrine rests upon his analysis of, among other phenomenon, the foreground-background phenomenon in perception. He argues that before any paradigm can ever be used to interpret our sensations, these sensations are already organized in a figure-background field.[8] Further, this field already is imbued with significance before any theoretical interpretation has been added.

We observe at once that it is impossible, as has often been said, to decompose a perception, to make it into a collection of sensations, because in it the whole is prior to the parts--and this whole is not an ideal

whole. The meaning which I ultimately discover is not of the conceptual order. If it were a concept, the question would be how I can recognize it in the sense data, and it would be necessary for me to interpose between the concept and the sense data certain intermediaries, and so on. It is necessary that meaning and signs, the form and matter of perception, be related from the beginning and that, as we say, the matter of perception be "pregnant with its form." [9]

Even in their most primitive state our perceptions are not without significance. Likewise, our concepts are never without a perceptual component. To speak of a pure concept or a pure sensation makes no sense. "The pure sensations would amount to no sensation and thus to not feeling at all." [10] Merleau-Ponty criticizes theories that make use of pure sensations, saying that they reflect "the experience error, which means that what we know to be in things themselves we immediately take as being in our consciousness of them. We make perception out of things perceived." [11] The result of this error is that we describe a world in which objects have lost their primordial richness as we experience them in our immediate perceptions of them.

The theory of sensation, which builds up all knowledge out of determinate qualities, offers us objects purged of all ambiguity pure and absolute, the ideal rather than the real themes of knowledge: in short, it is compatible only with the lately developed superstructure of consciousness. That is where "the idea of sensation is approximately realized." [12]

This "lately developed superstructure" is roughly equal to Kuhn's paradigmatic science. Given this view, it should not surprise us when Merleau-Ponty states later in his career that

Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to the "there is" which underlies it; to the site, the soil of the sensible and opened world such as it is in our life and for our body--not that possible body which we may legitimately think of as an information machine,

but the actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and my acts.[13]

Merleau-Ponty is not suggesting that science should renounce its project, but he is suggesting that science should begin to appreciate the incompleteness of its own powers of description. Our lived world is not simply "the object x of our operations," as envisioned by our paradigmatic model of it.[14] There is also "another world" which, so to speak, "supplies" science with the object x of its operations, but which science has chosen to discount because of its inconstancy, this primitive, phenomenal world where wax is at one moment a dull malleable lump, then a shimmering puddle, this world where the observer cannot draw a firm line between himself and the thing observed.

Let us be more explicit. The sentient and the sensible do not stand in relation to each other as two mutually external terms, and sensation is not an invasion of the sentient by the sensible. It is my gaze which subtends colour, and the movement of my hand which subtends the object's form, or rather my gaze pairs off with colour, and my hand with hardness and softness, and in this transaction between the subject of sensation and the sensible it cannot be held that one acts while the other suffers the action, or that one confers significance on the other. Apart from the probing of my eye or my hand, and before my body synchronizes with it, the sensible is nothing but a vague beckoning.[15]

Before we can become scientists who fasten this gaze upon things to search out their boundaries and to explain their appearance, that world in which things and ourselves exist must be revealed to us. The revelation of this world comes in the gaze where the perceptual field arises that bestows significance upon the observer and the observed. Thus, neither things nor

myself are anterior to perception. Rather, we both arise out of a perceptual field that is in Merleau-Ponty's terms "pre-personal." [16] This pre-personal perceptual field to which all things and all thoughts are subordinated is not simply a muddle in which "I confuse causal thinking and reflection." [17] Rather, the perceptual field expresses the relation by which "I am able, being connatural with the world, to discover a sense in certain aspects of being without having myself endowed them with it through my constituting operation." [18]

But if neither things nor ourselves are anterior to perception, then we must conclude that we are ourselves, not through the transparency of a constituting thought, which could only think things by making them its own consciousness, but rather by virtue of our bodies, which gives rise to an enigma.

The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen...It is not a self through transparency, like thought, which only thinks its object by assimilating it, by constituting it, by transforming it into thought. It is a self through confusion, narcissism, through inherence of the one who sees in that which he sees, and through inherence of sensing in the sensed--a self, that is caught up in things, that has front and back, past and future... [19]

As selves we see--we look out upon the world and behold it before us. But at the same time we can see our own body, which is in fact seeing. We experience an outside and inside to our seeing which are inseparable. Further, we inhabit the things upon which we gaze. Our vision is not locked within our eyes or our skulls; it penetrates the space around us, bringing us out among the things it discovers. Thus, there is an inherence,

even a confusion, of these two spheres. The self, as a body that sees itself out among things, experiences a brotherhood with things other than itself. "Things are an annex or prolongation of itself;...they are incrustated into its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the same stuff as the body." [20]

But if science is ignorant of this enigma, this "fabric of brute meaning" still inhabits the artist's vision. "Only the painter is entitled to look at everything without being obliged to appraise what he sees." [21] Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception implies that the artist may uncover the basis of vision in a manner that escapes scientific explanation. The remainder of this paper will attempt to understand precisely how art informs us of our vision. We will consider some general consequences of Merleau-Ponty's view of perception in relation to a painter's vision of the world. Then we will review his objections to Descartes' theory of art as a representation of real things. Finally, we will consider the work of the painter, Vermeer, in relation to the problems we will have raised in the preceding sections. Vermeer worked within a tradition where the representationalist project was still active. If Merleau-Ponty's objections to such a tradition are to be valid, we must show precisely how Vermeer may remain within that tradition and still capture the primordial world of perception which Merleau-Ponty wishes to assert inhabits all art.

*

Given the rich confusion between body and things, given the miraculous system of exchanges which characterizes our explorations of the world, Merleau-Ponty argues by analogy that art is a natural outcome of our being-in-the-world.

Things have an internal equivalent in me; they arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence. Why shouldn't these [correspondences] in their turn give rise to some external visible shape in which anyone else would recognize those motifs which support his own inspection of the world?[22]

Merleau-Ponty does not want to argue that this motif is simply a "faded copy" or a trick of representation which in turn is a copy not even of the real thing but only of our second hand copy of the thing as it exists in our mental image. This does not constitute visibility for Merleau-Ponty. Visibility does not divide itself into two parts, the thing seen and the seer. Rather, visibility is an "enigma" in which

the idios kosmos opens by virtue of vision upon a koinos kosmos; in short, that the same thing is both out there in the world and here in the heart of vision--the same, or, if one prefers a similar thing, but according to an efficacious similarity which is the parent, the genesis, the metamorphosis of Being in his vision. It is the mountain itself which from out there makes itself seen by the painter; it is the mountain that he interrogates with his gaze.[23]

Vision is not something we construct in order to gain a world; instead, "it works in us without us." If vision were simply a construction or a representation of the diverse parts of the visual world, we should be able to draw a clear line between that world and ourselves. There would be the real things located, depending upon whether you are an idealist or an empiricist, "out there," or else within our own mental

processes. And there would be a boundary between these two domains such that one set of entities would be representations of the other. Thus, vision would exist as a sort of indifferent commerce between the real and the representational pole. The representational painter, asking of vision to unveil its means, will search for a series of techniques or tricks with which to render copies, that is, representations, of the "real" thing. The ontic status of these representations would be secondary. They are not after all real, but copies of the real. They give us an illusion. The ideal of representational art becomes to give us an illusion of the real.

But, Merleau-Ponty does not depict such a model of vision. Instead he finds that vision confuses the line between self and thing, between seer and seen. This confusion (not only of vision but of all senses) gives us both ourselves and the world and both within the same birth. Vision precedes the world and the self; without vision there could not be a world or self. Thus, the question we ask of vision

is not a question asked of someone who doesn't know by someone who does--the schoolmaster's question. The question comes from one who does not know, and it is addressed to a vision, a seeing, which knows everything and which we do not make, for it makes itself in us.[24]

Vision is "pre-reflective." It gives us ourselves and our world before we can ever begin to think of them. This pre-reflective vision unites us with the world confusedly. Merleau-Ponty speaks of an "inspiration and expiration of Being" in vision that is "so slightly discernable that it becomes

impossible to distinguish between what sees and is seen." [25]

Klee, a painter Merleau-Ponty admires, reports that

In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days, I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me...I was there, listening...I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it...I expect to be inwardly submerged, buried. Perhaps I paint to break out.[26]

Here we confront the inverse of the operationalism of science. The painter, the seer, must be penetrated by what he sees rather than penetrating it. Implicit in the ontology of operationalism is the desire to penetrate things, that is to measure and to hold them in my consciousness as determinate entities. Consciousness becomes a purifying crucible in which the protean existence of things is rendered away, leaving a clarified consciousness of what things are. Such a model implies a consistent ontological boundary between the knower and the known so that the knower may "disenworld" things in the interest of a determinate clarity. But the painter questions vision to discover a location of being where this ontological line dissolves. He finds it is impossible to say who sees and who is seen. Thus, "painting celebrates no other enigma but that of visibility." [27] The painter practices "a magical theory of vision:"

He is obliged to admit that objects before him pass into him or else that according to Malebrache's sarcastic dilemma, the mind goes out through the eyes to wander among objects; for the painter never ceases adjusting his clairvoyance to them.[28]

The image that the painter retrieves is indeed problematic. It is, as the vision that births it, "prehuman" and "pre-reflective." Merleau-Ponty speaks of Roualt's portrait of a long dead king which is "there as itself, as that which was always most alive about it." [29] The image refuses the reduction to a representational mode: this is exactly what makes it art. It does not serve as a model of a moment of vision--rather in some mysterious fashion it is a moment of vision.

*

In contrast to his own description of vision, Merleau-Ponty turns to Descartes' analysis of vision in the Dioptic, a treatise written to explain how certain "artificial organs" can be fashioned to correct bad vision.

The heart of Merleau-Ponty's objection to the Dioptic lies in Descartes' reduction of vision to a causal, sense-data model of vision in which we no longer consider the vision we experience, the primordial inherence of things and the body in one another. Instead we substitute a conceptual explanation of what supposedly happens when we see, an explanation that places a model of vision-as-thinking between a pure self and its bodily sense data. For example, according to Merleau-Ponty's analysis of vision, the mirror is a product of the confusion between seen and seeing: when we stare into the mirror our body invades its image; we are not located simply where the physiological process of seeing might be said to occur. We are also there

before ourselves. Descartes' analysis of vision reduces this phenomenon to a class of things that are simply "effects like a ball's bouncing. If the reflection resembles the thing itself, it is because this reflection acts upon the eyes more or less as a thing would." [30] We confront in the mirror an image that is a faded copy, a representation of our body, and not a reflexivity of ourselves. The bond between the reflection and the onlooker is causal--the haphazard conjunction of lightwaves and a reflective surface make the thing before me in the mirror, which is not really "me" at all, but simply a correspondence of lightwaves ordered on a point by point basis.

A cartesian does not see himself in the mirror; he sees a dummy, an "outside," which, he has every reason to believe, other people see in the very same way but which, no more for himself than for others, is not a body in the flesh. The mirror image is nothing that belongs to him. [31]

This analysis of vision places its processes within a causal web of determinations which reduces the resulting images' efficacy to one of representation. The richer notion of resemblance, which moves painters to gaze with fascination at things, becomes an illusion. We do not see anything real on a piece of paper; rather we perceive a series of marks which "represent" matter extended in space. These marks, as Descartes himself notes, "excite our thought to conceive," as do signs and words "which in no way resemble the things they signify." [32] The drawing becomes the means whereby the thought of such and such an image is "occasioned." Vision becomes a code which carries a message but not the Being of the perceived object of

which it is the message.

The magic of intentional species--the old idea of effective resemblance as suggested by mirrors and paintings--loses its final argument if the entire potency of a painting is that of a text to be read, a text totally free of promiscuity between the seeing and the seen.[33]

Descartes' analysis of vision cannot account for the experience of Paul Klee. Things could never look at us. Sight does not even bring them into me. These trees are simply sense data that have come into my possession through my eyes. We no longer can speak of the vision we experience. We speak instead of a model of vision. These other experiences of vision, these "occult operations" together with the "potions and idols they concoct" are nothing but affective responses. Even color cannot be really out there. Rather we associate or invent a certain feeling to go with a certain face that appears before us. The pleasure we draw from such icons is no longer of ontological importance, but becomes a contingent, subjective, ontic response. Painting's power will

make us see in the same way in which we actually see the thing itself, even though the thing is absent. Especially it makes us see a space where there is none. The picture is a flat thing contriving to give us what we would see in the (actual) presence of "diversely contoured" things...[34]

Painting's purpose becomes to trick its beholder's eye into seeing something is there when it really isn't.

This is precisely where Descartes' analysis disintegrates. The history of painting demonstrates that there is no single given technique which can render faithfully exactly the way

things in space are perceived. Even linear perspective is not without ambiguity since it opens up several approaches to painting.

Thus plane projection does not always provoke our thought to reach the true form of things, as Descartes believed...Something in space escapes our attempts to look at it from "above." [35]

Space is not a homogeneous, self-contained container of all other things. To experience space is to be in it. We cannot get outside it to determine its absolute nature. Thus, the problem of perspective is always the problem of how one man sees individual things in relation to other things. His vision forms a field in which space bends and warps in relation to what is expected by the seer, and in what context the thing seen is found.

The thing in space is not simply a stimulus for seeing. It is part of a field of vision. Likewise, "no symbolic form (within a painting) ever functions as a stimulus. Wherever it has been put to work and has acted, it has been put to work and has acted within the entire context of the oeuvre, and not in the slightest by means of a trompe l'oeil." [36]

This is not to deny the existence of lightwaves or electrical impulses in the nervous system. But it is to deny that these stimuli to our perception of a painting suffice to explain our vision of that painting. The oeuvre itself is seen as a context, en totum, before any of its pieces are identified as this square stool or that blue eye. We do not see object x as its selfsubsistent identity, then object y, then the space

between them, and then add these three disparate elements together to find a relationship between the two objects in space. A theory which postulated pure sensation would find it necessary to compose an object from its various bits of sense impressions. We would list various discriminating features of an object, and when we reached a threshold where the features distinguished this object from every other object, we would then be able to see what it is. A sense-data theory of vision would be necessarily additive in nature, since the various stimuli must be combined into a co-ordinated and comprehensive totality.

A sense-data theory of vision will place the problem of identity before that of resemblance. Before two things can be part of a larger whole, we must identify them so that we know how they fit into that larger whole, and, indeed, what that larger whole presents itself as. Wallace Stevens remarks that "both in nature and in metaphor, identity is the vanishing point of resemblance." [37] When things are exactly what they are understood as, they lose their ability to be part of other things.

The proliferation of resemblances extends an object. The point at which this process begins, or rather at which this growth begins, is the point at which ambiguity has been reached. The ambiguity that is so favorable to the poetic mind is precisely the ambiguity favorable to resemblance. In this ambiguity, the intensification of reality by resemblance increases realization. [38]

Stevens, like Merleau-Ponty, finds a more basic structure to our world than identity. Stevens speaks of the "resemblances between things as one of the significant components of the

structure of reality. "It binds together. It is the base of appearance." [39] As in the case of Merleau-Ponty, Stevens' argument for signification within the world is dia-critical rather than determinate. If things were simply determinate, insofar as they are what they are, they could be nothing else. But objects can resemble one another because their meaning is not simply in their dissimilarity from all other objects. Rather, the object is dissimilar within a context of discovered and undiscovered similarities. The language of painting explores this similarity between things. But in order to explore things at all, they must be put in a context of other things. Their significance is not in and of themselves, but comes from their relation with the whole fabric of our vision. Another way of putting this is to say that an individual thing is not a thing at all. It is only because it marks itself as a divergence from other things, as a specialization of our total field of vision, that it can ever exist for us. Thus, the technique of a painter is not to render each thing as it appears in and of itself in a space that is homogeneous emptiness. Instead, the technique of the painter presents a style of seeing things; it presents us with a context within which things become themselves. Space is not a fixed and determinate construction any more than objects are. "Something in space escapes our attempt to look on it from above." [40] If there are not determinate things, and if there is not a determinate space, then the statement that "the language of painting is never instituted by nature..." [41] becomes understandable. Nature

does not present us with a finished space filled with finished things for which we must simply find the appropriate technique to render them as if they were before us, even if they are not. Rather, painting's language is to "made and remade over and over again. The perspective of the Renaissance is no infallible gimmick." [42]

Like spoken and written language, the stylistic language of the painting is diacritical. [43] And, as in language, "It is the lateral relations of one sign to another which makes each of them significant, so that meaning appears only at the intersection of and as it were in the interval between words." [44]

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If Merleau-Ponty is correct, that is, if it is true that a painting embodies a system of correspondences, a network of visual correlations which bind themselves together through the dynamic of a pre-figuring whole and which are not reducible to a conceptual construct of that whole, if it is true that any attempt to fix space as absolute and outside of our primordial vision is doomed to a reduction of vision to representation, what then are we to say of classical painting in its figurative and perspectival incarnations? Certainly, as Merleau-Ponty himself has noted

Classical painting cannot be defined by its representations of nature or by its reference to "our senses." [45]

If the classical painter were simply to put down the "apparent

size of each object" in a mathematical formulation that "transfers...measurements onto paper," then we end up constructing "representations, in which each thing ceases to call the whole of vision to itself, makes concessions to other things and no longer occupies on the paper any more than the space which they leave to it." [46] Merleau-Ponty terms this act a "renouncement of the world" which abandons primordial vision by fixing it absolutely within the strait-jacket of a heavily perspectival technique, in which "I think of and dominate my vision as God can when he consider his idea of me." [47]

Jan Vermeer of Delft was a painter firmly rooted in the classical tradition of representational painting. Many experts have concluded that he made use of a camera-obscura. [48] But even if they are mistaken, there is no dispute that his pictures are permeated with a precise, at times stunning rendering of space that is blatantly perspectival. Laurence Gowing finds a "god-like detachment" in this accomplishment.

His pictures are so invariably and completely convincing, they abstain so entirely from the suggestion of any other purpose, that at times we wonder whether the intention is not actually to deceive us. The record is so inflexibly impartial, so unchallengeable and perfect, that it is on the point of becoming a counterfeit. It is indeed only in painting which openly pursues this purpose, the painting of trompe l'oeil, at first sight the extreme opposite of the stylistic refinement which we associate with Vermeer's name, that such unremitting closeness to appearance is elsewhere to be found. [49]

Descartes' analysis of vision seems to explain most accurately the visual world of Vermeer's canvases. Vermeer catches things "cold" in his gaze, a gaze which is not the

primordial gaze of Merleau-Ponty, but a highly developed, theory-laden gaze in which geometric perspective maps out the exact placement of each object within the painting. Things give us the impression that they are "almost real." We find here the same ideal as that of Descartes; the paintings counterfeit space and its contents to create a model of the world frozen in a single moment. Must we conclude that these paintings deny our primordial vision, that they give us a world in which we are cut off from things and in which the gaze no longer is in the things it sees?

Yet Gowing concludes that Vermeer's works are finally opposed to giving us a counterfeit of things.

For him (Vermeer) the play of light upon form not only conveys its substance, but also subtly denies it. The illusion which he seeks is not closeness but distance...There is in his thought the paradoxical accompaniment of its clarity, a deep character of evasiveness, a perpetual withdrawal...The very closeness of his approach to a pure visual standard of representation was in fact the vessel in which he contained a strange depth of emotion, a complex pattern of feeling in which the attraction of the tangible world and a rejection of it were at last reconciled.[50]

Vermeer presents an interesting paradox; the space of his paintings is strongly perspectival and yet this space becomes the vessel by which a complex withdrawal from the tangible, determinate world of things is achieved. While Merleau-Ponty's analysis of vision would not necessarily preclude such a phenomenon, neither does it present a detailed case for its possibility. As he points out,

Classical painting wants to be as convincing as things and does not think that it can reach us except as things do--by imposing an unimpeachable spectacle upon

our senses. It relies in principle upon the perceptual apparatus, considered as a natural means and as a datum of communication between men. Don't we all have eyes which function more or less in the same way? And if the painter has known how to discover the sufficient signs of depth or velvet, won't we all, in looking at the painting see the same spectacle, which will rival that of Nature?[51]

Yet, Merleau-Ponty does not wish to deny the power of classical painting. Thus, he asserts that there must be another force at work in classical painting, perhaps unconsciously, that suffices to bring about in the place of simple representation "that metamorphosis which painting later became aware of." [52] Gowing finds hints in Vermeer's works of exactly such a metamorphosis. In the concluding section of this paper I will consider the work of Vermeer to determine how it is that he transcends the implications of perspectival technique and remains true to a primordial sense of vision.

*

Vermeer, like any painter of the seventeenth century, inherited a tradition of painting that was heavily perspectival in nature. Caravaggio's influence had moved painting towards naturalism. Painters were beginning to produce still lifes and genre paintings inspired by everyday occurrences and imbued with recognizable and profane human emotions. The art work was being weaned away from its overwhelmingly sublime and religious sensibility. This is particularly an accomplishment of the Protestant north during the Baroque era. The genre scene to which Vermeer confines himself in most of his paintings was also

a product of a rising middle class in Holland which desired an art that would complement the interiors of their homes. This was an art no longer made for churches; it hung in dining rooms or even in the nooks of blacksmith shops.[53]

Yet, Vermeer made his own living selling other men's art. Most of his canvases were still in his possession at his death. And while he had inherited the genre scene as a convention, he painted it as an intimate mediation rather than as a commercial venture. His canvases are obsessive: they return to the same room, the same themes again and again, reworking their relationships, adjusting their outcomes. This personal dynamic radically altered the nature of the genre painting produced by Vermeer: these are no longer sensuous or dramatic renderings of everyday Dutch households, but rather slices of time enveloped in an intense stillness, infused with diacritical tensions. His paintings, in spite of their everyday settings, did not reflect the off-handedness nor the moral didacticism that characterized many of the Dutch genre painters.[54]

One theme that stands out in particular within his works is the gaze. In his early paintings men gaze upon women in highly ambivalent contexts. Sometimes the gaze is pictured from behind; we see the large form of a soldier turned towards a woman at a table, but the gaze of the soldier is hidden from our view.[55] There is always an implied criticism of such gazes: they seem to capture insufficiently the women upon whom they alight. Edward A. Snow explores the gaze of a male suitor in

"Woman Drinking with a Gentleman":

Hat and cloak work to reduce the wearer to scarcely more than his look--a distant, hovering regard. The distance measured by this masculine gaze is the most negatively rendered one in all of Vermeer (the cloak forms a bridge from his eyes to her hand that seems calculated to offend perception). Regardless of what motivates it, it is depicted as something that objectifies, condescends and demeans. The gentleman's lips curls upward into an expression that threatens to read as distaste or amused contempt instead of admiration...[56]

Buried in these portrayals of gazes is Vermeer's deeper complaint: his own gaze. Vermeer's gaze is in one sense the perfect gaze of the arch-representationalist. His gaze is comprehensive in regard to things. Yet, Vermeer's gaze must ultimately be measured by the same standard which measures the gaze of the suitor in "Woman Drinking with a Gentleman." The suitor's gaze dehumanizes its object. It "objectifies." This is precisely the effect of Vermeer's perspectival gaze. It draws the woman into the space of the painting as a thing; it puts her body before us, fully determinate in its presence.

Yet Vermeer's paintings finally escape the effects of the objectifying gaze even as they continue to employ a perspectival technique. We first encounter the terms of this escape in the Dresden "Letter Reader." The figure is oblivious to our inspection of her. It is as if we have come into room stealthily or accidentally. In front of us Vermeer piles curtains, bed spreads and fruit in a tense and thick conglomeration of things past which we must fight to see "her."

She makes no appeal; she claims no place in the tangible world. The whole purpose is to exclude her from it, from the world of touch, of magnetic

attraction, to confine her with the envelope of space...The delicacy of Vermeer's approach to figure painting, his cautious advance upon humanity down the measured, fortified field of his perspective suggests an element in his attitude of something like fear. The caution, the tentativeness with which he approaches the "Letter Reader"...reveals the enigmatic significance that he attaches to her.[57]

This painting no longer pictures one person (usually male) observing another (usually female). Rather, the painting is the gaze of the painter as he comes upon this figure almost accidentally. She does not gaze back. Yet we sense a diffidence in his gaze as it approaches her form. She stands in front of us, unaware, silent and passive. She is like a thing, and yet not a thing at all. But Vermeer proceeds to render her amidst these other things as a thing. This is the only solution that his perspectival technique allows. She is, after all, a body, and a body is a thing. But she is not just a thing. A body is also a consciousness of the world. Thus, Vermeer's diffidence. To paint the body as a thing is to lose the body's presence as an other's gaze. We sense that Vermeer must be struggling with his own gaze, trying to put "her" there before us without violating her own integrity. Thus, Vermeer paints a tension between visual and tactile qualities. Vermeer fights the implications of his technique even as he pushes that technique to its greatest achievement. This diacritical tension is precisely the sort of metamorphosis that Merleau-Ponty predicts must occur in the classical tradition. This metamorphosis haunts the work of Vermeer.

As Vermeer paints his exact and clearly articulated space, he disturbs this articulation with an in-pouring of light from a single window. This light mysteriously disintegrates the solidity and fixedness of the various objects in the room. This light is not essentially shadow; it is essentially color. It does not define lines on the figure by contrasting shadings. Instead, the colors shift in nuances creating a vibratory dissonance that imperceptibly shatters the linear qualities of his figures. It is as if Descartes, who also experimented with the camera obscura, began to bathe himself in the mysterious virtuosity of color, that inconstant, mutant aspect of vision which he entirely ignores within the Dioptric. In Vermeer's rooms, even as space becomes fixed, light interrupts this process with its own ambiguous declaration of being. In "Allegory of the New Testament," Vermeer dampens this enthusiasm for light. The effect is disastrous. The figure of this painting is drab and lifeless. It is fixed in space, articulate, and yet it fails to arouse our wonder. And in an "Artist in His Studio" Vermeer gently satirizes this artist who paints the garland on top of a model's head. The garland that we see on the real model melts into light. The painter's beginning statement of this garland is naturally flat. It does not contain, at least yet, the nuances of light that will recreate Vermeer's wonderful light. Vermeer seems to ask, "Will he see it"? The fact that he has dressed his model as a rather unimaginative personification of history hints that he probably will not. Luckily Vermeer does observe this "marriage of

light," as Gowing has described it, with the precisely articulated world of perspectival painting.

In the window of the Dresden "Letter Reader" we return to the mystery of light. We see her face, broken up and flattened, cubist in its implications. The wonder of this mirrored face is its play of seeing with seen. We sense here the primal unity of things and consciousness in perception. And there is a further implication. If the window were to drift slightly shut, it would come to rest upon the gazer's face, this painter who would then confront his own seeing in light.

Most critics agree that Vermeer's dialectical explorations of visibility were most dramatically resolved in the "Head of a Young Girl." Here we observe the same disintegrating play of light against the tactile qualities of her form. But now a gaze confronts us. She has caught us even before we look. We cannot simply inspect her. And neither can we possess our vision of her. Her eyes haunt our seeing of her until we feel that the painting itself is looking at us, possessing us.

Faced with an expression that seems always to have already elicited our response, that not only seeks out but appropriates and inhabits our gaze, we can scarcely separate what is visible on the canvas from what happens inside us as we look at it. Indeed it seems the essence of the image is to subvert the distance between seeing and feeling, to deny the whole vocabulary of "objective" and "subjective." [58]

The final accomplishment of Vermeer's paintings is that they introduce in our confrontation with them the same problem which inspired them. Our gaze is questioned. Like the painter we are put before a space in which other gazes, other beings reside.

And like the painter we must interrogate the means by which these beings can come within ourselves. We sense an appeal in this work to a mystery: within our gaze there is a confusion of who we are with what we see. Even the most precise attempt to render the determinate geometry of space cannot escape the ambiguity of this essential foundation to our vision and by implication to our own consciousness. For the painter the gaze is the labyrinth of the world's being. There is no final thread by which to discover its exterior.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago, 1970, p. 114.
- ²Ibid., p. 126.
- ³Ibid.
- ⁴Ibid., p. 127.
- ⁵Ibid.
- ⁶Ibid., p. 129
- ⁷Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith (London, 1978), p. 3.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 4.
- ⁹Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, trans. James M. Edie (Chicago, 1964), p. 15.
- ¹⁰Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, p. 5.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 11.
- ¹³Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, pp. 160-61.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 160.
- ¹⁵Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, p. 214.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 216.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 217.
- ¹⁸Ibid.
- ¹⁹Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, pp. 162-63.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 163

- ²¹Ibid., p. 161.
- ²²Ibid., p. 164.
- ²³Ibid., p. 166.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 167.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 166.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 169.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 170.
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²Ibid., pp. 170-71.
- ³³Ibid., p. 171.
- ³⁴Ibid., p. 172.
- ³⁵Ibid., pp. 174-75.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 175.
- ³⁷Wallace Stevens, The Necessary Angel (New York, 1951), p. 72.
- ³⁸Ibid., pp. 78-79.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 72.
- ⁴⁰Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, p. 175.
- ⁴¹Ibid.
- ⁴²Ibid., p. 178.
- ⁴³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Signs (Chicago, 1964), p. 45.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 42.

- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 48.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 49.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 50.
- ⁴⁸ Laurence Gowing, Vermeer (London, 1953), p. 21.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 25.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., p. 48.
- ⁵² Merleau-Ponty, Signs, p. 48.
- ⁵³ H. Keningsberger, The World of Vermeer (New York, 1971), pp. 9-15.
- ⁵⁴ Gowing, Vermeer, pp. 48-51.
- ⁵⁵ Edward A. Snow, A Study of Vermeer (Berkeley, 1979), pp. 72-74.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 40-42.
- ⁵⁷ Gowing, Vermeer, p. 35.
- ⁵⁸ Snow, A Study of Vermeer, p. 3.

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POETIC LANGUAGE AND THE SPEAKING OF THE SELF

When the self demands its own uncovering, it does not demand it during "the leisure of a blue day." The realization that I do not know who I am is frightening. It plunges me into a yet uncharted abyss of my existence where it seems I must learn again myself or disappear. How is it possible that I can come to say that I do not know who I am? Certainly I know that I have a past, and certainly it is myself who moves these fingers across the keys of this typewriter while the world around me blooms incessantly. I stop and speak this question. I say, "Who am I?". Already, this earth is at my disposal, whether I wish it or not, whose tastes rest upon my tongue, whose creatures graze against my flesh, whose language embodies my desires, my opinions and even my insistent question.

Still, I am unsatisfied. It is not enough that there be a world. I sense however indistinctly a need to locate my existence. I am not these storms of light, no matter how awesome, that flood through the window, nor the words that I have used to say this sentence. All of these things are thrown into me or thrown away from me, but they are not what I might call myself.

I find everywhere around me evidence that my own self has existed. There is the music that I play upon a piano, or the love that I give a woman. These accomplishments seem to have journeyed out of myself and into the world in order to coagulate

that indistinct wound of the self that I cannot find. Can I not grasp hold of myself through these accomplishments in this world hovering about me? My actions, my products, my words show my presence. But, as Sartre has noted, each of these enworldments of my self fails to hold the self that has done them. Once the self has acted, putting itself into something "out there," the self finds itself outside itself in the determinate form of that something. I can attempt to possess this uncovering of myself, but eventually I will fail to recognize this enworldment, this entthinging of the self, as my self. The "who" that I am is not caught in this object or even in these others living around me. These appearances of my self mysteriously escape my project. In them a sort of self appears before me, but my indistinctness continues.[1]

Sartre argues that my consciousness, my self, does not possess being; it is a nothingness. Perhaps I am in bad faith, but I rebel against this conclusion. Yet, the problem that Sartre describes remains with me. My self cannot be put before me. It escapes my attempts to materialize its substance as something I can finally unravel and lay out before my consciousness. It refuses to become an object of knowledge for me. How can my self be my self when it escapes my knowledge of it?

But I cannot ask "Who am I?" as if I am asking "What is it?" "It" cannot be a self. To know myself as an "it" would be to treat myself as if I were a determinate object of knowledge

that could be abstracted from my act of knowing. The self becomes an object of knowledge before the self. This object of knowledge could be a physical object or a meta-physical object, but in either case this object serves as a sort of encapsulation of the self for the self. This self that we seek to know as an "it" is fixed and inert. This "it," this object of knowledge answers a different question. "It" appears when I say "What am I?".

Gabriel Marcel discusses this phenomenon. He terms the attempt to specify "what" something is as "characterization," which

implies a certain setting of myself in front of the other, and a sort of radical banishment or cutting-off of me from it. I myself bring about this banishment, by myself implicitly coming to a halt, separating myself as a thing bounded by its outlines. It is only in relation to this implicitly limited thing that I can place whatever I am trying to characterize.[2]

Marcel calls such characterization a sort of possession "of that which cannot be possessed." [3]

Gilbert Ryle develops a different sort of critique of the same problem. He contends that the attempt to posit mental phenomenon such as the self, as if they were things of which we can have conscious knowledge, builds a fantasy world of metaphysical objects which mirrors in its dynamics the normal occurrences of the material world.

The differences between the physical and the mental are thus represented as differences inside the common framework of the categories of 'thing', 'stuff', 'attribute', 'state', 'process', 'change', 'cause' and 'effect.' Minds are things but different sorts of things from bodies; mental processes are causes and effects, but different sorts of causes and effects

from bodily movements.[4]

Both Ryle and Marcel attempt to move away from a conception of the self as a "para-thing." I am in sympathy with this move.

But if I am not a thing, why might I feel inevitably drawn to a mirror when I question the possibility of the uncovering of my self? Is not this image just another product, another thing set before me? It is "out there." I am "in here" in my seeing. This image puts itself before me, like a mechanical dummy, the inevitable result of haphazard light waves that strike my body, then the mirror and then enter my eyes which record these waves as "data" and present it to this "self" whom I question so incessantly.

But I cannot remain indifferent before this figure. If it seems ugly to me, I wince. Sometimes it will seem frail and lost. Other times its eyes are filled with anger. A Cartesian might charge I am committing a pathetic fallacy. I am projecting what I myself feel into what I see before me. But what I see in this mirror sometimes startles me with feelings I had not yet discovered. It uncovers me in that face that stares vaguely distrustful and yet in wonder at an entity "out there" that is not just any entity, but is my face.

This mirror suggests that I come to know about myself in my vision rather than apart from it. If I am to ask the question "Who am I?" in such a way that searches for some absolute dot which I might recognize as myself, I would be searching for a

way to know that excludes the way perception knows things. In place of vision I would discover a way of the self being present to itself that is absolute and unmediated. I look into the mirror and discover a stranger that I begin to suspect I call myself. That face with its thin lips, its blue eyes, its expression of puzzlement pulls at me. I cannot imagine not being pulled at by that face. If I were to stare at it indifferently, as if it were a lump of coal, I would court the loss of the very self I wish to question. I can imagine a man who looks at his image as if it were an object. It does not seem strange to him because it does not remind him of himself. He has no reason to think it confronts his own familiarity with the world. He simply looks at it. He does not see the expression in the wrinkles at the fold of the mouth. He does not find himself startled at the luminescent eyes gazing into him. He simply observes an object before him.[5]

But I do not find an object in the mirror before me. Rather, I find something that I can address both as "I" and as "you." This image mixes the world's being with my own. Inevitably I speak my question to this other self that is my self: the question "Who am I?" in which is buried "Who are you?"

Its answer is not always comforting. In The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge, Rilke describes a scene in Malte's childhood when one day he put on a mask, swirled scarves around his body and searched out his image in the mirror. At first, he

is fascinated. Then, after having overturned a small table holding a crystal bottle of perfume and some porcelain parrots, Malte discovers he cannot release himself from his own disguise. The garments cling only tighter as he pulls at the cords which bind them to his body. He rushes to the mirror to aid his undressing...

But for this the mirror had just been waiting. Its moment of retaliation had come. While I strove in boundlessly increasing anguish to squeeze somehow out of my disguise, it forced me by what means I do not know, to lift my eyes and imposed on me an image, no a reality, a strange, unbelievable and monstrous reality, with which against my will, I became permeated: for now the mirror was the stronger, and I was the mirror. I stared at this great, terrifying unknown before me, and it seemed to me appalling to be alone with him. But at the very moment I thought this, the worst befell: I lost all sense, I simply ceased to exist. For one second I had an indescribable, painful and futile longing for myself, then there was only he: there was nothing but he. I ran away, but now it was he that ran.[6]

We might see Malte's experience as a childlike example of Sartrean bad faith. He succumbs to the power of the mirror to picture his existence in the world as a thing. But then, he recognizes with terror the loss of what he had thought was his own self in this strange self hovering in the mirror before him. He seemingly has confused the question "Who am I?" with "What am I?" and in the "What am I?" an abyss suddenly loomed that swallowed up the self he had been accustomed to being. He was no longer little Malte playing in the attic of his parent's estate. Rather he was this image in the mirror, this terrible, unknown image which he had become between one breath and the next.

In Sartre's view he was neither image. He was an abyss, a refusal to be any image. Unable to acknowledge this Sartrean self, Malte finds himself swallowed up in the "he" or "it" of the mirror. But it is not really the image in that mirror which disturbs him. It is that he is nothing that disturbs him so profoundly.

From another viewpoint the experience is even more frightening--yet wondrous. In my analysis of the mirror I have suggested that the self is mixed with the image it finds in the mirror. The self discovers itself as an expressive body put before itself. It is only because the self is there as a body before itself that it discovers the mirror pulling at itself. But the pull of the image of the mirror is also the pull of something beyond the self. The self discovers that as it says "Who am I?" to the image in the mirror, it also says "Who are you?" There is no splitting of these questions. One is implicit in the other. This "you" which I discover in the mirror is not simply a representation of "what" I am, nor even an acknowledgement of simply "who" I am. It is also the confrontation with a "you," an otherness that I am not. This otherness that I am not mixes with this self that I am. There is a sudden expiration of one self into the other. The self is utterly violated. It has become something other than itself, although not in bad faith as Sartre suggests. Rather, the self finds itself in the very odd position of being totally other to itself exactly as it is itself.

This phenomenon is not limited to mirrors. Nor is it always so frightening. Let us consider again the question "Who am I?". Such a question is not asked knowingly of one who is unable to recognize the problem such a question poses. "Who am I?" can be asked only to one who might answer. If this respondent tells me "what" I am, rather than "who" I am, this answer will be as insufficient as my own answer to "what" I am. In this case I would simply know that this other self sees me as an "it." This is precisely what motivates Sartre's view that others cannot unveil myself to me. For Sartre the other can only know myself as an "it" which answers the question "What?"

Further, this other self to whom I direct my questions cannot be an "it." I do not direct my question "Who am I?" to one whom I suspect can only ask himself "What am I?". This self before me must be in the same quandary as myself. Within the question "Who am I?", "Who are you?" is inherent. The act of asking the former question acknowledges a "you" to whom the question is inherently addressed. Even if the question is posed by myself to myself, the question is asked by an "I" to a "you." The self poses the question to itself as it listens at the same moment to the matter which the question poses.

This second self listens to this question "Who am I?" within which is buried "Who are you?". This listening, even before any answer might be given constitutes the basis of our acknowledgement for one another. In this questioning and this listening a certain power in language has been uncovered.

Language brings two selves searching for their selves into a shared significance. We both understand that each has discovered the absence of his own self, and that the other self, listening before me, embodies that question as much as I do.

The language that brings the question "Who am I?" to the "you," whether that "you" is another self, or whether that "you" is the listening of our own selves to our selves, this language makes possible the first uncovering of the self that allowed the self to determine that it did not know itself or the other. There would be no question at all without language. There would be no struggle to uncover the self if the question "Who am I?" were not uttered no matter how silently within the self. A self as a possibility would not even be named. This fact implies that between our demand to know and that which we seek to know is the mediation of language. Language arises within ourselves and between ourselves and other selves to mediate our entry into one another, and even our entry into ourselves. It is against this property of language that the asking of "Who am I?" gains its significance. Unlike "What is it?", our question demands that language be always with us. As in the case of my body set before me in the mirror, language does not set itself apart from myself in the question "Who am I?". Rather, I am my language.

This is not to say that I am language in every sense of language. The remainder of this paper will be an attempt to clarify exactly how language and the self are related. The first step of my analysis will be an inspection of the problem

of representational language. The second step will pose the possibility of another sort of language. To search out this language I will turn to the play, King Lear, by Shakespeare.

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The search to uncover the self leads us inevitably to a consideration of the role of language in our struggle both to utter and to answer the insistent question, "Who am I?". At every moment language intertwines with our search, hinting at a mysterious pact between the self who poses this question and its language. And even if the self remains silent, this silence becomes language. Our silences reach out to our moments of speech in order to focus and to reveal more fully the location of our being. Cordelia's silence before her father, King Lear, in Shakespeare's play speaks far more eloquently and sincerely than her sisters' ornate rhetoric. Lear's inability to hear Cordelia's silence as language bears tragic results for both himself and Cordelia.

We are accustomed to thinking that language is essentially referential. From this viewpoint, our language gains its meaning from the objects or ideas to which it is associated or which it signifies. In its association with an entity, language gains its power to become synonymous with the definition of the entity. The word's power is not in itself, but is in the object or idea to which the word adheres for its significance. Like a plastic coating adhering to a painted board, the word assumes

the form of the entity for which it is a sign. Language is a code, in which various entities are represented but which is totally meaningless in itself except that it can picture in a parallel fashion a real world. The word "cat" comes to mean cat only insofar as it is defined in relation to a real class of animals, whether this class is perceived or is simply our idea. Language becomes a tool in which the world is gridded and one object or idea is set off from another. Definitions serve as correspondence rules that attach the word in a consistent fashion either to things, to thoughts of things, or to our emotive responses.

Such conceptions of language have haunted philosophy. The project of an ideal language, conceived by Leibniz and given a more concrete form by Russell, searches for a language in which each word will represent only one class of things. Thus, we find Wittgenstein insisting in his early work that every statement has a precise sense, and that every statement has this precise sense because it is pictorial.

A factual proposition gets its precise sense only because its words either represent existing things or are analyzable into other words which represent existing things.[7]

Such a language, once formulated, would be placed into a parallel correspondence with a verified world to the point where one would not even be able to say false things.

However, if we are to take seriously the self's question, "Who am I?", a representational language will be discarded. A representational language can only say that which can be

encoded, that which can be defined as if it had boundaries which could be pictured, and as if it were able to be put before us so that we could "picture" it within our language. But the self does not stand outside of itself, at least in this manner, and so the self experiences itself as an abyss. When we attempt to represent the self we "see" a darkness rather than a thing. The self resists encoding.

Further, the self's use of representational language will be expressive in a rather narrow and determined manner. There will be an inner meaning which the self holds as an idea or perception, and to which the word gives an outer expression or picture. Thus, language is attached to the self's thoughts, like tags to invisible balloons in order to make these thoughts public. We say that language represents these thoughts. Merleau-Ponty has noted that "our analyses of thought gives us the impression that before it finds the words which express it, it is already a sort of ideal text that our sentences attempt to translate." [8] Heidegger criticizes this conception of thought in relation to language as a reductionism which ignores the primordial power of language and especially of poetic language.

The idea of speech as an utterance is the most common. It already presupposes the idea of something internal that utters or externalizes itself. If we take language to be utterance, we give an external surface notion of it at the very moment when we explain it by recourse to something internal. [9]

If thoughts are to be "translated," they must be like things with distinct boundaries, so that they may be pictured precisely by language. These thoughts are like various atoms

which the self holds in its consciousness like a bag of marbles, taking out whichever one it may need and expressing it in language so that other minds may also find the same marble through a process of decoding. The thoughts aggregate within the self, yet make no appreciable difference in the self who is inherently defined by such a view's implications as simply the capacity to hold these thoughts. Merleau-Ponty criticizes this view:

To make of language a means or a code for thought is to break it. When we do so we prohibit ourselves from understanding the depth to which words sound within us--from understanding that we have a need, a passion, for speaking and must (as soon as we think) speak to ourselves; that words have power to arouse thoughts and implant henceforth inalienable dimensions of thought; and that they put responses on our lips we did not know we were capable of, teaching us, Sartre says, our own thought. If language duplicated externally a thought which in its solitude legislates for every other possible thought, it would not be, in Freud's terms, a total 'reinvestment' of our life. It would not be our element as water is the element of fishes. A parallel thought and expression would each have to be complete in its own order; the irruption of one into the other or the interception of one by the other would be inconceivable... Of course, the very system of language has its thinkable structure. But when we speak we do not think about it as the linguist does; we do not even think about it--we think about what we are saying. It is not just that we cannot think of two things at a time. It would seem that in order to have something signified before us (whether at emission or reception), we must stop picturing its code or even its message to ourselves, and make ourselves sheer operators of the spoken word.[10]

The self that is evoked by "Who am I?" is a self without fixed boundaries, without the power of standing before itself to be pictured to itself. Thus, the speaking of the answer to this question cannot be thought of as the speaking of a code or reference for something that is really the thing which this word

simply stands for or signifies. Within the abyss of our searching for ourselves there is no thing for which the word may stand. We are left in silence, or within other modes of language that evoke in metaphor what many of us are likely to term the "unreal." From the viewpoint of representational language poetic language or silence stands for nothing that can be pictured before us in a precise fashion. Thus, when we are silent or when we speak poetically, our language is meaningless. While a representationalist will wish to rescue poetry by claiming it is simply representational language in a more arresting form (e.g. a metaphor is really a suppressed simile expressing a logical relation in the form of analogy), this reduction of poetry to representation implicitly unsettles the self who demands "who" and not "what."

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We now can ask the central question of this paper. If the self is indeed not a bounded thing or concept that can be encoded in language, can it then be said that there is no language which will take in this elusive self, and thus, being no language, can we then say there is no way for that self to be revealed in language? This would certainly be the argument of many thinkers. If evidence is to be construed as that which can be uttered as a representation of that which is, what have we here to represent? There is only an abyss.

Shakespeare's play, King Lear, struggles with precisely this question. At the play's beginning King Lear demands of his daughters: "Which of you shall we say doth love us most..."[11] The first and the second sister answer him in glowing terms, each attempting to outdo the other's words. Then Lear turns to Cordelia:

..what can you say to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.
 Cordelia: Nothing my lord.
 Lear: Nothing?
 Cordelia: Nothing.
 Lear: Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.[12]

This answer enrages Lear. He understands Cordelia to be insolent, interpreting her silence as the refusal or inability of Cordelia to love him. He disdains the advice of Kent, his most trusted advisor, who says:

Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,
 Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds
 Reverb no hollowness.[13]

Lear's questioning of his three daughters is not unlike the appeal "Who am I?". Yet what Lear expects is proof, evidence that he is loved, evidence that can be given only insofar as it can be represented to Lear. Likewise, Lear does not simply state his own love, but also wishes to give evidence of it by his award of his kingdom, now split into three parts, to his daughters. In return he expects that his daughters will prove by their words their love for him.

One might say that while attempting to ask "Who am I?", Lear blurted out "What am I?". His daughters' words are to serve as a representation of "what" he is. The more vigorous

the claim of the language to represent that love, the greater must be the love of that daughter. This love gives Lear proof that he is what he believes himself to be: a powerful and beneficent father who loves his daughters generously and wisely. The image of Lear to himself is something that Lear sees as an "it." He seeks security in the possession of this "it" by demanding its representation from his daughters.

The speeches of Goneril and Reagan at the play's beginning stand in opposition to Cordelia's. Cordelia says "nothing" while they attempt to say everything. Goneril states, "I love you more than word can wield the matter." [14] The exaggeration of Goneril's speech bothers us. We suspect that nothing can be loved as much as she claims she loves Lear. But it is not simply her grandiose claims that unsettles us. Goneril also implies to Lear that her love, whether she really feels it or not, is readily apparent to herself. Her love does not seem dark or mysterious; she possesses it as one might possess a castle or a kingdom. This is precisely the sort of love for which Lear has been searching.

Further, while Goneril complains of language's shortcomings, they do not seem to affect her capacity for self knowledge. She seems able to be quite sure of her love, even though she cannot say it.

Her love exists in her like an organ for which she searches the right tag. Sadly, there are no "tags" worthy of it. This is because she contends her love is beyond any quantity; it is

always "more than." But if her love escapes any quantification and thus cannot be represented, then how can she herself know surely that she loves Lear? If this love is within her like a bounded thing, then she could be sure of its possession. But she contends there is something about this love that is unrepresentable. It is not in her like a thing. Yet she insists on acting as if she possesses it. Her claims contradict one another. Yet Lear's desire for evidence of his own self blinds him to her hypocrisy. His initial assumption has been that language can represent love. This assumption now appears to have serious flaws.

Regan's response reinforces this notion of language. She states after her sister's speech that "In my true heart/ I find she names my very deed of love/Only she comes too short." [15] Evidently her infinity of love is greater by an infinity than Goneril's.

Cordelia reacts to the implications of her sisters' speeches with dismay: "What shall Cordelia speak?"[16] Lear's question searches her more deeply than her sisters. She is not as sure of her love. It is not in her as an already completed thing which might be translated however imperfectly by means of rhetoric into an outward expression of inward sentiment. Her language cannot be the clothing of a pre-formed thought. Regan and Goneril criticize language because it inadequately represents their love. But for both of them language remains representational in its project. Cordelia's criticism of

language is more profound. She rebels at the attempt to make a picture of her love. "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave/My heart into my mouth." [17]

Cordelia's answer is ambiguous. It carries two senses, one of which is creative and one of which is destructive. In this latter sense Cordelia's "nothing" threatens to become impotent in its speaking. Her love weighs upon her "ponderously," but her tongue cannot speak it. She seems troubled by the ease with which her sisters find and paint their love. Yet Cordelia's first answer, which says nothing beyond that she does love Lear, seems inadequate. Given this attitude towards language, love could be indicated but never shared. One will feel it darkly in one's heart; it will weigh upon one; but the tongue will remain unmoved, and in an important sense the love will remain unaccomplished. In the creative sense Cordelia's "nothing" is a genuine response. Unlike her sisters, she makes a serious although pessimistic attempt to show herself. Because of this, Cordelia's answer resonates beyond the failure of a representational project. She speaks her silence in this word. The speaking of this silence attempts to evoke rather than to represent for Lear the depth of her "ponderous" love. Cordelia's "nothing" calls out for further speech precisely because it startles Lear, undermining so profoundly his naive confidence in his language and in his self. The "nothing" refuses to be pictured in a representational speech. It calls out for a different sort of speaking.

Cordelia insists upon answering to Lear the question "Who am I?" in place of "What am I?". Lear becomes enraged. This rage's severity can only be accounted for by the fact that Lear has demanded a representation of love because he has made the image of himself as a loving father-king equivalent to who he is. But Lear is not an image of himself. Lear is Lear looking out upon the world. Cordelia's response is true to his richness of his self while it ignores his demand to be pictured. His denial of Cordelia's answer amounts to a blasphemy against his own self, because he refuses to acknowledge the depths of his self which cannot be represented. Cordelia's silence attempts to break down his false self so that she may share the significance of Lear with Lear.

Cordelia has intimately linked speech with morality and both of these with her own sense of self. "What shall Cordelia speak" is no idle question. She takes her speaking seriously precisely because it promises to mediate her love. Love might be discovered through speech rather than expressed by means of speech. Thus, Cordelia cannot be sure of her love for Lear. It is not a fact to be evidenced. Yet, her stubborn refusal to speak anything beyond "nothing" in a non-representational mode of speaking undermines his very possibility of Lear's discovery of her love. Sincere speech will discover its intention in its speaking. It will not manufacture language to reflect a preconceived and bounded love. But, when Lear pushes Cordelia to speak again, Cordelia equates love with duty:

You have begot me, bred me, loved me. I
Return those duties back as are right fit.[18]

With this statement Cordelia denies Lear's question, "Who am I?", as profoundly as her sisters. Cordelia is either reticent or unable to continue to speak in that mode of language that had begun to resonate in Cordelia's first answer. With this second response language slips back into a mode of representation. Cordelia's love no longer seems ponderous or strangely blind. Rather, her love becomes a duty, a logical outcome of certain biological and historical facts. Like her sisters she speaks of a love without wonder or darkness, its significance complete before it is ever spoken.

Lear's mistake is not that he asks concerning his daughters' love. Such a question promises a speaking that might uncover the self. Thus, Lear's expectation of an answer to his question is not inconsistent. But the insistent expectation that this love will be proven to him constitutes a tragic blindness. Cordelia's mistake is to find Lear's question without intrinsic merit. With her second answer she refuses the challenge to speak her love because she misunderstands the real question that Lear is asking. Cordelia's stubbornness arises from her anger that her father has asked for evidence of something that ought not to be proven. But this anger overreaches its intent and holds Cordelia's tongue silent just when she could have continued to speak in a mode of language that resonated with Lear's self as an abyss rather than with Lear's self as a bounded and fixed entity. Thus, the failure of Lear to respond to Cordelia is not simply his refusal to hear an answer. In her second reply, Cordelia also refuses to speak her

love to Lear.

Representational language, even in the more reasonable sense of Cordelia's second speech, will not save Lear. Speech that would resound in the "nothing" of Cordelia's first answer offers hope that language will be able to enlanguage Lear's self. The remainder of the play becomes a struggle to speak Lear's self in this new resonance of language. Lear learns to speak poetically. But first he must be weaned from his representational notion of speaking. Goneril and Regan have charmed him with their promises of a stable yet boundless love. This love is repudiated by them as Lear becomes a nuisance, a cross, old man disrupting the life of their courts. Goneril's insistence that he give up his personal guard, which is also an insistence that Lear let go his fixed image of himself as the still-powerful, beneficent king-father, begins his unnerving:

Lear: Does any here know me? This is not Lear.
 Does Lear walk thus? Speak thus? Where are his eyes?
 Either his notion weakens, his discernings
 Are lethargied--Ha! Waking? 'Tis not so.
 Who is it that can tell me who I am?
 Fool: Lear's shadow.[19]

Lear's question is curiously compounded. He demands both "Who am I?" and "Who is it that can tell me?". Implicit in these questions is the realization that a "you," a "stranger," must appear if his question is to be answered. He asks "Who am I?" but now finds he must also discover "Who are you?". Before this moment Lear had been more or less content that he knew who he was; he had not been a stranger to himself. Now his own self begins to escape his grasp. He finds his self foreign to

his own sense of who he is: "This is not Lear."

The fool's rejoinder to Lear's demand is profoundly disconcerting. We do not normally consider our shadows authoritative. In fact they are often viewed as a mere residue of our presence. We do not turn to our shadows to discover their significance. Rather we turn to the referent of our shadows, to our own bodies where the sign of the shadow is given a reality. But the fool directs Lear to his shadow. Perhaps he wishes to suggest that Lear has been accustomed to identify himself with what were only mere shadows. These mere shadows were the very stuff of the world: kingship, power, loyalty, parenthood. But now they have failed him, their temporality denying Lear's very substance.

But, perhaps the fool's answer is also a poetic attempt to direct Lear to the very location where he might find a respondent to his disturbing question. Lear's former self can no longer tell Lear who he is. Rather Lear's shadow must tell him. As young Malte who searches the mirror and finds his absence, Lear must also search for himself directly in the face of his absence. This absence forces Lear to become other to himself. Thus, his madness is revealed.

But the fool is also Lear's shadow. In the fool's speaking we find an evocation of Lear's self that resonates in the "nothing" of Cordelia. He probes Lear's conscience with a poetic and veiled speaking. He tells Lear he must talk with his "shadow." Since representational language has failed to provide

Lear with his sense of self, Lear must turn with deeper and deeper foreboding to this other manner of speaking, a fool's speaking.

Thus, Lear's madness is more than madness; it is also the unleashing of a profoundly poetic speaking. This speaking does not paint us a picture of Lear. Instead his speaking forcefully addresses the earth-shaking storm, this storm that offers neither homage nor love to the lost king. Yet, Lear's mad poetry is not his undoing. Miraculously, at precisely the moment that Lear casts off the vestiges of any representation of himself, something new is uncovered. Within storm's womb he turns to Tom o'Bedlam and states:

Thou art the thing itself; unaccomadated man
is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal
as thou art. Off, off you lendings!
Come, unbutton here.[20]

With these words Lear tears off his cloak.

But his nakedness before the storm no longer denies his self. In his gesture before the fool, Lear finally acknowledges his own relation with the things and beings around him. Lear becomes the "thing itself," the "shadow," the "fool." He finds he is with all other men in his new found nakedness. This achievement of humility leads him to evoke a world in his speaking rather than demanding one. Lear returns from the wilderness with a curious and playful openness to all those around him. His sadness and rage endure, but he is no longer consumed by a mania for self possession. Finding himself before Cordelia he states:

Pray, do not mock me.
 I am a very foolish fond old man,
 Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less.[21]

This new Lear speaks differently. Words are no longer evidence for other matters; they take on in themselves a value. When he and Cordelia are captured by Edmund, Cordelia speaks of having "incurred the worst." Lear's response is remarkable:

. . . Come let's away to prison:
 We two alone will sing like birds i' th'cage
 When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
 And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
 And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
 At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
 Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
 Who looses and who wins, who's in, who's out;
 And take upon's the mystery of things,
 As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out
 In a walled prison, packs and sects of great ones
 That ebb and flow by the moon.[22]

Here we discover a language that invents, that plays, that uncovers mystery. Lear sings his love for Cordelia by speaking poetically. He no longer demands of language to represent significance that would make his being-in-the-world secure. Rather, his language erupts from the very location where he is least in control of his destiny. The full destructiveness of the world has been made evident, and yet Lear gives himself over to this world, acknowledging its claim upon him. His language now calls out of himself and into a deepened sharing of the world's significance with Cordelia, with Kent and even with his two other daughters.

Lear's self, that darkened maddened thing that seemed stripped of itself past any recognition of what it was, now

becomes miraculously transparent. Lear is Lear in that he is with Cordelia. His self presences in its holding of Cordelia through the evocation of his language. But there is a final stripping, a final failure of the world to sustain Lear's hope for meaning that is heart-rending. Lear enters with Cordelia lying dead in his arms. She has been hanged.[23] Lear's agony reverberates in his final words over Cordelia's body:

And my poor fool is hanged: no, no, no life?
 Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
 And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
 Never, never, never, never, never.
 Pray you undo this button. Thank you sir.
 Do you see this? Look on her, Look her lips
 Look there, look there . . .
 he dies.[24]

But even Cordelia's death will not destroy the authority of Lear's speaking. His language still holds Cordelia with us, even as her corpse is laid before us. Lear's call to the others around him to look upon her brings Cordelia before us even in the silence of her death. When he murmurs "look there, look there," his speaking calls up Cordelia precisely at that moment when she seems finally reduced to a pure object, a pure "it," having become a cadaver. But to see Cordelia as a cadaver is blasphemous. This realization demonstrates the authority of Lear's speaking.

Language no longer attempts to represent either Lear or Cordelia to us in this passage. But it does call us as listeners into a silence that encompasses even as it rends the human self. After speaking Lear also dies. His death breaks

all images of his self. Yet his silence calls out to all around him with a terrible ferocity of concern. The silence of Lear's death speaks and resounds with the voice of a real self who can look upon the world but cannot look upon itself, a self in which an abyss has spoken.

Insofar as Lear or his daughters had attempted to speak their selves as representable entities, language became transparent in an effort to give us a picture of their selves. In this mode language becomes a technique, a tool for making evident what already has occurred, or what one already possesses. Such a language exists for its own negation. But as this language fails Lear, Lear searches out a new language which no longer serves as Lear's shadow. In this new language Lear finds himself other than himself. At first this realization threatens to dissolve his self. He fears and fights against his madness. Yet when he can no longer hold to his former self--as young Malte Briggs who stared into the mirror until the mirror finally spoke who he was--Lear now lets language mediate rather than represent himself. His "shadow" speaks. But this madness does not consume Lear with its "all shaking thunder" that threatens to "strike flat the thick rotundity o' th'world." [25] In fact, Lear not only survives his madness, but finds himself enriched at its end. However, madness alone will not save Lear. He must come again to himself by opening his self to the significance of other things and other beings. He comes again to a sense of his

self at the play's end. But this coming to himself no longer finds a self that is possessed.

At the play's end Lear speaks both himself and Cordelia in a manner for which representational language would be hard pressed to account. In this speaking his words ring with authority because they no longer separate Lear from others in the world. Nor do the words separate themselves from Lear in order to speak for his self. These words are Lear, and in them he uncovers a significance that has haunted him throughout the play.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹This analysis is a simplification of Sartre's position in relation to the self in Being and Nothingness (New York, 1966), trans. Hazel E. Barnes. Sartre's basic position states that if we seek to be a self, we can only fulfill our project by having a self. Without the ability to possess itself, the self vanishes. This being the case, Sartre concludes that the self is not a being, but a nothingness. This conclusion brings about the problem of bad faith, in which the self attempts to loose the anxiety of its nothingness by the immersion of its identity in a thing (a "for-itself"), even if that thing be its own body. My own position will be that Sartre's dilemma between being and nothingness occurs only if we insist on a purely representational language to describe the problem of the self. Once we open our discourse to the poetic saying of the self, such as occurs in King Lear, the problem of thingness becomes irrelevant to the self's identity. In poetic language the identity of the self with any thing (whether it be one's own body, the body of a loved one or the crown upon one's head) becomes metaphorical rather than representable. It is the self's speaking and the intentions arising out of this speaking rather than any thing which underlies the existence of the self.
- ²Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having (New York, 1965), p. 168.
- ³Ibid., p. 169.
- ⁴Gilbert Ryle, Concept of Mind (New York, 1949), p.19. It should be noted that while Ryle and I agree on this limited point, we are in fact miles apart when it comes to the essential nature of the self.
- ⁵This analysis of gazer and mirror owes much to a similar analysis by Merleau-Ponty in his essay, "Eye and Mind," The Primacy of Perception (Chicago, 1964), trans. James M. Edie, p. 168. Merleau-Ponty distinguishes "resemblance" from "representation" to explain the ontological roots of various European painters' appreciations of the gaze and the mirror.

- ⁶ Ranier-Marie Rilke, The Notebooks of Malte Lauride Brigge, trans. M.D. Herter (New York, 1964), pp. 94-96.
- ⁷ Joseph Pears, Ludwig Wittgenstein (Middlesex, 1970), p. 58.
- ⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Signs (Chicago, 1964), pp. 17-18.
- ⁹ Martin Heidegger, Language, Poetry, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York, 1975), p. 193.
- ¹⁰ Merleau-Ponty, Signs, pp. 17-18.
- ¹¹ William Shakespeare, King Lear, The Complete Works, ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore, 1969), Act I, scene i line 51.
- ¹² Ibid., lines 85-90.
- ¹³ Ibid., lines 152-154.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., line 55
- ¹⁵ Ibid., lines 70-72.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., line 62.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., lines 91-92.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., lines 96-97.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., Act I, Scene iv, lines 216-221.
- ²⁰ Ibid., Act III, Scene iv, lines 101-103.
- ²¹ Ibid., Act IV, Scene vii, lines 59-61.
- ²² Ibid., Act V, Scene i, lines 8-19.
- ²³ Ibid., Act V, Scene iii, lines 306-312.

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THE SAYING OF SILENCE AND THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION

Part of the primitive fascination of a story is this, that we often cannot be sure why it has been told. Often we can: it may say, I am Odysseus, this happened to me: share my self esteem; or, This may happen to you King Pentheus, be prepared; or, This happened here in Athens: know how to feel. Or often: You will wish this might happen to you. But devoid of arteries from me, or you, or here, why does that tale's heart beat? A sower went out to sow his seed...; or, A governess went to Bly, where there had been servants named Quint and Jessel, undesirable people, and the two children... Why are we being told that?[1]

While Hugh Kenner comments in this passage concerning the literary heritage left to Ezra Pound by Henry James, the question that is posed is one of universal significance to the study of literature. Inevitably our fascination with artistic works leads us to pose our questions of them. The responses to these questions often take their form as an assigning of certain meanings to certain aspects of the work. Uncovering an intricate web of correspondences, we trace diverse paths between the literary work and its new found significances. We say that we have given an interpretation of the work, as if this too were part of the same process that the work had begun. We say that we are now better acquainted with this piece of literature.

But are we? Or is interpretation simply the imposition of a reader upon a work that he does not understand and which his interpretation by its very nature will distort, misrepresent and finally destroy? Susan Sontag in her essay, "Against Interpretation," first defines and then attacks this manner of coming to terms with literature.

By interpretation, I mean here a conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain "rules" of interpretation. Directed to art, interpretation means plucking a set of elements (the X, the Y, the Z and so forth) from the whole work. The task of interpretation is virtually one of translation. The interpreter says, Look, don't you see that X is really--or really means--A? That Y is really B? That Z is really C?[2]

Sontag argues that interpretation presumes that one element within the work stands for or represents another element that is more real, being outside the work and part of the "actual" world.

Thus, the interpreter unmask the meaning of a poeticizing, by making what seems to be a mute image within the work speak its significance by demonstrating precisely what it represents. Sontag objects to this strategy since it so radically devalues what we experience as the poetic image in favor of a conceptual content that the image holds in code-like form.

The modern style of interpretation excavates, and as it excavates destroys; it digs "behind" the text, to find a subtext which is the true one. The most celebrated and influential doctrines, those of Marx and Freud, actually amount to elaborate systems of hermeneutics, aggressive and impious theories of interpretation. All observable phenomena are bracketed, in Freud's phrase as manifest content. This manifest content must be probed and pushed aside to find the true meaning--the latent content--beneath.[3]

Sontag calls this strategy "the revenge of the intellect upon art."

Even more. It is the revenge of the intellect upon the world. To interpret is to impoverish, to deplete the world--in order to set up a shadow world of "meanings." It is to turn the world into this world. (This world! As if there were any other.) The world, our world is depleted, impoverished enough. Away with all duplicates of it, until we again experience more immediately what we have.[4]

Interpretation authorizes a new series of utterances to take the place of the poetic utterance. Such a strategy tells the work of art that which it is about. Such a strategy can only take place when the work has become like an object with fixed and stable boundaries so that we can place a correspondence between each poetic image and its "actual" significance.

Susan Sontag's criticism of interpretation is justified as long as we regard her definition of it as exhaustive. But is it exhaustive? I think not. Rather, she presupposes that interpretation could only reflect a certain type of thinking which by its very nature would damage the literary work when it attempted to understand it. Such a thinking sees the work as nothing more than an object before its understanding, an object which has certain determinate qualities which, if we are patient, can be exhaustively explicated. Heidegger characterizes such a thinking as "representational thinking" which David White has characterized as

thinking which characterizes the entity thought and the entity thinking in a certain definite manner. Thus, "representing means to bring something before oneself and have it for oneself, to have something present to oneself as subject." (FD p.106). And again, "representing presents the object in that it represents the object to the subject through which representation the subject presents itself as such." (H pp.121-22)...The result, stated in general terms is that "contemporary philosophy experiences the being of an entity as the object. The entity comes to such standing in opposition through perception and for perception." (VA p. 254) [5]

One of the inherent characteristics of representational thought is that in placing an object before the subject, the subject's receptivity to the object is conditioned by the fact that the subject must remain subject and the object must remain object. To imply that there is not a clear distinction between the subject and the object would be to imply that the object somehow invaded the subject and made the subject other than itself. In such a case the subject would lose its nature. Thus, if the subject is to remain subject, its knowledge must be a sort of possessing. It possesses the object of knowledge in such a way that the object is at its disposal. Such an attitude leads the subject to adopt a "technological" attitude towards the contents of its knowledge. Heidegger explains that such attitudes are brought about

..by the positioning that belongs to representation that Nature is brought before man. Man places before himself the world as the whole of everything objective, and he places himself before the world. Man sets up the world toward himself, and delivers Nature over to himself. When Nature is not satisfactory to man's representation, he reframes or redispenses it. Man transposes things when they are in his way.[6]

Heidegger characterizes such a "positioning" or "pre-positing" as "willing." Man objectifies the world by his self assertion as subject to which all else serves as object.

To such a willing, everything, beforehand, and thus subsequently turns irresistibly into material for self-assertive production. The earth and its atmosphere become raw material. Man becomes human material, which is disposed of with a view to proposed goals. The un-conditioned establishment of the unconditional self-assertion by which the world is purposefully made over according to the frame of mind of man's command is a process that emerges from the hidden nature of technology.[7]

In like manner, the promise of representational interpretation becomes to render the poeticizing of any man comprehensible by making it into an objectified meaning which we can possess. The storm in The Tempest does not unsettle us with its dark savagery and utter indifference to human perspective. Rather representational interpretation transforms it into the raging waters of the human id which Freudian psychiatry has so successfully uncovered. Further, we may by certain techniques quell and redistribute the unsettledness of any such psychic storm. Thus, Prospero is the prototype of the benevolent psychiatrist. And so forth.

Once a work has been interpreted in such a manner, these new significances seem subject to the same vicious circle of objectification and reinterpretation. For these new meanings also stand before the subject as objects of its own knowledge. Thus, one might argue for an infinity of such interpretations, each shattering the appearance of the one coming before it and yet each in the end assuming an appearance to be shattered. For if C is really Y, the inevitable question must arise as to what can Y really be. The underlying implication of representational interpretation must be that there are primary and irreducible meanings which compose more apparent, complex meanings. This offers our only escape from an endless succession of interpretations. Yet, the practice of interpretation upon poetic works seems to point to just the opposite experience. The various interpretations of an image multiply the complexities of the work in question. No one seems to agree to

exactly what a certain image ought to be reduced. Poetic speaking is criticized for its vagueness and indeterminateness. Its richness of evocation becomes problematic. The logical positivist argues that all such evocation is mere froth, a subjective titillation of our emotive capacities. The truth of "To be or not to be" is that it is a tautology.[8] To speak of the substance of poeticizing is to speak of confusion.

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The implication underlying representational interpretation is that language is man's possession. Interpretation makes this possession useful, by substituting a "real" significance for the poetic image. The image itself is simply a lens which focuses a latent content before us. Poetry's function is auxiliary to significance: it makes significance more concrete at times, but it is not of itself significant. Thus, man is the measure of language. Language, as the object of his attention, is significant only if it is capable of showing him "what" it represents. If language cannot show him this representation, then language fails to "measure up" to the demands of the subject who has posited himself as the subject before the objectified world. Thus, he may discard such language, saying it is meaningless.

But Heidegger states after Holderlin that poetry measures us. This measure is not available to representational thinking where man assumes that language is his possession.

Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man...For strictly, it is language that speaks. Man first speaks when, and only when, he responds to language by listening to its appeal. Language beckons us, at first and then again at the end toward a thing's nature. But that is not to say, ever, that in any word-meaning picked up at will language supplies us, straight away and definitively, with the transparent nature of the matter as if it were an object ready made for use.[9]

If language measures man, then the role of interpretation in relation to language would necessarily change. Interpretation would no longer take hold of language to demand its significance. Instead, interpretation would find itself questioned at every turn by a language that engages it and by which it receives its authorization.

Such an interpretation, which I will term "poetic," would not struggle to reduce the poetic image to a specific latent content which is termed "more real." Rather, poetic interpretation would listen closely to how the universe of words both within and without the work suggest limits to one another. This view of a work regards the whole of the work as forming a language field which by its tensions and correlations voices a world of relationships. Further, we would bring all of our language to the literary work in such an interpretation in order to gather the work into the whole of language. The whole of language is not a finished structure in which all relationships have once and for all time been made clear. Language changes precisely because new literature is written.

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone... The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction

of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order...will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.[10]

If we wish to gather a work into the whole of language and the whole of language to be gathered into the work, interpretation will be inherently open-ended. Its measuring of us is never finished.

But how is it that we can be measured by poetic language? Heidegger speaks of this measuring as that "by which man first receives the measure for the breadth of his being." The breadth of this measure shows us that "man exists as a mortal," that is, he is capable of death. But against what are we measured? This question seeks to demand the measure of that by which language itself is authorized to measure. More succinctly, we are demanding to measure the standard by which we are measured. Heidegger terms the essence of this authority to measure that is found in poetic language as the divine. He quotes a poem by Holderlin:

..Yes.As long as Kindness,
The Pure, still stays with his heart, man
Not unhappily measures himself
Against the godhead. Is God unknown?
Is he manifest like the sky? I'd sooner
Believe the latter. It's the measure of man.[11]

Heidegger concludes from these lines that

The measure consists in the way in which the god who remains unknown, is revealed as such by the sky. God's appearance through the sky consists in a disclosing that

lets us see what conceals itself, but lets us see it not by seeking to wrest what is concealed out of its concealedness, but only by guarding the concealed in its self-concealment. Thus the unknown god appears as the unknown by way of the sky's manifestness. This appearance is the measure against which man measures himself.[12]

One could easily dismiss such an analysis of language as fanciful. One might begin by asking by what authority does Heidegger derive his conclusion from the reading of one poem that man is measured by the divine as concealed in language and especially in poetic language? Further, how is it that an "unknown" entity appears as the "unknown" by the way of another entity's "manifestness"?

Heidegger can only respond that insofar as poetic language takes upon itself the measure which measures man, his analysis will be experienced as true. Ultimately we must appeal to poetic language itself for the authority of his statements concerning it. But such language cannot be used as evidence that Heidegger is correct. If we could use it as evidence, we would be able to measure the very measure that measures us. This is precisely what Heidegger denies is possible. Rather we must put ourselves before poetry. Insofar as we are measured, language will "evidence" that measure, that is, the "godhead."

This position is not unlike the Judeo-prophetic position in regard to language. Yaweh demands of Isiah: "Go, and say to this people, 'Hear and hear again, but do not understand; see and see again, but do not perceive.'" (Isa. 6:9) As Herbert Schneidau points out, "these words evoke the function of the

parable,"[13] a speaking of language which like the poet's speaking measures man rather than being measured by him.

Serious literature at all levels is built around this function, of revealing and concealing at the same time. It has nothing for those who share the positivist creed that "everything... that can be expressed, can be expressed clearly," and thus that interpretation should yield something plain and obvious. In effect literature seems to be straining with signification, yet we are never confident that what it is saying can be reduced, for more than certain superficial purposes, to a descriptive state of meaning.[14]

This inability to unravel the signification of a text does not argue against the project of interpretation. But we must "acknowledge how precarious is our grasp of any meaning in the world at all and that we force ourselves to probe the words and forms before us in a never-ending labor." [15] Like Heidegger, Schneidau argues that we must give up attempting to secure the significance of a text through a representationalist interpretation. Instead, our sense of interpretation must become parabolic. Heidegger's description of the poetic image carries the same sense of revealing and concealing as Schneidau evokes in his analysis of language:

The poet makes poetry only when he takes the measure, by saying the sights of heaven in such a way that he submits to its appearances as to the alien element to which the unknown god has "yielded." Because poetry takes that mysterious measure, to wit, in the face of the sky, therefore it speaks in "images." ..The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights god surprises us. In this strangeness he proclaims his unfaltering nearness.[16]

Heidegger states that the poet mixes the world that we recognize with the "darkness and silence of what is alien." Could not this silence be as important as any overt naming of the divine? If language only existed as a representation, then silence could not call out, since it would represent "nothing." In such a silence no object sets itself before us; therefore, we say that silence is ignorance. If language is silent, then there is nothing to be said. But if poetic language is not exhausted by a representational interpretation, then silence could play an important part in a poet's poeticizing, if that poeticizing were receptive to silence.

The problem could be rephrased in this manner: How could poeticizing show representationally that which grounds its saying? We experience that poeticizing (and language in general) brings us near to what Heidegger calls "presencing." This presencing comes about in poetry when language gathers the various interfoldings of things and events (the Fourfold) so that the interplay of the earth, the heavens, man and the divine are brought near to one another while yet keeping their difference.

But the nearness of the divine is "oppressing" according to Heidegger.[17] The divine grounds the world even as it interplays with it. Thus, the divine announces itself from what Heidegger terms the silence that makes language and the world possible. The divine's silence makes a place for poeticizing to speak. It is necessarily silent so that poeticizing may

announce the world. How then can poeticizing announce the divine? If poeticizing represented the divine to us, the divine could no longer be the silence that precedes overt naming. But if language is silent in ignorance, then neither can the silence which makes representation possible announce itself as meaningful silence, since it will be mistaken for the lack of an announcement. But the silence we wish to consider is not nothing. Rather it is the absence in which that which cannot be represented seeks to announce itself. Heidegger states:

The poet becomes compelled by holiness into a saying which is only a still naming.
 The name in which this naming speaks must be dark.
 The place from which the poet is obliged to name the gods must be thus: that for him, what is to be named remains that which is approaching. In order to open this remoteness
 as remoteness the poem must withdraw from the oppressing nearness of the gods and "name" them "only softly." [18]

It is my judgment that The Tempest of William Shakespeare does exactly this: the play's language withdraws from the oppressive nearness of the gods and "names them only softly."

*

The Tempest is Shakespeare's last (or next to last) play; critics have found it difficult to interpret. As Phillip Edwards remarks of Shakespeare's last plays in general: "Though we may be convinced because of the constant insistence, that the Romances are important, it is hard to point to the critic who has shown where the importance lies." [19] Again Theodore Spencer echoes other critics when he writes that The Tempest is "a play

with so many layers of meaning that no single interpretation can do it justice." [20] The Tempest is admired and yet often seems inaccessible to the critical reader.

If we grant Heidegger's understanding of language, and if its implications in regards to our interpretation of literature are correct, how could we best approach this play? Rather than casting out representational interpretation all together, we might search out such interpretations as a natural feature of the play's language. The result of such a consideration would not sum up the play, but it would widen the context from which a possible silence, to which the poeticizing of the play might be receptive, could be made more apparent. We would expect a sort of gap to open up in the structure of the play that would continually surround any attempt to reduce the play to a representation of what is spoken. This gap would be a hint at the silence of the play. It would bring us back to the play again and again to find that silence in a more comprehensive manner. In a sense the best criticism might not abandon representational interpretation, but would take it to its limits to show how an abyss undermines it at every turn. Yet, this "undermining" would not be a destruction of language, but an enriching, since language would begin to "oscillate" between its speaking and the ground for its speaking. The undermining qualities of that silence would not contradict the naming of things and events by the poet, but would give them a context by which the world could be gathered into the language of the play. In such a manner the divine might make its "dark" appearance.

*

Is The Tempest receptive to such a critical approach? I think so. Prospero, the central character of the play, is oddly resistant to representational strategies. Leo Marx in *The Machine and the Garden* describes Prospero:

His survival and his triumph rest upon art, a white magic akin to science and technology. As readers of the *Golden Bough* or the work of Malinowski know, there are close affinities between magic and modern science, particularly in the tacit views of man's necessary posture in the face of physical nature. Both presuppose our ability and our need to master the non-human through activity of the mind. The aim of Prospero's magic, as his relations with Ariel and Caliban show, is to keep the elements of air, earth, fire and water at work in the service of his island community. He does not share Gonzalo's faith in what "Nature should produce/without sweat or endeavour." [21]

John Fowle's description of Prospero's "triumph" is oddly dissonant with Marx's view of the power of his "white magic."

True, two young people fall in love, but out of their own nature, not magic. A fuddleheaded but kind old man, Gonzalo, remains fuddleheaded and kind to the end; two cynical scheming politicians demonstrate by their final bitter silence that they will always be so; two seamen-buffoons and an Indian "savage" stay unredeemed. Even the spirit-agent Ariel seems anxious to be freed from playing assistant to any more such futile experiments. Only Alonso, who conspired in the usurpation, shows any plausible repentance; but he has very little to lose by changing sides...It is certainly not difficult to read, even in Prospero himself, a suspicion that he has in vain tried to surpass that other sea-magician and pig maker who hides behind Caliban's Bermuda-inspired mother Sycorax, Circe. The "every third thought shall be my grave" he prophesies of his return to Milan is hardly a happy final note. He forgives as Circe and Calypso forgave their visitor (his last command to Ariel repeats their last gift to Odysseus, the provision of a fair wind), but the forgiveness is also like theirs in its air of forced circumstance, of noblesse oblige. No hearts have changed. [22]

Who then is this man Prospero, and what sort of project does he

take upon himself? In one sense we can readily observe that he is blessed with a "power," through which he attempts to perform an elaborate ritual of initiation for the benefit of his island visitors. As to the nature of this ritual of initiation it is all too easy to jump to conclusions. It seems that Prospero wishes to enact a series of confrontations between various characters and their past mistakes or future destinies. It also seems that these confrontations serve to bring them to self-knowledge and the ability to build and inhabit a "brave new world," a utopia where every man will achieve the fulfillment of his most noble nature. But there seems to be a rub to this hope. Fowles continues:

The play may outwardly demonstrate true culture, or moral nobility triumphing over both false culture and culturelessness; but it throws strange doubts and shadows on its own message and on its very form. The conflict revealed is the oldest in all art, and takes place inside the artist; between the power to imagine and the use of imagining. Cui bono, to what purpose? What will it change?[23]

This paradoxical impotence of Prospero's power appears most acute in relation to his own view of that play or series of tasks which he has enacted. No matter how much Prospero may delight in the exercise of magic, finally he moves no man's heart, not even his own! George Slover notes:

When the time comes for him to play his personal part in the imitation of the providential action, Prospero finds, I think, that his noble reason is not a match for his fury. He discovers that though his magic can bring all his enemies to lie at his mercy, it cannot move his mercy to raise them up to be themselves. He must first abjure his magic (as Alonso later resigns his dukedom) and then stand with the rest in the circle of disenchantment drawn by himself.[24]

Slover's analysis refers to a crucial part of the play: Ariel

returns from the various tasks upon which Prospero has sent him.

He reports that

Your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.'

Dost thou think so, spirit?
Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their affliction, and shall not myself
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?
Though with their high-wrongs I am struck to th'quick,
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
Do I take part. The rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further. Go, release them, Ariel.
My charms I'll break, their sense I'll restore,
And they shall be themselves.[25]

Immediately after these words Prospero casts down his books and his staff "deeper than did ever plummet sound," saying "this rough magic I here abjure." [26] He then places himself in the circle of his former associates to become again part of their world, now free of his power, of his ability to conjure over them.

Yet, as powerless as his power may be, The Tempest revolves around this magic of Prospero. Without it the tempest itself would never have been raised, Ferdinand would never have met Miranda, Alonso would never have been shipwrecked to confront his guilt for past deeds or the loss of his only son. All the characters are touched by this power. But the power is cast off by Prospero in the end; he even plans to cast it off from the beginning. And as he casts it off he enters the circle of his compatriots as their equal and not as their master. His claim to his throne is granted him by Alonso of his own free will.

His brother harbors resentment because of this. His daughter loves from her own power of love. Further, as long as Prospero practices his power he seems alienated from those upon whom he practices it. The magic is oddly impotent; Prospero terms it "rough." Finally, Prospero seems to gain a power by giving up this power; he can now step into the human circle rather than remain outside it. One senses that Prospero's powerlessness at the play's end is somehow more commanding than any of the great feats of magic that he had already performed.

Given this background, one wonders: What was the original intention of Prospero? Many commentators, including Marx and Frye speak of an intention of Prospero to institute culture and morality in a semi-utopian setting. It is thus only in the dissolution of this utopian setting that the real effect of Prospero's intentions may be born into the "real" world. This implies that the world within the play is somehow less than or at least other than the real. The island upon which these men land is implicitly different than the real world; there is a barrier between it and Naples, a barrier where Prospero must throw down his book and staff in order to cross it.

This explanation offers what appears to be a cogent account as to why Prospero must leave the island. However, a further problem arises within the play; Prospero reflects near the play's end concerning this "real" world to which Prospero is about to return.

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision
The cloud-capped tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Yea, all which it inherits, shall ye
 And like this insubstantial pageant faded
 Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on, and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vexed.
 Bear with my weakness: my old brain is troubled
 Be not disturbed with my infirmity.
 If you be pleased, retire into my cell
 And there repose. A turn or two I'll walk
 To still my beating mind.

At the very end of the play Prospero remarks enigmatically that he will "retire to my Milan, where every third thought shall be my grave."

Northrop Frye has appealed to this speech as evidence that The Tempest is not a "religious drama," nor an "allegory":

If it were, Prospero's great "revels" speech would say, not merely that all earthly things will vanish, but that an eternal world will take their place. In a religious context Prospero's renunciation of magic would represent the resigning of his will to a divine will, one that can do what the boatswain says Gonzalo cannot do, command the elements to silence and work the peace of the present... [27]

Frye argues that if the play were religious drama, the divine would be overtly made relevant to the structure of the play. However, Frye insists that this relevance would announce itself allegorically so that the divine order could be overtly named. This would make the divine present before us as a representable content of the play's poeticizing. However, the play does not make the divine apparent in such a manner; thus, the play is not religious. But we must ask ourselves if it is only in religious drama that the divine will announce itself. The next step in my analysis will attempt to lay a context for the "revels" speech that will show the possibility of the

appearance of the divine, even if the play is not, as Frye contends, a religious drama.

Prospero states "our little life is rounded with a sleep." In fact, is not Prospero's very project to begin his death? The play encompasses the problem of what constitutes a just society; it reflects upon the problem of revenge; but finally Prospero seeks out the terms of his death.

If death is a major theme of The Tempest is there not then the spectre of nihilism rising within the play to crush the fragile aspirations of its participants with the "sleep" that "rounds our little lives?" Within these lines we find a darkness, an abyss that hovers within the poeticizing of the play. It is present in Ferdinand's fear of his father's death and in his father's fear of his son's death. Caliban plots Prospero's death and finds his equals in the dark MacBeth-like musings of Sebastian and Antonio. Ariel wishes to end his association with human servitude, and rebels at every turn. Finally this darkness hovers most deeply in Prospero himself, who muses upon a world which is "this insubstantial pageant faded" which "vexes" him, which is an "infirmity." These thoughts disturb him so that he must "still" his "beating mind." At this moment Ariel appears. Prospero speaks anxiously to him: "Come with a thought. I thank thee, Ariel. Come."

Perhaps we can begin to comprehend with greater sensitivity the intention behind Prospero's magic.

"Sleep" in The Tempest is the ultimate horizon. Or is that horizon the utterly mysterious reality to which sleepers

shall awake? From the perspective of this consciousness our life appears not only "little" but "such stuff/As dreams are made on." [28]

Slover makes two points here: First, that sleep is the ultimate horizon; Second, that from the perspective of sleep our life might or might not appear insignificant and meaningless. The threat of nihilism within The Tempest is ponderous. It disturbs, unsettles its main character and in the end is the focal point of his great project. Because of his success he is free, but only to go to Milan "where every third thought shall be my grave."

But if this play were only a grammar of nihilism, why then would Prospero cast down his book and staff "deeper than did ever plummet sound"? Why indeed? Given the world we have just drawn, his chief motivation would be to keep his power over dreams and this insubstantial world as long as he might. Must we conclude that Prospero despairs when he gives up what little power he had come to possess. Like Odysseus before him he is given the paradox of immortality. He may remain a magician and thus, one might suppose, immortal. But the price is his exclusion from the very circle which he enters at the play's end, the circle of his friends and enemies, the circle of his own humanity. The price of his humanity is his death; but if death is indeed a nihilism, a sleep which darkens all that has gone before, what then should we think of such a decision? Should we say that Prospero has thrown down the cloak of the magician only to become a fool?

Perhaps. But the question of Prospero's death is echoed early in the play with the fictitious deaths of Alonso and Ferdinand. The mock death of Ferdinand's father makes him distraught, but his sorrow is dissolved in his new found love for Miranda. Alonso's sorrow plummets to the very limits of his soul, and he finds his very sanity threatened by proof of his son's death. Unlike Ferdinand, he is an old man. He has tasted deeply of that darkness hovering in death. His youth no longer lies before him. Ferdinand's death confirms Alonso's mortality: not only will he die, but he will leave no one after him. In the midst of this crisis of father and son, Ariel sings

Full fathom five thy father lies;
 Of his bones are coral made;
 These are pearls that were his eyes;
 Nothing of him doth fade
 But doth suffer a sea-change
 Into something rich and strange
 Sea Nymphs hourly ring his knell...[29]

A silence rings in this poem, the silence of death. The words reach into that silence and bring back a saying. The saying is this: "Nothing of him doth fade, but doth suffer a sea change into something rich and strange." Death reaches into the play again and again: the feigned deaths of Ferdinand and Alonso, Prospero and Miranda's presumed deaths, the plotted murders of both Prospero and Alonso by a host of villains hungry for plunder of the world. We meet at the play's end the expectation of an inevitable death: Prospero's. We watch Prospero choose to enter the circle of other men where he confronts this death, however troubling it may be. We begin to

Something is lost. But what is lost suffers a "sea change into something rich and strange." The Tempest shows death as a measurement against which all human action places itself to find its significance. The silence of death speaks into the play. But this speaking is poetic and parabolic. We do not find a picture of death, but we do find an "image," as Heidegger would say it, of death. We hear that death is "rich and strange," a "sea change," a "sleep." Within that "sleep" lies that order which Frye complains Shakespeare has not alluded to in his play. We hear "softly" a disclosure which measures the breadth of our lives and which suggests to us an epiphany of the divine. Would we not misunderstand poetical saying if we demanded that Shakespeare explicate "sleep" for us, that he overtly name this silence and bring it out before us just as Prospero summons Ceres or Iris, dispossessed gods, to strut and play before us. These are the divine when it has become a spectacle.

When Prospero turns towards death in the play he sees ephemeral visions or he sees sleep. The "divine order" remains unannounced. Around the visions and dreams of men, there is only a silence. Yet Prospero throws down his book into this silence, breaks his cane and turns himself towards this eventual sleep. Yet even as this "sleep" extinguishes the lives of men, these very lives "suffer a sea change rich and strange." Just as in Prospero's magic, there is a powerlessness in poetical saying. The play and its saying can bring us to the limits of our humanity--our deaths. But here the play and its language can only listen for the divine. We hear the listening in the

play's rich openness to death. The characters within the play struggle with their deaths, their insubstantiality, at every step of their initiation. Finally, at the play's end, even the saying must die, must be silent. The play too is a temporal thing and must end. The play too must die. As Prospero states in his Epilogue:

And my ending is despair
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself and frees all faults.[30]

The poeticizing of Shakespeare within The Tempest is transformed by the "sleep" of death. However, this transformation does not come about by representing or picturing that which hides within death. Rather the language must become receptive to the silence of death. Poeticizing, when it is receptive to this silence, becomes transformative of human action. What saves the play is not a saving that comes to keep the play or its occupants free from death's silence. The silence has not made itself unsilent. But the play has announced a place for silence; it has made room for that which cannot be announced. As Prospero throws down his staff and his book, he announces the saying of silence within the play. His choice of death is rich and strange and, we sense, inherently right.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 23-24.
- ²Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation (New York, 1966), p. 5.
- ³*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
- ⁴*Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ⁵David White, Heidegger and the Language of Poetry (Lincoln Nebraska, 1978), p. 149.
- ⁶Martin Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York, 1975), p. 110.
- ⁷*Ibid.*, p. 111.
- ⁸As related to me by Cynthia Schuster, PhD., this philosophical position was once defended by Hans Reichenbach during one of her classes with him.
- ⁹Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, p. 215.
- ¹⁰T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Selected Essays (New York, 1960), pp. 4-5.
- ¹¹Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, p. 219.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, p. 220.
- ¹³Herbert N. Schneidau, Sacred Discontent (Berkeley, 1977), p. 254.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 255.
- ¹⁶Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, pp. 225-26.
- ¹⁷Martin Heidegger, Erläuterungen zu Holderlins Dichtung (Frankfurt, 1971), pp.187-188.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*

- ¹⁹ Phillip Edwards, "Shakespeare's Romances: 1900-57," Shakespeare Survey, ed. Allardyce Nicoli (Cambridge, 1958), p. 1.
- ²⁰ Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1943), p. 195.
- ²¹ Leo Marx, The Machine and the Garden (New York, 1964), p. 56.
- ²² John Fowles, Islands (Boston, 1978), p. 98.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ George Slover, "Magic, Mystery and Make-Believe: An Anological Reading of the Tempest," Shakespeare Studies vol. XI (1978), p. 186.
- ²⁵ William Shakespeare, The Tempest, The Complete Works, ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore, 1969), Act V, Scene i, lines 17-32.
- ²⁶ Ibid., lines 50, 51 and 56.
- ²⁷ Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, lines 151-163.
- ²⁸ Northrop Frye, "Introduction," The Tempest, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore, 1969), p. 1370.
- ²⁹ Slover, "Magic, Mystery and Make Believe...", p. 201.
- ³⁰ Shakespeare, The Tempest, Act I, Scene ii, lines 397-403.
- ³¹ Ibid., Epilogue, lines 15-18.

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