

intent.

Letter of Talk, Thinking, & Document

Vol. 1 No. 1

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Totality: The Methodology Is the Form

Charles Olson

*TOTALITY (I owe the use of this word to M. Elath, INTRO, I, 3-4) as the form of reality man had to deal with from, say, 1350 AD - and ideality as the form of that other reality which had lasted from 1450 BC (the date of the destruction of Knossus and the beginning of the Mycenaean Age). * What do we have as a comparable definition of the "form" of the preceding reality, the one from 4950 BC - 1450 BC? --- or shall we, when we know more about that history, find it valuable to divide it, in its turn, into what, from what one now knows, may well be two periods, 4950-2500 BC, and then 2500-1450 BC? The Mesopotamian story does so divide; and does the Hyksos break in Egyptian history indicate some like change? Does, then any such figuring as my own that totality is invertible only signal a stage of passage? Am I guilty of pulling over an already exhausted form to accomplish definition of its contrary? It is possible. But if that possibility is admitted, then the use of it as vocabulary is possible as tentative value until the present is more disclosed to itself.*

It does come to a simple recognition: that the totality of a person is a form requiring its own methodology as deliberately as the old ideality of a person had its. And that the organic fact is the usual one, that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts because the relationship of the parts is something else than the parts themselves. My own assumption is, that what we who refuse to buy the collective as the necessary only outcome of totality (the collective is the "universal" which replaced the old one some time after the end of the Middle Ages) are beholden to do this difficult thing, to know *all* our parts and all of their relationships (for an organism is all of its parts and all their relationships) in order to define what a totality of an

individual is (instead, mark it, and ideality of him) - in order, in other words, to say in what way any of us is a sum greater than both the parts and their relationships. This would be a way to define what is sacred in man at the time that one also

"I ask what polis we have other than the very whole world? It is true we each have extrications from it, suburbs of birth or jobs or passport rights or cultural allegiances etc. But in the actual fact of the reality of a society as society now bears on us, is it at all a bit smaller than the whole damn thing?"

presented a methodology for the use of same. For this latter is of extreme importance to those of us who find the methodology Miss Weil, say, backs up on (hers is Neo-Xtian, but the number of such today should not cause us to ignore the number of Neo-Greeks (usually scientists) or the number of Neo-Jews (usually goys, who are fugitives from the other two: the spirit and the mind concepts of Xty and Greekism left Judaism as the only representative of the more ancient behaviors straight into our own day ((that is why I would take it that the mythology of the Bible has had so much more use in the Western World than the Greek - or, for that matter, than the mythological elements of Xty, the Holy Ghost, for example)).

A methodology is the result of a change in the disposition of attention (attention, by the way, this change, precedes goals or ends: this is one of the laws left out of consideration in the ends-means arguments of the present - that there are truly three terms in the series, the beginning, the means, and the end. It is necessary to say that if we will get

(See "Form" p.3)

Chet Baker 1929 -1988

"I Wish I Knew"

Duncan McNaughton

Still a very young man, Chet Baker sang favorite American love songs in a cabaret style of 1950's cool jazz; Pacific jazz, one could say, since Hollywood and coast beaches may have had something to do with it. What was so unusual in his styling were qualities of extraordinary male tenderness, intimate sweetness, wisdom of love deep for so young a man. For me, his singing and playing have been appo-

site to the playing and composing of Clifford Brown: differing personalities with apposite purities and sweetness in their work, in the years following the immense abstract expressionist machismo of bebop. It has seemed to me the delicacy of their work looked ahead to more recent accents in poetics, much as John Wieners' and Frank O'Hara's work has

(See "Chet" p.2)

180 Second Tribute to Robert Duncan

John Thorpe

Rather than invoking Robert Duncan's poetry, or himself, I'd like to recall three areas of research wch Duncan thought & talked about enthusiastically during the late 1970's & early 1980's, & wch make his writing remarkable to me. These three areas of his research-work are Phonology, Honesty, & the concept of Field.

1) Approaches to poetry inevitably point out its phonetic underpinning - but discrimination of a properly phonological system of the unspoken interactions of sounds has only been possible - Duncan felt, to us, at least - very recently. He felt that phonetics was nationalistic, whereas phonology pertained to the thousands of human languages on earth, their future drifts & shifts & contacts with the semiotics of environment at large. He searched for something like the subatomic particles & quanta of language, as subconscious matters to work with. Each word was a straining of the entire phonology - a sort of God telling poetically. Duncan thought that poets were loose on a wild & far out quest - equipped with a pathetic compositional technology - yet that no shrewdly imposed technology could work for long or at depth. He felt that language might be an evolutionary aspect of a communicating system wch goes beyond the fact of human being, & that we were at the beginning of all this.

2) Where honesty is concerned, Duncan worked with certain imperatives in mind. He felt that poetry wasn't interdisciplinary - that it couldn't beg its ethics from other disciplines - & that it was capable of striking back whenever the poet abused its reality, or wdn't let it be itself. When poetry presented itself immediately, everything counted, everything about it deserved first place. Any disregard of the poetic process seemed to Duncan like suppression or punishment. If fear or greed for sound, fear or greed for mind, & fear or greed for composition led the poet to improve or disprove the poem rather than work with its probity, that was a crime against the global development of the discipline.

3) The concept of poetry in a Field seemed to transport Duncan's imagi-

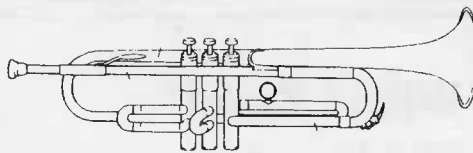
nation to infinity. He felt that one was a position for the forces, changes, & masses of a universe in motion. It was a creative universe, not a phenomenal one. The approximating imagination did not in fact want to consign the universe to less than human orderliness. In a way, Duncan thought that the real audience for poetry was human DNA - that DNA, or something like it, & like the forces in physics & chemistry - was reading, discussing, & writing the universe. Sound & Mind, coinciding omens in poetic composition, were addressing DNA's coding of a potential field of experience into the universe.

(Statement made at Robert Duncan Memorial, San Francisco, April 4, 1988--ed.)

Chet

(Cont. from p. 1)

done. I've not heard a successor to Clifford's trumpet nor to Chet's singing. Perhaps "successor" is a useless expression. Perhaps the periodically recurring sweetness of heart is what's useful, as one hears for example in the work of Alice Notley or Bob Marley; as one hears it in Violetta Parra's songs or in those of Edith



Piaf; in the styling of Billie Holiday, of Otis Redding, or in the writing of James Schuyler. One thinks of that sweetness of heart as being what is really common to our desirous souls, the quality which overcomes all barriers in order to circulate anew the heart's creative feeling among men and women who have reason to despair. All the artists and spiri-

"The edifice that intent flaunts before us is, then, a clearinghouse, within which we find not so much the procedures to clear our connecting link as the silent knowledge that allows the clearing process to take place."

Carlos Castaneda,
The Power of Silence.

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tuals do it, though only a few seem destined for that purer tenderness in their work. As recently as 1983, a Stockholm date with Stan Getz, Jim McNeeley, George Mraz and Victor Lewis, Chet Baker is recorded singing "Just Friends" again, the no-teeth-28-years-later version. Lovers no more.

intent.

Form

(Cont. from p. 1)

anywhere in the restoration of ourselves to the series. For we - any one of us - is the beginning - it is we who use the means to ends - and how we take ourselves in the first instance is the real determinant of both the means and the end. (Again, the Neo-Xtians jump, for me, the gun: they put the beginning in again, but from the sanction of the old ideality (the divine in man, Christ as the Son of Man & the Son of God) and the old ethos as the methodology - that the means and the end are one. I, of course, accept absolutely the latter as true but am not prepared (yet, at least) to find that the necessary ethos sufficiently rests firm on the sanction of the divine in man to be a methodology adequate to the facts of any one of our experience now.

My own present suggestion is that we not give up the totality thing (or at least not jump too soon, in the face of despair, back to its predecessor, the ideality thing) without doing two things: (1) actually examine that totality, until we determine if the concept of a totality of the individual can be forced out of it and can be shown to breed a context successful enough to rival the ideal context; and (2) examine the state of man back before the ideality deal got going to see what worship has to offer as another form of love than the Xtian, Greck or the modern decay of will into hate and destruction.

And though I am very ignorant, there are some words and sensations which I can record, for what they are worth, about the results of a total use of the self. It is curious, and of course a distinct and deliberate evidence of the tremendous truth of ideality, how close much that I will say is to the Xtian & Greek way. But the difference, however small, is determinably a difference in the disposal of attention, and so, at the other end of the series, at the end where the attention comes out (and in-

TOM CLARK

Nehru's Nation

Dreams confuse and deceive more and more with the years. One night the Grim Reaper in hooded caftan, cracking his knuckles and coughing out through Khomeini whiskers the grave choked vowels of Islam, teaches a sunken basement acting class in Hollywood. While kid tv stars chant memorized verses from the Koran, Grim glares at me, declaring in throat rattling Arabic I must write a poem called "Nehru's Nation," though when I wake up I can't be sure it wasn't really "Nehru's Notion," which makes no sense. I worry about it, become more impossible than usual to live with, then one night find myself traveling through this tall dream wheatfield in the shade of these low dark trees. The white wheat waves in one windy flat top unison lean like that flat blowing grass you see in certain Hopper paintings, where the people in the picture seem to know Fate has dragged Snow White away under those low dark trees, soon to emerge in blood stained overalls for fresh victims. Out of that dream wheatfield now steps a man in an aviator's cap with long blue earflaps tumbling down to his shoulders, a sanskrit insignia at the crown. As I look on the wind begins to ravel up his earflaps, wrapping them around his head into a turban. The tall wild wheat waves into the low dark Nebraska Sweden death trees. I recognize this is his beautiful sweet death nation. He beckons in a gesture of invitation but dreams confuse and deceive so that as I move to follow the wind waves sieve through me, failing to carry me along.

creasingly all the way along the band where the series is most extensive, the means) the difference is very great, so great that you have no saint as the emergent figure at all, but the hero, no religion of a single god figure at all (that thing which creates the tension in the first instance by which the saint is strung) but of many gods, and these not gods in

our sense but metempsychotic figures in a sense we have lost the exercise of, and so a wholly different universe - nature different than in the Xtian-Greek, space and time different, society, and man himself.

Let me pick up by way of the polis. Socrates put it sharply when he explained his choice of suicide over exile to his afflicted friends: he pointed out that in his suicide, Athens committed suicide. And we don't need the history of Athens to know he was right. He was right (and could not choose exile) because he had rested his case throughout his life on the identity of the citizen with the polis. This is the truism, that the polis disappeared, but another possibility has been left out, that what we are dealing with is not its loss but a change in its size (and the omission of this possibility has played increasing hob with the individual & society since the 18th Century at least.) Socrates could circle Athens every day, he could speak for man because he could know all the men that mattered in the polis concept, yr own fellow city citizens. In other words, the organism of society was actually knowable daily to the organism which also matters, the individual. Literally.

The question, now, is: what is our polis (even allowing that no such thing can be considered as possible to exist when such homogeneity as any Greek city was has been displaced by such heterogeneity as modern cities and nations are)? It is a point worth making, simply that it will expose the thinking of all community, cooperative, colony people, as well as the false premises by which the present political-social System imposes itself on all of us. I ask what polis we have other than the very whole world? It is true we each have extractions from it, suburbs of birth or jobs or passport rights or cultural allegiances etc. But in the actual fact of the reality of a society as society now bears on us, is it at all a bit smaller than the whole damn

(See "Form" p. 4)

Form

(Cont. from p. 3)

thing?

Reading this back to yourself - to the individual member of such a society - such a polis (politics, as you will notice, is from the root), there are several observable differences. Is there any one of us (except, say, Hitler, and this will be of some import later in the argument) who, in being presented with the choice of exile or poison (and every man of draft age is presented with a like choice every one of these days), would take the poison under any such correctness as Socrates did, that, in his death, the world dies? (Of course it does, ultimately, but, in the sense of the world as polis, which of us can so die today?)

There are several human beings who do die every day in whose death the polis does die. But let me show who they are in another way. Take these two opposed things, the State and the Utopians, or, the decentralists, or whatever name you want to give those people of good will who think that any of the smaller forms of society offer an alternative to Big Boy, the emerging World State. The Utopians think they choose exile instead of the poison of continuing membership in The System. And they argue their act on the premise that a man is extricable from a polis, that the world is not our polis, that, in fact, we present citizens have to create a polis. It sounds wonderful, but the intolerable fact is that the State, the System, has proved it is a polis in the most hideous of fashions - so hideously that the continuing palaver of all Utopians is intolerable to a man of soul. And what makes me think that totality is invertible is that totality has so turned Socratic man inside out that it kills members of itself daily in a colony so distinct, a community so impressive, a "utopia" so in existence that one man at least has

had the penetration to see that "utopia" as evidence of the fact that the post-modern economic system is already growing like a body out of the cancer of all we have known. I refer to the slave labor camps (and to Ernst Zander in *Contemporary Issues*). And I assert that each of these human beings who die in those camps daily are the true sign of the act of Socrates for us - an act which makes any continuance of the use of Socrates or his premises an imposition upon all of us, simply because such saintness (I shall not labor the old recognition of the relationship of his act to Christ's - the difference of one as a death of and for the polis, and the other as of and for humanity is one less of kind and more of kin) is wholly upset and wholly peripheral now, in the face of all these anonymous people dying daily while the rest of us live on crumbs from the table supplied and set by the same monster, the same beast which has put them there, has forced them to recognize what has been continuously true, and we all criminally blind to, that The System is our polis, and the price of the membership is not our lives or our liberty

(those the concentration camp showed had been taken from us) but something much more necessary and more terrible in its loss, our labor - and without choice of losing it,

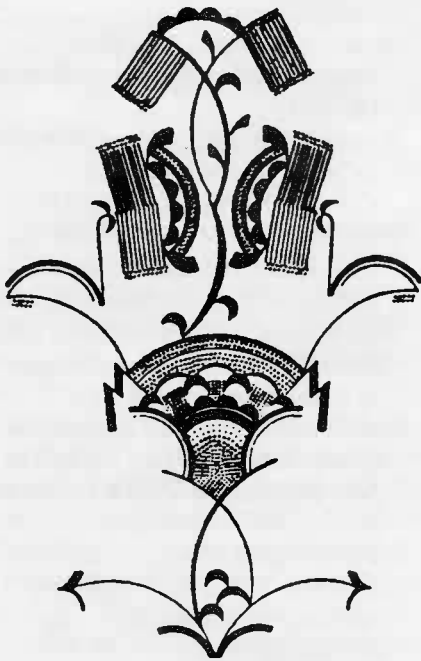
"It has become one of the absolute iron edges, the daily hot fire to all workers, a writer, for example, to speak for myself, to have to ask himself if any word he makes can get free, even tho it is free labor, from The System . . ."

merely seized from us. So, all choice, too, goes down: it should not surprise us, logically, for Socrates and Christ both rest their systems on choice, on the definition that the freedom of a man's soul is his opportunity to choose good from evil. All free labor goes down (it has become one of the absolute iron edges, the daily hot fire to all workers, a writer, for example, to speak for myself, to have to ask himself if any word he makes can get free, even tho it is free labor, from The System - if it isn't actually so trapped it only contributes to the continuing success of that System -

it will, any of our work will, until we have made ourselves so anonymously powerful that any one of us can say "The system dies in my death." Only then will our anonymous brothers thrive, who are dying every day with the full knowledge that in their death the system lives. For when we can say the system dies in my death it will only be because we have so lived that our lives are the death
(See "Form" p. 5)



CECROPS



FRED WAH

MHT NINETY

On the weekend I got into anger talk about landscape and the hunger of narrative to eat answer or time but space works for me because place got to be more spiritual at least felt now this watery genetic I suspect passions like anger suprafixed to simply dwells I mean contained as we speak of it believe me I'd like to find a new word-track for feeling but language and moment work out simply as simultaneous occurrences so I don't think you should blame words for time-lapse tropism eg ethics is probably something that surrounds me like my house it's where I live.

Form

(Cont. from p. 4)

of The System.

Which brings us to it: how do we so live that we are as definitive as Socrates or Christ was? I say we don't know, that not one of us knows. And the proof for me is those who are only a step worse than all of us, the inhabitants of that truest proof of the polis we are members of, the slave labor fellow citizens. I say this: so long as there is anywhere in the world a slave labor camp, not one of us knows except, predictably, the members of that camp.

I put it this way, this sort of way, to emphasize why, I take it, we have not yet done - any of us - the job: to invert totality - to oppose it - by discovering the totality of any - every - single one of us. I said I could suggest some characteristics of such totality. One meets this Socrates thing another way: his use of the old Delphism, "Know thyself." I deliberately state that, despite the increase of the quantity of knowledge, population, and the polis from a city of Athens' size to the present World State, it is possible

to know all things by knowing yself. And not because of the old dodge that the commons of a man never change. Not that, but something else: that the imperative that a society is never allowably more important than a man who does know himself (as Socrates surely did, or Christ) is permanently, and even presently, in the face of the slave labor camp, true.

But this is nothing. For having said it, you have not begun.

□□□

*As this 1450 B.C. date has long been connected to the volcanic destruction of Thera (Santorini), by the late Spyridon Marinatos and others, it should be noted that at least four dating methods have now converged to revise the date backward to: 1626 B.C. (bristlecone pine); 1625 B.C. (radiocarbon of bean and barley from Akrotiri); 1645 B.C. plus/minus 20 years (sulfuric acid in Greenland ice cores); 1620s (oak growth in Irish bogs)-ed.

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This essay was found undated among Olson's papers. The reference to Ernst Zander is to "War as a Way Out?" *Contemporary Issues*, vol. 2, no. 7 (Autumn 1950); also in the archive is Olson's copy of Simone Weil's essay, "Beyond Personalism," *Cross Currents*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Spring 1952)--ed.



FUGGER NEWS-LETTER

English on the Rhine

"Some English ships are said to have left England six or seven months ago, and to have built a fort in Florida in India. Consequently, all English ships and subjects in Spain and Portugal have been detained." Cologne, October 24, 1585

JOE NAPORA

Pursuing the Millennium

The man still pensive operates on himself.
It's not hard. The flesh
gives itself to the hand
familiar with the knife.

The man of twisted thoughts opens
his stomach to the sun. No one
has taught him the anatomy of poetry.

He is no Aztec priest
he only wants his organs
elsewhere. Instinctively
he knows he has touched the wrong
sore spot. Oblivious

to the residue of undigested words
that fly and crawl away
escaping from the probing blade
the knife cuts a path of spiraled mysteries.

Between his gross fingers
tiny stones blossom into flowers
for his beloved. His scars
become medallions.
And he finds his peace of mind
in self destruction. Then

he carefully constructs a circle
that includes within it plastic daisies
with stems broken sideways
stuffed crocodiles and paper valentines
and old photographs of people slowly fading.
And a description of the man collapsing
into another person. And another.
As he allows himself to shrink into
comprehensible fragments.

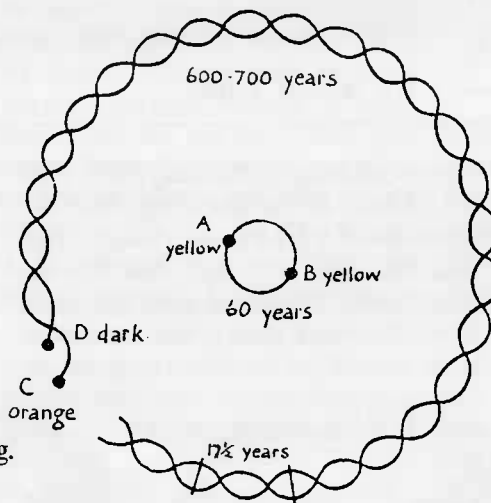
Ismaili Studies

from Ken Irby

James Winston Morris, "The Spiritual
Ascension: Ibn 'Arabi and The Mi'raj,"
Journal of the American Oriental Society
vol. 107/4 (Oct.- Dec. 1987) and vol. 108/
1 (Jan.- Mar. 1988); "Ibn 'Arabi and
His Interpreters: Recent French
Translations," *JAOS* vol. 106/3 (July-
Sept. 1986), "Influences and
Interpretations," vol. 106/4 (Oct.- Dec.
1986), and vol. 107/1 (Jan.- Mar. 1987).

from Duncan McNaughton

James Winston Morris, tr., *The Wisdom
of the Throne* (Mulla Sadra), Princeton
UP.



Also Noted

- Sandra J. Peacock, *Jane Ellen
Harrison: the Mask and the Self*
(Yale UP).
- Kenny J. Williams, *A Storyteller and
a City: Sherwood Anderson's
Chicago* (Northern Illinois UP).
- Ford Madox Ford, *A History of Our
Own Times*, eds. Solon Beinfeld and
Sondra J. Stang (Indiana UP).
- V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa:
Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order
of Knowledge* (Indiana UP).
- John Josselyn, *Colonial Traveler: A
Critical Edition of Two Voyages to
New-England*, ed. Paul J. Lindholdt
(UP of New England).
- Mary Settegast, *Plato, Prehistorian:
10,000 to 5000 B.C. in Myth and
Archaeology* (Cambridge: the
Rotenberg Press).
- Edwin W. Murphy, *The Antiquities of
Asia: A Translation, with Notes, of
Book II of "The Library of History"
of Diodorus Siculus* (Transaction
Publishers, Rutgers).
- Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable:
Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*
(forthcoming from U of Chicago P).
- Charles Olson, *A Nation of Nothing
But Poetry*, ed. George F. Butterick
(Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow).
- An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected
Writings 1916-1935*, ed. David
Forgacs (Schocken Books).
- Ray Huang, *China: A Macrohistory*
(M.E. Sharpe Inc.).

--ed.

What's Overlapping Among Friends Gerrit Lansing

"...if anything describable can occur as an hallucination then I may suffer the hallucination of believing myself to be Nelson, and even remember to be in love with Lady Hamilton. It may be argued that, although I could believe myself to be Nelson and even act by what I believe, any experience that I have cannot merely agree with any experience Nelson himself had. It may be said that Nelson's experiences belong to him as exclusively as mine belong exclusively to myself. But it is only necessary to accept such a conclusion if one takes the decision to do so; it is equally tenable to say that no identifiable experience is necessarily unique. By the standards of common sense, it will not be said that being able to experience an object, such as a table, is conditional upon it *not* being experienced by someone else, but by common-sense reasoning it will be said that being able to experience one's own private memories is conditional upon them not being the object of anyone else's experience. Yet, in the last resort, there is no reason why any particular subject-matter should not disappear from one consciousness and appear in another." -from George Melhuish, *The Paradoxical Nature of Reality*, St. Vincent's Press, 1973, Bristol, England, p. 140.

BOOKS, & ...

The Poet in Terror

Albert Glover

Yesterday I came upon a new book which you may know, *The Failure of Modernism: Symptoms of American Poetry* by Andrew Ross (Columbia UP, 1986--though costs of publication were covered by the Princeton University Committee on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences). This young man read a paper which appears in different form in this book at the "Olson Section" of MLA in Chicago where I last saw George. In the preface he writes:

"For any history of modernist poetry to have a coherent polemical shape, it ought to be addressed, as this book argues, to the whole series of successive modernist attempts to eliminate subjectivity from poetic form and language in order to establish a discourse that is assumed to be more authentic or 'true' to our experience of the natural world. Of course, one of the short-term consequences of such a history would be to clear the air, if not the decks, of any further adventurist criticism or interpretation of modernist texts. In the long term, however, the result would be that *poetics* as such could no longer be regarded as the innocent haven for 'wild' philosophy or 'wild' politics which modernist poets claimed as their special privilege, but rather as a set of different and often conflicting discourses that are ideologically produced and therefore irreducible to any particular author's 'vision'."

In the end of that last sentence I think one sees the aim clearly of what now produces the situation described somewhat in Russell's *Poets, Prophets, and Revolutionaries*.

Ross' chapters on Olson (there are two of them) are, at this moment for me, the most challenging writing about Charles I've seen. His contention, for instance, that the poetics of Maximus are essentially "psychotic" rather than "neu-

rotic" is, given the "psychotropic" research of the time, quite valuable. Yet, of course, it is entirely damaging in the age of "The War on Drugs" and "Parents for Normalcy." Like LaBarre's book on *The Ghost Dance* (which takes animism seriously enough to mount a full-scale intellectual assault upon it), Ross' attack on the poets of our century is a brilliant articulation of the hostility which emanates from the academy, Plato's academy one must realize eventually.

It is now almost forty years since "Projective Verse," and certainly the poet's reality has changed. My working "title" at this moment is "The Poet in Terror." The guerrilla war has become a terrorist campaign on "both sides." I find the current terms of repression a step beyond what Charles faced in 1946, for now "the camp" has been freed from its spatial definition and human agency. To be free is to die, period. To speak, is to die. The "authority of the individual" is more completely eroded, not only in the living but also among the dead. All of history must be revised, all of culture. I guess it demonstrates the force of "one just man" (as Milton put it) in the face of something else. The poets have been pushed off the field completely. We've lost the will to resist -- I have anyway. The desire for peace is a dangerous thing, for oppression goes on in many forms. Yet even the terms of struggle have been appropriated. And, still more frightening, one can see that every invention of this century made to overcome the evil has, with increasing rapidity, been seized and used by the enemy.

All this is premature, to say the least. I feel that even the terms in which I am working are the wrong ones, finally. But as I prepare my seminar on "modernism" and begin again to work from Yeats forward, I do feel this enormous pressure upon "the poet" as such.

ED SANDERS

I searched for the grave
of the socialist singer
Beranger

at whose funeral once
a mighty crowd
lined the boulevards

Not many seek
out the socialist
song-crafter

on his iron street
of rust and toppled stone

but I know
the
dream
seeps
through the rust.

Karl Gartung Driving

On the way to the airport
he told me how Mari Sandoz
had died poor
in the '50s
in New York

& that Meridel LeSeur
had been her secretary

& LeSeur's dad
she told him
had been an organizer

& was being chased
by private detectives
across the prairie
& a railroad engineer
stopped a train
to aid his escape

intent.

Tom Clark

Lost Weekend (Billy Wilder, 1945).

An Unnoticeable Star (1905-1986)

just another pretty face
but behind that blank
and vapid mask

a supercilious nonchalance
with just a faint
undercurrent of malice

a safecracker hiding his
whiskey bottles in the chandelier
with a subdued flair
for dark emotional stories

both cursed and coolly
exploited his unnatural
gifts

something disturbing
yet horribly true about
his mixture of extreme
irritation and disbelief
with almost gentlemanly disgust

something about reality
ray milland couldn't stand

Fool for Love (Robert Altman, 1985)

The Pure Products of America, Much Later

Banquo's Ghost, this time round, is
the link with everything as
the lonely girl at the broken down
gas station fights
Fate for the man she loves--
and will expose not only her body but her mind
to save the strange runaway
and the drunken brute of a surrogate
father--played by Harry Dean Stanton--
but the real dark interior--
the autistic child of the wilderness--
the fatality--the girl from Kentucky--
history from below--
is played by Kim Basinger--
a trashy thirteen with no past
an angel on one shoulder sighing
and perched smiling on the other a Dark Plan Witch
like a kind of radical Teleology--

.S.
.S. A .S.
X M Y
X P O FERENS

The "Diario" of Christopher Columbus' s First Voyage to America, 1492-1493. Tr. Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley, Jr. (U of Oklahoma P).

The Log of Christopher Columbus. Tr. Robert H. Fuson (International Marine Publishing).

An Obsession

Refused in Lisbon he kept his self belief
Before the Salamanca Committee he quoted the prophet Esdras
To prove the world was smaller than a single thought
A grand landmass he contended lay close beyond the setting sun
The committee of scholars trotted out Aristotle and Augustine
The world was too big and anyway mostly water
Interrupted here and there by impassable bulkheads they said

He loved his own obsession
He kept his self belief
Nine years after his first failed pitch at the Portuguese Court
Isabella Queen of Castille entrusted him with a few small ships
He sailed with little else except the blind confidence of fixation
After planting under the unfortunate palms
The sticks and rags of his employer and her gods
He lightened the locals of a little of their gold
Sold a few of their wild souls into slavery
Then sailed home triumphant he thought

He came back to disgrace and jail
He kept his self belief
Throughout his endless tiltings against the Eastern Dragon
Only he could see its myth quality
Its full Rig Veda morning alarm glow rising
Flaring up lifeward and archaic in the West Indian dawn

When he died
He laid down his head
In a house in Valladolid
Less than a mile from the one
In which Cervantes would be born

Regardening Eden

Elizabeth Willis

Kamal Salibi, *The Bible Came from Arabia* (Jonathan Cape, 1985).

According to Kamal Salibi, the new Jerusalem has shifted nearly a thousand miles from its original foundation. Salibi's proposal of an entirely new set of coordinates for Biblical geography began with the observation of linguistic similarities between Biblical placenames and those of a small area of Saudi Arabia and the Yemen. While archaeologists have located hundreds of Old Testament sites in Palestine, their evidence is often based only on the geographical--not linguistic--evidence of a Book whose sacredness requires essential ambiguities

and whose centuries of translations and reductions have occurred in a charged political theatre.

In his study Salibi accounts for the

entire stock of Biblical placenames--many of which have never been found in Palestine--by showing how in Talmudic Hebrew geographical meaning is always equivocal since generic nouns can be read as proper nouns and vice versa, so that whatever univocality appears to exist is reliant on questionable academic and political assumptions. Once the possibilities of the language are opened, Salibi argues, the similarities spoken in Hebrew and Arabic make it easy to find Biblical sites even by their current names in the area of Arabia which he describes. Salibi does not doubt the authenticity of Palestinian sites but claims that they are younger than their Arabian counterparts, which had been partially abandoned in a series of dispersals and captivities.

The missing evidence Salibi seeks is archaeological data from the Arabian peninsula, where excavations are now prohibited. But whether or not his argument is ever corroborated seems beside the point, as both Hebrew and Chris-

tian Bibles insist on the priority of breath or word in a language aloof to worldly "truth."

Salibi's book is addressed mainly to Biblical scholars and archaeologists, but the implications of his work are clearly more than academic. In a world in which signifier is not just severed from but seemingly repelled by its signified, the irony of a Holy War fought over mistaken territory is unbearably apt. If Salibi's claims are ever wholly refuted, his point is still of interest. In that world in which name's the thing, the generic taken for the singular, the anecdotal appropriated by the dogmatic, Salibi's work makes clear that, given the current crises of the Middle East, it is in the quarter of the Arabian peninsula to which Salibi refers that the globe's only political ambiguity remains inscribed, where in *Arabia Felix* the interior borders of Yemen, Oman, and Saudi Arabia are marked in broken bands as UNDEFINED.

The Political Agenda for the New Millennium?

Randy Prus

Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine*. Tr. Brian Massumi (NY: Semiotext(e), 1986).

Nomadic Endeavors

Randy Prus

Herbert Schneidau's *Sacred Discontent: The Bible and Western Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1976) locates the Yahwist distrust for the material world, and the cultures which arise from it, as the center of western culture. In the Yahwist tradition, alienation and paternity propel the drive into history at the expense of autochthony and the cosmic continuum. Yet, at the same time, its own tradition is called into question, furthering the tradition. Sound familiar?

How far we've moved away proves only how far we've come. Our

essential bond is not so much with the Platonic movement *towards* abstraction, but with the Yahwist movement *towards critical distance*--away from ourselves, our place, our habits of mind. Schneidau's study should be the first step for anyone considering to relocate the agencies of metaphor to new ground. Nomadic endeavors are endemic to Yahwist visionaries, who distrust any world, their own included.

Yahwism remains with us, not as a system of belief, but as a system of disbelief. Yahwism produces "an unceasing critique of itself." For this, we remain dislocated and detached in a world given over to language.

The "war machine" functions, in Deleuze and Guattari's essay, as a metaphor for the nomadic essence, and is not to be confused with the "state's" magic violence nor its military institutions. The "war machine" is both apparatus and methodology. Its relationship to the "state" is both antithetical and complementary, and, in terms of spatial metaphors, it is itself pure exteriority. Deleuze and Guattari's terms of war machine/state and exterior/interior constitute more than a shift of dialectical axes; their terms are founded on opposing, but not necessarily dialectical conceptions of

See "Nomadology," p. 14

intent.

MAIL

Now Is the Time

Harvey Brown

Full Moon and Lunar Eclipse -
Lester Young's Birth Day - "the god of a
living man"

Now is the Time of *hsien* - the
Feathered Men and Nūkua of the Nommo
in the misty night when la luna is full
and eclipsed - black night and fertilizing
drizzle and this morning is low and moist
- honkers cutting above the nimbus - and
out the kitchen window amaranth now
in full flower purple and gold and purple
Echinacea and Golden Rod coming on.
The first touch from Arctic - last days -
pole star messages - two days ago Sirius
rising in late dawn light - a brighter star
- so close.

The Lion Path

Gerrit Lansing

The Lion Path working continues
-- lunched w/Musés yesterday. Will see
him once more before his New York lec-
tures and west coast return (he was at
MIT w/Minsky day before yesterday),
whence he goes to Hawaii to study pet-
roglyphs there. We have been working
on the Periodic Table of the Elements
& phosphene patterning (the printers
reversed a chart of phosphenes on pp.
110-11 of *Destiny and Control in Human
Systems* [Studies in the Interactive Con-
nectedness of Time (Chronotopology),
Boston: Kluwer Nighoff Publishing,
1985]; a serious error, if you are working
-- / the book).

Yes, I know of Schelling's tergiver-
sations re Hegel...am reading Brown's
The Later Philosophy of Schelling, on
Boehme's influence.

Musés attacks Frances Yates' repe-

tition of I. Casaubon's error in not find-
ing "Thrice-Greatest" as epithet in pre-
Xtian Egypt.



Trasumanar

John Clarke / Duncan McNaughton

JC: Gerrit sent me Musés and
Arthur Young's *Consciousness and Re-
ality*, which I've been reading in. On page
431, I find reference to Paradiso I, 67-
72, as of Glaucus & Dante's word *Trasumanar*. Here's the quote: "Trasumanar
significar *per verba* / non si poria; pero
l'esempio basti / a cui esperienza grazia
serba." Musés writes: "That remark-
able word 'transhumanize' was coined by
Dante. The reference is to Glaucus,
surnamed *Pontius* 'the Bridge-Maker' or
'Connector,' traditionally figured as a
merman. He was the builder and pilot
of the Argos." The Bickersteth trans.
you gave me to take to Oregon has it:
"Since words may tell not what it means
to outsoar / the human, let the example
satisfy / him for whom grace hath fuller
proof in store." The trans. Musés cites
has it: "Transhumanize is an experience,
not a word; / and this example is enough
for him / whom Grace sends such a gift."
Musés also has things to say about Glau-
cus' herb, i.e., *soma*, as an astral-substance,
"dispensed in greatest abundance during
the waning moon," so not simply Was-
son's mushroom. Cf. Simurgh in Corbin.
He also mentions that Pausanias says the
herb given Glaucus was planted by
Kronos, & that Glaucus was also identi-
fied with Phocnician Melkart(h)-Herakles.

DM: I've thought about "intent"
for a couple of days. It is a verb (inten-
dere) much used by Dante, as the nouns

are (*intento*, *intenzione*) - the concor-
dance has to be used.

Keep in mind that Glaukos is
"veiled" or clouded, and that Dante's word
is *not* a word; the prefix makes it very
problematic a thing; this *ascent*, in which
body and voice are ceded (Maria Sabina)
to the one(s) who speak...and the descent,
in which body and voice are given back,
but "transhumanized."

Why not use the passage from
Dante, in Italian, for the newsletter epi-
graph? Leave it there that way, his way.

Why No Zen?

Joe Napora / John Clarke

JN: Why no zen in *From Feathers
to Iron*? An unnecessary addition, al-
ready enough doors in I suppose. I no-
ticed Lansing pressed that point a bit [*Sul-
fur* 23, Fall 1988], not realizing that com-
pletion doesn't mean inclusion of every-
thing. But still, so many hits with zen
that my copy is cluttered with them. Clut-
ter. Maybe that's clue enough as to why.

JC: Check the Black Sparrow Olson
/ Creeley *Complete Correspondence*, vol.
7, pp. 63-74, for Olson's letter to Louis
Martz of August 8, 1951 (which is Ala-
mut Day for the Ismaili, the date of the
advent of Absolute Truth, 1164; also the
day Nixon resigned the Presidency, 1974):
"We are Pelasgians--the Americans only
more so than others that, from Eric the
Red to the Pilgrims, a migration took
place of such dimension - and to a New
Found Land - that it is fair to call it the
FIRST important such CHANGE since
the Pelasgians found ARKADIA!" And
especially: "that the cultural continuity
does *not* extend, so far as the *recognition*
function asserts itself, to include the Asi-

(Cont. on page 11)

intent.

(Cont. from p. 10)

atic." So, except for the Ainus who, like the Danubeans Olson says gave us their "Bearson," Odysseus, are Japan's aboriginal bear people (whose rituals may have Shinto connections but no Zen), it wouldn't have worked other than to exclude.

If you look up "Samson" in *Hamlet's Mill* you will find Susanowo, "Brave-Swift-Impetuous-Male" of the myth (from the 8th century A.D. *Nihongi* compilation) depicted on Japanese currency; for full account of the adventures of this "Samson," see Post Wheeler, *The Sacred Scriptures of the Japanese* (Henry Schuman, 1952).

Also, if Indian *Dhyana* (Chinese *ch'an*, Japanese *zazen*) began as I-E for "to dance sitting down" - and Gary Snyder has found Celts in "Lotus" position - might "Zen" not have been there from the very beginning? My own one "Zen" experience of 1967 (coincidentally of that same Alamut date) was not susceptible of expression, except antithetically, or one could say only by (a koan?) the sound of feathers brushing iron.

On page 185 of the same volume of *Correspondence* you'll find Creeley coming at the question from still another angle, as of Kung-fu-tzu (L. Confucius): "I know nothing about it, or hardly more than I've got from Ez, but it is clearly a conservative position, i.e., one intent on sustaining a man in the most 'safe' way, whereas there is the counter principle, in some degree clear in Christ, of the other, the generative or that which maintains itself almost by an excess." Such conservatism ("in an almost *feminine* sense," Creeley continues, p. 230), as expressed in the third millennium riverine complexes of Mohenjo-daro, Sumer, & Egypt, met in Minoan Crete the generative excess ("the male's 'gratuitousness'," he calls it) of the West.

Actually, the coupling of Arab

science to the wealth of the New World stolen by the Spaniards created the "dynamo" we have known as "the West." The planet cannot afford to go through another Henry Adams phase fueled by coal, however accelerated China's passage might be. If Maoism is dead, the question now is, does the new thinking there, say, the astrophysicist Fang Lizhi's, include Chinese geomancy, alchemy, and the Taoist tradition, or only, say, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*?

The man who first published

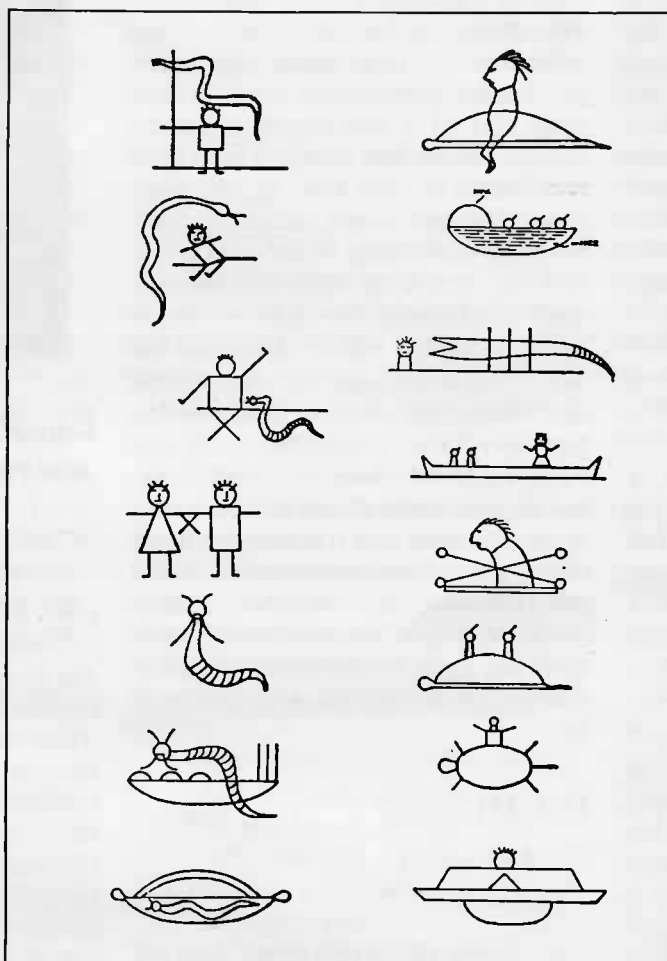
used at Black Mountain and recommended was Owen Lattimore's *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*.

JN: I got interested in zen in the early sixties too, but let it pass, was more interested in some kind of indigenous practice and that led me to the Walam Olum. You mention the Brotherston *Images of the New World* in *Feathers* so you might remember the Walam Olum from that book. He reproduced several of the pictographs w/verse translations (your

Hare Man is Nanabush, who is the only named deity in the Walam Olum). I have been working at the text for about 10 years on and off but intensely the last two years. I am convinced that there is a connection of American Indian myth to Chinese, the Delaware glyph to Chinese glyph, and that some of the story told by the Walam Olum, told primarily through these pictographs is also a world poetics. So, for me the zen enters rather obliquely as theory and practice through the Delaware text which comes out of my investigation of frontier hero/myth: Boone, Mike Fink, and the mighty Paul B with the double-moon axe.

JC: The point of "connection" and all the "investigation of frontier," certainly for Olson, is that you have a history. "In fact, in the moment of the invention of the word," Olson says in "On History" (*Muthologos*, vol. 1, p. 3), "you get almost the moment of the invention of some supposed division between Europe and Asia." For a quick ac-

count of how Robert Duncan, our Marco Polo, made it through the Iron Gate, see Andrew Schelling's essay in *Temblor*, No. 2 (1985), e.g.: "Duncan's contemporaries - Rexroth, Snyder, Corman [and Whalen] - approached the orient across the Pacific Basin, attempting to locate a northwest passage to the domain Pound



"The Kingfishers," Robert Payne, as well as books on Asia and Mao, has an anthology of Chinese poetry, *The White Pony*, you may want to look at sometime. As you may know, Olson was interested in events of the 13th century, not just Marco Polo to Kubla Khan, but also Giovanni Carpini, the Franciscan, to Mongolia (see *Poetry and Truth*). One of the texts he

(Cont. from p. 11)

had brought back word of....Duncan, however, entered Asia along Marco Polo's route, travelling eastwards, and for him Asia becomes permission for the opposite: for error, for rumor, for superstition, to assume their rightful seats in the poetic discourse. His Asia, like Polo's, presumes a levelling of cultural and sexual customs - the inclusion of a sexual 'variance' in which *variance* is shorn of its derived sense of *perversion*." But this is strictly entry. By 1972, upon return, Duncan could write, in "Structure of Rime XXVIII In Memoriam Wallace Stevens": "I will willingly assume his numbers among my own. The rest is all Asia, the astral miasma, the Undoing we came from, my version of Who-He-Is-In-Reality, the domain of colouring invading the Responsible." This movement - what Blake called a "going forth & returning wearied" (*Jerusalem*, plate 99) - Dante, Polo's contemporary, termed "transhumanization" [cf. the Clarke / McNaughton exchange above].

Finally, the fact that *From Feathers to Iron* attempts an axis shift from East-West to North-South may also bear upon the Zen question. Looking at J.G. Bennett's *Gurdjieff* (Harper, 1973), p. 33, I find: "The Chinese have always been unwilling to admit the part played in their culture by foreign ideas and so we cannot with confidence say whether developments such as Zen Buddhism owe their origin to Central Asian sources. One can only point to similarities of technique." The difference in North-South Sufi distribution (basically, Anatolian/Armenian vs. African/Arabian) is even more to the point because it engages the question of the directional flows of such currents directly: "I think that there is little doubt that the northern Sufis were profoundly influenced by the Buddhist notion of liberation from the world of appearances. They were in close contact with the Buddhist schools of Tibet and Sinkiang and brought into their own Islamic beliefs the essentially Buddhist notion of attaining absolute freedom for the individual by the abandonment of selfhood. This is a very different notion from that which we find in the mystical literature of the Arabs and even of the

Indian Sufis," Bennett, p. 38. It looks like we're backing up here into Olson's hinge #3 ("the hinges of civilization to be put back on the door," *Additional Prose*, p. 25); that is, "to turn the 5th Century BC back toward the 6th & thus catch up Persian & Thracian & Milesian," Olson names Heraclitus, Buddha, Pythagoras, and Confucius, but the list would have to be extended to include: Lao Tzu, Zoroaster, exilic Hebrew prophets, and other less well known "violets" of millennial moment still at issue. At this juncture we have only Melville: "that hair-turbaned Fedallah remained a muffled mystery to the last. Whence he came in a mannerly world like this, by what sort of unaccountable tie he soon evinced himself to be linked with Ahab's peculiar fortunes; nay, so far as to have some sort of a half-hinted influence; Heaven knows, but it might have been even authority over him; all this none knew. But one cannot sustain an indifferent air concerning Fedallah. He was such a creature as civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see in their dreams, and that but dimly; but the like of whom now and then glide among the unchanging Asiatic communities, especially the Oriental isles to the east of the continent--those insulated, immemorial, unalterable countries, which even in these modern days still preserve much of the ghostly aboriginalness of earth's primal generations..." (*Moby Dick*, Chapter 50). It may be because I saw *Platoon* again last night, but I think we all recognize that ground that has since come over us.

Breast Line

Steve McCaffery

There's a great new Blaser book out from Coach House called *Pell Mell*. It's always difficult getting a manuscript out of Robin (Clayton Eshleman apparently phoned Coach House from the west coast and congratulated them.) I was in Vancouver in November doing a writer-in-residence at Simon Fraser. Warren was in wonderful shape and quite well behaved (a kind of Enitharmon to my Los). I gave a paper on Olson and Mayan glyphs

that somehow managed to tie in with Baudrillard's seduction theory of meaning and Blanchot's concept of cessation. I was surprised how well it was received. My delivery was nervous . . . i kept speaking of Olson's breast line . . . four times actually before i corrected myself & gave myself a witty escape, only to start again with a reference to Olson's notion of breast. So one of those days.



Encyclopedia

John Thorpe / John Clarke

JT: I don't have anything at this point about the German Romantic Enlightenment or the notion of Encyclopedia, tho I cd translate some very far-out Novalis passages from my french edition, if that seems useful. Otherwise, I'm quite ignorant of that milieu except for the attention occasionally given it by Gaston Bachelard (in "Earth & Wish-Fulfillment Dreams" he discusses geological alchemy in detail). As I mentioned to you when we had lunch, I'd been interested in looking at some of Ernst Cassirer's sources for his history of symbolic forms - sources in now lesser-known figures of the Renaissance & Enlightenment etc. For Novalis, the grand sage of his era is a fellow named Hemsterhuis. Stendahl thought of Helvétius as the great psychologist. Blake has Klopstock to argue with. Cassirer thinks of Schleicher as founding linguistics. Etc. I wouldn't expect any of

(Cont. on p. 13)

(Cont. from p. 12)

these largely forgotten people to be light-weights. Alexander von Humboldt is at least the equal of Herodotus. Anyway, it's an area I'm looking forward to. The standard dismissal of the romantic movement (is it Lukacs or Adorno? *The Destruction of Reason* etc.) as leading up to the repressive humbuggery of the 3rd Reich seems like crap to me, because it's not a planetary view, let alone a cosmic one. But then Americans don't have that particular local guilt to trace backwards. One "weakness" ("strength"?) of the Old Romantics seems to me to be their own formalism (i.e. in attacking formalism it adheres to them in bizarre ways apparently - Blake is an instance). And the other romantic muscle-building machine is all that pietist comforting the leisure class administered to itself like television. "Versification as a rest cure" said somebody. How come the soul craves rest? Isn't it an argonaut, an explorer of a world wch only half comes back to this one? Who started the rumor that souls could be consoled here anyway?

JC: There should be a book on the Jena scene, those 5 big years. Maybe there is? I haven't looked. The book I started with, and showed Charles, which gave us "Novalis' 'subjects'," was *Natural Science in German Romanticism* by Alexander Gode-von Aesch (Columbia UP, 1941). I've got from Ernst Behler via John Roche a xerox of H.A.M. Snelders' "Romanticism and Naturphilosophie and the Inorganic Natural Sciences 1797-1840," which you should have, and I'll make a copy for you.

I do think it's a good idea to 'pit' the sense of Encyclopedia here (as verb) as against Diderot's - tho he did, like Novalis, have a Sophie (his was Volland) - for his sense of "changing the general way of thinking" was I think purely social, rather than Novalis' "magical" agenda, tho the idea of organic relations (thus change) within the system is there for both I presume. It would also have the value of moving forward out of Sanders' Z-D Generation into the next one - in that it also stays social only, unless the 'life' of the thing, like a Golem, takes off on its own at the inclusion of that next catastrophe-producing entry. Un-

like straw that broke the camel's back this "revolution" might go unnoticed; whereas the German encyclopedia has been presumably including right along the incommensurate so that the mental penetration is *possibly* open to both writers and readers in a way that makes patterns and categories not only redundant but has them suddenly relating in new and strange (organic) ways even as it encourages their disappearance into...

That is, trading the 'social' in on the 'meta' won't change anything. Your piece on "Region" ["Regionalism": All Chiefs & No Indians?" *Peninsula: New Writing from the Coast*, ed. Joe Safdie, Bolinas, 1988] is more to the point, because it exposes the 'trap' of progressive-time overlay to individual thinking.

Atheism Cheaper

Henry Adams

On your wording of your Law,* it seemed to me to come out, in its first equation thus, in the fewest possible words:

All Civilisation is Centralisation.

All Centralisation is Economy.

Therefore all Civilisation is the survival of the most economical (cheapest).

Darwin called it fittest, and in one sense fittest is the fittest word. Unfortunately it is always relative, and therefore liable to misunderstanding.

Your other formula is more difficult:

Under economical centralisation,

Asia is cheaper than Europe.

The world tends to economical centralisation.

Therefore Asia tends to survive, and Europe to perish.

The most brilliant part of your theory, however, is its application to thought as well as to economy. Nothing has struck me so much as its application to religions.... You have already applied the theory to the reformation, but you have not casually, and, as it were, carelessly thrown out the suggestion that atheism is still cheaper than reformed religion.

*Brooks Adams, *The Law of Civilization and Decay* (Macmillan, 1896).

Yurup

Robert Creeley

Just now back from time in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Extremely moving and handsome places, i.e., Budapest and Prague. I also got out a little to three smaller cities. I was in Prague for Havel's sad sentencing, his sister and brother-in-law (I think I was told) came to the reading at wild jam-packed bookstore, Holub introducing me, etc. I walked around a lot, saw where Kafka was born, old Jewish cemetery, so many echoes in those cities. Budapest was great, and happier people at this point. So. Right now it's all still a rush but there'd be no way otherwise to get to all these places, so I'm pushing it as hard as I can. I go to Italy for substantial "tour" in April, and it looks like Israel early May with luck. Am also trying to get to Estonia and Latvia, which are just next door. Otherwise this week I was again in Turku, and earlier in Joensuu--so I'm doing my homework.

Temple of Artemis

Elizabeth Willis

9 Jan 89

The Temple of Ammon/Amen at Karnak still stands. Down-"river" at Jerash the Artemis Temple 10 times the size of the Zeus 100 meters uphill. And in Damashq just in or out of the gate of the Temple of Jupiter--looking both ways in this Janu-ary, the gate being all that's left--a mosque re-built/built on what that land specifically had been holds the Heavenly City. Underneath which John's head buried and above which arrives the final whirlwind according to the local story, and in this other 'aelif-bet, trying to find Avicenna, and in some unmined (explosive) land they are finding bees in Israeli tombs. Snow coming to the mountains as far south as Petra and Ma'an.

Nomad

Dan Zimmerman

Nomad more by chance than inclination, I've found no next house home, though rarely huddle homeless in my wickiup, my bivouac, my yurt. Homing from pavilion to pavilion, I've sought a hall, however brief or narrow, bridging bed and board. That conduit links night and day, sleep and wakefulness, Lethe and anamnesis. Its space is dream; it's chairless. Uninhabited but for posing kin, doubly distant in the mirror opposite, it ferries me from nature into nurture; from the bed of generation to the lap of instruction; from the Land of Beulah to the Land of Nod or Promise. Thus, home is where the heart is, but inverted; arterial, home's core communicates between its throbbing chambers, circulating peripatetic blood, and what that blood remembers: blueprints for an ark, and scent of olive; erelict raven, cageless dove.

Nomadology

(Cont. from p. 9)

space. And it is between these spatial structures, however metaphorical they may appear, that poetics and post-modern politics are enacted.

The state occupies "striated space." In striated, or metric space, "space is counted in order to be occupied" (18-9). Striated space conceives of a dimension that maintains linear and solid things. Its geometric understanding is Euclidean. The war machine, on the other hand, occupies "smooth space," a space which is "occupied without being counted" (18-9). Smooth space contains a "rhythm without measure, which relates to the upswell of a flow, in other words to the manner in which a fluid occupies a smooth space" (22). Its geometric understanding is Archimedean. Nomadology acts as a way to recover smooth space by supplanting the rigid metaphors of science with a hydraulic epistemology. Smooth space offers no fixed observation point, violating the very structure upon which the representational image is founded. Instead, smooth space offers non-metric, acentered, rhizomatic multiplicities, akin

to systems of sound or colors. This difference in spatial structures lies not in exclusion of one or the other, but in the "perpetual field of interaction" between them.

Deleuze and Guattari's essay offers a further understanding of a discourse of smooth space. Their metaphors of interior and exterior transform the linear axis of dialectics into a wider "field" of investigation. Nomadology operates, not within the purposes of striated space, but within the possibilities of smooth space, and yet, it is contingent upon and necessitated by the purposes of striated space.

The political left in this country is not dead, but it has been consumed by the representational image, by the discourse of striated space. Now, in 1989, at the end of this millennium, the politics of striated space seeks to extend itself into, and appropriate, smooth space. "Star Wars" is more than the delusion of an aging actor; it is the metaphor for the "state's" political agenda for the next millennium.

JOBOOSKI

Wanted

A person who drinks his or her own urine and stomps around in the moonlight howling and playing watchee watchee.

A solitary medium.

No training necessary. Apply within.

[ed. note: Lest E.D. think this figment of T.C.'s imagination an unlikely option, in a recent communication J.W. writes: "Some of these old guys tell me we're going to regret this 'open winter'; one cat has even suggested that we'll be drinking our own piss." Peter Redgrave, in *The Black Goddess and the Unseen Real* (Grove Press, 1987, pg. 179), says his informant, S.C., told him "the best practice was to drink from 'the middle channel' every morning on an empty stomach; that is, to reject substantial quantities of the fluid at the beginning and end of urination. The theory was that all the semiochemicals stimulated by the night's dreaming were present in elixir, and it brought one closer to the animal senses. Chemicals from weather response also accumulate, so one is, in effect, by feeding back, amplifying weather sensitivity." For further reading, Redgrave suggests: Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, Part V, "Spagyric Discovery and Invention: Physiological Alchemy" (Cambridge UP, 1983); John W. Armstrong, *The Water of Life* (Saffron Walden, Health Science P, 1971);

Arthur Lincoln Pauls, *Shivambu Kalpa* (Ortho-Bionomy Pub., 1967).]

***** One Thin Fin *****

We're underway, but we'll need help to continue. If this first letter interests you, one thin fin will help assure others come your way. Let us hear soon, please, one way or the other.

"The subject-being is shown to be that which is irresistibly drawn outside itself, and this underlies the impossibility of an absolute distinction between intent. and gesture."

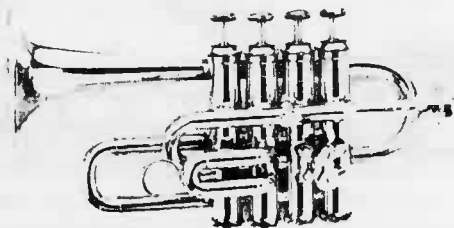
Cornelius Castoriadis,
Crossroads in the Labyrinth.

intent.

Billgrwl

Charles Keil

That's what it says on the computer file, BILLGRWL, without the vowel, because you have to say it in eight letters or less. The sound of an instrument like the cornet has no consonants or vowels, of course, but it has, like all playing instruments, attacks and releases, and, in the hands of some great masters, a fully intended idiosyncratic tone in between the attack and release of each note. Wild Bill Davison has had such a tone on the cornet for fifty or sixty years and he still produces it for delighted fans in North America, Europe and Japan at the age of 83. It is a buzzy, blurry, furry, growling sound that ranges from very light to extremely guttural, but it is there on almost all his notes in the lower register.



When I bought myself a cornet for Christmas a few months ago my aim was to learn a few Wild Bill solos and I thought I would easily achieve "the tone" as a sloppy beginner. Not so. Within a few days I was getting bell like tones, not blurry, fuzzy ones. I asked Rick McCrae, trombonist with The Outer Circle Orchestra, what to do and he suggested various breath-control techniques, trying to create two notes at once, putting a spin of some kind on the air going through the mouthpiece. I couldn't get it to happen. I called cousin Roz Rudd, another trombonist, who had toured with Wild Bill a few times, and Roz said it had to do with growling in the throat as you play. He also told me a nice anecdote about finding Wild Bill sitting naked in his hot Atlanta hotel room with a Civil War hat on his head and other bellum memorabilia at hand. Getting into the spirit of Dixieland? I finally called Bill himself in California and sure enough, "I do it by growling in my throat, try it and you'll see." I did and it worked; I've been growling on my cornet ever since.

Hearing the touring Tibetans last month it occurred to me that Bill may have independ-

ently invented their technique of generating more overtones and partials by going low and deep into the throat for the better vibes to send heavenward. Idle gossip has it that Bill's reputation for wildness has been fed by his kleptomania but I don't believe he stole this from the East. Rather it comes from the center of his American experience and his intention to make the cornet completely his own. This he has done.

Ransom Notes

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HELP!


Special thanks this issue to Fred Wah for help with design, to Robert Creeley and the Gray Chair for post, and Elizabeth Willis for help with graphics.



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further intent.

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July 4: *plants and animals*

Fall: *for the sexes*



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