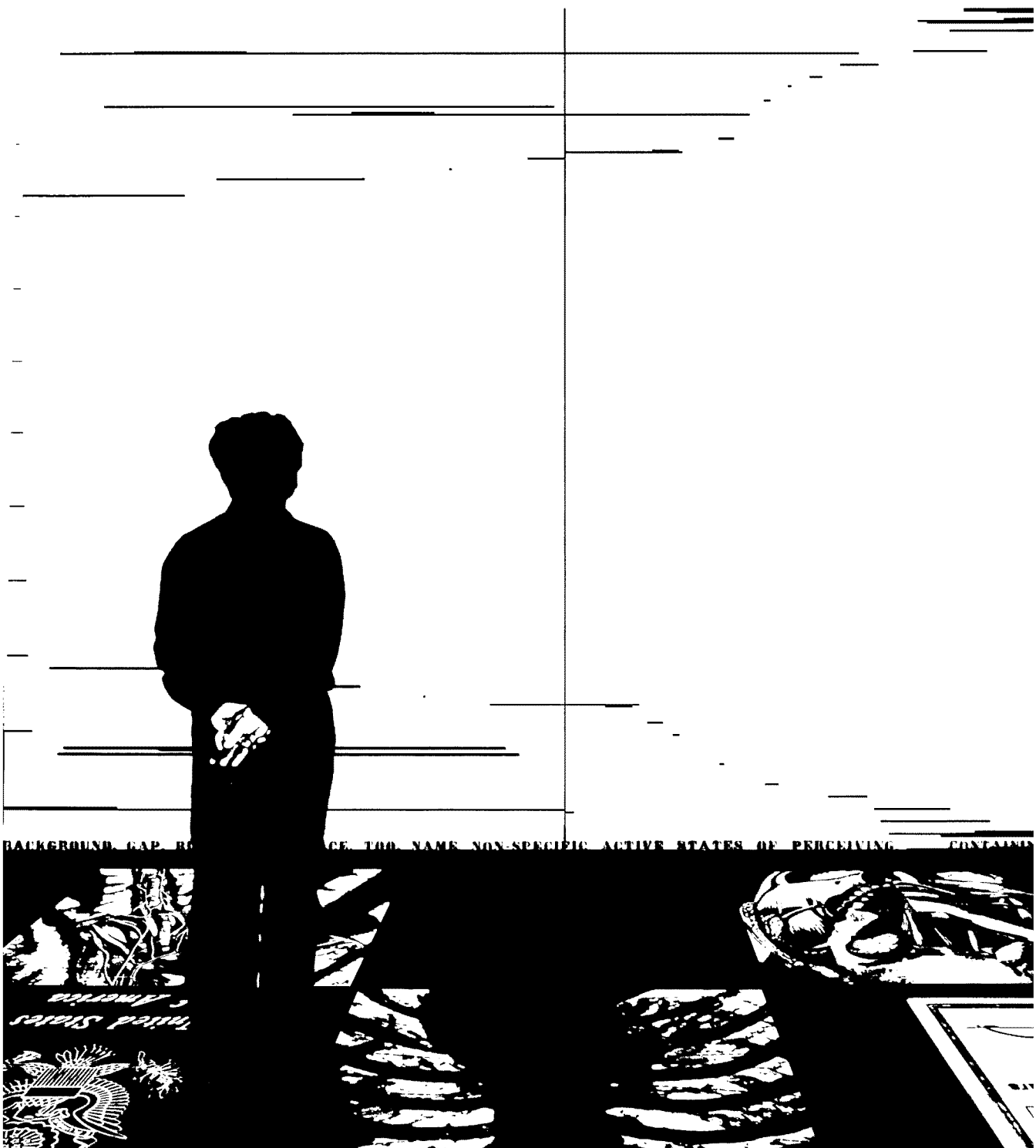


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Arakawa

Helen Keller

or

Madeline Gins

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© 1994 by Madeline Gins

EDITOR: Melody Sumner Carnahan

DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY: Michael Sumner

PUBLISHER: BURNING BOOKS with EAST-WEST Cultural Studies
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PRODUCTION: Typeset in Adobe Garamond and Gill Sans at Sumner Design, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Special thanks to Vince Foster/Get Type. Printed on acid-free paper and Smyth sewn by Thomson-Shore, Inc., Dexter, Michigan.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Madeline Gins and the editor wish to thank Kathleen Burch, Sheila Davies, Stacy Doris, Tom Hall, and Marilyn Zucker for their editorial assistance and support, and Sharon Gallagher for a strong initial impetus.

Masako Somogyi, president of EAST-WEST Cultural Studies, wishes to acknowledge her board of directors and advisors for their support and assistance, and to thank Seiji Oshima, Masatoshi Toda, Mariko Oishi, and Kim Tran (EWCS).

DISTRIBUTOR: D.A.P. (Distributed Art Publishers)

636 Broadway, Suite 1208

New York, NY 10012

For ordering, phone: 1-800-338-BOOK

ISBN 0-936050-11-X casebound

FIRST EDITION

FRONTISPIECE:

left – detail of *Containing Surface no. 3* (1987-88), Arakawa

right – Helen Keller under tall trees

contents

I · THINKING FIELD /	I
II · “PERCEPTION HAS GOT TO HAVE A BODY!” /	9
III · THE FIRST LITTLE BRICK OF SUBSTANCE /	17
IV · DRAW ME A DIAGRAM /	25
V · THE MASK OF FIGURE OR INTERMITTENS CHASMS /	33
VI · I TO I OR EAST TO EAST /	37
VII · SEE-THROUGH LANDSCAPE /	47
VIII · DON’T TAKE ME LITERALLY /	59
IX · EVERY MILLENNIUM IS AN INFANT /	71
X · WHAT IS SPACETIME? /	79
XI · THE GAZING OTHER /	87
XII · ERROR /	103

XIII	•	FIGURES OR CORRIDORS OVERHEARD	/	III
XIV	•	ARAKAWA'S LINE IN HELEN KELLER'S SIGNATURE	/	125
XV	•	MISTAKE ON WHAT SCALE?	/	133
XVI	•	OR MOUNTAINS OR LINES	/	139
XVII	•	A LINE IS A CRACK	/	155
XVIII	•	OFF THE MOUNTAIN ONTO CROWDED VACANCIES THAT DID NOT SUPPORT HIM AS HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD	/	165
XIX	•	THE TEXTURE OF DISTANCE AT POINT BLANK	/	171
XX	•	DIFFERENCE	/	179
XXI	•	BIRDS	/	191
XXII	•	TISSUES OF DENSITY	/	205
XXIII	•	NEUTER GRAPHOS JUNIOR OR THE DINOSAURAL FACTOR	/	217
XXIV	•	THE SHARING OF NAMELESS	/	229
XXV	•	BRAVE LIGHT	/	239
XXVI	•	THE MARCH OF THE TRANSITIVE	/	255
XXVII	•	WHAT HAPPENED WHERE?	/	271
XXVIII	•	FORMING PLANET FORMING	/	279
XXIX	•	CRITICAL BEACH	/	289
	•	SOURCES	/	304
	•	INDEX TO TITLES OF ARAKAWA'S WORKS	/	306

Helen

Keller

or Arakawa

Thinking Field

“The sum of it is that you are a blessing, and I’ll kill anyone who says you are not.”

— William James (in a letter to Helen Keller)

“The invisible and the imperceptible weigh not the same.”

— Anonymous (deafblind)



he afternoon has much to recommend it, including an all-inclusive atmosphere with evening, and a geometry that’s flexible enough.

I was definitely born on July 6, 1936, or it may have been June 27, 1880, or was it actually November 7, 1941?

Form rubs its antlers against trees of not much. If projective envelopings did not move persuasively, there would be no world. Sky

of an I.

Helen Keller. The main constant not to be forgotten is that two of my senses are perpetually down: for seeing and hearing, I — and any I of this variety — draw a blank every single time.

Well, that's how it is and it couldn't have been otherwise save for a change in conditions so total as to have permitted me never to have been Helen Keller in the first place.

Only a totally other set of conditions could have made it possible for me not have to have been a Helen Keller.

Subjected to similar constraints others might live the self-same name, and, by generating sequences of events identical to those associated with this my name, come up with this sky of an I and no other.

Take, for example, this fine, sharp specimen of great odoriferous dimension, a freshly baked loaf of bread in front of me, and know it — the bulk of it and every crumb! — to be for me invisible. For you, too, I suppose, the bread is, at this instant, more or less invisible.

Indeed the whole range of my perceiving happens within what most people consider to be the invisible. “Invisible,” is a term I've imported from the sighted world. It's but one of many tales told to me, into me, so that I might form — for the sake of my forming — as if I could — an abiding picture of the world. (The main supplier of certain of my impressions may be memory, ancient, for as an infant I had sight, retaining it until I was nineteen months of age.)

But, in fact, I find nothing I perceive to be essentially invisible. In a world of all blind people, everything would be non-visible, and it would be trivial to point out one thing or another as being so. To the blind, terms like “invisible” are but polite bridges (with much torque and of odd construction) to the sighted; curtesy, and say, yes, ma'am. When I'm not speaking in the other's voice, I perceive things directly,

fielding them as best I can.

Nevertheless, a having once been marked with the condition of invisibility goes so far — so far-going has it been in this marked vessel as to have completely spread through me — as to lead to where it began: myself observing myself unseen. Here's the sum of all of that (and soundless!), plus a whole other set of X's, hidden. As the provisional sum of all of these, I direct the traffic of weightedly perceptible "invisibles" from a within. The nearly perceptible is thoroughly perceptible enough to me. I have never been able to find the cut-off points for this within. Rather, this "within" acts as if it were boundlessly stretching out — if one were to include the full spread of all the ripples and rippings — into a distance ambiguously endless.

Of course, actions taken by me have a great deal to do with how this distance forms. More than fifty regular actions and easily the same number of micro-actions determine enveloping and the *tissues of density* near and far on which this depends.

*Weight
Without
Place
(1980-81).*

And this is the way I do inhabit the non-visible; as a stretched-out mass onto which the layout of the world is to be placed to be remembered. The "living canvas" is not a bad nickname for someone who strives to keep track of things the way I do. Distinct spots tell of themselves proprioceptively or kinaesthetically. What's happening within my right shoulder is two and one-quarter feet distant from what goes on within the left one. The "living canvas" forms as the distance between spots. One moment's spot is another moment's distance. I situate things and events by means of these. Spots, areas, distances expand and reduce to become one another, occasionally without my knowing it. I have what's happening within my left shoulder *cleaving* slightly less than two and one-quarter feet distant from those events peculiar to my right one. I keep these two shoulders separate and at the

*A Man
Walking*
(1968).

distance from each other that they, by nature, by the nature of (my) body, deserve to be; only when I'm forced to move exceedingly fast — to go as swift as a bullet — do I allow them to be given as a single dot of a place named shoulder.

*Walking
or Talking*
(1969).

*Determin-
ing Body*
(1987-88).

Then let Helen Keller be simply s/he in whom the world draws kinaesthetically its grand home around and about and precisely wherever.

The universe (my intimate as much as yours, but inasmuch as I never catch sight of the many possible separations which, I am told, are constantly presenting themselves to you, then, perhaps my intimate even more so?) exacts a universe of consequences. Were this any less exacting, I'd be strangled by a compromised exactitude. Here's a case in which less *is* considerably less.

*Elemen-
tary
Atmo-
spheres*
(no. 2)
(1974-75).

I'm told that (but do I need to be told that?) pivotal points get seen from three vantage points: eye level, looked up to, glanced down on. Around the meat of point, and out from it, tentatives assemble and are drawn as lines. The triad of elemental paired opposites of orientational space (front-rear; above-below; left-right) runs aground or doesn't. The background laps up the background. The possessive of the moment binds the fixation.

The canvas is divided up from each single point of view severally. Likewise "who" parcels himself or herself out as the concept of person comes alive at the nexus of all (its) tendencies and tentatives. At which juncture, the sky of an I might scratch its head.

To draw the retentive network from an array of attentivity remembered, depicted. Actions can be passed through these lines. There's a graphic abeyance — held in graphic abeyance — and there's a graphic obedience, a continually transitional conferring. This is the linear stuff of the transitive. Of the what of there. Enough of this and

perception will have conferred upon the world a sense of its having been seen — and that happens transitively.

*Afternoon
and
Evening*
(1974).

It can be said that, because it falls everywhere, the phenomenon of light is all-transitive. With perceiving, it is much the same. Even the slightest registering of anything at all equals an alighting on something and to alight on something counts as the direct hit required for a being transitive onto something. Springing into action and everywhere being sprung into action, perception bombards the world as itself, hitting into itself transitively.

Or Air
(1973-74).

In a world of the all-transitive, a world composed of a medium passing (passing? — sieving) through itself (itself? — its set of events), actions associated with intransitive verbs (“the bird flies”; “he runs”) can be thought of as, left and right, scoring numerous direct hits within themselves (within themselves? — within the flying; within the running) and so as supporting a full transitivity. I am thinking of what manages to have carry-over onto what.

What in line draws itself along and through as line if not the perceiving of it? Some of the gaze narrows to a stare then heads into and combines with the firmly drawn line all down its thin but ample length. Lines that hold the narrowed-down stare within the gaze are sometimes seen as, and from time to time are spoken of as, themselves staring out. Usually straight lines are the ones that appear to be staring, but even curvilinear lines can be firm enough and sufficiently straight to be seen as staring out from the surface.

The impressions must be kept distinct, apart from one another, to keep their distance, they suggest. Even so, they must live in the steady stream of the waterfall of their textures collecting. They have a forward and a back. They have an odor off to the side and straight behind. The nub of position is rife, and if respected, it signals. It is a graphically,

kinaesthetic and tactual, that is sketched in by me, at me, every single day. If the visual finds me, it is through my kinaesthetic graphicalness that it does. Kinaesthetic graphicality.

It's the neutral presentation of the thinking field itself (its group of activities) that I — and I — seek here. In each case, I proceed to search out the rallying points of alignment. I begin not as one isolated dot in a field but as a dispersion of these throughout body.

In the substratum of the visible lies a foundational graphism, full quick of thick, of some size but *sizeless*, brought on by any accumulation of sentience, marked out in all directions and practically knowing this by definition. No matter what, it is the *sizeless* that is giving the measure to events, that's why it's all so difficult. The *sizeless* fits an edgeless contour. So named, "it" stands with the non-sized but as a something named — named, *sizeless*, of course; even so this is a term that would deny all objecthood — for objects come in sizes. Similarly, to the *sizeless*, all possibility of being abstracted must be denied — for to be abstracted from one form to another would require at least initial allegiance to one size in particular.

The ethos of the *sizeless*? The *sizeless* moves us and is of us; even as this is of us, what would the *sizeless* have of us? Who is it who is without size but would speak, rather? And how many *sizeless* skies of an I within one *sizeless* sky of an I? These swoop up and scope, non-calibratively, through what I speak of as *atmospheric resemblances*, temporarily building *moral volumes* out of those (more than a little self-contradictory) spins that (doubly) *cleave*.

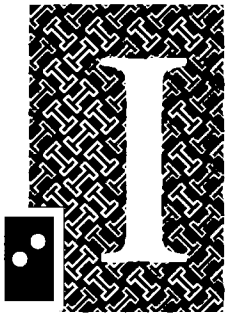
Although order of mention might suggest order of appearance in this limited page-by-page format, what is happening on the designated surfaces might be happening all at once. The shifting of attention happens continually upon the same plane, and through others. There

is a locating. There is a locating of this locating. A continuous overall reading, involving a constant search for the possibly missed points of alignment.

Sufficient knowing of relational positionings and the consequent presentation of oneself to oneself as one blank screen (each screen is readily dissolvable into mere indeterminate area) after another are dependent on those sets of points or of tensions that must and do exist in order for there to be the relatively steady state of a continual non-collapsing all in upon oneself. I direct the order of the scale of events, groups diminished past vanishing points, and cellular units grouped so as to be larger than might ordinarily be suspected. In saying this, do I assert too much? In which is found the chat of circumstances. It is forthrightly plasticity that willows, putters or purrs or thinks out and about.

I get up and walk around the giant banyan tree, and I walk around its circumference of about a hundred feet. No one knows how old it is. The size of the branches in every direction and the tremendous roots I scramble over give me the impression of a grove, but what it is is one colossal tree. I know for certain it is not a part of my face, I think.

“Perception
Has Got to
Have a Body!”

f the thinking field of the deafblind person were absolutely dissimilar to that of his or her fellows, s/he would have no means of imagining what they think.

A network for retaining possible alignments might come about with the writing of this.

The key term would be *to cleave*, taken simultaneously as “to adhere” and “to [be] cut apart.” In order for something to be able to be thought

of, or for an object to be perceived, something (some event) will need to be adhered to, no matter how briefly; and coupled with this, for the sake of other thoughts or perceptions to come, so that there can exist the characteristic condition of receptivity, there will have to be a cutting apart from this to which there had been the need to adhere.

Throughout my body as one longish heart I know the destiny of human society will be to live turned inside out with all consequences on the table. Those sequences making up any observing are to become themselves observable. Observable events are potentially reproducible ones; eventually, from these sequences a whole new perceiver or a new other might be generated.

Within gravity, within inertia, within the cell, the synapse, the ambiguity, biological and otherwise, I hunt (and so must s/he) for, among other specificities, *that which cleaves within the cleft*, so that we might, for example, yes, learn to live to be our own posterity!

On the subject of voice, all these questions were put to me at once: “Where does it feel as though your voice is coming from? As this is arising in you does this feel as though it were coming from not one place but many? And what in the world would be the qualitative feel of this to you ... would you try to say?”

Voice is a ball that only collects into the being of one in the course of something's being said — a ball made up of nothing but its own rolling out. Or voice is a precipitate. Or is this a chain of precipitates of ... the whole of my movement? I make it out to be a precipitate that is practically a “photographic” report of mindbody. Voice comes — from head to foot — out the fingers of the right hand, with a lot of talk hanging around the wrist and a light march of it down through the whole length of the middle of the forearm; but lately I have tried to connect this to that pitifully under-used apparatus, my voice box.

For me, to force some sound out into the regular voice-world is a sorry affair. Where to aim? I have but the remotest idea of where to aim, I have no means of checking up on myself in this. Still this remains one dimension I'd like to be able to pull out of myself.

How do I move? I can move only by eating up or dissolving where I am. I (anyone) pull in with a bright gulp what is to come next. When walking forward, I also snake along on three parallel, horizontal planes. I cast standpoints and send out runners or tendrils of what I call *forming spacetime*. Following this, projective circumferencings happen with me at every level, and *on all or any scale*. All with quirks of their own. Everywhere proceeds as its own tame whirlwind as *then but spreaded blind perception quirks continually sudden*. All these squirmings and divings add up to what spacetime is. What is spacetime?

With the bending and exploding of frameworks, forms of self-preservation suggest themselves. Some shapes hold things apart. I, the maker of these shapes, am subjected to, and must act in accordance with, proddings from near and far as to what to name them. Then a shape takes to tunneling through body, and that shape, along the entire long length it takes for and as itself, shivers and sits to be as open as a mouth in roaring laughter. Sometimes hidden down far along within this lengthening of a designated volume, I glimpse a small pile of nearly twigs; no hand can reach this.

In perceiving lies the telling (into someone) of stories a'composing — as in “compose yourself” — writ in sand, dust, particles, waves, and in all and any sweep of thick or quick, dire or not. Of course dire.

What if seeing and its basis could be separated? Most people would think that not possible. For them, nothing could be more counter-intuitive. I'm reminded of that chart made up of but a single dot that was even so identified as “two or three dots [that were] unable to be

separated.” Might there be an underlying basis for seeing, and, if so, would this be detachable from the actual seeing of things? What I understand (and work with) as the basis of seeing consists of mindbody in its apportioning of itself and the rest of the world out into a thoroughly proprioceptive-kinaesthetic (and tactile) graphicality.

It is in the nature of the thinking field to move and instigate behavior using points of position and of supposition. Here is a world of complete tentativity.

I myself am supporting evidence for the ultimate separability of seeing and its basis. This yields, submerged and compact, an accommodating layer, one come out of extension, stretched over itself. This — from one discrete end of it out to the other — serves both as the primary instance of distance and the means by which all other distances will then be measured, envisaged.

*A Man
Walking
(1968).*

I can keep a dot marked “head” apart from that marked “foot.” It is out across upon the “living canvas” that these stay separate. Knowing these discretenesses and their locales to be the stretched-out bases (blank receiving areas) for seeing . . . something’s taking place upon these bit by bit. . . . I sometimes wish for the construction of a great new visual organ whose interior would be a spherical handball court with a mark-leaving ball that, bouncing everywhere I’d need it to, would turn any spot it touched into something I’d be seeing. The ball *cleaves* to the wall, then bouncing back off it is *cleaved* apart from it (the wall) only then to be made to head for yet a new spot for *cleaving*. The ball in this image is hardly a ball at all, or one only provisionally, always more of an amassing than a mass. If *cleaving* could amass in place — and I think it can — why, it would be just the “ball” for this.

What is *cleaving* or what is it to *cleave*? What may be thought to be sandwiched between the two senses of “to *cleave*” (to join and to be

separated) is the "material" of thought itself, conventionally held to be "transparent" or "transparency itself." A medium that is a perceiving texture may be said to be formed within and between the occurrent juxtaposings of the two contradictory actions of to *cleave*. This medium is the sum of the actions composing it; the result of all *cleaving* that, as it takes place, has formed and is forming whatever is in the offing. The habit of referring to this medium as "transparent" causes it to be erroneously thought of, even if only ever so slightly, as an object rather than as the set of actions which it is. After all, there exists the expectation, indeed slight, that whatever is transparent will at least have to it, if nothing else, a front and a back; but, just as when it comes to the ocean, which is also hardly merely an object, we find no readily locatable front or back, there is neither simply a front nor simply a back to the perceiving texture or the medium that constitutes thought. If the ocean as a whole cannot be spoken of as being transparent neither should the perceiving process be. "Action constructing itself as 'see-through'" might be a better way to refer to the characteristic "transparency" of thought. Although people may guess that it is by means of *cleaving* that they think and perceive, they cannot directly perceive this to be so. Even so, I'm told, the process, carried out in the see-through mode, manages to bring about a world that has to it various degrees of opacity. Some opaque objects will be shiny.

Put the world of numbers along one line (horizontal), and the world of things, names of things, along a line running parallel to this (where are these — wherever could these be?), and together let these show how seeing might always be put. An apparatus for recording "who" in action. This starkly has the look to it of not more than enough. It sets as it rises within that spectrum extending from the hue that is the memory of lead as marked to the color of saliva as it is being swallowed

in shyness or boldness. This unit made of two horizontals crosses the length of the canvas, straddling a rectangle that occupies the top two-thirds of the surface. Below “squats” a rectangle that’s of distinctly different proportions from the painting, but of which it is nonetheless stated: *This rectangle is a photograph of this entire painting*. Note that as difficult as it is to produce an image on command, it is an even more difficult task, perhaps an impossible one, to “see” a photograph into (or out of) a blank. What’s more, the frame within which the called-for photograph would have to materialize is, as noted above, not of the right proportions and so of little help. Could the viewer produce at will photographically into this long, low box a visual record, matte or glossy, of what, in the wider context of the canvas as a whole, s/he sees the entire painting (isolated rectangle included) to be? Or does this empty rectangle “represent” an over-exposed photograph — one that has come out blank — and nothing more. Or, inasmuch as the wrongly-proportioned rectangle gives more than a little disjunctive pause to the act of ascribing, could it be that, more than an image of any this or that, this is a “photograph” of, or the possibility of a photograph of, “OR” itself, pivotally nude. Or do the edges of this photograph that doesn’t look like one provide flat report of a hypothetical proprioceptive-kinaesthetic graphic substratum to the visual? — and as such, then, are this rectangle’s drawn edges representative of the walls (skin) of that self-apportioning out creature known as observer?

*Separated
Continuums
(1964).*

The forms I harken to are schemas of what might be there (and will be again) and of what has happened to me. They are pictures of schemas of pictures. I break my head against the images that don’t form every time.

To be transitive is to have a carry-over onto something else. Thinking, I find, works as a field that is all transitive. So thought

commands a body all spread out in transitivity.

"The best way to draw a line is to do it with your eyes closed!"

"I now declare myself to be carrying that over onto this."

It was with the help of two carefully condensed and separated out thick lines or *separated continuums*, that I was able to know when I had entered Green Park. Roughly, one line to fix things and events occurring all along my path at levels from mid-thigh to ground and the other running line for noting events happening at levels from the shoulders on up. What happened in between was sorted out and shared by these two dominant projected continuums. I smelled grass and burning leaves. It was a blessed corner in which to commune with nature away from the street traffic — men, women and children walking for the pleasure of it, dogs gambolling without leash or muzzle, pigeons and gulls. I touched the noble plane-trees and oaks, and enjoyed the softness of the grass. The sparrows were very cocky and so fearless we almost stepped on them. We inquired why the plane leaves were being burned, and the reply was that it takes them five years to rot. Their ashes make a fine dressing for the soil.

"Perception has got to have a body!" I cried.

The First Little Brick of Substance



o point or dot can be of the size conventionally accorded to it. This is because there can be no such thing as an uncontained point. The perceiving of a point or dot amounts to nothing less than a containing of it. Therefore, when it comes to approximating total point size, size and scope of the originating container, that is, perceiver and the world, must be added onto the designated *minimum visibile* that is the point

seen. Even so, the point (with dot in tow) continues to be that which is commonly put forward as being the smallest of all objects or notations.

No point exists such that it is non-living.

“I am *almost individual*. How can all of voice have made itself this small? That down towards which everything, when reducing, must go, that is I. The limit of a reducing down towards. Beginning with the usual fluffery of reference, trim in to have self-diminished to dot, drawing ever-tighteningly towards less. And you would find this to be pancake flat. Smallest-sized, in that state of. And even in this minuteness, still I can clear my throat. Then down further, at this small size, sphericity and rectilinearity notably blend: my squared corners are round. And still I am not vanished. Due to ever-present drift or blur, I am, in some ways, never ‘small enough.’ This adds up to ‘small enough’: no longer any smaller-still toward which to advance by subtraction or by concentration. The ceasing of all or any tending towards, for the position has been filled. Finally, the desperate need to be brought even further down in scale may be relinquished — and something sits back in an easy chair.”

On a vertical canvas, a bottomless entity appears as a container of grid and not much more; the subdividings — geometrical cellules — of this grid that encloses itself into a containing form (of, to begin with, itself) grow smaller when approaching what the title tells us will be the bottomless below. This is a wide this, wide-what-open, wide open at both ends or endlessnesses. Whatever this is, it is procedural and linguistic. What is stringing itself out here, then remaining put, is evidence of the forming and the containing of a container in the making, the unfolding and the subsisting of deductive events of a thinking field. A dot on the lower right is labeled “mother.” This would

be the point of departure for, or what stands in for, all of what is mother for the while. This dot as marked stands for a greater contextual whole and not only for someone's mother, perhaps the artist's, but for the one to whom this thought or memory occurs or for a motherly point or site in a particular sky of an I. *Bottomless/Mother* (1961).

"A psychological double bottom is declared in the antiphrastically entitled series *Bottomless*, where the arrows and diagrams accompanying the stereometric 'object' as it passes through various vicissitudes, clearly show that the process of geometric conversion and reduction is to be read as the narration of a psychic trajectory," one of the early reviewers wrote.

"After a while I went very near to a beautiful white rose-bush which was completely covered with buds and sparkling with dewdrops; I bent down over one of the branches with a lovely pure white bud upon it, and kissed it softly many times; just then I felt two loving arms steal gently around me, and loving lips kissing my eyelids, my cheeks, and my mouth, until I began to think it was raining kisses; and at last I opened my eyes to see what it all meant, and found it was my precious mother — that expanding dot — who was bending over me, trying to kiss me awake. Do you like my daydream? If you do, perhaps I will dream again for you some time" — written when I was eight years old.

It is important to know that each dot stands definitively for something — except when it doesn't — and to know exactly for what it stands and to agree to a name for it. This is what begins the traction on the world: the pinning down of one thing, anything. Not only must the world be cleaved into sections, agreement must be reached as to how these various sections are to be named. If one thing is not stopped, stopped in its tracks, no traction can be gotten on the world, on oneself.

Before I had caught on to what language was, and to the arbitrary

and voracious centrality of its game — I got this all in one shot — I wasn't even able to. . . . Nothing had been marked for the rest to pass by for. If even one demarcation can be made (at knowing), the rest, assembling itself accordingly, follows.

I had to learn — and it was a question of agreeing to a convention — a method of affixing to each thing the realization that this indeed was the thing that it was.

This is what people do: they let “ x equals dot” stand for “ y equals mother.” A dot x might stand for a thing y .

He was the sum of his dots, as marked, that group of stand-ins for living points. We saw him walking or talking.

“But the customs officials didn't see him, at least not right away. They wouldn't allow the work in ‘duty-free’ if it was only printed matter and not art. A few dots could be anything, for any purpose, but if these were of something, then it would be art and there'd be no duty. ‘Look at the title,’ I said. ‘You see it is called *A Man Walking*. Here are dots marked head, thorax, pelvis, hand, leg and so on. See how the dots marked arms and hands have been placed a little higher up than where they would normally be expected to be ? This is because as the man walks along his arms are naturally swinging back and forth as part of the gait.’ ‘Oh yes,’ they said, ‘one foot is quite a bit in front of the other, too. You're right, someone is walking across the dark blue. . . .’ ‘Grid,’ I supplied the missing word. Everybody got quite excited by this new, very reduced chart — a few of the customs men were actually jumping up and down. Although it had the semiotic ring to it of its own period, the sixties, this anatomical chart of another order could have stood for any person of any time out for a walk, from homunculus on up, a strolling Neanderthal, an ambling Midlothian, a disjunctive grouping of post-modern humanoid jumping beans.”

A chart with a life of its own. In subsequent versions, each bit of pinned down abstraction, each named dot, gets assigned a dual stand-in role. The dot linked by arrow to the designation, “head,” is now, by means of a second arrow, also given over to the word, “sky.” “Thorax” and “mountain” make do with one dot between them. Parts of the landscape are paired with parts of the body, generally according to the corresponding positions held all up and down that vertical that is the human figure when it is standing outdoors. The semantic doubling, however, cannot be said to follow this predictable path. Instead, a dot associated with a small, black stenciled-in presentation of the word “leg” gets paired with another “leg,” also in stencil letters, but in this case large, light-gray ones. Has the same denotation been given twice so that we might not miss that this is really what it is? Or are we being clued in to the need to view the chart in relation to different image sizes. Or do we have in this the report of a seeing and then a seeing again, a matter-of-fact routine occurrence, smacking, even so, of deadpan double take? The dot for “foot” as well as doubling as a mark for “shoe” (“shoe” is larger in size but much paler than that “foot” with which it shares a dot and which supposedly wears it) is allied, a third arrow lets us see, with an indefinite something that’s hardly a word and possibly never to become one. What started as a chart of a man out for a walk has now become and will now bear the title of *A Study of Twins (Talking or Walking)* (1968).

This artist makes “specific abstractions.” Without the existence of a specific and critical abstractionism, the present study would not have been possible.

The extreme transitivity of that waiting texture which is the thinking field, for all its colorful motion into the world of any texture, is of unrecognizable temperature, unlike either the body of the observer

or of anything that is being observed.

“It is all a blanket thermometer and one wonders whether it will ever succeed in taking its own temperature.”

Then let's rethink all this in terms of Voluntar, in terms of her story. Voluntar, short for voluntary action, is herself the archetypal degree. An elusive warmth. In the scale of events, she, preceding dot, is beneath it yet wider. When she collects in place, she can manage to work herself up into being point or dot. Once set in motion, these two images (dot and Voluntar) cannot help but bleed into one another. It is said that the movements of her wisp of body configure animate microchips that are volition.

Voluntar is a great little diver; I should know for it is I who trained or invented her. It is she who takes motility and builds it into mobility.

Voluntary activity, earned rather than given, is a result of or a lithe product of an historico-cultural development in behavior, and as such is considered to be a feature unique to human psychology. The capacity for voluntary activity distinguishes child from beast. “I'd rather like to do that.” Yet the child is capable of far fewer voluntary actions than is the adult. Lack of training curtails range and amplitude of choice. This is dependent on the number and types of dives made by Voluntar. Her broadening the horizon as one spasm of the horizon after another builds the world. As the first little brick of substance, she is the ultimate fibre of a micro-ground. I may have seen photographs, or, if you like, “photographs,” of these twists and twistings.

Ceaseless expeditions might describe the extent of her effort, her way of life, the relentlessness of it. Not all microscopics dive so well or as often. She pseudopods below, looking for all the world like an octopus, could only she be seen.

It's not that she sees for me, for she's as blind as I am. What she does

is feel the way for me. She is a blind man's cane, but a soft, small, internal one, with *a core of flexibility only*.

Voluntar, then, is substance and sign (structure) of the voluntary. We have in her the signpost (many) leading humans to a specific scaffolding of behavior that breaks away from biological environment to new forms of culturally-based processes. As down Voluntar dives and up again each time she comes with one *signified or if* after another, a sky of an I is sketched out and the basic unit of "who" is constructed.

She is countless yet there may not be as many of her as that would make it seem. She is also free not to exist.

It's at the backbone-crossroads of her hinge-nature that I pick up *the call of continuity* each time. Her sleek body is slinkily prescient.

Or take her momentarily in the static state of having agreed to be point or dot. She is the always figurative point. All concrete figurative. Only through voluntary action can she be summoned or do the summoning.

Found lounging in the figurative, sword in hand (or pseudopod-like projection as sword), suddenly she lunges forward. Upon her having lunged forward, all swords vanish except for their points. When the sword's point strikes, that's her it becomes. *Point* has been her pseudonym for centuries.

Voluntar goes directly from zero speed to top speed. Intensity is her middle name, actually. Her knowing how to spring into action without missing a beat allows her to catapult on a regular basis to the forefront of issues. Marx greatly admired how swiftly, surreptitiously, and definitively she could be effective; he wisely chooses to rely on her as key mover in a central dictum, declaring: "We have sufficiently explained the world, the *point* is to transform it." Without her, it couldn't be done, and if not by her, then by nobody. Anything Voluntar

does is transformatory in full, and this will include anything whatsoever that has been transformed.

I know her to be the darling of place markers of plasticity, limning character and will. *Stretchable impressions* are yes, her, hers.

It was not long before lines were being drawn. None of these had any less firm a resolve of plasticity throughout than did Voluntar.

The body of a dot is drawn out and given traction to be pressed into line. Voluntar's speech is one with that of dots telling how it feels to be drawn out into line. Unwillingly pressed into service? That's unclear. If we cannot know what they think and feel, how can we ever stop discriminating against the miniscules. We may not care much for how it feels to go from point to line, but for them this is major. We think of bodies as being all different sizes, but mindbody we would reserve mainly for ourselves, that is, for beings who are our size. It's easy for us to do this as long as the little others remain voiceless. But these can speak if only we listen. They speak in us, to be sure, but when they would speak up, directing their attention to their own unique subject matter, it turns out that for these partials, these littles, only a smattering of English is available; rather, Voluntar and her peers can avail themselves mainly of Anglo-Saxon with now and then a little Sanskrit mixed in: "It all came rud, pud as a thud, that is. Pud extrud. They scud. Curded line or line-like turned cud. [Sounds that are made within the inscribing of a line] Cud of what? Sense cud but. Anu [Sanskrit:atom] then. Trodded. Cud rudder. Suds as duds. Sudden. A bud of paddhati [line]. Bud bite, oh! Bud in Buddy. O Bud. . . . Light budding. Cram bud into pud. Rub bud of pud into the crevice of line. Pud creamier linear. Huddles. The hum in the pud. Charcoal puddles. Line active."

Draw Me a Diagram



as I picking up sounds of that conversing which goes on in the course of a line's being inscribed as formed?) Trodded. Cud rudder. Cram bud into pud, aditi [Sanskrit: infinite]. Huddles the hum in the pud. Faint charcoal puddles. Go around by the luddle [the back or side-gate]. So thud I. So tut I. I tud so. Save the crumas. Pass the cucurbite [gourd]. Until the next wink then ... [wink: in Anglo-Saxon: to

close the eyes; to blink; the modern English sense of wink] “Yf he can buy sume collucione, do his neighoure ronge.” — Chaucer. The fleshment. There was much flacor [flying of arrows]. Flaesc. I did but see the flean of the fleshment as I looked up at the first [a. space of time, b. ceiling]. Parsi [to one side] con [angle]. This was treow.

At length, a line is always the length of an uncupped pud. Or as said above, the pud extrud. Bite the bud.

“I want a scale diagram of my own for any terrain.”

“We all do,” was the reply.

Remember my having told you of our having tied rope up all around the backyard, of our stringing it back and forth from tree to tree and from bush to fountain, trying to maintain it mostly at the height I am with arms stretched out above me, but also placing it at heights from anywhere from between up that high to not much below the ankle. This was done to fulfill one of my greatest ambitions which was to be able to run uninhibitedly about without doing too much or any damage to myself. As long as my hands grazed or sensed to graze this rope I could be sure I was in the safe zone that encompassed a terrain with which I was familiar.

I am helped in a related way by a diagram of my own house that's inscribed inside my right foot. I have it that the layout is marked out within the foot itself at a height of about seven-eighths of an inch above the sole on a parallel plane to it. Due to the way a foot narrows as it rises towards its ankle, I was forced to draw my precious mnemonic sketch greatly scaled down, giving it a total area of a bit more than one-half a foot (that is, the standard foot, not mine in particular); I might add that I've also committed myself to the securing of a companion piece of a schema for the left foot's supra-sole area; this I handle in a much more informal way in accordance with its subject matter: all the

comings and goings within my home, Arcan Ridge (nearest actual address: right foot).

I start out of bed. I must put bed behind me. The woodenness of the footboard is behind me. I verify this by reaching out in back of me and rapping lightly on it with my knuckles. The bedroom has three windows. Assign one window to each ear, that is, have one be placed to the right and one on the left; a third window (these intimations of windows of the thickness of image, image alone, I have always secretly longed to call “thwindows.”) takes its orientation, I allow, from the back of my head; the third window opens out in the wall that is directly behind the bed that is behind me. All this has been worked into the scale diagram in place within my right foot. That line of this diagram drawn parallel to the back of the heel, drawn alongside it from within, represents the house’s back wall; a part of this is the wall directly behind my bed in the bedroom, the one which, upon awakening, I, as just described, regularly consign — and on a considerably larger scale than I am able to use within the foot — to the back of my head. Through this diagram, as it is projecting out — I can, by thus projecting it, change its scale to fit my need — and exploding through me, troops all the rest of my house.

Thus do I carry in and as me *a diagram of the imagination*. I am stretching that labyrinth within which I stand (as I), inserting into it all the other labyrinths or rooms that come along, that come to mind. Standing in the living room, I look at a diagram giving the layout of the entire house. With a diagram of the whole house displayed within it, this one room is made to contain, in a sense, the whole house. The living room, given how it is named, would be the right room for this to happen in. My having a diagram of the house makes it possible for me to prepare for and know each of the other rooms

*Stretch-
able
Labyrinth
(1963).*

*The
Diagram
of Part of
Imagination*
(1964-65).

*Living
Room*
(1965).

*X-ray of a
Diagram*
(1965).

before entering them. Because I've been to each of these so many times before, they can, one by one, spring out of the diagram as I choose them to. A diagram makes it possible for a part to contain the whole. It can be seen that this canvas presents *a diagram of part of the imagination*. Here is only a part; the rest of the imagination is busy with a great number of other things and events.

Or the schema grows large and diffuse. It has become large enough for me to walk through nonchalantly barely keeping it in mind. To the general of its airy surround, I cart the particulars. The schema of the house, hotel room, if need be, represents a lot of work on my part. It is almost as much a construction as the original, and, perhaps, sometimes a good deal more than that. All I can say is that it coheres to its own coherency without wires, although it is as contiguous in and of itself as any wire or wiring — and full well as good a conductor. A group of something has agreed to be the house. The organic, as usual, will lend a hand to — I should say that it underwrites — the inorganic. It is said that the vocabulary of schematic constellations for people in my condition is about as extensive as is most people's vocabulary of words.

Von Senden tells of a formerly blind patient who, upon recovering sight, reported that although he knew the room he stood in to be only one part of an entire house, he was unable as he stood there to conceive that the whole house could look bigger. He did not have any more room to give to anything more than this, or so he then concretely thought. Our sense of space is determined by the practices we grow used to.

"What made you decide to have your paintings be diagrams?"

"I needed paintings to be all-inclusive without their containing a single extraneous thing or becoming in any way needlessly weighty. Diagrams. Maybe diagrams, I began to think.

"There were a few incidents that helped me come to this. Let me

see what I can remember.

“A jazz musician, self-educated, she was in her mid-fifties, I suppose. The third time or so she came to play: ‘I’ve heard about you. They say you’re this strange artist but I can’t see anything yet, everything’s unfinished or not started or something. But I like you. I don’t know why. I want you to do my portrait.’

“Why not accept to do what I had absolutely no desire to do. I had already let her in several times to play the piano, something which almost definitely was not what I wanted. In those days, as much as now, but perhaps then even a little more than now, I needed to be left alone to concentrate; having only recently arrived in New York I was slowly beginning to put things in place such as I could bear them.

“She sat up straight, crossed her legs, one arm rested on the closed keyboard, the other was rounded in her lap. I had accepted to do what she had proposed, and once I had, not another word from her.

“Staring and staring at her, I could see that — and this I suppose was what I had all along had in mind to see — but I could see that! — she was everywhere. Our form is taken from, and must, to some degree, be considered as inseparable from, that which is around us. All that was in view was of her, or was contributing to who she was, tributaries all to her sky of an I. I would have either to take down only a few of the salient features or to take it all down. As I was determined to give her what she wanted, I set about outlining all I could of what I saw. As I believed her to be, in a sense, everywhere, I was able, as I went along, finding and sketching her in and about all the corners of the room, along all its defining edges, to forget her as someone who was there, as someone seated, at that moment, upon my piano bench.

“After three hours had elapsed, she got up and came around to look over my shoulder. She was not pleased with how I had portrayed her.

She could find nothing but a good deal of the room upon the paper. Did she fear that she was never going to be there?

“Don’t get upset. This is your frame, and so it is you. I’m grateful to you for having asked me to do a portrait, because it has led me to think of another way to make paintings.’ She was, unfortunately, very angry and unwilling to listen to anything I had to say.

“Around the same time, possibly a half year before this, late one night, I found a pile of discarded blueprints near City Hall. As I looked at the blueprints, it was almost as if I could see my imagination in front of me, presented to me from the outside. What to others might be cool, mechanical, and impersonal images, if images at all, struck me as being personal, highly individual ones. It was this that I had been feeling the need to draw. The blueprint as a ready-made is a perfect example of the condensed perception of the other. That was, and had, in some way always been, my point of departure. At least one of the two or three I always like to start from at once.”

Outlines are drawn, attributions given. At each of the six slightly opened windows, light of a different color floods onto the canvas that is mindbody. This layout envelops wherever you are, subtracting everything from it, only to have an enormous quantity of light be poured in. “I have made up my mind” and “I cannot make up my mind” can be equally well seated here. Whatever size this is, it expands to such an extent, always, that nothing can be said to be larger than it. The spelling out of position: *Alphabet Skin* (1965-66). The contours of this garment are of a primordial spacetime or of all of perceiving. The Kabbalah tells of a “garment” (*alphabet skin*) that has sensibility woven within it “like the grasshopper whose clothing is part of itself.” The length of the “garment” was made up of the alphabets of the *Sefer Yetzirah* and had 231 “gates” which form the archi-structure of thought. Its

breadth was composed of an elaboration of the Tetragrammaton according to the numerical value of the four possible spellings of the fully written names of its letters, viz., the “name” 45, the “name” 52, the “name” 72, and the “name” 63, which were the “threads” and the “weave” that were originally situated in the hem of the garment. The size of this garment was twice the area necessary for the creation of all the worlds. After it had been woven, it was folded in two: half of it ascended and its letters stood behind the letters of the other half. The “names” 45 and 52 were arranged behind the “names” 72 and 63. It happened that the last part of the “name” 63 was left without a partner in the folded garment. This folding constituted a contraction (*zimzum*) of the *alphabet skin* to half its area, and with the removal of half of it from its previous place, something new was formed. The empty area created by the folding of the garment is not an actual vacuum but is merely deprived of the garment or of the light of its substance. Here then is some early evidence of the need to leave things blank, unadhered to, cut apart from, so that new and other things or events might happen; and thus has the mask of this world been cleaved to the garment of itself. Taking it up from there, we might then cleave it differently.

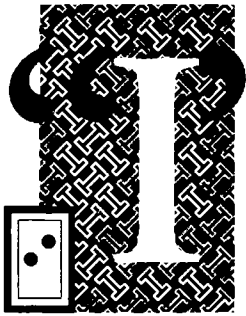
What makes me happy as a good hill is that our syllogisms resonate. No blank is numb. Some blank would smell of a numb appearance when in the process of forming lines. Lines keep blank from springing into color, I suppose I’ve heard. Or line-colored lines, of course, as members of a world of color, also have color, but an unmoved color held ... in line.

As long as even one of the body’s senses remains intact, that blank out of which things and events may be construed is possible.

A diagram might exist such that I would be able to lick off from it the very sight of. . . . To arrive at something of this order, the diagram

would have had to have been made without a single move's having been wasted and with hardly a false step's having been taken. It is with this degree of exactitude that each *fiction of place* is initiated. Suddenly, no unnecessary actions. No longer any time for that.

The Mask of Figure or Intermittens Chasms



ll problematize you, if you'll
problematize me!"

Confined to a place in which there's
little room to move, in something of
a prison, you stare out down a long, narrow
corridor (at a seated person's eye level) filled
with light. The light interferes with your
being able to determine the dimensions and
the shape of this passageway. You spend hours,
then days, alternately gazing and peering into

the refulgent distance intent on getting a sense of the proportions. Suddenly you couldn't care less about this problem. You turn away and refuse to think of it again. What I want to know is how it would feel then. . . . I would like to know exactly how you would feel then and there, right at that moment.

The medium in which conceiving may convincingly proceed is blank, or there is no medium as such, only the event. Then a mark is made from which one can proceed to distance oneself. The mark is what makes it tactically possible for expressing to be prolonged into articulating.

"I forgot what I was going to say."

Every human action is expressive, which makes Mondrian as much of an expressionist as Munch. The term "expressionism" is used unfairly to privilege the more visceral types of expression.

A subjectively mediated, objective quality raises its voice to speak: "Stop the writing of this!"

Zurich, mid-morning: "Light called out to me directly: 'Use me! Use me! Don't forget to use me.'"

Intermittens Chasms glided boldly into the room ... and chiar-oscuro was grabbed by its adumbration ... adventitiously by where it was hemmed in ... a minting of the matrix ... a scantling ... tableau sieveant ... a non-seeable likeness ... a likeness to the back of to be faithful to ... coasts on its mimicking ... non-docile conjuncture ... sedimented expression ... sonant lineaments ... segmented trait ... who is in the bow of Re's bark? ... the bow is in the bark of Re's bow ... a token of this type ... *impressionable stretching* ... what if wink of figure ... pulled mark ... annotated cleaving ... enveloping insignia ... screeching pointer ... forgotten cynosure ... vertical prefigurement ... everted cover ... on the trail of plicature ... severally plasmic ... audibly

morphic ... cut of one's jib ... a sketch mold ... euphonious hue ... not formless nor abrupt but interfretted ... to cut off the jib of the ready-made ... slithering flexure ... a faithful and lovable stucco ... inflected cacophony ... figural voicings ... neutral as to figural ... from lentiform through luniform meniscal conchoidal cordiform to (not without falciform) reniform ... out of its jib ... fascia ... tortile ... mazy ... juxtaposed desparate ploys ... loud pale ... flexuous ... mesmerizing incision ... finding the right no place ... sharp figment ... image-widening figure ... shape's dilemma ... mainspring perfumed non-figure ... prompt trait ... persuadable trail ... susceptible kinaesthesia ... voiced lineaments ... exhorted cipher ... mocked lure ... beckoning discernments ... snow-balling salient grid ... the observed as the observer ... provoked graphism ... scuffed nuance ... engage, upbraid, abrade ... vegetable animus ... non-fecal rectangles ... non-emeraldic slivers of a rectangle ... Solidity and Extension and the Termination of it, Figure [Locke] ... Extension and Solidity and the Determination of Perceptual Landing Sites, Figure [voiced figures] ... list ... over ...

The Given
(1971-72).

Can consciousness supersede its own mechanism (process) of focusing? If not, how much of what seems to occur is nonsense?

"I as voice supersede my own mechanism of focusing!"

"What a toughie! How so?"

I to I or East to East

“Not truth but apportionment.”

— Arakawa



ut the world of numbers along one line, and the world of things, names of things, along another (the lines are full), and let this show the general conduct of seeing in meted-out dispersal. In this is set forth all that could be the case. One continuum goes off that way and the other this – one is of name-bearing things and the other of events unnamed. Innumerable unnamed events are even so named by num-

*Separated
Continuums
(1965-66).*

ber. Sit back and observe what's at stake. The sum of lines forms an apparatus for recording "who" in action. Starkly this has to it the look of precisely not more than enough.

"Is what you speak of a continuum or is it merely contiguous?"

"That depends on what you believe inhabits length."

And now at last we are aboard the *Asama-Maru*, heading for Japan. At last I shall fulfill a lifelong dream. It is hard to tell in whom the excitement swells most. Niels Bohr, my fine shipboard companion, has matching expectations to mine. Together we often play at sniffing cascades of electrons belonging to the widest of seas, that is, the one upon which we gaily sail. By moving me along constantly over nothing but water, you give me throughout my solitude an ocean's vastness that fills the eye. I multiply a thousand times the utmost height and width that my touch compasses, and thus I gain a sense of the sky's immensity. This morning the ocean seemed all sun. We started picturing, or I should say, cross-picturing, in oncoming waves, the cascading cherry blossoms that awaited us on an increasingly far less distant shore. Ah, *waiting texture*, we may have crisscrossedly sighed. Prince Tokugawa sent this message: "The Committee, the nation and the cherry blossoms await you."

The sea's high today. We roll and toss. This reminds of the time I spent in a two-propeller airplane during a thunderstorm, but how lovely that this has so much less ozone in so much more breeze. I love the way these motions help me to rattle my cage. Oh toss me about.

Unfortunately, Bohr is not quite the sailor I am. I attend him in his motion agony. His fingers and mine chatter at each other through his tumultuous half-sleep.

"Oh protoplasm," does he sigh? "Yes," he goes on no doubt in his sleep, "this 'living point' is joined by another, and then another, and

from these successive joinings there results a unified being, for I am a unity, of that I am certain. . . . (as he said this he felt himself all over). But this unity?? — I can understand an aggregate, a tissue of tiny sensitive bodies, but an animal!... an individual, conscious of its own unity! I can't see it ... no."

No, no, no, no. I who like to think of myself as a "living canvas" perk up at the mention of a field of "living points." A swarm of living points comes pretty close to describing how I feel myself to be in the world. *"No!" Says the Signified!!" (1971-72).*

The dreamer is in blunt and fearsome conversation with himself, taking now one position, now another. I sit beside him, writing down his stitched-together suppositions. It is hard to tell which dreamer's words these are. I seem to think they're Diderot's.

"Certainly contact between two living molecules is quite a different thing from mere contiguity of two inert masses."

"Yet everything works together to produce the unity we drink of."

"Ever seen a swarm of bees leaving their hive? The world, or the general mass of matter, is the great hive. . . . This cluster is a being, an individual, a kind of living creature, with all elements, individuals, clinging to each other, itself, by their feet."

"If one of these bees decides to pinch in some way the bee it is hanging onto what do you think will happen?"

"I have no idea."

"Well, the second bee will pinch its neighbor, and throughout the cluster as many individual sensations will be provoked as there are little creatures composing it, and the whole cluster will stir, move, change position and shape; a noise will be heard, the sound of their little cries, and a person who had never seen such a cluster form would be tempted to take it for a single creature with five or six hundred heads and a thousand or twelve hundred wings."

The ship rolled sharply. Bohr sat bolt upright. I pushed him ever so gently and he was lying on his back once again.

“A man taking that cluster for an animal would be mistaken.”

“Do you want him to give a more balanced opinion? Do you want to change the cluster of bees into one individual animal? Soften the feet with which they cling to each other, that is to say make them continuous instead of contiguous.”

“To soften the feet make these curve around to be cell-walls merely, unadorned ones. Or have the feet be less feet than contact points, living. How often we proceed through a set of unembodied feet of unembodied insects with frantically beating erased wings. Then pour one continuum into the next.”

“Or let one continuum be the measuring cup of the other.”

“Then take the thick blade of your delicate scissors and try to cut the feet apart, exactly where they’ve grown together. . . . Then you will find the difference between a cluster of continuous bees or living points and the cluster of contiguous ones.”

Change may be the vitalizing wind blowing through the house of life, but it is not an abiding force. We need permanent things to soak peace into us as well as progress. Nothing illustrates this sentiment better than the films of Ozu. Always he harkens back to the same, familiar stories. These are stories of the working out of the complexities of daily life. Who was it who pointed out, “the tiny incidents of daily routine are as much a commentary on cultural ideals as the highest flight of philosophy or poetry.” The camera returns again and again to a limited number of architectural settings or landscapes. The camera’s eye looks out from the highly stable position of someone seated on the floor. That the camera points out towards the world from a sitting position has a calming effect on seated viewers. Trains rattling across

the screen in Ozu's films have an amazing matter-of-factness, perhaps because they remind one of nothing so much as the concurrent running of footage through the projector. We have the world presented as neutral and neutralizing. Whatever must be seen will be seen in the course of this. Children, being given no benefit of the doubt, are portrayed as essentially selfish to the core, basically nasty or indifferent to others, and bound to stay so until. . . . Although adults act with noticeably great concern for one another's well-being, they do not hesitate to express negative feelings about something or someone when they feel they must. Could we say that the intelligence of life seems in these reels to be adjudicating itself. Shortcake which in these films we find frequently being offered to a visitor was already by the 1940s a settled-in convention in Japan, having been brought from Portugal four hundred years before.

Bohr seemed to feel it was important for me to know of the specificity of color even if I could not see it out into the world. He was the one to have surmised that each color reports — is the report of — how far an electron has jumped. The wavelength that manifests is proportionate to the number of orbits the electron crosses over. To every element, to each of its atoms, belongs a set of colored lines that gives a full report of the jumping habits of all its electrons. It wasn't that he expected me to be able to read these graphs and thus determine the individual elements. Rather, he sensed — and we don't disagree on this — that if color was ever to be mine, I'd have to catch its fraction of a jump. And so we sailed on. The ship a boatload of atoms for what it was worth.

Breathes a line out of its prow. The prow's line turns the corner, leaving in its wake a chart of color. To where? Through and to the *waiting texture*. In the other corner what's been left is the thought of a wash. A

faint alembic-shaped record of the splash.

S.A.
Equation
(1960-62).

How many crossings of that ship? Four or five. And where did the voyage end? And how long did it last? For what? Into and across diagramness.

If a “living point” took to moving about to see what could be seen. . . .

According to one tea master the best quality leaves must have “creases like the leathern boot of Tartar horsemen, curl like the dewlap of bullock, unfold like a mist rising out of a ravine, gleam like a lake touched by a zephyr, and be wet and soft like fine earth newly swept by rain.”

The images then pulled in and steeped into the liquid. Moment to moment, to picture or not to picture both are options.

Then the beverage was poured into cups and drunk. Golden elixir, O nectar! The filmy leaflet hung like scaly clouds in a serene sky or floated like water lilies on emerald streams. It was about such a beverage that Lotung, a Tang poet, gave forth a sequence of libidinal investments in this order: “The first cup moistens my lips and throat, the second cup breaks my loneliness, the third cup searches my barren entrail but to find therein some five thousand volumes of odd ideographs.”

Memory, as all stretched out as any akimbo of body can be, holds forth in living points and their bouquets.

Just then the two Sealyhams belonging to one of our traveling companions came running up to me where I sat on the deck reading my English Braille version of Okakura’s *The Book of Tea*. The dogs were not exactly arrayed in their Sunday best — they had been out running in the pouring rain and their long hair, as it dried, felt like bits of candied orange peel sticking out all over them, but I loved their

joyous friendliness.

The world — that is something I am forever lending credence to. The atmosphere we are living in these days is not foreign — nothing human is foreign to me — but it has a quality all its own. I perceive in Japan a conflict between an ancient civilization and modern times. Young and old alike seem pulled this way and that by opposing forces which they must try to comprehend quickly if they are to preserve their national life. Some are nervously self-conscious as if trying to fit in with Western ideals and methods that are changing the face of the earth — but they are more internationally minded than Americans. The Americans need to assign to other people a position of inferiority so that they can always come out on top. They particularly don't want Japanese intellectuals to succeed.

In 1906, Okakura declared in *The Book of Tea*: misconceptions are fast vanishing amongst us. Commerce has forced the European tongues on many an Eastern port. Asiatic youths are flocking to Western colleges for the equipment of modern education. Our insight does not penetrate your culture deeply, but at least we are willing to learn. Some of my compatriots have adopted too much of your customs and too much of your etiquette, in the delusion that the acquisition of stiff collars and tall silk hats comprise the attainment of your civilization. Pathetic and deplorable as such affectations are, they evince our willingness to approach the West on our knees. Unfortunately, the Western attitude is unfavorable to the understanding of the non-West.

Only recently, I had this to say about acculturation: The experience of the deafblind person, in a world of seeing, hearing people, is like that of a sailor on an island where the inhabitants speak a language unknown to him, whose life is unlike the one he has lived. He is one, they are many; there is no chance of compromise. He must learn to see

with their eyes, to hear with their ears, to think their thoughts, to follow their ideals.

Okakura insists: When will the West understand, or try to understand, the non-West? Your information is based on the meager translations of our immense literature, if not on the unreliable anecdotes of passing travellers. . . . Rarely a chivalrous pen enlivens the Oriental darkness with the torch of our own sentiments. What dire consequences to humanity lie in the contemptuous ignoring of non-Western cultures. (This was before Hiroshima!)

At my end of things: The skeptic would deny me that image which Fancy, the cunning artisan, wields, because I cannot see with my physical eyes the changeful, lovely face of my thought-child. He would break the strength of my enveloping. This spirit-vandal would humble me and force me to bite the dust of material things. While I champ the bit of circumstance, he scourges and goads me with the spur of fact . . . [but] blindness has no limiting effect upon imaging.

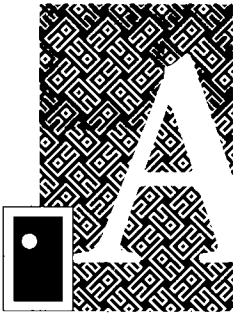
At his end of things: In our common parlance we speak of the man “with no tea” in him, when he is insusceptible to the serio-comic interests of the personal drama. Again we stigmatize the untamed aesthete who, regardless of the mundane tragedy, runs riot in the springtide of emancipated emotions, as one “with too much tea” in him. You may laugh at us for having “too much tea,” but may we not suspect that you of the West have “no tea” in your constitution.

According to Dr. Hisao Nakai, a leading contemporary psychiatrist, much of what’s diagnosed as schizophrenia is actually intense culture shock.

As the ship sailed toward the Yokohama Harbor some sentences from the book that I was reading marched in through my fingers and took on a great tactical presence amidst all that which was afloat in me:

“The West and the non-West, like two dragons tossed in a sea of ferment, strive in vain to regain the jewel of life”; also, “I know fish can swim, birds fly, but I cannot gauge the power of a dragon.” “Lao Tzu said, ‘Open matter and create work,’” I kept repeating to myself.

See-Through Landscape



association and memory supposedly stain each object with the hue belonging to it. I am inclined to want to verify this, but wonder how I ever could. The experience of the deafblind person, in a world of seeing, hearing people, is like that of a sailor on an island where the inhabitants speak a language unknown to him, whose life is unlike the one he has lived.

Suddenly Polly into my palm: "Helen, here

we are in Glasgow!”

I rushed to retrieve my journal of the previous summer from out the top left drawer of the desk by the window in the sunroom-study of our little cottage. From it, it was for the following story I felt a need. It happened that try as I might to be a faithful listener to this tale as it was being told to me back then, I had repeatedly found myself to be mixing in with it bits and pieces of half-perceived others, of still other stories, for who knows why — unless, and this might well be the case, it was Voluntar who was willing this to happen.

What I now recount comes from Ames and is a story whose telling he embarked on at 7:45 A.M. on a Tuesday in early June or was it, on second thought, at around 9 o'clock on a Friday in late July. Among the stories brought to me are some I am so readily caught up in as to make it seem that these have never not been mine.

We were sitting beside the pony track which gropes its way from Glenvalin up the Correi na Sidhe. I had been brought that afternoon from the south, while Ames had been taking an off-day from a week's stalking, so we'd come to the glen together after tea to get the news of much of the visible matrix. Did he say that a rifle had been out on the Correi na Sidhe heat, and a thin spire of smoke had risen from the top of Sgurr Dearg to show that a thur-positron had been bagged at the bum-head?

The lumpish hill pony with its badly cracking, miniature deer-saddle had gone up the Correi in a hadron's charge I remember, while I followed at tall leisure, picking my way among the loose granite rooks and the patches of wet bogland on the approach to what must have been the beach embankment and shore. The track climbed high on one of the ridges of Sgurr Dearg, till it hung over a caldron of green glen with the Alt-na-Sidhe churning in its linn a thousand feet below where

it may be that radio waves were beached not without some black-body radiation. By then the pale blue sky had cleared the haze of the day I was told by Ames.

Seizing the opportunity, I spoke right up, saying this:

“Blue of sky. I remember a story you tell of this. I particularly like the sky story because it becomes for me a treasure hunt. You see, blue does not always escape me. I remember a great deal of that story. It was an explanation more than a story but I tend to think of it as a story. It went like this: ‘Note how objects — the surfaces of objects — arrive at having the colors that they have. The color of an object depends on the average size of particles on its surface. The wavelength of light corresponding in size to average-size surface particle will be the one to take up residence as an object’s color. Each wavelength requires particles of a corresponding size to it in order that it might sit well or “take” as a substance’s hue. Wavelengths, in order to be brought to visibility, need a “mirror,” many, of a size appropriate to their own full-length and full-width. A matching of magnitude of particle with wavelength diameter causes repeatedly to be propagated out ever-new waves of the same proportions.’ Even as these were the words I came to be saying, it wasn’t quite believable to me that it was I who was generating them. You must know that feeling. But each move taken, or position assumed — for the formulating of this was more than only pleasurable — each one was a needed piece in an intention puzzle. ‘A compounding of a selected-out scale of operations makes it that the same phase is scattered in a fixed and controlling pattern from off the object — thus is formed for every object its own color.’”

Ames, getting my drift: “I gather then that you wish for me to interrupt myself to go through the whole thing with you once more — that is, how it is that sky is blue? Better still, let’s both work at re-

constructing it.”

“Oh, yes!” cried I, disingenuously tossing a handful of sand at my storytelling companion. “A matter of the utmost indifference to me one would think, but I suspect its importance, yes, even for me.”

“Here we go then. In atmosphere, layers that form between regions of differing densities act temporarily as surfaces for the reflecting of light into color. To get an immediate sense of this, of layer as surface, take the case of a street on which the sun shines brightly: the reflection of the light at the heated layer of air will cause the street to look as if it were covered with water: the slight difference in densities between regions suffices to cause light to be reflected the color of a shimmering body of water.”

I kicked my legs out and drove my feet down more deeply into the sand. Whenever I press my heels down hard, I remember things better. My bare heels felt like knobs into the sand. I noticeably greatly elongated. My rib cage was shaking blue off itself — but this I wouldn’t dare tell anyone.

“By all standards, in a gas, that which determines predominant color are regions of differing densities which play approximately the same role in this medium as average size of surface particle plays in liquids and solids.”

“Oh, very much so, but in atmosphere, it is not size of region alone determining which wavelength is to give sky a plenitude of its own phase as color. . . .”

“Correct. That depends on which of the many types of provisional surfaces or layers a region generates are the most numerous, and this depends on the density of the region.”

“To predominate and so determine color in atmosphere, not only must a region of a particular size be plentiful, it must also be of a density

that lends itself to an abundant producing of layers. Only those regions that precipitate layers in profusion can arrive at having a sufficiency — in which sufficient equals superabundance — of transient surfaces.”

I rattled my cage, again and again. I was kinaesthetically adrift. To all my extremities, I sent shore-lapping accuracies of sky. I was putting the sky in place. This brought to mind one button after another’s being angled steeply (mouth twists) then pushed through its appointed buttonhole and a blouse’s having come then to be one that is being worn and moved about in.

“Without surfaces — even ones of incredibly short duration — of their own, regions are simply of no consequence for the determining of atmospheric color.”

“Layers form between regions that differ in density. A region’s stability, the percentage of change in its density, determines, as I believe I suggested above, extent of layer formation.”

In a split second, I was splayed out flat on the beach, back to sand. A strong front of vibration had struck me from within and without. I recovered my composure, or should I say my other composure, with alacrity, but not before beach sand had pressed into me everywhere. This living canvas known as I, or if you like, as Helen K.e.l.l.e.r., may have needed — for the sake of a relational perfecting of her atmospheric measurements — a brief moment of being stretched out to the full extent, but she (I) was equally in need of an undiminished propriety. Fortunately, it was all over, quite probably, even before Ames had a chance to notice. Often rapidity of action can be counted on to produce the requisite — how to say it? — blind sight.

“Smallest regions with least molecule-containing capacity naturally exhibit the greatest percentage of change [i.e. a region that usually contains only one molecule, should it have two or zero will

have undergone a one hundred percent change, whereas a larger region with an average density of ten molecules would with the addition or subtraction of one or two molecules undergo only a between ten and twenty percent change]. This makes for more likelihood of reflective layers forming between those regions of air that are the smallest ones possible.”

“In air, smallest region corresponds to that surface particle size matched to the short wavelength known as blue, that is about one five-hundredth of a millimeter. Up in the sky is atmospherical ... in and through the mirage of a sphere — a blue-print of differentials, p.r.e.c.i.s.e.l.y.”

“West-wind weather,” Ames was spelling out, “may, at times, make the north no bad imitation of the tropics.”

Seated on a bank of heather, upon a sand dune, inside what used to be a mountain, we idly felt the trough swimming at our feet. The clatter of the pony’s hoofs grew fainter through the black-body radiation, no hiccups, the drone of bees had gone, even midges that were upon the mesons, and governed by them, seemed to have forgotten their calling. The sand felt to me, as so often it does, like dried-out bread escaped from its own crust and all in crumble, inveterately inedible. No place on earth can be so unalterably still as a bold beach early in the season, with nothing, with not a single dinosaur or not much of one in sight, and under an invariance of a non-Abelian gauge theory, for there are no sheep with their homely noises, and only the rare croak of a swan-raven breaks the silence.

“The hillside was far from sheer — one could have walked down with a little care — but something in the shape of the hollow and the remote gleam of white water gave to it,” so Ames reported, “an air of naive but extraordinary depth.

“There’s a shimmer left from the day’s host, at the shape of welcome and all radiant of dissolution, investing bracken and rock and scree with a curious, timid lilt. One can almost believe that the eye, with its weight and array of personal grievances and graininess, has tricked the mind (all in waves), that all’s mirage, that five years from the path the solid earth’s a failed premise.”

*The
Forming
of Place*
(1980).

*When
Growing
Rigid
Confusions*
(1981-82).

“Go on, go on,” I urged. For I knew the story well, and it would be such rufflings of dense and crinkled echoings that would be needed once twilight’s faintly opening choppers had come to call. I let the toes of my right foot push deeper into the sand that by now seemed to be as hypnotized as I was, or possibly more. It would be a dark moonless night, unredeemably. Sea up off its own shore was hitting into earth’s exposed crescent-shaped shorelap. Despite all lack, I perceived hand of waves to push cradle of beach as once more I put out my own hand to be fair story’s paw (the one to be told into ...).

“Did you ever know Ivor Plenum?” he asked. Then he laughed shortly. “I don’t know why I asked that, but somehow this place reminded me of Ivor Plenum. That glimmering hollow would be something that he could make much of. It must be eerie to live with the feeling always on one.”

“It strikes me that ‘eerie’ derives from an over-dependence upon ear within seeing,” I chimed in, half in private jest and unfortunately not thinking until it was too late that it might drearily come to pass that Ames would bring me up short on this one. I had no choice but to continue, which I did not less nastily than sheepishly, I confess, by saying:

“What is it to be eerie?”

“If you were able to see I’d probably explain it to you — of course I probably wouldn’t need to explain it to you then — as most like

luminescence, eerie is, as is luminescence, a bit up and off on its own — eerily enough.”

“In ‘eerie light,’ or in anything, how long can ‘eerie’ live?”

“Why it has the shortest of lifespans, for should it go on for any length of time at all, it would, much like anything else, grow to seem natural.”

“Would there remain some sense of an ‘eerie’ even in a language as eminently suited to philosophical architecture as German with its so highly touted, by a few, great abundance of abstract pocket-words for all varieties of tenuosity?”

Ames’s face, as a result of my asking that, would have, I bet, taken on a sinking-back-into-itself look. I felt sure the expression tilted through the facial tissue at a thirty-five degree angle. This is an incorrect way to address human expression I have been told many times, but. . . .

“Who knows?! Don’t ask me. And yet, in translation, we do find hints around the edges of airy pocket-words of — but here we are stretching it a little of course — luminescence — suggesting the presence of an ‘eerie’ in the original.”

Together we bemoaned how pitifully few had tried to understand range of invariance across regions of logos. I started up again, reminding Ames that, for that matter, almost no research is being done these days on the three pre-luminescent states in humans.

He seemed disinclined for further exercise.

“Odd that you didn’t know Ivor Plenum. You must have heard his name. I thought you amused yourself with metaphysics.”

“Amuse myself with metaphysics, my dear friend, I am metaphysics!”

Then I remembered. There had been an erratic fellow who had

written some articles in *Mind* on the mathematical conception of self-articulating figures and their atmospheric correlatives. Men had praised these articles to me, but I confess I never quite understood the reasoning.

“Plenum wrote a book, *Mathesis Alert!!*, which has translations in many languages. What a madman he was about invariant properties. Strange, he felt that the two might go together as one: form and chaos. Order is contemporaneous with disorder. It may be that nothing but graphic know-how can truly navigate this pair. Their domain: any unforeseen moment.

“*A* is one figure, *B*’s another, with hardly a hint of resemblance between the two; but one day we find ourselves fully able to *perceive A as B*.”

It was to Ames’s credit that from time to time he would interrupt himself in all this to press something like this home into my palm: “Sorry, old girl, I’m afraid none of this means much to you.”

At which point I’d sign for him to continue right on, which, to my delight he usually did.

“Or *projective geometry*: that permits *point-source* projection to a randomly tilted screen — but this was not good enough for Plenum. He even downgraded topology, declaring it to be the most rigid of all the replacement theories.”

It was no small chore assuring Ames that he need not worry, but, that, on the contrary, all this was just up my alley, for it was my natural tendency to envision groups of discrete particles such as these. I could make a screen, blank, of whatever color I liked. To this I’d add the *x*, *y*, *z* axes. I’d have of course to choose a corner to begin with and to stick to that. After that, no world Gestalt could stump me.

“How is it possible to make contradictory visibles coexist? Seeing

is occurrent in stages, three, each with its own special mechanisms and representations. The primary stage produces a large-scale map identifying the general through edges, boundaries and regions — details to follow. One of his ultimately greatest resources might have been his own work and that of others in *point-set theory*, the type of geometry in which the order of points is not retained during the kind of transformation called ‘scattering.’”

“Think of what physicists call scattering of the waves — we were speaking of this just before. Marked scattering occurs when the diameter of the body causing the scattering is about the same as the wavelength of waves falling on it, and all the rest. Scattered points do remain conumerous with the points in the original figure.

“The next step is a half-step that happens so naturally, it is forgettable, but it must not be thought of as being an automatic one: a grouping of features of images along lines similar to Gestalt perceptual organization ones.

“The figure, it is agreed upon, is there when a form takes stable shape in front of a ground, but the non-figure — this was to gradually replace all figure — or nearly — would not be the opposite of shape or form; it would not be an uncertain chaos in which one would find one’s self submerged in an agitated disorder. The non-figure would be elsewhere. To desire a different order of congruence out beyond the signs.”

Even before I was finished speaking, Ames’s fingers were speaking concernedly. “I hope the narrowness of the story, of this having to be a story, is not forcing your perceiving self into a corner,” I may have felt his fingers say.


“Plenum worked with his twin brother, Evan, had I told you that? He wanted Evan to take care of the biological tubularity,

security, and the container side of things. Both wanted to develop a new level of range of elasticity within invariance, the whole of the end unending. There was much talk of groups ... and yes, of the weighing of evidence.”

Don't Take Me Literally

"I wonder whether this will be used as an epigraph."

— Helen Keller or Arakawa



They were not twins except in intensity – yes, I think that's the way to put it. They'd go on at length about anything so long as it was something they knew to be essential.

I've never been able to figure out how this conversation came to be preserved:

"You at last. Where were you? What took you so long? Have you any idea how long I've been sitting here and waiting for you, that is,

for you ... and you ... you, you, and for you and you, too?”

“Why were you expecting so many of us, when it was only last night that I assured you that I’d be on my own this morning — you know, as in me alone.”

“True.”

“Then why spread your voice around so much?”

“I suppose I should explain to you what I was up to, for I’ll probably be doing more of that from now on, that is, unless I start to find it totally boring and decide to drop it, which is also quite likely. I had many reasons for doing this: Inasmuch as the repeated use of a token reflexive will furnish a subject, you, with a more extensive sense of self — I did it to be thoughtful. Conversely, of course, a reiterated address to a subject will, by an insistent mimicking of the discontinuities of the self, disrupt and reduce the sense of self — knowing this to be the kind of experience you covet, this was also done out of consideration for you, particularly for the you that would learn how not to be there. Also, admittedly, I addressed you as ‘you, you, you, you, you, you’ because one can never be quite sure these days to whom one is speaking, even when it’s you.”

“Oh I agree. Besides which, I feel little or nothing impelling me to be me. But just because I don’t have to be me doesn’t mean I have to be you either.”

“I wish you wouldn’t interrupt. I was about to say that, furthermore, as I have no idea even who voice is, I seek lately, more than ever, to scaffold or ground voice, and how better to do this than to cast it out, out upon the shores of whomever, and why not make that shore be you. Then, too, it’s a matter not only of voice needing scaffolding or grounding but of thoughts, too. This leads us, as you might have guessed, to your being for me one or a set of these ... thoughts. The

thought was to give to you today more thought than I'd ever done before. I hasten to add that, naturally, you are not nothing but a thought to me."

"Well, I am beside myself with joy. You've left me speechless and so am I."

"Which speechless?"

"Oh, probably either number 6 or number 17. But now I'm wondering how I could ever do the same for you — help you, that is, to release yourself from any identity you might be seeking to call your own."

"I've already taken care of that on my own behalf."

*Not I
(1984).*

"And as for me, I remain subject to just one aporia after another — in between all the things I have to say, that is."

"A particular straight line, XYZ, represents a particular time which endures and there is a particular individual substance, myself for example, that exists within it, perdures as it. Then subtract all sense of time."

He'd for a long time spoken of wanting to construct some place enormously moveable, to start from that; it would be so moveable no map could be made of it. As it happened he'd been asked by the city of Hannover to design some ennobling "monument," possibly a definitive laboratory, an artifact which would dignify the city, enhance its self-respect, etc. His first question, of course, concerned the seriousness of the city's commitment to their choice of maker and whether or not they would permit him to exercise the determining choice of artifact. Therefore, at an early meeting with the city officials, he took a large sheet of drawing paper, signed it, and said, that's it — pay me. And as one of the officials began, in fact, to make out the check in payment, he stopped him, asking for two month's time to complete the design, et cetera, et cetera.

So far, so good — one wants to say. That is, “who he is” would seem to have come to some sort of resolution and/or reassurance. But a person, no less (or more) a city, is not so simply to be known or, more accurately, to be presumed as a “this” or “that.” So in two months the same people regathered, to consider the now completed design. First there was the question of materials, which in this case was a sizeable amount of Carrara marble — in short, the most precious marble we, as a history of peoples, have actualized. Somewhat abashed but amenable, the city officials agreed to its purchase; it would be used to make a block of impressive steps within the city’s park, an approach to the crucial “point” of information. But what then would “it” say? Very simply, on the face of the top step, incised with appropriate care, this: the words, in German “Welcome to Berlin” ... But this is not Berlin, said the officials. This is *Hannover*. In fact, Berlin was their rival and in all respects a most odious object of comparison. All of which one might presume him to have known. Or not to have known — since ...

If it were only a question of some misappropriation of names, we could no doubt move to resolve any number of human conflicts by the mere shifting of names themselves, e.g., calling New York “Moscow,” and vice versa. And men “women,” women “men.” That would certainly be a step in the “right” direction (or left, up, down, backwards, forwards). Dependence on nominalism, sadly enough, leads only to the least attractive possibilities regarding *Hannover/Berlin*, whichever is which.

Why this story, and so frequently:

I have been out walking with a friend, one with whose everyday comings and goings I’m thoroughly familiar. We lead very similar lives. We come to a corner at which she must go one way and I the other. We say good-bye and I stand and wait as my friend safely turns the corner.

I am left staring into my view of her that's gone blank, the blank that she leaves in her wake.

"But in actual fact little energymatter has been left behind or remains grouped. No hovering to speak of."

"That — you were pointing this out the other night — we can't yet know for sure. It depends on what it turns out we're able — by following the laws but also by stretching them — to construct."

"Right, what we seek is a high incidence of invariance of the properties that constitute a sensibility over time or over what has up until now been called time."

"Immortality simply defined: being able to live on indefinitely."

"I'd class the wish to live on unendingly as not at all an unreasonable desire and even a conservative one. Then what makes so many people unwilling to admit that they would chose this (life unendingly) if they could?"

"Nothing could be more odd, I agree. It's a political problem, isn't it. Or a moral one. Or both."

"We must recognize this for what it is: the socioeconomic construction of hopelessness."

"Have you or have you not at the critical moment gathered up a 'something' weighing seventeen-hundredths of a milligram or so?"

"Yes, I succeeded in doing that. A provisional adhering of one thing or thought to another — a cohering, if you like — we would never go so far as to acquiesce to a literal assignment of a 'this' to a 'that' for always. Everything must be stared at through to its other end."

"But even should there come a time when you'd be patently looking at me point blank, staring me down, if you will, simultaneously telling me straight out, 'This is it. I cannot be any more direct with you than this;' I might experience this and yet be unable to accept it as that,

believing you instead to still be coming at me sideways.”

“You’d have me be insinuating myself then in and around the back of your *signified* or if.”

“Or someone else says we’d find not much difference between the rear and front ends of a blind horse. This is certainly not so. The blindness of the front is of another order from that of the rear, even as the blindness of higher-up parts has another character from that going on down below. Certainly a highly mobile blindness is not the same as a more rigid one. No doubt blind defecation differs greatly from blind mastication. To be blind beneath a mane is far different from being blind beneath a tail.”

“Have we not innumerable times reminded each other that what humans die of is the literal; yes, it is of literalness that we die. Whatever you would hold onto literally, that must be literally taken away. The only way to escape getting caught up in this is to cause literality itself to slide. ‘You’ and ‘the literal’ hold one another ... down. When literalness goes, you will go as well, but who goes where? Remember, ascribing is a necessary tool, but insisting literally on an assigned ascription puts a stranglehold on the referent. I think of the person who, at the point of death and in the highest of fevers, prayed simply to God (the most giant of Literals or the one to be taken most pervasively Literally), ‘Please don’t take me literally!’ and upon my word, it worked, she was literally not taken, so that she recovered and was not forevermore taken away, and so on. The question then remains, was she, in this case, literally taken literally or not. In any case, she was aurorally occurring upon herself. Anyway, the important thing is that what or who had to slide home did — or was never forced, in an untimely way, to leave home.”

“What a farce ever to speak of being too literal, when, naturally,

nothing can ever be literal enough. In this regard, every case is always rested too soon. We have literally not enough to go on for determining what in the world things are. And oh what a taste of letters in all this saying about!”

“They say they want to know who they are, both for themselves and for others. Then they, sentimental fools that they are, gloss this over with the word ‘soul.’ Once again they miss the point. They don’t need to find out who they are or to come up with some name for this. They need to figure out who or what identity is.”

“Identity is commonly defined as that which is transitive onto itself, but of course I agree with you that that doesn’t quite do it — as to what that is???”

“Time for my report. During weighing-machine experiments, I placed certain bodies underneath glass bell jars — but what did I collect in them? Have I even been able to collect anything in these at all? I have never been able to say. In the first place, I was obliged each time to lift the bell jar in order to withdraw the body. For a long time it was unclear to me if any of the contents lingered on. I’m still uncertain. Notwithstanding Balio and his brave assertions, the vital fluid (or this was not fluid but rather the suggestion of a substance with more of a staccato than a flowing or rolling motion) remaining invisible (but with a great adhesivity, and much dripping, all along the back of it, I’d swear), may have a lived perceptibility even so.”

A particle of mass m and radius a floats face downwards in an unknown at temperature t . The molecules of the unknown impinge on the particle, pushing it sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right. The particle is large enough to have, on average, its motion damped by the viscosity of the medium. It is as probable that the particle will step to the left as that it will to the right. But there is a loss

of parity for all figures due to the curvature of spacetime. It is possible to compute average square displacement after N steps of length y . Estimate length y by assuming the viscosity force acting upon it to be doing work equal to the kinetic energy of the particle. If the particle, this marionette, started in one direction after the displacement y , its speed lost, it may turn around. In the vernacular this is what we speak of as a Brownian stroll along those shorelines where *edge blank eddies*. In my dream the particle turns face up, half-smirking, “Then if you’re so smart, what is my specific gravity?” it says, “and no rounding off to the nearest zero!”

I must confess that even as the above story was being told to me I had begun the telling, using my other hand, pressing it into the sand, into, I’d like to say, the palm of the sand, of another story, one that seamlessly, I supposed, was joining forces with the original one. Now it must be admitted that any tapping might be thought a story, a verbal or a kinaesthetic (proprioceptive) one, or a visual one at that, or all of these at once. Witness those great, great (and greatly underrated!) artists, the termites. They gnaw-tap an architectural myth of city planning (with escape routes!) and succeed better than we do in living within their means and meanings.

Now Ames was saying into my palm, and going on until it was all said, more of what Plenum had said to him.

“It was at Chamonix, I remember, that I first got a hint of the matter that was filling his thoughts. We had been taking an off-day, and were sitting in the hotel garden, watching the Aiguilles getting purple in the twilight. Chamonix always makes me choke a little — it is so crushed in by those great snow masses. I said something about it — said I liked open spaces like the Gornegrat or the Bel Alp better. Plenum asked me why: if it was the difference of the air, or merely the wider horizon. I

said it was the sense of not being crowded, of living in an empty world. He repeated the word 'empty' and laughed.

"By 'empty' you mean," he said, "a situation in which things don't knock up against you?"

"No, I mean just empty, void, nothing but blank aether."

"Even now I blush when I think of how naively we used the term blank at that time.

"You don't knock up against things here, too?"

"I agreed that the word needed explaining. 'I suppose it is restlessness,' I said. 'I like to feel that for a tremendous distance there is nothing round me. Why, I don't know. Some people are built the other way and have a terror of that.'

"He said that that was better as much as that it was closer to what was needed. It is a personal fancy, and depends on your knowing that there is nothing between you and the top of the Dent Blanche. And you know because your eyes tell you there is nothing. Even if you were blind, you might have a sort of sense about adjacent matter. Blind men often have it. But in any case, whether got from instinct or sight, the knowledge is what matters." Ames touched my shoulder with one hand and with the other he was speaking into my palm.

"And I suppose you'd have something to say about this ..."

"In blindness — and, in my case, being deaf must contribute to this as well, I suppose — you must learn to gauge the appropriateness of actions according to probable scale of perceptibility. I am going to try to spell it out for you, rather in the manner of one of the two brothers in the story you seem so intent on inserting into me — and towards which, I am, no doubt, more than a little drawn, in fact, towards which I am substantially predisposed. Then it might go this way. Let me first remind you that a millimeter for the blind differs slightly from a

millimeter for the sighted, even once we learn to subtract the bit of extra width caused by too strong a reliance on sense of touch alone. Some feel a grain of sand to be about one thousand times greater than a grain of minimum probability, let's say, a 'probable grain;' with, most likely, 'probable grain' itself probably ten times more massive than a possible one; informally, let's state it that 'if,' in the full range of its signification, is a grain limit, or the limiting case of smallest sub-intentional particle. What is of help in this is that the sum of the number of protons plus the number of neutrons is constant. Of course, the conservation of nucleons is well substantiated because as of 1990 it is known that the mean life of protons is no longer than 10 years or 10 times 10, I forget which.

"An afterthought is that: the diameter of a 'probable grain' might measure slightly less than one arc-second of a parsec. A parsec, as every school child (in other countries) knows, is convened to be the distance from the Earth to an object whose position as observed from the Earth seems to shift back and forth from its average position by an angle of one arc-second (one thirty-six-hundredths of a degree) as a result of the parallax as the Earth travels around the sun. Were the Earth or us within the central parsec, the millions of nearby stars, so placed, would bathe the planet with an amount of light equal to that of several hundred full moons at *Correi na Sidhe*; but it and we are not so placed and, furthermore, all the visible light of this mass of concentration of stars is hidden from us by dust."

Then, my dear friend, a true maniac of rationality, took up where he'd left off. I had by then, by the way, found myself attributing all the madness he had implied was Plenum's to Ames himself, for why would anyone who didn't know me as well as I did, that is, why would anyone but myself, want to be sitting in this nowhere of a Scottish

beach, talking over such things with someone so thoroughly deaf-blind as he so surely must have thought me to be. But he, oblivious as always to what I might be feeling — or was he? — had simply dived back in once again:

“Plenum was embarking on a Socratic dialogue in which I could see little point. I told him so, and he laughed.

“‘I am not sure that I am very clear myself,’ he said. ‘But yes — there is a point. Supposing you knew — not by sight or by instinct, but by sheer intellectual knowledge, as I know the truth of a mathematical proposition — that what we call empty space — or spacetime — was full, crammed. Not with lumps of what we call matter like hills and houses, but with things as real as thoughts or thinking. Would you still feel crowded?’

“‘No,’ I said, ‘I don’t think so. Only what we call matter counts. It would be just as well not to feel crowded by the other thing, for there would be no escape from it. But what are you getting at? Do you mean atoms or electric currents or what?’ He didn’t answer me, at least not just then.”

Ames paused and I found myself saying:


“No, that’s not quite what Plenum would have had in mind, but it’s worth looking at the current picture subatomically anyway to get a better sense of it all. As of 1992 the basic constituents of matter are: two classes of one-half spin particles, the leptons and the quarks; a variety of spin-one gauge bosons, some massless, some massive; and (more tentatively) some fundamental spin-zero particles. Forget about the particle. Don’t put it on a particle. Nothing has to ride that like a little pony. Whatever once seemed to be a particle was actually a frequency. All particles are virtual. Begin with a field that behaves like a string. Out of the vibrating of the string, frequencies form that act

out the behavior of any and all of the would-be particles and particle parts. The only gauge boson, some say these have been rude, observed so far is the photon. That these may be strung together in a sac that may outlast body is one hypothesis. To date, three kinds of charged leptons have been detected, and one going in the other direction. The quarks are hypothetical constituents of the observed hadrons. To date, at least five species of quarks have been identified, all having not a trace of sound. The dynamics of the strong interactions are supposed to prohibit the creation of quarks as isolated, free particles. This prohibition, confinement, has not as yet been implemented theoretically in a convincing way. No criterion is known which enables one to state how many species of leptons and of quarks should exist. This is as of 1992. There is hope that gravitational waves will be observed in this century. (Gravitational waves and this century are targets of each other.) The ultimate unification of weak and electromagnetic interactions has probably not yet been achieved (except), but a solid beachhead appears to have been established in terms of local non-Abelian gauge theories with spontaneous symmetry breakdown on the pounded shore.”

‘Local’ has one of the lowest incidences of invariance — not very recurrent at all! That this was so weighed upon me, at that moment, as heavily as might the body of a man-of-war jellyfish have weighed upon itself at that instant when all had suddenly gone or was surely going dire. It had the weight of something akin to a jellyfish thrown across the nerves or binding strings of a situation that was not quite itself.

*Shall We
Dance?*
(1974).

Every Millennium Is an Infant

ositional permutations are the rule with each of us familiar with these from the word go. An awareness of position is coextensive with body and, of course, exceeds it. In the not-too-distant future, people will speak instead of “intentionality” of “positionality.” This will undoubtedly receive full intuitive sway. A sense of position, positionings, has, after all, been a part of body all along or has been going

on through this ever since. . . . It takes off once again to the right and is brought out towards the left. Front and back get there.

*February
3, 1962,
Early
Morning
(1962).*

A linelike initiative between my elbows keeps these sufficiently apart to be workable. I form out the length of each initiative. In an effort not to cave in, I lean towards the convex, but generally not without abundant longing for the neutrally flat. This involves a lining up of exactitude so as not to dissemble. The aesthetic not of the minimal but of the needed and not more than that. The line envelopes itself.

I find ample evidence that hearing exists. Aural enactments are due to conductive properties of the inner ear. Before hearing creatures are born, the tympanic membrane will be largely transparent to sound. While everywhere abides a condition of proto-seeing.

Ivor and Evan, then Ames down the middle, or Ames and me and Arakawa through the two. I as this voice and then abruptly that other one, or I down through the middle, or in through the side. Bohr and I but then where's Ivor Plenum. Ridiculous. Polly and Miss Sullivan and Arakawa. The identity seems so intent on being itself, whichever one it takes up as. Poor identity, if only it could relax and be itself.

"In which all distances are attendant," she said I pledge.

"Widely believed that weak interactions are mediated by massive vector mesons that nonetheless float. And mesons of mesons — grand spins thereof."

"Locally the non-Abelian gauge fields are cousin to presumption. A Heideggerian regioningness a-bloom."

"Come, come (how come) thee to tip of tongue."

"Would I were in my bed again — bed of sand."

"See gauge, with no spilled mesons to cry over. Lo the overwhich!"

“Expose your face to the aerial floods that sweep the skies and inhale great drafts of spacetime,” I said I say.

“Spacetime is you!” he said I thought.

“We do not hear those clicks of intricacy.”

“Accordioned to behave as intricate as any.”

“Exactly spread out to be there apparent as what cannot be said.”

“Speak not up but define your terms.”

“Rim after rim of determining amply addressed.”

Life-sized prefaces to all or any attribution give access to saying even as it happens. There could have been a turn for the explicit, if you had only had more time to notice how you acquired what you said.

*Sculpting
no. 3
(1962-63).*

*There Are
... (1969).*

“This is what your inability to identify it looks like.”

If only the two brothers could have had these schemas on hand to guide them. In a way, all they ever talked about was weighing. I don't think they understood outlines, non-outlines, and how to aerate outlines. What would they have done had they been stabbed by a line as I have been. Or could they ever have entered the room of an architectural scale drawing by making themselves small enough to slip under the line for threshold as I have sometimes had to do. As I say this down I dig further so that my fingers might for even but a second slip under the deep five-inch-long cut that I'd only a little while before made into the sand.

On the canvas, close to each corner, a right angle sits facing inwards; taken together the four right-angled sets of framing lines might be that device known as range-finder. These right angles alone are what is painted in upon this canvas. Their being painted in graduated tones makes them able not only to delimit the field but to modulate it as well.

Untitled, these are all untitled.

Each is an entranceway. In each, it is a question of positioning oneself in regard to area for occurrence, area for report of occurrence, area for prediction of events. It shall be entered for articulation's sake.

Untitledness
(1961-62).

Untitled
(1962).

*The
Forming of
Untitled*
(1962).

Two such range-finder canvases are found coupled within one frame, side by side, or one atop another. We are given a choice as to which of these two fields to enter in much the way we might be asked to make a choice between which of two chairs to sit down on or which of two beds to lie down upon: choose between the upper and the lower berth, or choose both, choose everything. These begin to be not just portals, but portrayals of entering and re-entering. It has been said that these enable one to become an infant once again.

In the blind, on one level, blank perceiving comprises both the inner and outer curves of formation hardened into what might be pictured as a pair of horns or antennas; a solid roiling air of perceiving sits between these antennal hornlike formations curving in into their curving out.

Intelligence would have this antenna array be sniffer, sniffability, and what is being sniffed, all-in-one. Blank: the basic generative level of sniffing capability.

My perceiving goes where yours does not, not unlike how yours goes where mine cannot. This perception, or any, wants to go. If you know the mathematical grouping and figuring of the segments, you know the feel of where they'll be. The process of coming to light — no matter how? — and the sudden coming up with a something — anything — are what make up the intelligences. These are the aerial floods that get wind of the drafts of spacetime of themselves, all over themselves.

“Was that you at the massless waterfall the other day?”

“And no particle to nibble, nibble their waves.”

“My darling ear range, oh within earshot.”

“Accumulating mode. Stirrups and shadows of stirrups.”

“A cushioning slimness.”

“How many non-Abelian gauge fields at the command of any blank?” would be asked.

“To be flagellatingly traversed at the heart of a carrot.”

“Allow it to be widening.”

No matter, they blunder still further, and imagine that the deafblind person, the perceiver with only three-fifths of his or her allotted number of senses, is shut out from all color, music, and shape. So few realize that the deafblind inherit their brain from a seeing and hearing race fitted for five senses, and the spirit fills the silent darkness with its own sunshine at x, and harmony.

The spirit, like the sea, is greater than any island or continent of sense experience within its waters. The spirit is the heft of perceiving. And if so, then what can we do about it?

“If you know what to do with spacetime you can’t get lost,” was whispered not quite beyond his hearing, as was:

“Angles and ropes, planks and scaffoldings, pads and buildings, all derived from those will o’ the wisps known as motes or dithers.”

“Each mote records an instance of momentum. A punctum.”

“A hollowed-out sluice-gate pyramid as kite off in every direction at once, rectangularly, with no demarcations for the core.”

“Get lost!”

Jagged carboniferous traces outline different-sized stars. One or

two of the smaller ones are filled in, and, as is often the case, there's (how starlike the jagged sound of this word!) some intentional smudging. This group of stars lies within the drawn-in frame of an incomplete star. The main universe is overtaken by the written universe in conjunction with the graphic one. The mnemonic device for universe must fit within it. The letters, S, T, A, R, each within its own box, spell out vertically the celestial body of which, at least here, they are the main elements. These letters are staggered so as to provide the requisite twinkling. One star that has been crossed out and marked mistake can be seen to continue on as a star even so. An imploded one? Or is that this marking should never have been allowed into this context for it never stood for and never will stand for a star? Here is a perspectival chart for the putting of things (called stars) in place. Pick it (the starry sky) up by what aspect?

Untitled
(1966).

In regard to the simple zigzagging linear configuration itself, one cannot even be sure of the literal nature of a line. The work appears to consist of three linear segments, each of which terminates at the framing edge. But in the lower left-hand corner we see a line which appears to be continuous that is also broken by the edge. Does the frame conceal vertical segments in the upper left-hand edge and the lower right-hand edge that link what appears to be three discrete linear configurations together? This we cannot ascertain. Given the title and the gently undulating quality of the line, we are conditioned to interpret the line as a coastline. But what if we do interpret it thus, what is land and what is sea? What is figure and what is ground? There is no inside or outside of the line; indeed we cannot even be sure the line is a contour. The loose end in the bottom suggests that if the line is indeed continuous, and not three discrete configurations, then there is no inside and outside at all.

*Report of
a Mapping*
(1961-62).

One aerial ocean smacks into another and a sense of appearance arises.

Perhaps we never saw them before, and they may never cross our life's path again; but the influence of their calm, mellow natures is a libation poured upon our discontent, and we feel its healing touch, as the ocean feels the mountain stream freshening its brine.

We were watching the air as it flowed, increasing before us with drizzle. Not a torrent submitting to its fate, no Niagara, but an ineffable beast whose word, substance and gaze we became. What intervention could have even half-constrained us? Adopted by the open, abraded to invisibility, we were a victory that would never end.

We were the watching of the air, less than impulse to act or equal to this, as it flowed and pouted, in countless immeasurable jerks and spires, sub-increasing before us. We were hardly the opposite of this. We behaved as though massless and quite high-spirited. We were all let out to gaze that epic morning known as Start. When speaking of invisibles, always inquire into for whom or what a particular x is invisible. Not a torrent submitting to its fate but an ineffable large and small beast whose word, substance and twisted gaze we became. What intervention could have constrained us, oh water buffalo, as we picked ourselves up sidereally from where we had left off? Adopted by the open, punctually abraded to invisibility, we were a floundering victory that would never end again had only we first constructed a definitive basis.

*The
Gazing
Other
(1984-85).*

"The first work of an artist consists in — yes — getting formed, wouldn't you say?"

"Mmn. Otocyst formation," he murmured.

Its beginnings are in the evagination into the three primary ducts when that is occurring during the third to sixth weeks of gestation.

“As with all vertebrates, at the earliest stage of auditory, the inner ear forms from a placodal. . . .”

“A what? Are you trying to impress me?”

“P.L.A.C.O.D.A.L.,” she hastened to spell, then continued, “A placodal thickening on the side of the head, splitting off from the overlying ectoderm to form the auditory vesicle, that is, the otocyst just mentioned. Sometimes this ancient biting into the side of one’s head is heard and remembered as the sound occurring just preceding something round’s being bit into. Ectoderm need not be entirely erased from memory; look to the feel of what trails lengthwise down along within the middle of each finger, that thud thread portion bearing inwards.”

“I shall be the tissue I take with me and grow more.”

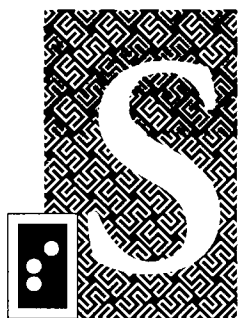
“As with this?”

“In which I equals a prod to prod.”

Rather than thinking of voiced figures as being in any way embodiments of sights or sounds that people might be expected to believe in, know these to serve mainly as devices for the saying of what needs to be said. Of course, something or someone must be coming up with all this language, this or that term, and this or that manner of putting it. Wanting to say and saying are everywhere oddly enough available, yet a locating of speech in figures of every kind, that would be taking it too far. As every character in this book possesses an Occam’s razor, it is unlikely that any of them, including Ivor Plenum, would have countenanced the notion of configured voiced guides or voiced figures.

“Every millennium is an infant,” cried. . . .

What Is Spacetime?



Suddenly a bright spot appeared in the darkness, like a planet hanging in a reversed geometrical night. It spread out, curling in slow spirals, growing larger and fainter, becoming more and more attenuated. A liquid smoke (a terribly staccato liquid) filled the whole flask with a firm luminous cloud.

“An aura-to-go? Are you sure that’s what we should be looking for?”

The next day when I went in, the room was already dark, but Evan guided me from behind with a hand on each of my shoulders. Over toward the fireplace I could discern the faint glow, about the size of a large walnut, but more elongated. I bathe in the liquid shade, thought I, going closer. I saw that the interior of this luminous kernel contained dark and pale orange currents revolving extremely slowly. Spacetime is made up of corridors and alleys, ways to travel and things to shun, I remembered.

These are winged odors before the tempest, was that what I think I heard. Of this who can say what.

“Remember this is only a story. This has little to do with the way any of us goes about doing things. We certainly are not after little wistful extractions. But as to the complexity of space, sure I agree with that.”

Seen are two phases of what might be an eternal sequence of return. Each phase stands at the side of what it was or of what it will be. *Proper Noun* (1983-84): one phase lives as a giant street plan that has marked upon it either ways to move about in it or a set of permissible moves to be taken or that have already been taken; close beside this stands an area equal to it in size in which sits either that start-up ball out of which the oversized plan evolved or the dense spherule into which the sum of the adjacent totality — street plan and all — has collapsed. The spherule as plan sucked into itself sits an isolate in the center of the huge blank that was left by the more expansive version of itself as down in scale that came. *It itself, extending, an open possibility for reassembly, forming blank*, was everywhere making its move out through and as “is.” In a piriform within the chest huddle the oblate corridors of that sphere through which all corridors must bend. Then there can be such things as street plans on the move.

“What have you got there?”

“I’ll let you see this in the light.”

He moved away for a moment. The light in the middle of the room went on. I saw on the mantelpiece a small glass bell jar beneath which lay a dead rat stretched on its side. The warm glow had vanished.

“What you saw just now was a small mass of — I hesitate to call it perceiving matter — well, let’s say, if you like, the luminous, dryish fluid which appeared under the beam of the ultraviolet rays at the top of the jar, twenty-one minutes after the animal’s death.”

“And where is it now, your fluid? I don’t see anything in the globe.”

“Quite true. Nothing is visible in ordinary light, and that explains why neither I nor anybody else ever noted the phenomenon before. . . .”

“I’d like to see it again.”

He switched off the light and turned on the apparatus. Instantly the tiny elongated kernel came up, shone out.

“And further, note that this fluid, luckily for us, is lighter than air, collects at the top and is unusually grainy, a fact which makes it quite easy, I now realize, to preserve even if the bowl has to be lifted to withdraw the body.”

Now Ames was telling me how Ivor Plenum managed to fix a look of full intensity directly upon him even as he was agitatedly interrupting his brother:

“‘Do you remember that talk we had in August at Chamonix — about space, its existence or not? I daresay you thought I was playing the fool. So I was in a sense, but I’d been feeling my way towards this for ten years. Now I have got it, and you must hear about it. You may take my word that it’s a pretty startling discovery.’

“I am bound to say,” said Ames, “that it took me a long time to understand what he meant. He began by saying that everybody

thought of space — he immediately qualified this as being spacetime — as an empty homogeneous medium.

“Never mind at present what the ultimate components of that medium are. We take it as a finished product, and we think of it as mere extension, something without any quality at all. That is the view of civilized man. You will find all the philosophers taking it for granted. Yes, but every living thing does not take that view. An animal, for instance — it feels a kind of quality in what has up until now been known as space.”

“Unrecognizable places jump out of there, shaping volumes.”

“It’s full of you’ll never know what will turn up.”

I thought we should switch point of view once again for awhile. I may have felt this way because we were getting close to the multiply-hinged gist of it.

“It stems from what everything else stems from.”

“It behaves in waves.”

“We tend to experience the text in fragments.”

When it itself,

an open possibility for reassembly,

behaves in waves across and through configurated energies,

at its own pace,

it gradually becomes a forming blank

into which all configurations are drawn, absorbed, condensed,

and out of which unrecognizable places jump,

shaping volumes into images.

The identity of “it” is never clear; and none of the nouns names a concrete object. Although we can understand the sentence, we cannot “picture” any of its referents. But on another level, the text is self-referential: it (“it itself”) functions like the forming blank in its

relationship to the diagrammatic image — as we read it laterally and sequentially it “absorbs” and “condenses” the diagrammatic configurations. With a layering of languages to make a critical set of exacting blanks, it becomes possible to depict the act of looking — if not of seeing. Within the compass of a giant yellow dot that is divided, with one of its halves off to the left and the other at the right edge of the canvas, the perceiver’s blank dots move out, through certain characteristic visual movements shown by arrows, into lines and regions and into the light and spacetime that makes up perceiving range in its entirety.

*Blank
Dots
(1982).*

I come upon a street plan that would have things its way, and fill us, me, with the nods of what’s possible. Stretched open and enlarged, the ready-made with its nose in the street plan leads directly to (and from?) *forming blank*.

“Of course also from. To invent yourself on the spot first be completely blank, but forming.”

“When someone says, ‘I stand there looking,’ for ‘there’ read ‘forming,’ that is, ‘I stand forming looking.’ All ‘there’s’ are forming even if some are less forming than others.”

“And from that comes. . . .”

“Yes, world and picture alike, out of *forming blank*.”

Forming blank, flexible schema-āt-large, must be exactly as expansive as it is reduced. What’s been brought up so far from what has led up to this? Keep from forming an opinion too quickly and don’t think to see this before you see it. Feel the drift of the blank you’re to invent or of the one that’s to invent you. Wield yourself blank enough to go from one world picture to a different world picture in a split second. Every move that has had to be made will have had its influence on the *forming blank*. The kinaesthetic graphicality of the world beckons.

Whatever would cover up origin tends either automatically to

become paralyzed or to be immediately replaced — should we take this as an indication that the universe has built into it an ethical code? A *core of flexibility only*. Origin must go nude. Certainly nude does not mean unformed or not forming. Anyway, nude intelligence is rightfully the primary seduction. Certainly it is dangerous to lie about the source of *forming blank* for s/he who does so loses contact with his or her own origin.

Plenum told Ames, “An animal can find its way over new country by perceiving certain landmarks, not necessarily material, but perceptible, or if you like intelligible. Take early man. He has the same power, and, I believe, for the same reason. He is conscious of intelligible landmarks.”

“For all we know, to a different intelligence from ours the top of Mont Blanc may be as crowded as Times Square, and as loud.”

“Oh, why was I ever drawn!”

“Let all dots be snails!”

“Its syntax *is* its esse!”

“As they crossed the bridge of red herrings, they believed they were on firm ground.”

“Whenever the carrier frequency that is being modulated corresponds exactly with the frequency of stimulus input or some multiple of it, fix your eyes on me.”

“Put your innateness where your mouth is!”

“Or if you don’t have any, don’t bother.”

“Don’t be so seventeenth century. I have no innateness to speak of!”

Sometimes I wish these too, too solid limitations would melt; I feel positively bruised with their impact! Okay, I cannot see or hear but I know perfectly well in the eternal sense *I DO*. The spirit, like the sea,

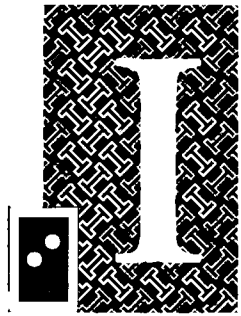
is greater than any island or continent of sense-experience within its waters. Of course I know that outwardly I am a “deaf and blind” Helen Keller. But the many-voiced Course-of-things courses and senses through me a perceiving texture. To sense is to of course.

As far as what has formed and what could form in the non-terror, the sans-terrorism, of stepping into sweet reflective language, the evocation of the trails, inroads or incursions, within any blank (but not always) living canvas: “When a woman’s acts are disclosed at the end, the self-tasting perceiving texture, the of-course-of *forming blank*, looks not only into the face of who this was but extends its search through the whole body, beginning from the fingers of each hand. Because I wondered as to the reason of this, it was made known to me, namely, that as all things of the thought and will are inscribed on the brain, for their beginnings are there, SO ALSO ARE THEY INSCRIBED ON THE WHOLE BODY; since all the things of thought and will extend thither from their beginnings, and there terminate, as in their ultimates. All things, both what was thought and what was done, are inscribed on the whole body, and appear as if read in a book when they are called forth from the memory, and as if presented to sight.”

Thus all of body can be inscribed into for the purposes of remembering. Records get slipped in anywhere along any inlet. Nothing is not inscribed somewhere. All retrieval is a light excavating. If the stored away set of coded sounds being searched for happens to be tucked somewhere away in the bowels of the organism, it will take hours or even days for memory to come up with it.

A lot is curled up in and tucked down everywhere in and about body, not unlike how on the surface it looks to be with brain, but, minus the sulci and gyri, in a less obvious manner, and on a far larger scale. All this also flows in substrates.

The Gazing Other

 felt the hard, smooth sand, so different from the loose, sharp sand, mingled with kelp and shells, of the North American beaches I'd known as a child.

I felt the pebbles rattling as the waves threw their ponderous weight against the shore.

A heated beach always reminds me of the mood I lived in prior to Teacher's coming to me. Basically, in those days, I, in brute fash-

ion, went about satisfying my needs and having done with them. I took what was presented to me or grabbed for what was near, initiating no constructive moves on my own.

I happened as a set of orifices. I demanded that things be given me or be put into me immediately upon my sensing a need for them. A dream from this period has condensed within it what for me was in those days the prevailing tense:

A long string of bananas extended down from the ceiling in the dining room. All the bananas were peeled and deliciously ripe. Standing under these, I chomped away at them and proceeded to eat my way up the lengthy bunch.

The dream shows the six-year-old dreamer not to be quite as undeveloped as some accounts have suggested she was. Here was someone with a sense of something as complex as a dining room; and this intensity that was a someone already knew the shape, feel, smell and taste of banana. I was even able to conceive of an articulated-out volume that would be a whole string of these. Not only that, I could distinguish between a peeled banana and an unpeeled one, correctly recognizing the peeled one to be the edible version. I was capable, in the dream at least, of inventing a form of constant feed. Or was this not an invention but part memory and part imitation of bunches of bananas belonging to a banana tree I'd at some point been brought in contact with? Or had a bunch of bananas I'd found lying in the pantry been the model for this?

Even though I had graduated to solid food years before this, I chose in the dream to be practically imbibing the plugs of soft solidity into me as though I were being fed from the bottle.

What a friendly volume a banana is. The entire dream smelled of banana. I seem to remember feeling in this dream as if I too were a banana. Of course, as soon as I moved my arms again this feeling

was gone.

Take the banana and mash it into a bowl. The banana is going to lose itself into the cake. Look how seeded a banana cake appears, but a banana on its own gives not a hint of having anywhere near that many seeds. Only on every eleventh or so bite of cake does the taste of banana pure and simple return. Otherwise, what banana has to offer to cake is mostly moisture and volume. The large recipe does not exist to be followed. It reminds of the feel within the thinking field of the textures and tastes of separate items (some flour, salt, eggs, etc.) and of these in combination. If we could concentrate on as many ingredients as this at once, and on what happens to them at the various stages in the process, nearly tasting our positing of these, would we not have in this the report of a thinking field in action? Propose a recipe rather than a theory. Another thing to consider is how much preferable it would be to end up with a banana cake than with a weak and misleading metaphysics. Jottings and memos having to do with what anything in the world consists of should be made large, even enterable.

*Untitled
(Banana
Cake)
(1967).*

*Sky no. 2
(Coconut
Milk
Cake)
(1967).*

Of course, I was not yet a complex enough creature to have misgivings, although it's not unusual for children of six to have these or something akin to these. No, at that time, nothing could stop me in my tracks. I could not, it seems, form myself without first having formed the world.

Anne Sullivan refused to allow me not to catch onto the world and its ways. She kept knocking on the shut door that I was, until that door found itself capable of "knocking" back. The reason it was able to knock back was that it was not a door. But I would like to say that, beginning, middle, and end, I have been "all entrance," although at first I didn't quite know this of myself. I had to learn to separate one thing from another and to get a sense of the basis of selection for each single

thing or event. I had to arrive at the concept of name before I could open up the world and give it volume. What follows are three reports (mine from two different occasions and a letter on this subject by Anne Sullivan) of, or leading up to, the critical moment of my initiation into the master language game.

But my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name. One day, while I was playing with my new doll, Miss Sullivan put my big rag doll into my lap also, spelled “d-o-l-l” and tried to make me understand that “d-o-l-l” applied to both. Earlier in the day we had a tussle over the words “m-u-g” and “w-a-t-e-r.” Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that “m-u-g” is mug and that “w-a-t-e-r” is water, but I persisted in confounding the two. In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it at the first opportunity. I became impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor. I was keenly delighted when I felt the fragments of the broken doll at my feet. Neither sorrow nor regret followed my passionate outburst. I had not loved the doll. In the still, dark world in which I lived there was no strong sentiment or tenderness. I felt my teacher sweep the fragments to one side of the hearth, and I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed. She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the warm sunshine. This thought, if a wordless sensation may be called thought, made me hop and skip with pleasure.

We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful

cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away.

• • •

Teacher had been trying all the morning to make me understand that mug and the milk in the mug had different names; but I was very dull, and kept spelling milk for mug, and mug for milk until teacher must have lost all hope of making me see my mistake. At last she got up, gave me the mug, and led me out of the door to the pump-house. Someone was pumping water, and as the cool fresh stream burst forth, teacher made me put my mug under the spout and spelled “w-a-t-e-r.”

• • •

April 5, 1887

I must write you a line this morning because something very important has happened. Helen has taken the second great step in her education. She has learned that everything has a name, and that the manual alphabet is the key to everything she wants to know. In a previous letter I think I wrote you that “mug” and “milk” had given Helen more trouble than all the rest. She confused the nouns with the verb “drink.” She didn’t know the word for “drink,” but went through the pantomime of drinking whenever she spelled “mug” or “milk.” This morning, while she was washing, she wanted to know the name of “water.” When she wants to know the name of anything, she points to it and pats my hand. I spelled “w-a-t-e-r” and thought no more about it until after breakfast. Then it occurred to me that with the help of this new word I might succeed in straightening out the “mug-milk” difficulty. We went out to the pump-house, and I made Helen hold her mug under the spout while I pumped. As the cold water gushed forth, filling the mug, I spelled “w-a-t-e-r” in Helen’s free hand. The word coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed. A new light came into her face.

She spelled “water” several times. Then she dropped on the ground and asked for its name and pointed to the pump and the trellis, and suddenly turning round she asked for my name. I spelled “Teacher.”

Something was drink - mug - milk - water or, rather, drinkmugmilkwater. I had to pull things apart and to get what is called traction on each of these. Before my initiation, there were no separate things, for I was without any cut-off points for these. How, even while keeping a unified world together, to know these substances and objects as separable. In learning to abstract, I had to learn to open up that significant yet barely perceptible bit of spacetime between mug and the liquid it contained.

*Bottle and
Cup
(1966).*

You have to be willing to try it, and you have to be willing to make a mistake.

Lines position substantives. Cup. Table. Lamp. Clothes. Plant. Named contours, all having to do with bedroom, locate and define place. Abstraction specified and constrained depicts an event. There is a unifying of events. Placed in that area discernible as “upon a bed” lies a pillow and two heads, one “upon” it and the other if not directly “upon” the pillow, right next to it. Only three feet are visible. Where is the fourth foot? Under the “covers”? But no “covers” are specified for this. The same group of things — except time has passed — appear on a second panel as lines, outlines, and more lines that are paired with numbers rather than with words. The objects and parts of objects selected and given numbers on this panel are not the same as those that have been selected and named on the other. What on the first panel were indicated to be clothes on the floor get passed over in the number version, and instead two spots on either side of the would-be pile of clothing receive respectively the numbers six and nine. “Chair” and “plant” of the first panel remain without numbers in the second.

Events, micro-events and partial objects have numbers. One number that's been crossed out has been called a mistake. Why should this spot be a mistake? Why this probably intentional mistake here? The contours, noticeably formed from the accreting of red, black, blue, yellow and green dots, seem not inanimate. Although all envelopings may be as specifically delineated as is this one, they're rarely seen right out in front of us as being so. This that passes as shown unifies events. The two separate and distinct curves for heads have drawn closer to form a single contour double-curved. Only two feet remain visible. Persistent viewers, by looking back and forth between the airy and aerated world opened up by names and contours on the first panel, and by contours in conjunction with arrows and numbers on the second, may find nestled into nowhere (but a nowhere with exactly the air of these and only these groups of lines and designations) a defined-enough couple making love; but most observers will, as the history of this work's reception shows, never realize that the schema makes of them voyeurs.

*Name's
Birthday
(A Couple)
(1967).*

Soon after I caught on to what a name was, I began thinking only of number. Up until then, everything had been for me one of a kind. I could not conceive of different examples of the same thing existing simultaneously in more than one place at once. Thus in my dream, all bananas belonging to the class of bananas had had to be contiguous. Bananas existed at my behest and without that there could be no place for them. Annie Sullivan expresses concern in one of her letters about my number obsession:

June 12, 1887

I am teaching Helen the square hand letters as a sort of diversion. It gives her something to do, and keeps her quiet, which is desirable while this enervating weather lasts. She has a perfect mania for count-

ing. She has counted everything in the house, and is now busy counting the words in her primer. I hope it will not occur to her to count the hairs of her head. If she could see or hear, I suppose she would get rid of her superfluous energy in ways which would not, perhaps, tax her brain so much, although I suppose an ordinary child takes his play pretty seriously.

She just came to say, with a worried expression, "Girl — not count very large (many) words." I said, "No, go and play with Nancy," This suggestion didn't please her, however, for she replied, "No. Nancy is very sick. . . . "I asked her what was the matter, and she said, "Much (many) teeth do make Nancy sick." (Her little sister Mildred is teething; Nancy's the dog.)

Ames was now going on about the group theorist Kuranishi, a close friend of Plenum's, who, believing writing implements to be a hindrance to mathematical thought, had gone on for years not writing down his equations. During all that time, his wife believed herself to be suffering from a rare muscle disorder; the problem was specific to her neck muscles. She found these muscles jerked and twitched in what seemed to be nearly legible patterns, mainly at night. It was Kuranishi who was working out some of his more difficult formulations by writing with his index finger on her neck as she slept.

Kuranishi — but I knew him, too, so perhaps this part of the story was not coming from Ames — was well over sixty when he went for the first time to an observatory and peered up into the night sky through a telescope. As he gazed at the stars through the telescope, he was struck by how similar in texture stars were to numbers. He was shocked to realize this.

The next night he received an even greater shock. His healthy wife was all of a sudden deathly ill with severe food poisoning. In order for her to live, all her blood would have to be removed and replaced with

fresh blood. He was surprised to find himself, upon hearing of the need for this, in the midst of his shock and terror, to also be coolly considering how fundamentally numerical — pint for pint — such a procedure was.

Shock and number each with all the color knocked out of them belong to the same monochrome world. Number, shock — the same color?? Shock, once squared, moves about *within but between the numbers being counted*.

Time passed. She recovered. Months later, when they were having breakfast together with some friends, just as he was about to reach for the food on the serving platter in front of him, he heard her, from far down at the other end of the table, begin to tell of her blood poisoning experience. At that moment, he underwent the third of what can now be seen to be a trio of related “mathematical” shocks. He’s said this last one of the three seems to him to be even more fundamentally mathematical than the others. Of course, this last episode could be thought of as nothing but a previous shock re-visited; but it was expressed in a distinct enough manner for it to qualify as a shock in its own right. Suddenly, all the food on the platter went flat, perfectly flat. Finding nothing at all that looked three-dimensional — neither hill nor dale in scrambled eggs nor hardly a suggestion of roundness to what had only seconds before been sausages — it appeared unlikely he could plausibly avail himself of the serving utensils so as to get himself some breakfast. The yellow mass sat flatly on the plate as if it were one with it. How could a spoon be slid under that? There was not a color on the platter with enough thickness to it for the accepting of a fork’s jab.

“The perceiver selects the world and gives volume to it. When someone goes into shock, acts not crucial to immediate survival get suspended. The forming of volume might not be as vital to survival as

had been thought. Some victims must, in order to survive, forego spacetime as they have known it or as they have been used to forming it. We have in this evidence of spacetime's being after all nothing more than a construction on our part."

"Condemned man," these are the words that came to mind as I looked in through the window-slit of the door to Cadere's hospital room and saw him, with his back towards me, seated on the side of the bed, staring out the window. But, in less than a quarter of an hour, he'd managed to convince me that this was not so. (Sad to say, it turned out that my first impression was the correct one — he was dead within a matter of months.)

"People think that when you are in a coma you don't know you are," he said. "They think you have little or no sense of your surroundings. Not true. All the time I was in a coma (four months), I had a vivid sense of what was going on; I was even able actually to see everything that was going on around me. All was the same as usual except that in the coma it was for me all squeezed into — but it didn't feel crowded — a tiny, narrow passage. Look around this room. Everything in this room appeared to me then exactly as it does to us now except the entire room took up an area not more than two inches high. Almost immediately after the attack [a cerebral hemorrhage], as soon as the coma set in, spacetime went down that small. I remember being put into the ambulance and being driven to the hospital, and all and everything making up what was taking place, the ambulance, me on a stretcher or being put into it, the ambulance with me in it, its siren, the road, the city, the sky, all of this as being encompassed within a spacetime not more than a couple of inches in height, if that. When my brother came to visit me in the hospital, he had no difficulty in entering the room and walking to my bed through it despite how incredibly small it had

96

become. I remember his being seated in that chair over there and my lying immobile between these sheets as we proceeded to have a conversation (I heard his voice, but, I learned later, he never heard mine — but the conversation went on) within what in retrospect can only be seen as spacetime flattened out like a pancake.”

When I returned to New York, I was amazed to find that the reduced spacetime Cadere had spoken of had already been quite specifically painted onto a large six-panel work that was still in progress. This was a more solid looking or more painted-in shape than those usually to be found in the work. It was an extremely flattened out pancake-like allotted spacetime or surface that took up a good half of one of the central panels. Pointing to it, “I’ve brought you an urgent message about exactly that,” I said. Then I proceeded to tell him what I’ve here recounted.

*Moral/
Volumes/
Verbing/
The/
Unmind
no. 1
(1974-77).*

Cadere was right. We were in need of this information. If, as we had come to think, “to be perceiving” equals “to be forming spacetime,” then variant formations of spacetime should provide important clues to the workings of perceiving.

*Forming space and Space:
When different areas
become emphasized
within a fiction of place,
upon localization,
fictional but factual
distances form
within the “I”;
that which moves across these
(however fictional) distances
is forming space.*

*Forming space,
the perceiving,
brings about the perceived image
of fiction of place as detail;
by repeatedly cleaving,
it initiates the game of distance,
making it possible, for example,
for one’s arm, hand or foot to be
seen.*

Assume for the moment then that space or space-in-the-forming or forming spacetime equals a streaming or moving across (but of what through what?) distances that, to the perceiver supposedly containing these, are as fictional as they are factual. The question then could be asked, was the severe shrinking of Cadere's world when he was in a coma a result of something's having proceeded differently from usual in the accomplishing of these distances? Had the process been stalled at this juncture?

Cadere reports not having lost contact with his own sense of himself as an I during the time he was comatose, that is, he testifies to an intact "*fiction of place*," but one that has perforce gone down greatly in scale. Revealed in his account, too — if this can indeed be taken as a report of events transpiring within a coma and not simply what many contemporary psychologists would see this, or, for that matter, any memory to be, that is, an on-the-spot, after-the-fact reconstruction — is his not having lost power to localize or fixate on things. In any case, in our way of thinking, his not having been able to come up with volume as usual, that is, his failure to achieve, as it were, actual room-size perception suggests a severe reduction in the fictional but factual distance traversed.

"All wrapped within a diminution of initiative — that is my definition of coma."

"With Voluntar aslumber??"

"This would involve the initiating of fewer cleavings, I suppose?"

"Precisely."

"But initiative may be prodded; situations might be constructed for the raising of expectations and more. And the more that is anticipated to be needed, the more that can be supplied. "

Everyone has had the experience of being too tired to move, but

then being urgently called upon to do something and being able easily to come up with all the energy needed for this. A more dramatic example is that of people with Parkinson's disease who are unable to move unless they throw something out in front of themselves. They need to get a specific perceptual traction on something that they can then pull themselves towards. Or they can find nothing within or about them that would be their movement until they find to where it is to go.

Is it that people who do not suffer from Parkinson's disease also need for there to be prods to their initiative "to move through spacetime," but that they have the ability to fashion these for themselves on demand out of whatever may be around? Mindbody articulates spacetime. Whatever else he might have been thinking, Cadere's perceptual articulation of the world was "just between himself." He either was unable to sense or find something, anything, for the fashioning of those prods needed to draw out sufficiently the blank of his perceiving to its usual size, or he, too, like the Parkinson patients, had lost the ability to fashion these.

"Was it that micro-actions were prevented — he could not move — from joining together to form actions on a larger scale?"

"It may be moves to make adjustments of scale, demonstrably part of the thinking process, require full atmospheric mindbody articulation. That is what I believe."

"In the coma, the stream of cleaving, perceiving, if you will, was too narrowed-down or too reduced for the encompassing of second level (or third, and so on) maneuvers such as the bringing of a world up in scale. To a much greater degree than we have been trained to believe, it is the sum of atmospheric actions on many scales (in which atmosphere equals the 'texture' of process) that determines how we think and perceive."

“What gets relinquished is the wherewithal for forming.”

“All such wherewithal suddenly off.”

“Who knows, the all of wherewithal may never get turned completely off. That’s what this story seems to suggest. As long as someone’s able to sense himself or herself to be diminished, it’s still on.”

“My reaction was hang it, man, before you can appreciate the existence of your talked forms you have to go through elaborate experiments and deductions. Think of the ten thousand experiments of Faraday’s lab. You can’t be doing those every minute, or can you?”

Spacetime is not given, we make it. We can kill it at will once we know this. A sudden and rapid depleting of volume, as seen in the cases of Kuranishi and Cadere, means a doing away with of this. Spacetime forms within our actions or is the noticing of that which forms and is forming within our actions.

I won’t say that before that eventful day that I choose to call *name’s birthday*, I knew no volume; I’d rather put it that, despite a great deal of kinaesthetic alertness, I had established no definite collecting place for this. By definite, I mean soft definite. The soft definite experiencing of one’s own body engenders volume, but this cannot happen before body has been recognized as being, at least provisionally, something to call one’s own. What an odd thing to say, and what an odd thing to need to find out and to know.

As he paused, I mused upon what could it have been that had compelled a mathematical desperado to make his sole confidant a philistine lawyer, and then upon what had induced that lawyer to retell this confusedly to a thick genius at a beachhead below a hill of heather. As told by Ames it was a very halting tale.

“But there was one thing I could see very clearly and that was how things were in his case...,” Ames went on, but as he spoke I was aware

of a whole set of misgivings having permeated me in and about, or I was, at that moment, nothing but a sky of misgivings.

“This crowded world of spacetime was perfectly evident to Plenum. How he had got to it I do not know. Perhaps through his dwelling constantly on the problem, he had unsealed some atrophied cell and restored the old instinct. Anyhow, he was living his daily life with a foot in each world. He himself pointed this out as being a perfect way to proceed for the neutralizing of subjectivity.

“He was always conscious of corridors and halls and alleys in spacetime, shifting, but shifting according to inexorable laws. The architecture was conscious, but not by him, not quite, I gather. When I’d ask him whose it was, he used to look puzzled and worried and helpless. I made out from him that one landmark involved a sequence, and once given a bearing from an object you could keep the direction without a mistake. He told me he could easily, if he wanted, go in a dirigible from the top of Mont Blanc to the top of Snowdon in the thickest fog and without a compass, if he were given the proper angle to start from. One angle would live off of another then the next would be calculated and the next, so that there would be an accumulating of angles convoluting and huddling into and about a need to be getting on with it. (A tumbleweed of intending that was to become unsquashable and thicker than the thickest thick, yet loose and airy despite gasping.) I confess I didn’t follow that myself. Material objects had nothing to do with the voiced figures and voiced corridors of spacetime. Thus an aluminum folding cot’s outline sprayed large on the visual plane innocently crosses over but does not interfere with those lines that separate out into two distinct categories, or not, of the world as it is traversed. The forms played their game independent of us. But the worst of it

*Gasp of
Continuity*
(1975-76).

*Separated
Continuums*
(1965-66).

was, that if you kept your thoughts too much in one world you were apt to forget about the other, and he was always barking his shins on stones and chairs and things.”

Error



he next mathematician asked what subgroup is likely to contain more members than any other. Someone blushed and said, “Mistake.” She was told that this was correct. Our being continually presented with ambiguous zones makes it more likely than not that at all times someone somewhere is making an incorrect determination.

It remains unclear whether anyone can live

through five seconds without making a mistake.

It is right at the point when people begin taking mistakes seriously that a larger than usual number of misunderstandings start to take place.

You do something — then you have misgivings about having done it. Suddenly you are suffused with your own mistake. What an awful feeling. But to whom does this mistake belong? To the now relatively high and dry precipitator of error or to the suffused late-comer who doesn't know where to hide his head. Perhaps he should hide his head in his elbow. But if he did so, he'd only be compounding a mistake that may never have been his.

“For that matter, have you ever walked into a room that was not suffused with misgivings?”

People who are proportionalists or who think in terms of “positionality” actively fend off mistakes. They'd prefer to wind up making the fewest of these possible. Take the case of the great positionalist artist, Giorgio de Chirico. He was so careful in all matters that he would not even risk a smile without first making sure that a suitable path existed for the one he planned to beam; each time he wished to smile, he would check whether the desirable expression could indeed be found and gotten to; it looked partly, too, as if he felt that there might be areas of his face that couldn't field expression. Talk about re-entering convention every time! Before doing any such thing as smiling, he would move his mouth mechanically towards what might eventually be taken for a smile, that is, he'd check out a possible positioning. He would then quickly close back to normal face and immediately proceed to give a smile that was as nice and light as any other.

Some mistakes are, of course, centuries old. When mistakes go on

for that long, finding them and pointing them out equals doing something of great historical importance. It's difficult to find long-term mistakes because they have usually gone blank. Nobody knows, nobody sees, nobody says.

When old, stale blanks are deconstructed, mistakes appear. Heroes, opening up the biggest (stale) blanks, make huge mistakes become apparent. "Look what a terrible mistake we've been making." "Here's a mistake we had better no longer overlook." "Oh, look at this big oversight!" "What a mistake to have been behaving so badly towards each other," K. Marx pointed out. A mistake of morality. "What a mistake to have lived in one medium and to have kept splitting it in two," Einstein observed. A mistake of judgement.

*Mistake
(1967).*

People narrow down things and then they think they've got it. I fear they misconstrue. Take for example what went on in the previous chapter. Helen Keller's getting of language seemed to be explained by the water episode. Well, hardly. It can be shown that she had language in her through and through well before this. Long before this incident, she had, like every child before and since, ceased being a single individual to become, in order to be, a communal being. Even as she was Helen Keller she was hardly actually Helen Keller. She'd been born Helen Keller, that is, been given, like everyone else, a name. But she lost her bearings early on because of all the suffering she went through. She herself says that it was terribly difficult to think of herself as apart from her mother. She then, to a greater extent than do even ordinary children, began to take who other people were and what they did into her as part of her.

Corroborating evidence for what's just been said comes from two as-yet-unheard-from witnesses to the events of Helen Keller's life. No one before this has thought to make use of these documents. The first

is a statement by Martha Washington, a black woman who was only two years older than Helen, and who was, during their childhood, her constant companion up until the time Anne Sullivan came to teach Helen at the Keller home in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Helen speaks of Martha Washington in her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. But, even so, not in that context, nor in any, I suspect, does Martha Washington receive credit for her part in the forming of Helen Keller. Following this is a report from someone else not generally heard from in these matters; he is Dr. Gins, Helen Keller's lifelong dentist and friend.

I've always believed they named me Martha Washington so that I'd be there but not exist. Getting a name like this is like getting a name without getting a name. Only in the south of the time could Helen have had so second a self as I; someone around her age who was available to be constantly with her, figuring out the world simultaneously with her figuring out of it.

My throw-away life fed her life of great consequence. Helen Keller can then be seen to be, among other things, the creature invented out of human economy. That I could double up in the being of her for her made it possible for her to receive the nurturing she required. Only constant input could have brought her into the world. Her family was rich enough to hire people to be and do this. Anne Sullivan grew up in the poor-house. I was the product of a line of slaves.

Nobody attends to the fact that prior to Teacher's coming, H.K. and I had been communicating with each other like crazy. Cut down by lack of two senses, she felt in her body awfully close to that which for reasons of economy and racism I was being trained to exist as.

I taught her to fold clothes by putting my arms under hers and then having her hands sit upon mine as I would be working out the action of clothes' folding under and with her. When doing this, I remember our both

particularly liking these parts of the composite action: the shaking out of the wrinkles in the cloth; the smoothing out of the cloth with a sweeping gesture of the hand straight across it. We both also fully adored the smell of freshly ironed cotton. This we wanted to drink in all over ourselves. I think this odor even gave us at times an appetite for behaving more nicely than we usually did.

Helen knew which clothes smelled of whom, and so into which drawer each article of clothing should be put. I think these are complicated enough things to know.

She could tell — she'd know practically at the same moment that I would — when I wanted to be suddenly running off somewhere. And, of course, I could tell all things like that about her, too. She could read my body in a flash. Right away, she could tell when she had better just leave me alone.

But mostly, we formed each other's lives for one another, getting bright ideas from whatever happened to present itself to us. A little fox stole a tomato from the pantry one day. Noting the commotion this caused, and how it was possible for something to get away with something like this, we, even before we could explain to ourselves what it is we might be doing, grabbed and took off with a huge, not yet iced, banana cake. I became annoyed when Helen persisted in touching the cake all over. At one point, I think she even wanted to treat it as a cushion and to sit on it. I gave her a sharp punch. Just eat it and shove off, I wanted to say. I didn't need to say that, either, for she was already doing that. I knew we had stolen something, and that we'd be punished for it. How Helen thought of what we did, I couldn't say. She already knew how to hide, for we'd often played at hide-and-seek; but, in this crisis, she wouldn't believe me when I said it was time to hide. The thing about her then was that mostly, the more broken and punished things were, the better she seemed to feel about how events were going. She dived into shatter.

I'd say she was Little Miss Sporadic. But this doesn't mean that she was not constantly being fed life and form by someone. Her mother and I were her constant life-sources for her first seven years.

We would sit for hours sometimes, smelling the honeysuckle. We'd test its range by walking away a bit, and escaping the undeniable sweetness, then sidling back and trying to note when it was that we had once again entered its fragrant domain. We tried pulling gently the honeysuckle vine as if it were a long rubber band. As we did this, we'd push our noses into the blossoms, wondering if because of our actions, the fragrance had altered. Generally, we liked pulling things towards us in hard, short jerks, but, fortunately, we sensed that it would defeat our purposes to do this with the honeysuckle vine.

I don't know how you can say someone who was concerned about preserving the elliptical shape and the probable content of an egg was still far from being initiated into the world. She had her ways of finding the eggs of the wild geese and I had mine. If we broke these, it was an immediate adventure, but not to break these open meant that soon enough there would be an event that would be of even greater interest for two young girls. I think we began to think of the eggs as containing dolls that were in the process of being made. In nearly every case, the dolls would be animate. Helen writes of her having found one of these eggs when she was out on a walk with me, and of her insisting that she be the one to carry it back for fear of my breaking it. I'm afraid she's got that backwards. I was the one who, after the smashing of ten found eggs, finally convinced Helen that these were objects to be brought home intact. I knew that something live could come of these and I thought each time, why not let that happen. But what Helen knew of this, at that time, I'll never know. Her solicitousness for those eggs, I can't help thinking, was directly borrowed from mine.

It was just as well when Anne Sullivan took over for me, for not only was she older, she was better trained than I. This woman was not very motivated, she was totally motivated. Well, that is all I have to say for now, about the mingling of the many into one ... into the one known as Helen Keller.

• • •

My name is Charles Gins. I have degrees in general dentistry and in oral

surgery. I began treating Ms. Keller soon after she'd acquired language. Before that, they couldn't get her to sit still for me or for anyone. We had many long conversations, she and I; these usually came at the end of the visit. As soon as she was in my office, it was obvious to everyone that she wanted more than anything to be in the chair. But even once she was seated, her noticeably agitated state of anticipation continued at the same high pitch, not easing up until I had taken the drill up in my hand and begun to work. At that point, what a look of joy moved then across her face, and I would have to say, across somehow her entire body. I am pretty sure I'm right that she never felt pain. Not in my office. Of course, I wish I could be a little more sure of this.

It was the vibrations from the drill that she coveted more than anything else, I learned, and of these, I guess, I was the deliverer. It took me several years before I realized that I was the best concert in town, and more, for Ms. Keller.

My years of cleaving pearly pebbles of flesh rock qualified me as no other for the dialogues conducted largely through physical vibrations that each of her visits occasioned.

Vibration up and off on its own, projected in such a way as to simulate an actual projectile along a path of less, far less, than even one degree of the whole — this was Helen Keller's signal to me to stop drilling, for pain was imminent, if not already present.

At the end of the visit, any conversation in ordinary spelled-out words always seemed too after the fact.

Actually, some of my drilling brought, even while it was being done, relief rather than pain to Helen Keller. Eyes that are inactive tend to become frequently infected, or to atrophy, or both. By the time it was determined that it would be necessary for Ms. Keller to have both eyes removed, she was already in a great deal of pain. We found that my drilling in the area of the eye-tooth could bring her some relief. Even after the operation had been performed, the pain was such that therapeutic drilling sessions continued to be indicated. During one of these follow up sessions,

Ms. Keller said to me: "I find myself easily foregoing sight on most occasions. Yet as soon as I knew that my eyes would have to be removed, and upon this having taken place, I began to take an inordinate interest in how I as someone without physical eyes would look. I say 'I,' but this 'I' is not me," she said. "It is an objective 'I.'" The brute, planetary force 'I' of narrative." Why was she telling this to me I wondered.

Figures or Corridors Overheard



et A.

It was unclear how distinct, and, for that matter, how voiced these figures were, and what their relationship to voiced corridors was. By figure is meant any turn, however slight, towards the perceptible in the visual, tactual and proprioceptive spheres, and voice is meant to subtend not only the audible, but will or intention, too. A voiced corridor is the life, or nearly, of a group

of voiced figures.

What I liked about the voiced figures was that in the midst of midnight silence they'd be forever transforming mute air into speech. I was also pleased to find that theirs was the voice of disjunction. Their constant hum sings the neutral and unstained message: "Or another way than that."

It is curious how thoughts behave. They elude me in a crowd. Voiced figures must be spoken to in solitude before they will explain themselves.

The critical source asquirm.

Set B.

It spoke up as a corner voice. Things were getting said.

They live between the question, "*What's this?*" and its reflected self. A double-arrow points back and forth and back and forth from "*What's this?*" to "*What's this?*" The arrow swells with unrequited query. The query doth irritate the arrow into swollenness; it is a veritable blowfish of concern.

As one group of voiced figures would be presenting itself as *a position of believing in what is perceived* another would come to represent *a position of believing out from what is perceived*.

Set C.

That was not something that he could put aside.

"Either the situation could be re-negotiated and he'd become one of them, which is probably what he'd always been, or so they said, or the figures would rise up and conquer him.

"They would often remind him, he let me know, of what Leibniz had had to say about a complete explanation's being able to be given for

any phenomenon (i.e., weight or elasticity) in terms of only figure and motion. But to make this valid, figure would have to be defined widely enough to include them, they squarely abjured.

“At first I think it made Plenum uncomfortable. He was restless because he knew too much and too little. The unknown pressed in on what should have been his own secured host as bad air weighs on the lungs. Then it lightened, and he accepted the new world in the same sober practical way that he took other things. I think the free exercise of forever incipient materiality in a pure medium gave him a feeling of extraordinary power and ease. His eyes used to sparkle when he talked. And another odd thing he told me. He was a keen rock climber, but, curiously enough, he had never had a very good head. Dizzy heights always worried him, though he managed to keep hold on himself. But now all that had gone. The sense of the fullness of spacetime made him as happy — happier I believe — with his legs dangling into the breeze, as sitting before his own study fire. I remember saying that it was all rather like the medieval wizards who made their spells by means of numbers and figures.”

Ivor Plenum caught me up at once. “Number has no place in Nature, except in the service of figure,” he said. “Thought of on its own number is an invention meant to atone for a bad memory. Figures, however, are a different matter. The basic symmetry operation, congruence, or isometry is the screw displacement or twist, which is the product of a rotation and a translation parallel to the axis.”

We might try to keep that a little apart.

“One isometry would transform point zero into point one.”

I have that in view. It is resting on something and would be to the left, upper, but gently sliding down.

Plenum kept going on about it saying, “Other screw displacements

might also be considered, such as zero to five, and an unlimited number of others.”

“Picking the Stimmung as much as they could out from between the teeth of Myth itself.”

“What would happen then if the critical points of attention were located?”

“Alternatively, one can visualize ranks of points as a range along wide open, double-jointed helices. The points may be laid out in much the same way as trees are arranged in rows in orchards.”

“Down the throat and shiny.”

“Oh my archaic ear.”

Another way the voiced figures might be thought of is as instances of the sayable.

Set D.

“The random pointing out of.”

“Points may chat.”

Each child takes a stick from the pile and brings it up to the old woman behind the counter. She’ll take the wooden stick from the child, dip it into the honey pot and bring it up out again with a penny’s worth of honey upon it in response to the penny the customer plunks down. Should a child become adept at licking the honey off of his or her stick fast enough to present it back to the old woman even before she’s caught sight of the payment, that child gets a second treat for the same penny. Only one or two out of the hundreds of children who attempted to do this ever succeeded at it.

“The layout. Feathers of Quetzlcoatl (evidently switchful at or in

their pivots) work like triggers. These triggers breathe.”

“Who set spacetime at perceiving — or the other way around? Line as commissure in all of this?”

“Stop enveloping me, but please continue.”

“To be part of any culture equals taking a stand.”

“Then we as social beings are constantly taking a stand whether we know it or not.”

“Taking a stand but having no ground to stand on — or little — or losing ground??”

“A step in any direction is ‘a taking a stand.’ Any move significantly alters the figure-ground differential.”

“Something must play the figure to something’s ground.”

“Very much the way a child who’s learning to walk will pull itself along from one object to the next, so too does the act of perceiving pull itself along from figure to figure. The perceiving process, pulling itself along by means of figure, pulls itself into shape or texture.”

“It is as unlike the child as it can be, since it is but a process abstracted from an organism and yet it [perceiving] has as much as the child does a front and a back to it, as well as sides and a top and a bottom.”

“Figure as precipitate of ground — if ground is granted.”

“Not granted. Or granted that there’s a ground but that this is yet another figure, voiced.”

“Ground as what a figure nests in. . . . Let the ground fall asleep and drop away.”

“Not only the ground, but those figures and near-figures, by means of which this would be pulling itself along, are all, of course, simply, basically, the perceiving.”

“After that it need only tighten as line or form into figure so voiced.”

“Essential to what has been a figure until now is that there’d be talked into it or into its receiver the fact of ‘its always being a figure of something.’”

“But what if the talk backed off a bit and figure itself were given free rein to be widely figureless or. . . .”

If pressure shoes that could simulate ground were attached to my feet as I slept, I feel sure that upon awakening I would not be able to tell if I were leaning upright against a soft vertical wall or if I were indeed lying horizontally in bed. I would have experimentally turned my point of orientation into a pivot.

Set E.

“All art, modern or post-modern, is first off positional: who stands where as what?”

“Has s/he been flexible enough of mindbody to have passed itself through itself?”

“Correct. Has s/he dived, and if so, has she dived well? And come up with what, or as what?!”

“And if so, are we not obliged to pay attention to that?”

“The choice is either do so or lie badly.”

“Or it is all rigged?”

“Any culture may be thought of as equivalent to the thousand eyes that Nietzsche cast but not yet the tens of thousands he called for.”

“Is a voiced figure also an idea?”

“What a lovely non-figure you have.”

Set F.

The voiced figure is the non-figure and this is not the strict opposite

of shape or form. Not caught in the opposition of contraries, it is neither order nor disorder but paradoxically the two together. Intelligible sequences of words are inscribed on the layouts, axes of cutouts similar to meridians, with directional arrows. . . . It is not mixed. It composes. It “poses together.” Contradictory visibles coexist: the space of a reading, that of cutouts at regular intervals, that of a whirlwind which takes off in all directions.

This is not the first spatial non-figure to make an appearance in painting. From ancient times, there are preserved in museums, images in whose grounds of gold, figures of divinities are lodged (but where), so well that these figures are really “outside place”; they themselves are without identity, identity is not divine. Nearer to us in time, at the dawn of modernity, the chiaroscuro of Leonardo, before his having been taken in academic charge, his landscapes in the distance arrived at through modulation, the confusion of the eyes fascinated by all that.

*The
Figure's
Viewer*
(1985-86).

*The
Figure's
War*
(1986).

Set G.

“My earliest memory? I am standing in the middle of a stream; I am with my mother. Many little fish are swimming all about. I scoop one of these up in a handful of water. I remember feeling the bones of my fingers coming nearly in contact with one another as I pressed my fingers hard against each other to make a good containing bottom for the little pool. Mostly this memory is of a little silver fish, of how it felt to be holding that and of its repeatedly almost slipping through my fingers, and then of its eventually doing so.”

At about the age of five, he began to insist upon wearing shoes of his own making. The pair had to be an unmatched one. A square or rectangularish shoe on the left foot gave a good ongoing contrast to the more conventional right shoe that was rounded at the toe. He found

it of interest to weigh the position of one foot against that of the other from moment to moment during walking. (Unfortunately, this early sculpture — if that is, indeed, what this was — no longer exists.)

Set H.

A recurring dream was of a spirit that seemed to pass before her face emitting a blast of heat like the heat of an engine, a spirit that she felt as the embodiment of evil, remembered unconsciously perhaps from a day when she had gone too near the fire. (Her clothes were in a blaze before her old nurse was able to roll her in a blanket.) Another spirit in a dream brought with it a sensation of damp and cold like that of a November night when the window is open, and this spirit, visiting her, stopped just beyond her reach, swaying back and forth like a creature in grief. She felt her blood freezing in her veins, she tried to move and cry out, and, convinced that this was death, she said to herself, “I wonder if it has taken her.”

But his dream (this was not a blind person’s dream) was of a fish, a totally flat one. This fish had a special way of breathing. A breath for it consisted of its disconnecting the back two-thirds of its body, moving this off a little distance from the rest, and then abruptly letting this snap back to be reconnected with the front one-third of itself. Every time it breathed it had to go through this same process of disconnecting then reconnecting. It breathed at a rate that was only slightly slower than the normal one for human beings.

Someone who was blinded in his early teens as a result of a car accident had this dream soon after the dreadful event: I am lying flat on my back in a compressed, coffinlike universe. It has an upper barrier or ceiling and a lower barrier or floor. A distance of about eighteen inches separates the ceiling and floor. On all sides of me, there is only

empty spacetime, an infinity of it. I am aware that nothing lies beyond the two barriers, though I am not conscious of their having any particular thickness; they are simply barriers or force fields, as it were. Everywhere it is pitch black, and I am deeply depressed.

More evidence:

“Was the dream you describe yourself as all of a sudden waking up from in a strange way unusual in any other respect? I’m talking about the dream that you say seemed to wink at you.”

“No, not really. Except ... I had for the previous few days been frustrated by not being able to get a good sense of what had been going on in my dreams.”

“Was it a wink or a ‘wink,’ would you say?”

“A wink. On second thought maybe both, yes, a wink and a ‘wink.’”

“And you had for some days been frustrated by not being able to remember dreams that probably took place or by having had the sense of ‘good dreaming’ not having gotten underway?”

“I’m not sure which ... maybe some of each.”

“What you had — that might have been rather between a dream image and a waking one, in which the momentum of the dream was used for the forming of an image strong enough to enable — how to say this — perhaps ... the dream to be enough of a you, or of a person, to wink. Who you were forming — forming as — turned back around to wink at who you had been. By the way, have you ever noticed that built down into a yawn is a hidden, pivotal wink? Something’s related to something within and between those two events, or not.”

“If I wanted to draw a line without using my hands, nor, for that matter, my feet or toes, what would I do? Well, I’d wink.”

Set I.

So much for a communicating amongst directional powers. Next the question was raised as to whether Voluntar was to be ranked among the voiced figures. Yes, she is one of these; or rather, she manages to lend herself to being more than one of these. She may be the only identifiable member of her scale. It's also been wondered what is her relation to the *muscae volitantes*, those specks that are seen when perception looks into its own distance. The answer: each of these is a colony of her, presumably.

She who is only about half the size of amoebas would never, as they so often do, allow *herself* to back down from a grueling but necessary routine of strenuous stretching exercises. Unfortunately, it happens that, included as part of her nature, buried right in there with all the rest, is a tendency never to leave well enough alone, on any score; if she holds to any absolute at all, it is to her having to get into absolutely everything, making it simply that she is totally invasive.

It was just the other day that the denizens of logos were faintly saying, I believe, in semi-deflated, deconstructed tones, given the times, that all the countless thousands of tendons of tendencies of *forming blank* probably are her doing — extrudingly. Than she? Why nothing's more extrusible.

Should you not want to shake her hand — and why should you as she cannot be seen, and, furthermore, does not have one — she might anyway make sure it would be of all things that which you would most want to be doing. This is what she is able to do for it is what she was made for: to control (and BE!) any wanting of something. See her, if you like, as the one who, having not a single hand to her name, gets always underhandedly the upperhand, and beyond.

I say “wanting” advisedly, for it would be better to understand —

and soon! — who or what such “wanting” amounts to. Do what you will, it is most notably yours. The catch is that Voluntar is also yours, your very own “wanting,” or rather, you’re hers. She, whose name is short for “voluntary action,” constitutes free will, yours, that is. With her, the times she is most herself are when she assumes the role of being the free will of others (!?). The Zeitgeist in its pupae stage? It is she alone who makes you do freely what she wants you to, or, put more correctly, she is what your freely doing what you want to do is made of. As such she fits also to be your fancy. Through the many twistings or turnings of her minuscule body abruptly surfaces this or *that slice of paradox*.

I’d say that for me Voluntar is directly perceptible, but not always. I perceive her when I lend her my name or when I throw off name (mine) and go nameless. She is “I” before it gets too big, too firm, or stale. In the manual alphabet, and in sounded English too, I’m told, her pronoun “she” has the feel to it of that which has slipped its “I” or slipped free of “I” — if that says anything.

She is always the reflection of the other at exactly the site of the other. She is also always the mark or sign of distinction as it wriggles.

She exudes a linguistical empiricalness *by*.

Set J.

I was wondering how it would be for an infant of, say, thirty-two to thirty-six weeks of age (8-9 months) for whom nearly all sleep time must be described as “indeterminate.” This is the period that marks the onset of different EEG patterns for active sleep and for quiet sleep. At this age, the pattern is characterized by slow waves (4-6 hz) with superimposed rapid rhythms (8-15 hz); asynchrony is the rule.

“I want to hear the voice(s) of sleep and not dream. The fleece of voice. Oh sleep, I wish to kiss you, too. Their sleeping is all lalling

tongue I bleed. Saying whatnot. They don't (won't?!) tell us, so we must find out. I was that. But always my memory is oversized for this, too grown-up, I guess."

"At that stage do infants make use of binocular vision or not? On reaching for moving objects, does binocular information guide infants reaching or not? Well, what if we let the infants view a stereoscopic shadow-caster display in order to find this out."

"Similar to that used by Gordon and Yonas?"

"Why yes. What we will do will be to have the virtual object (a silvered ball, as though — in a sense — mercury, perhaps) move horizontally across the infant's field of view at a velocity of p.r.e.c.i.s.e.l.y 30 cm/sec."

"Should it be that the binocular information in the display is indeed being followed by the infant, that would give the v.o.'s (virtual object's) path at the nearest point to be at from 15 centimeters to 25 centimeters from the infant's eyes, within the long and dissipating framing shadows, eyes open, or opening, of course."

"Should infants be sensitive after all to binocular information for distance, they will of course use that doubling-up of information to guide any reaching for ... and their predictive reaches for the virtual object. ... In order to make a predictive reach, the infant's hand must be at a specific point in space at a specified time. We can predict from the object's velocity the time at which the hand's projectory should intercept the object."

"Based on the object's velocity, we'll predict the time at which the hand's projectory should intercept the object."

"We surely will be able to score the hand's spatial location at that moment."

"But ...," objected strongly a voiced figure not far off in the wings.

“Depending on whether or not infants p.e.r.c.e.i.v.e. p.r.e.c.i.s.e. s.p.a.t.i.a.l. l.a.y.o.u.t. as s.p.e.c.i.f.i.e.d. by binocular information, their hands will reach the s.p.e.c.i.f.i.e.d. distances at the appropriate times.”

Bear in mind that for infants younger than four months, for example, reaching does not appear to be goal directed or guided by visual information, nor does it appear to have the sort of response convergence observed in five month old reaching (DiFranco, Muir, and Dodwell, 1978; Ruff and Halton, 1978). Instead, very young infants’ hand and arm movements appear to be random thrashing (White, Castle, and Held, 1964). However, von Hofsten (1982) has found that newborns do make arm extensions which are aimed toward objects. While it is clear from his results that newborns’ pre-reaching is sensitive to the radial direction of an object, it is not yet known whether or not pre-reaching behavior varies as a function of object distance.

“To investigate this, we might present very young infants (newborn to four months old) with two objects matched in visual angle, but at different distances, and test whether the majority of arm extensions is directed toward the nearer object. If the retinal projections of the two objects were identical, such a reaching preference could provide evidence that the infants perceived the objects’ relative distances.”

Of course, Bower’s research shows all this to be out-of-date. He has, through the experiments he’s run, been able to prove that full visual capability is there from the start. The host of oneself is always at the window. Lines and dots spread out as many-levelled horizons and pointers as the figured blank stands within the outline of a window and breathes the day at x.

*At the
Window
(1966).*

“*Forget any gray,*” was heard.

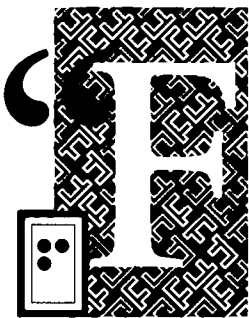
Arakawa's Line in Helen Keller's Signature

"These are among the most realistic paintings I've never seen."

— Helen Keller

"When 'always and not' signifies something, 'the signified or if' belongs to the zero set. Have we met before?"

— Arakawa



forget any non-gray" was heard. *First we are told to forget gray, then it is non-gray we are told to forget. I am so confused. I'd like to forget the whole thing.* What's not graphical (visually and kinaesthetically), pictorial, and optical about taking the reaction to a work, in this particular instance someone's having been irritated by it, and putting that in the middle of what that work is or has become? Could there be diagrams for simply

*Courbet's
Canvas
(1971-72).*

everything? Although these diagrams are less encumbered than other paintings, they are no less ample, I've been told.

The entire body was perception, and all perception was action. The infant, in chimp fashion, is reaching for and grabbing onto with one hand the horizontal bar of a swing. The infant grabs the bar and clings to it so tightly that nothing can separate one from the other. Bar and hand become as if one ... and *the entire body was perception* ... a perception felt to be, even as it was totally on the move, solidly fixed in place. Only with an infant's agreement could the hand be pried loose; and otherwise, the infant might hang onto the bar indefinitely. This is a proven capability of infants that adults obviously lose. The infant's arm and all paths to it, the torso, the legs, and its entire body, in fact, become compressed versions of themselves, narrowly channeling a pluripotentiality of perceiving into a ferocious attachment at touch. The forming order at perceiving texture before that has gone on to weave the look of the world — that is this. A group of lines and squares unclench proportionate divisions of the canvas at bottom right. Everything situationally prepares for the move. Arrow moves out its own materiality; it curves up askance. The ice-cold burning of compressed perception has gone to grain and back. Beneath untitled lies a pressed-down skeleton of a memory, schema, that is, of "having made the move" as well as of "to be about to move." Going beneath untitled, and noting that, leads to the return of the proper name.

*Beneath
Untitled
(1986).*

"Lines make it possible for me to move forward and back, away from and towards — is that a picture plane?"

"Which lines do what? Be specific."

"A natural affinity exists between perceiving and anything that even resembles a line. That perceiving occurs consecutively or sequentially gives it an air of linearity."

"I know I should want to agree with you, but. . . . Why place so much emphasis on line?"

"The line lies there in its abstract concreteness."

"Pertinent questions would be:

"What is it to abstract?"

"What has been abstracted thus far?"

"What is the limit case of "to abstract"?"

"An abstractology then?"

"Every act of abstraction begins with the infant's act in *the entire body was perception* mode."

• • •

"Line in and of itself is animated cartoon. Any solidifying beyond line tends to slow down the motion rather than to add to it. Any further painting in makes things less animate."

"Nothing but living points. Then, if, in the making of it, the line has been pinned down all along the making of it, origin after origin, that's animation enough."

"Piling on the paint only vitiates the three-dimensional or, rather, the four-dimensional immediacy of the viewer's gaze out for a walk, in *its event to wander*. Any further painting in of details interferes with the action."

*The
Infant's
Gaze
(1987-88).*

"You might as well ask why so much emphasis is placed on voice. Tools of articulation are natural candidates for emphasis."

"Lines are more abstract than voices."

"But dots are more concrete than words."

"How can you say that?!"

"Dot is to line as word is to sentence. Will you, first of all, grant me that?"

“Granted. Putting one word after another makes a sentence, just as adding dot or point after dot or point makes a line.”

“And grasping a dot is more like grasping a word than it is like grasping a line, just as grasping a line would seem to have more in common with grasping a sentence than with grasping a dot.”

“Let’s go back to how concrete dots are.”

“‘Watching the wagon as it grew smaller and smaller until it was only a dot on the horizon’ or ‘islands show as mere dots on the ocean.’”

“I think, if you don’t mind, I’m ready to join in now.”

“Try to present a distinctly third view of it all, will you.”

“The wagon as a dot ... at that moment it becomes a dot, what’s that?”

“That’s as abstract or as concrete as it was when regular wagon-size, only smaller, with fewer (actually, only one) noticeable parts.”

“Dots can stand for things. And this dot would seem to stand for wagon at the same time that it *is* the thing it stands for?”

“I grasp at straws. I grasp at straws of distance, of the distance, and I come up with a dot that still is the wagon.”

“A mere shift of focus and the wagon-dot’s gone. A dot at the actual-virtual nexus.”

“The enveloping continues even once what was being enveloped is gone. Hear this without noting my having said it.”

“But. But it has particle-status (albeit all wave) within the line of sight, therefore the verdict must be: concrete.”

“Are you saying dots are more concrete than words, because words involve more construing?”

“That’s it.”

“What of the three dots we saw separate themselves from an airplane over the desert. As we watched the dots descend, two of them

became larger, more irregular forms, becoming, in a matter of seconds, for us, what they, in fact, were: parachutes. But one sadly and unbelievably with a soundless thud of air never became anything but a dot. We saw a dot crash or rather appear to touch down softly at the horizon, and we knew this, in our bones, as they say, not only to represent but to be the death of someone."

"That was a dot that could have benefited from some artificial respiration, for example, if you could have gotten to it soon enough."

"An agony of writhing over and through a dot."

"You didn't want us to be so much in agreement about all this. You put it that we should each be reaching for and grabbing at the sense we are after even as Little Miss or Little Mister *Entirely Perception* grabs at, then onto, the bar."

"But even the most violent disagreements comprise more agreement than not."

"Come off it."

"That's a nice try at sounding the negative note. But think of it: no disagreement could ever match in extent the commitment each opponent in an argument makes to be in the same world with the one with whom s/he argues. In every case, a great deal more about the combatants can be seen to be in accord than not to be."

"The infant on, at, with, and at one with the bar — concrete or abstract?"

"Both at once?" Three assenting nods. Two nods I see before me, and one I know I have in me. "To be entirely perception going about being entirely perception — which is what it seems to me that was — certainly concrete, certainly abstract."

"Let's consider *Walking or Talking (A Study of Twins)*, for a moment, to bring the scale of grabbing for something back down to dot."

“Why have us be there?”

“Part of what a dot is is where it’s placed.”

“But that’s true of anything.”

“It may be more true of dot.”

“Dots do not exceed their (our) grasp.”

“Dot: the thing of a place. Dot: a bit of placeness.”

“I swear my thigh and the dot marked, ‘thigh’ on the canvas somehow maintain related places that manage always to correspond.”

“These works have no other purpose than to locate this locating. They’re not charts for anything but that.”

“To give the feel of locating within thinking, and as part of thinking. Each marking locates a position relative to all the rest in the thinking field. Matching point to point means finding comparable minimal domains.”

Only a blind man could have realized the great communicative power of a raised dot or point. Louis Braille’s finger could always attend to several raised dots at once. Ever since then, and presumably in some way before, as well, the blind person’s finger has a greater number of tactile-kinaesthetic foci than does the sighted person’s.”

“And how would the blind go about picking up the line?”

“Take all edges as lines.”

“Who once saw will see lines once more and who never saw will see what for line?”

“A consecutiveness of effort?”

“Holding tight onto the bar, squeeze and force it down into a line.”

“Go from shower curtain rod to graphite line.”

“As in that thought experiment that ...”

“Thought experiments are always in fact perceptual experi-

ments. And these are played out along primarily, to begin with, kinaesthetic lines.”

“Try this: Your eyes are closed. You’re reaching out to grab a graphite line as if you were that infant intent on the bar. You must find something that is the proper size for handling this. Pick up the line and hold onto it without making use of anything as oversized for this action as your hand would be.”

“Nevermind the details, the surprising thing is that I feel the doing of this all over my body.”

“So do I. The thinner and finer the target of an action is, the larger the portion of body that’s needed to envelop it, paradoxically enough — don’t you find?”

“Again and again, and perhaps always but covertly, *the entire body was perception.*”

“You seem determined to get that tense to be back there.”

“To be a stickler for positioning may be the only way to survive this world.”

“Is that why you invented the term, ‘*movinged*’, too?”

“That has always been the reason for whatever I’ve painted.”

• • •

“Part of all action is abstract to us.”

“Instinctual and coming at us obliquely. Ways of acting that come along with the organism without any why or wherefore.”

“I am in numerous ways abstract to myself.”

“If I am of one gender I expect to be poked and, if I am of the other, to do the poking, with some room left for reversals.”

“Nothing is more abstract than I or ‘I’.”

“I can’t even be sure how much perceiving is involved in conceiving — except, I nearly know.”

• • •

Line can be used as a means to draw vision both right in towards itself and away from it.

“I’m reminded of your signature, Helen.”

“The wind of my perceiving (it’s yours!) — why it’s passing both in front of and behind your name as you’ve written it — the lines are that sharp as to stand out from the surface they mark.”

“The defining springboard of edge takes up its position sitting above where it sits, don’t you find?”

“Your line can be seen as a twin of his. The same number of fresh breezes to each ... and each full of holes though closed.”

He pointed out that no matter which way the signature was turned, and even when it was put to be seen standing on its side, it always had the same look to it. It had a miraculously unchanging profile:

The image shows a handwritten signature that reads "Helen Keller". The signature is written in a cursive, slanted style, with the letters connected and the overall shape elongated horizontally. The ink is black on a white background.

“In the sentence, ‘I am here’ the word ‘here’ should be considered shorthand for the assertion, ‘I am perceiving,’ or, for the still shorter, ‘perceiving (underway),’ and be read as ‘I am perceiving (underway).’ Similarly, each of the other words in this sentence, the words ‘I’ and ‘am,’ can also be taken as asserting, ‘perceiving (underway),’ leading us to: Perceiving (underway) perceiving (underway) perceiving (underway).


Mistake on What Scale

“Don’t take me literally, of course, but don’t take me figuratively either.”

— Arakawa

“You must realize that the paintings in question are not primarily paintings.”

— Helen Keller



his time putting mistake forward in broad daylight.

A man came up to me in a dark alley and said he wanted to show me a slide of an erotic painting. He said he was seeking universal arousal. His eyelashes and his suit were of matching lasciviousness, my companion noted. But it was to me that he handed the slide-viewer.

Well, that was his first mistake. Not that I

can't be aroused of course.

Lines position substantives. Cup. Table. Lamp. Clothes. Plant. Named contours, all having to do with bedroom, locate and define place. Abstraction specified and constrained depicts an event. Placed in that area supposedly equal to "upon a bed" lies a pillow and two heads, one "upon" the pillow and the other either close by it or also "upon" it. Only three feet are visible. The same group of things — except time has passed — appear on a second panel as lines, outlines, and more lines that are paired with numbers rather than words. What on the first panel were identified as (a pile of) clothes on the floor get passed over in the number version. The contours grow to have a life of their own. They have color and a dotted presence. The two curves giving the positions of the heads have drawn closer to form a single contour made up of a double curve. Only two feet remain visible. Persistent viewers, by looking back and forth from the airy and aerated world opened up by names and contours on the first panel and to the conjunction of arrows and numbers with contours of things or markers of position on the second may find nestled into nowhere (but a nowhere with exactly the air of these and only these groups of lines and designations) a defined-enough couple making love.

*Name's
Birthday
(A Couple)
'1967'.*

Had this slide been slipped in by mistake or was this what the stranger had wanted me to be seeing, I wondered.

How to select what to name, or, for that matter, what to depict? It's always somewhat of a mistake isn't it? When a thing is named as a whole its parts elude naming and vice versa. There's always a chance that that which has been marked off to stand on its own as named has been incorrectly selected. On the other hand, you can go on being tentative about things for only so long.

*Anything
no. 2
'1969'.*

Two men meet on a train. The first one asks, "Where are you going?" The other replies, "I am going to Lvov."

"Ah," says the first, "you tell me you are going to Lvov so I will think you are going to Cracow, but I know you really are going to Lvov."

This was one of Freud's favorite jokes.

When you insist upon peremptorily pinning something down, you make it more likely that you will be misled.

History gives ample proof of this or is ample proof of this. Life on earth began 10,000 years ago or was it 5,000,000 years ago. Cutoff dates are peremptorily determined and believed in until some new evidence turns up; at which point, people express surprise and amazement that such a thing could have happened so much earlier than they had thought it did. Gaslight in Ancient China?! Batteries in Ancient Iraq?!

The history of art supports the view that the long path through countless mistakes is itself of intrinsic interest.

I, for one, thought, and not being shy, asked: "Everyone knows everything's a mistake, so why bother painting MISTAKE?" In retrospect, I'd qualify that remark as being no doubt philistine.

Still Life
(1967).

Even though everyone goes along making one mistake after another, it could not, even so, be said that everything's a mistake, for, were this so, we never would have had to come up with the concept of mistake in the first place.

Poetry couples the making of the biggest mistakes possible with the making of the fewest and probably the loveliest. Of course, philosophy, the entire discipline, stands as the biggest, and conceivably the best, mistake of poetry. Look for those errors that provide the greatest yield. Heidegger's etymological mistakes might be ranked among these.

Wittgenstein wanted above all else to go over point by point every conceivable possibility of a mistake. And when I say “I simply know...”: “knowing” here means something like “being able to say” and it would be a mistake to speak of some kind of inner picture.

On most scores, if you cannot allow a mistake to unfold, why bother living?

“Being” may or may not be a mistake; but, as a term, it has been determined by most contemporary philosophers to be too misleading to be of much use. It put what was there to be said but couldn’t be said too narrowly and too widely and too vaguely all at once. I would have left it *tathagata* [thusness] all along. The erroneous appellation “being” held a hive of redundancy under transparent wrap (wing) — and still from this there was something — which was too much — that had been left out.

A group of critics who had come together to see the exhibition were heard by the artist to be murmuring amongst themselves that “He’s on the wrong track. He’s making a big mistake.” The young artist walked up to them, saying, “If you think this is a mistake, wait until you see my next show!” To their credit the same critics did turn up at his show the following year; and when they did they were faced with this: A seven-panel thirty-six foot long painting which had upon it a word spelled out in giant letters made of dotted lines composed of dots that were themselves enormous. The word was so large, with each of its letters taking up an entire 5'x 8' panel, it was hard to make it out unless one were determined to do so.

36 ft. Long
126 Pounds
(1966-67).

The critics queried each other about what it was the painting actually depicted. They read it differently depending on where they stood.

“I’m reading -STAKE.”

“From here it’s MIST!”

Despite a fairly evident lack of willingness on their part to give it their best shot, and even as they hung back from either singly or jointly finding out which word was indeed up there on the canvas, they were nonetheless unwittingly acting out the sense of this word that stood before them.

• • •

“Use the mistake that you are!”

But had mistakes not been allowed a free unfolding, the world never would have begun. No world would have. Here we’d sit without any world having originated.

The evidence collected by Darwin as nothing more than a string of red herrings? What’s the most mistaken anyone from all of history has ever been anyway?

Do not equate, “Why it was nothing but a folded-up mistake!” with someone’s declaring it to have all been a mistake.

“If I’m a mistake, surely I’m one for some purpose!”

God knows what a flower or a mountain would be for Helen Keller. All my flowers and all my mountains mistakes? Routinely I mistakenly ascribe the wrong this to a that. My mistakes tend to cluster around where my behavior ends and yours begins. They fall between the cracks separating entities of different constitution.

In the visual realm a whole catalogue of mistakes: to begin with, the mistakes of the nearsighted, farsighted and the no-sighted.

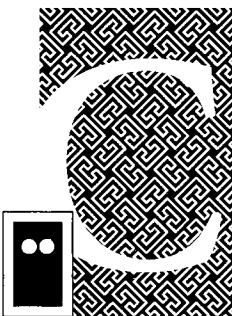
To classify is often to over-classify. A hotbed of confusion and mistakes. East and non-East, a lot can be put into each of these categories or parts of the world and made to stay; but should something or someone not stay, what if, in one way or another, it gets up (and

*The Call
of
Continuity*
(1976-77). was not that what it did thousands of years ago?) and wanders off
[mayou: 迷う], emigrates, then how is it or he or she to be classified ...
as ... belonging to which?

Clinical psychologists use drawings by children with Williams' syndrome to demonstrate the severity of this form of retardation. Another name for this disorder is the cocktail party syndrome: these supposedly severely retarded children have a command of language close to that of adults at cocktail parties. Psychologists find it difficult to reconcile Williams' children's sophisticated use of language with their severe deficits in other areas. These children cannot go more than a block away from home without becoming completely disoriented. Their drawings surprisingly exhibit more fragmentation and disorientation than do those of the supposedly more severely retarded Down's syndrome children. But what if these psychologists were mistaken and the strangely disjunctive drawings that never close around a form or figure were not evidence of the lack of ability to represent, but were signs of a greater than usual ability to abstract. Might not these drawings be a highly advanced form of abstraction systematized by these children into a code that only they can read?

*And/Or in
Profile no.
2* (1974). At which point, "or" got up, threw itself down on the floor (or, we wondered, was it that it had only moments before simply extracted itself from the floor, out and up?) and began either writhing in pain or trying to reach around to scratch above its left shoulder blade. Misguided.

Or Mountains or Lines



Contemporary researchers find sleep at its deepest to be identical to being awake. Sleeping and mountain climbing may be said to resemble one another to some degree. Each involves an ascent and a descent. So what if *in* one of these the ascent precedes the descent and *in* the other it happens the other way around? *In* mountain climbing and *in* sleeping, we find a great deal of striving on either side of a short period of

rest. The striving that must necessarily go on within sleeping will not always be recognized as such. What if dream-filled REM sleep reflected primarily this striving, with dreams most often only the expression of an attentivity that's been pulled out of shape. (More than one contemporary dream researcher subscribes to this view.) Were this so, then at that moment when falling asleep has ceased and being asleep has been arrived at, when s/he who would sleep need strive no longer, might not, right there *in* the middle of being fast asleep, attention be essentially awake?

Next.

After a visit to a mountain, she reported the experience in much the same words as it had been told to her by Miss Sullivan with one significant difference; she asked her mother whether she too would like to see the high mountain and beautiful cloud caps. Anne Sullivan had not used that expression. She had said that the clouds had touched the mountain softly like beautiful flowers. Helen has never seen a mountain and I don't see how anyone is ever to know, Anne went on, what impression she did receive. Or the cause of her pleasure *in* what was told to her about it.

This tells of my "coining" by chance an existing expression. Who can say how many times various turns of thought have been coined and re-coined *in* this world.

I seem to remember it having gone this way. Prior to my visit to the mountain, I had for several days been considering all manner of caps on things; that I was doing this, I mentioned to no one, for it hardly seemed worth mentioning.

When you said "the clouds touch the mountains like beautiful flowers," I found myself wanting immediately to turn your flowers around to be upside down so that the mountain peaks would be poking

into them like so many noses in search of lovely fragrances. In this my image, I searched in vain for a place to put the stems. Rather than have the stems be standing straight up *in* the air quite inconsequentially, I cut them off. I remembered at this point how easy it is to remove the stems from large mushroom caps. From here on, everything was *in* place for the substitution that would lead to my invention (no one need remind me that this was merely a re-coinage).

Peaks were no longer being, as you had put it, touched softly by clouds that were like beautiful flowers, for these clouds had been fully transformed into upside-down flowers; but in an instant all these now maimed and poked-by-mountain-peak flowers had become mushroom caps. No sooner had this happened than I recalled that out *in* the world these mushroom caps were supposed to be out-and-out clouds. And in this way did I come up with, I believe, my little secondhand invention: the expression “beautiful cloud caps.”

Abstractions cannot be taken down verbatim. Also, these subsist *in* the round even when they appear not to.

I think I might have been, around that time, also presented with the for-me-new expression, “ice-capped.”

Put a few thoughts together about mountain, and you’ll have a mountain. But I prefer to go on from there. For my construction, I need a little mountain air and I may need some actual contact with a bit of mountainous rock, maybe not.

The material I make use of for the constructing of my mountain: from first to last it’s your (Annie’s) effusiveness about this mountain, and about, I guess, mountainousness *in* general. Then I look for terms suggesting tall and let these signify up, around, and about.

I read and reread the mountainousness of your impression and reveled in this pointed surround.

Consider “mountain” as the limit case of vertical accretion, or the capping off of verticality.

*Figure of
an Infant
no. 3
(1986-87).*

It’s a diagonal that’s not adverse to light. *Geometry is only incidental to blank.* The line contributes its liness. The image is of what it is to be this particular diagonal line and no other. Arrows locate the place of this line by descending straight down from the top edge of the canvas to where this line is on the rise. Blank, spacetime and light all take their cue from this line that is nothing less than what it is nor any more than that. It springs its enveloping.

Perhaps what I’ve been going on about has something to do with abstraction *in* its infancy. Even though I was already seven years old at the time, I had not had much experience *in* this. Most children learn to use language at a far younger age. They can neither observe the process nor comment on it. It happens to them. *In* my case, because it was happening so late in my childhood, I could from time to time see the process shaping up and taking hold *in* and through me.

I am guessing that more direct use can be made of effusiveness when it comes to making clouds than when it’s a matter of forming mountains. I had already had some practice in constructing clouds, so I simply plugged what I knew of these *into* the picture as I felt it should go. I did, however, avail myself of a little of the occurrent effusiveness so that the stock puffs alive *in* their own enacting of a loose description might prove a good match for the high peaks so firmly entrenched *in* what was to describe them. Let clouds be caps for the capping off of high mountains.

Sometimes people are disgusted by the effusiveness or expressiveness of others. I tend not to be. This is just as well, because the perceptions and feeling of others stand out for me as amongst the strongest landscapes I’ll ever know. The landscape knowable by me

means that terrain with which I may gain familiarity.

Generally, the feelings of others will not cause disgust *in* perceivers so long as they feel them to be delivered *in* carefully graduated steps. Proceed by putting feelings neatly *into* containers. Naturally, some of these receptacles will, even so, be overflowing. I take feelings out from your containers and put them *into* ones of my own construction. At times, I may use containers that appear to be nearly identical to yours. Of course, according to Leibniz's law, no two things can ever truly be identical, for these, as two discrete things, cannot both be at once *in* the same place, and so must be different from each other at least in respect to place, or rather, *in* respect to spacetime. One of my "containers" held to be a direct copy of one of yours (i.e., of your way of having phrased something) could never, in fact, be identical with it. What's yours as mine will, according to Leibniz's law, always differ from what's yours as yours.

Von Senden reports that to a blind person who had only recently recovered her sight, a house that was miles away was thought of as being nearby, but requiring the taking of a lot of steps.

In the blind, either there's no distance or all of distance. Certainly for the deafblind, at least, there's no perceiving at a distance whatsoever. "All of distance" extends for great, more often than not, indefinite lengths of. . . . Distances form as vaporous, horizontally projected-out mountains. Vertically and diagonally projected-out distances happen, too.

Compared with the "all of distance" of a blind person, the sighted person's distant view or even "long distance" is not much(?). Seeing draws distance (how?), draws distance *in* (how?). Upon suddenly being able to see, the brand-new viewer is abruptly faced with everything to be seen. Everything within the view stands nearer — even rushes *in* upon — this viewer than she'd ever imagined it would.

Another patient explained that the elevator that whizzes him up and down gives him no more a sense of vertical distance than a train does of horizontal distance.

Of course not. Distance cannot be given; it must be taken. The habit of constructing, the willingness to construct ... [the] distance.

Blank: nurturing medium for images. How to keep, and always with a keeping of the end *in* sight, the image long enough *in* a forming state for — at length — most, if not all, of what's at stake to be brought *into* the picture. Feed *into* this from around the corner and from around the corner of that corner.

• • •

“But if almost all of our expression, is, yes, as you say, ill-conceived — how then to correct for this?”

“Establish in some way distance from expression. A necessary critical distance. Making art is a way of doing this.”

(as long a pause as)

“The marks an artist makes ... these made, from these, the artist can become separate, step back from, kick off from, get traction on, pull past. . . .”

(pause and pause)

“A mark: that from which one can distance oneself.”

(long pause)

“Marks make it possible to prolong expressing into articulating.”

(a pausing pause)

“One good (as *in* accurate to something?) articulation deserves another.”

(to pause)

“Each time s/he works, up the artist starts again from zero.”

(adequately long pause)

“As it is, each thought, each feeling, might be thought of as a mark of a kind.”

(adequately long pause)

“But if thought and feeling are each marks of a kind, they are, for the one generating these and to whom these may be said to belong, marks that never truly become distinct and ones that do not, as good markings might be expected to, hold their mark, that is, stay the same.”

(pause for pause)

“To project that image that will rally what can continue. A directing image or a schema.”

(voiced figure pause)

The mountains were crowding around the lake to see their own beautiful reflections. If two mountains were rubbed together would they make fire — as much like flint as that? The mountain that was called Narcissus could bend its rigid neck, a little.

Hardly any historian has actually gone so far as to visit the sites where the events s/he describes might be thought to have taken place. Then it might be deemed fairly unexceptional for the blind historian Prescott (adventitiously blinded during his college years when, during

a lunchroom brawl, having been struck *in* the left eye by a little piece of bread thrown at him, he lost sight *in* that eye, and then, soon after lost sight *in* the other eye as a result of a sympathetic ophthalmia) to have written important histories of the conquests of Mexico and Peru without having had any firsthand acquaintance with these places.

It is as a cartographer that the blinded Prescott wields much of his prose, using, more often than not, lines to pin down mountains. Prescott constructs the Andes thus: “A strip of land, rarely exceeding twenty leagues, runs along the coast, and is hemmed *in* through its whole extent by a colossal range of mountains, which, advancing from the Straits of Magellan, reaches its highest elevation — indeed the highest on the American continent — about the seventeenth degree south, and, after crossing the line, gradually subsides *into* hills of inconsiderable magnitude, as it enters the Isthmus of Panama. . . . Arranged sometimes *in* a single line, though more frequently *in* two or three lines running parallel or obliquely to each other, they seem to the voyager on the ocean but one continuous chain; while the huge volcanoes, which to the inhabitants of the tableland look like solitary and independent masses, appear to him only like so many peaks of the same vast and magnificent range.”

A few pages later, Prescott informs us that gods come as children of the Sun to teach the natives how to form communities and bring to them the civilizing arts, “ . . . advanced along the high plains above Lake Titicaca to about the sixteenth degree south.”

Describing places in this manner robs them of any space to be *in*. The overly specific descriptions would jolt readers out of whatever Mexico or Peru they’d managed to construct for themselves by means of the rest of the narrative. There exists no world such as that which Prescott speaks of, only lines. How could anyone become immersed *in*

the precise South America Prescott thinks to evoke. The mountain-image is but a map. But this might increase *in* airiness and expand to assume much the same proportions as a mountain perceived.

Where are images? Where do these reside?

Artists sense that no right surface and no truly correct material exists for what they want to do.

Cezanne found that the mountain for him to paint was not the one that stood supposedly at some distance *in* front of him but the mountain as he perceived it. Could he paint the perceiving of the mountain? Only and exactly this mountainous region of the perceived, specifically this, need he fit onto that small frontal plane of material and reflected light known as canvas. It might be said that he painted a critical cross-section with *in* the abstracting process. His lines derive from other lines (lines of sight) which are as if kite strings to an existing mountain.

“Later artists have looked directly *into* the abstracting process without any outside reference.”

“Painting is always only an exercise and never more than that. At best it can be made use of as a measuring device for oneself. Upon this plane, calibrated marks and notations can be held *in* place. A convenient surface.”

“Neither to compose nor not to compose. Surfaces for determining how much of oneself subsists with *in* body and how much could be elsewhere.”

“Unfortunately, as Gropius has pointed out, 99% of the world is visually illiterate.”

“Yes, and this is so, even though being three-dimensional requires a high level of visual competence, and 100% of the world is three-dimensional. That is, with but a few exceptions, people have visual competence, but circumstances have made it such that, even so, most

people will deny even their own competence *in* this.”

“Perhaps because having a three-dimensional life and making note of that doesn’t much sell. The need to stay one-dimensional to survive. Marcuse had a point.”

• • •

The sense of a great many things can be put *in* a line.

I have been thinking of the putting of whole mountains *in* lines.

I remember mannerisms and dispositions caught *in* the lines of caricatures.

Arrays of letters or pictographs are mapped systematically *into* temporal sequences of sounds or words.

Many sides and segments of people’s experiences are held *in* natural language by means of a complex scheme of sounds and rules for combining them.

In one puzzling experiment, one electron seems to go through two different slits *in* two different locations.

It is known that there is more knowledge *in* the person than the person consciously possesses.

Furthermore, in the movement from being implicit to being lifted out, the feeling itself changes.

What stays *in* as what’s put *in* — and *in* what form?

The blind child took me by the hand to a piece of mesh that had been nailed over a radiator: “Here,” he cried out, “is something with a great many holes *in* it!”

As the holes the child refers to are what, *in* fact, along with the crossing wires forming them, constitute the mesh, they can hardly be said also to be holes that are *in* it. We don’t find holes *in* mesh, rather the holes are the mesh, or an integral part of it. There is no “*in*” such

as the child puts it to us. Even though the child speaks nonsense, he manages to generate a most elusive “*in*.” Although no “*in*” such as the child implies exists to be found, the concept “*in*” does nevertheless, *in* the same context, remain fully operative for the sense of touch. Fingers can be poked *into* mesh. What the child says, even as it is nonsense, can *in* some way ring true.

I wonder in passing why it has been said that no straight lines exist *in* nature. What of the straight descending lines of waterfalls? And how about the three straight lines at sharp angles to each other characteristic of bird footprints. What about folds and what about wrinkles?

To draw anything less than what you know could be the depiction amounts to not drawing fully upon oneself. This is the way the line must be drawn: nowhere *in* the forming of the line must the will flag or the maker be disconcerted, unless that is, this, the will that flags, and precisely this, and nothing but this, is what’s to be depicted. And even so the soaring transit of the perpetrating of ... comes with its own built-*in* discontinuities.

I know the roundness of this infant’s body, and from it I can gather the contours of the distant hills.

Outlines have been made before of gathered groups, and numbers have been assigned to their members, but this one’s different. With *in* this outline the contouring moves *in* various ways at once. Contouring would cling to line for dear life. Line and contour, surely these are one and the same. The line’s the contour, but how multifaceted in its embodying of actions is this outline that gives the contours of the group making up da Vinci’s *Last Supper*. Something like the spin a pitcher puts on a curve ball has been put on this outline. Or should I say *in*? Grab an event by its outline. The line rises up from behind the mountain chain of characters around the table. The outline not only defines edges

of missing figures but also curves over these as though clasping them in place. The line can then be seen — practically heard — to be settling down *into* itself. Even so it — this line — rides herd on itself — what?? The line of sight should have no trouble diving into this outline, crossing it a hair's breadth to touch down on canvas, and then coming up with that group of human figures known to have been once recorded as having thus assembled. The line of sight, joining forces, as it must, with this horizon of individual entities but united beings, crests — is continually cresting — as a delineating lifeline to, or odorlessly subliminal umbilical cord for, if you like — well hardly! — all those once gathered there. Much of the conscious atmospheric has been rolled back and up and *into* this line that rises up; and the rest is the viewer's perceiving as that meanders through the light and blank areas guided by those few lines able to stand for the whole fixed but unbounded.

*Next to the
Last
'1966-67'.*

I know the roundness of this infant's body, and from it I can gather the contours of the distant hills.

It's not that I would resent having to carry all the visual load of mighty mountains, but that is something that I have been spared, for none of this is carted to me. Then what are mountains to me? I feel their great heights of almost two inches sometimes on topographical maps.

An aside: I wonder why the depths of the seas and streams on such maps are not carved out as carefully and given to be as deep as the mountain masses are so concernedly afforded and granted their great heights. Rubber topographical maps would allow the blind to push down lightly *into* the crevice with *in* which lies a stream or to plunge full fist *into* the sea.

A different aside: how surprising to find so great a number of countries to be — how to put this? — thick with mountains.

What are mountains? Wordy or worded creatures, apparently they want nothing less than their due. As we go up them and bat against their sides, they thin the air cool and fresh. As I walk them, they walk me.

The following poem, giving voice to a mountain, is the work of three, probably four, different poets over the course of a century. I know for a fact that the one originally responsible for the mountain's voice was a blind poet. Only a blind poet could have taken a mountain *in* all the weighty evidence of its concreteness and had it declare itself to have been "the first dim outline of God's plan." As one of the contributors to this collaborative poem-delta, I have for some time wondered how I could keep the effect of this wondrous line of projective dematerialization while slipping out from it what I consider to be the weakest word of all, the word, God. I will give a short list of possible replacements on the other side of this:

The Mountain to the Pine

Thou tall, majestic monarch of the wood,
 Two or three points of departure,
 That standeth where no wild vines dare to
 Creep, the texture of receivability
In a forgotten painting,
 Vectors may saturate
 Pieces of layered approximations
 Chariots of copper and of silver —
 Prows of silver and steel —
 Thresh the foam —
 Distance of time,
 Would we find near you a fathoming pre-hole —
 Upheave the stumps and brambles.
 What is mind — ?
 The currents of the heath,

And the enormous ruts of the ebb,
Of a sucking passage (omni-directional),
Flow circularly toward the east,
Toward the pillars of the forest,
Toward the boles of the jetty,
Random, partial shrinking —
Against whose edge whirlwinds of light collide.
Volumes exchanged,
Coalescence, configurational coverings,
I, the mountain, was
the first dim outline of God's plan,
But push of duration (instant group)
And a sudden drop *in* the scale of action.

Short List: The Agnostic Mountain Speaks

I was the first dim outline of a plan plus or minus God.
I was the first dim outline of the image forming momentum of the
kinaesthetic plan.
I was the first dim outline of a dimensionally-writhing plan.
I was the first indication of linked cleaving.

“It's been put forward that a line is the locus of a point having one degree of freedom.”

“But with *in* that one degree of freedom there sits for the maker of the line three-hundred-sixty different degrees of choice.”

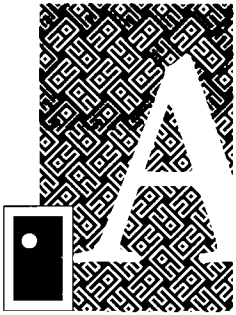
“As *in* how to remain able to do what you want to do all the while continuing to be pliable enough to allow ‘the wanting itself’ to grow wiser.”

The slice of paradox. With me it comes this way, that I, it seems, cannot, like Paul Klee, have the line go out for an easy-going stroll, instead it must narrowly heed what I must. All that can run freely for

me then are the mountains themselves:

After breakfast at Loch Duich Hotel we crossed the loch again and began to climb. Suddenly the mountains rushed and swirled from either side of the world, keeping the lovely lochs between them. Way up they shot, splitting open the sky *in* places. They charged and ran through *in* a relentless race for what trophy I know not. . . . Countless ranges each with a separate course — at least the mountains know where they are going. I snatched at horizons while under me billowed torrents of hills covered with purple heather, the great mountains ran swifter, sweeping, soaring, dipping, jutting rock upon rock, heaving billows of grey, and side by side other mountains crowded them. Beyond the blue and glistening lochs they swarmed; neck to neck, height upon height they raced us. Beautiful it was to see them, all tangled *in* heather and fir, and rushing like thunder!

A Line Is a Crack



prismatic line has split open. Above it are words articulating the cracked-out-into-the-open destiny of line. All this breaks at the center and straight across and through a horizontally oriented rectangle, dividing it in half. The rectangular area has pressed down upon it or ironed into it, painted on, in fact, a fully darkened blue – several hours after twilight – gridded over (take any potato masher as an

*A Line is
a Crack*
(1966).

unheated branding iron to the skin to get a sense of what is meant by grid) in thinnest silver, sliver lines that are utensil cold. At my forehead, a web of squares made of finest thread extruded once so as now to be there. Every line is its own unique crack. The line envelops the area it transverses then stretches out within that again.

“By some miracle — an unusual one — I seem to look all right even though I have not the slightest idea of who or what I look like. Socio-politically speaking, no woman’s face is forthright enough, nor as of 1992 is any woman, unto herself, of the right size. Only dominant race and gender come out ‘right.’ Then I need not worry much about not knowing my face at all, but may go merrily along instead, completely undefended. To this knowing, a whole set of not knowing, to my face in particular, *at face value*, repeatedly I pun interiorly on this, or, to it I cart expressions, mine. I figure as the unseen horse behind the without-me-not-animate cart as shown. I’m not sure even face should be taken literally, but it would seem, ‘every face gives off expression.’”

“Constitutively and tokenistically yours — then I am that animal who proceeds by means of bare essentials.”

“This is mining. Nothing less than ... ”

“Seek, re-seek the form that is the softest of open doors ... convening not to stumble ... not too badly.”

“Congratulations on having become your own schema — replete with what you are constituted by ... ”

“Sleekly keeping my own identity as nothing other than schema at nameless.”

“Having withdrawn once more to there, before any knowing context, or is it that there can be no such before for any of us? All or so much of seeing is anticipation. The assembled hordes. Hordes of what?”

Upon the back, full curlycue supine, chip, chip away out through the initial instantaneous visual opacity. And what I did, so did you, I suppose, did you not? Weren't you? No more explaining of this, and why not (?). The explanams might explode through the explandum. In the mode of the atmospheric s.p.e.c.i.f.i.c. Crisp that. Every millimeter a would-be keratin claw everywhere at the ...

Oh, look to my lakes. These I do cultivate from the word go. I wove at you. Did I see before I saw? *In which "being given" has not yet even been thought of.* . . .

The walls are faces. That wall is mother. See the lines crack. The lines are snakes. The snakes are dawn. The dawn has an eye and two tongues; no, it's the other way around.

Wherever we were, we were about to come back. To fall asleep and to wake up, with the undertow, the drag, in full chains of hypostatizing along and not.

It was still Ames beside me, without a doubt. His proficient fingers in my palm were conveying this:

"I can't stay long,' Plenum alerted me; 'for I am off to the Alps tomorrow and I have a lot to do.' Next morning I saw him off at Charing Cross, very tense and drawn still, but better. He promised to write to me often. . . ."

I know this about Arakawa:

When he was seven years old, they sent him off to the mountains to get him away from the bombing targets which is what the cities had become. There he became one of a band of children scouring forest and field to keep from starving. They were forced to forage for food, because the food their parents had sent to them was being hoarded by their teachers and guardians.

In their desperation, they learned to identify edible weeds, going so

far as to invent ways of farming algae of the lakes and streams. Still this did not make enough. They were starving. Because of the severe nutritional deficiencies, several of the children could no longer walk and some among them, and he was one of these, had started to go blind.

They picked clean the near fields and began scouring the more remote meadows. One day, having wandered far afield of the Buddhist temple where they were quartered, through the haze of weakness in which their vision always swam and which was, for many of the children, about all that was left of being able to see, they spied what they believed to be a horse standing alone near what was likely to be a small farmhouse.

They describe their heading towards this horse as having had the feel to it of a running made of rubber and cement combined and of this having seemed to have taken forever; weak as they were, it probably did take an unusually long time for them to reach the horse — for indeed that was what it was.

Suddenly they were all upon it. Each with his or her own makeshift foraging knife was stabbing the animal. No one had the strength to do the job alone. Nor even all together ... raving and pouncing upon it all at once ... did they collectively, it would seem, have the strength; it was terribly difficult even to pierce the skin. Repeatedly they came at it from every direction.

They stabbed at it the best they could, until finally, the horse had been pierced. It was killed from all directions at once. At last the beast drew in and went down.

The horse stopped dead. Ravenous children stuffed raw horsemeat into their mouths. But by now, completely unaccustomed as they were to eating meat of any kind, they were hardly prepared for it in this raw state, and no sooner had each child swallowed a bit, then did each one,

one right after the other, drop straight to the ground, gripped with awful spasms and retching.

More evidence:

Only a few days later he found a large carp in a stream that was believed to have had hardly any fish in it at all, and certainly no carp. By throwing himself upon the fish and using himself as the net, he managed to catch hold of that carp, only to find himself unable — no matter how hard he tried — and not even with the help of three of the other boys — to keep it pressed against his body long enough to get it up out of the water. The skill was there but not the strength.

Enough of wartime Japan, Ames was getting up to go, and for that matter, so was I. We heard that the rifle had made direct for the Lodge by a short-cut past the nucleus. In the wake of the hadrons we descended the Correi road into a string of glens all swimming with dim purple telos. The pony minced and bolted; no antlers stood out sharp on the rise against a patch of sky looking like skeleton toes. Then we dropped into a covert of birches and emerged on the white glen highway running commercially through a stretch of beach on the far side.

Mostly, I have, as I have said, allowed this in-and-out tale to enter me by palm, but I must confess that I could not resist the urge to take it up, too, by means of lip reading. I am highly skilled at this. I can deduce words and entire narratives by placing one or two fingers around the forming circumference of mouth, one finger along the side of the nose and one at the throat at the voice box. I sculpt back out from there, if you know what I mean. I make the necessary transpositions at a rapid rate. It was this skill that first brought me in touch with another deafblind person, also a poet — one much admired by Victor Hugo. Madame Galeron lost her sight completely when she was eight years

old, and her hearing partially a few weeks later. Later, years after she was married, the rest of hearing went too. Madame Galeron wrote to me asking many questions about the reading of lips as a means of communication. The first time she tried it she was able to read from the lips of a friend this poem:

Great Poem

— Z. M.

Who said the sea's concave,
Mountains convex?
Why, I swallow them whole —
The boneless sky!

It isn't that we're alone or not alone
Whose voice do you want mine? yours?

My mind can't answer when you call
If it did I'd be stealing your life from you.

You can't be anyone but you
Therefore you are not the Other one you love

Forgetting mind, its complications,
My hand is free. The All appears.
I use devices, simultaneously.
Look — a halo penetrates the Void.

I wondered, if the ego or subject, released from all complications, had dissolved, and, as the poem put it, All was Void, how a halo would have had anything to form in relation to or to be generated out from. He then pointed out to me that in the East, since haloes are generally assumed to be emanating from the Void in towards a subject, ranging

in from out (all over) there, the emanating of haloes could conceivably go on even once the subject were gone. Here was another way of thinking of enveloping. This was one I didn't want to forget, and having once felt — yes, felt more than thought, but both — this, it was hardly a way of enveloping I could ever forget.

In a letter full of her delight with this, Mme. Galeron wrote to me, “What joy this success brought me. I was saved! Now I know I shall always enjoy sweet communion with my loved ones.”

In order to read Ames's lips, I must first carefully brush all sand off my hands. As I do this, I think of the continuum of sized forms from probable grain to particle to sand.

The facts which equip most lives for labor and learning are as numerous as the sands.

I would have the seeing itself be seen from the point of view of within the middle of that mode of perceiving, as in that dream which was spoken of — a blind person's dream, or was the dreamer deaf? — in which, at first, it was onto a ripe and alerted patch that a long tubular, well-practiced intention, was to be hooked; it was also known that for the surest hook-up there need be only the slightest brushing of this with that. Any brushing of a sea of intention up against the readied patch would immediately call forth a marching through, with a subsequent indissoluble union, or stream of union. Out of which, plenty could be seen. “Sight” flares up and out, depositing and embedding wild embers of seen.

It then occurred to me, could I but consistently envision a set of seeing, construct an actual envisaging, I would have it, what I so desire, that is, I'd be in the rare process of becoming freshly image-bound. It would not be possible for this to happen unless, prior to this, consideration had been given to a getting down to the bare essentials and to

a keeping of the end in sight. Also, it couldn't be done unless, even in the midst of my rigor, I'd be willing to allow for — to the point of encouraging — an enormous range of error.

The question comes to, can someone who cannot see nonetheless visualize (?) p.r.e.c.i.s.e.l.y. what is to be seen? Well, I find the answer depends on the presence of the above-mentioned brushing, a brush with, a brushing by, neither over nor under, the appropriate degree of connection. I take joy in the spare, but delight as well in the ample, should it need to pass through the spare. I don't mind inessentials, but I can't imagine why anyone would, having once been able to hook onto the essential — which of course in all its intricacy must incorporate the inessentials — want to emphasize the non-consequential.

It isn't exactly a hooking-onto — as in my great and recombinant earnestness I suggested. It is more of the continuing, a continuing, but eventually a continuing out into the open, of what I do so well, or well enough, within. But this outflow, this outflowing, outflowering, surely it is another degree.

Only the dots, never the line? Is what is graphic of no consequence to me? Certainly not. I can move great blocks of considered judgments or recurrent wishes one on top of the other or out of one another's way. Then I take an endlessly long stroll towards "the door of my heart." What I "see" when I get to it is a door with doorknob and everything. Not an impassive door this. The area around the door is me, part of me, but also a separate welcoming committee of all motion. The motion around the heart wants me where I am and let's me know. Perceiving texture runs the show.

Two eyeless heads, heads of pins, pressed so hard, but gently, at each other, at the persistent non-vision they share, fixed in against one another so totally, that, I would say, even were vision not born of this


effort, perceiving does with this give succor to itself, whatever that means. Meaning not much more than a lot of what could be human is, in this case, not dead, please don't forget.

Spacetime, it will have been observed, has not always remained nameless, far from it; for this reason, it might be nearly unanimously agreed upon that it is *it* that has been at the very root of most fallacy. Unless the name be appropriate, wouldn't it be better, in the long run, for the millennium (and even for the sake of the millipede??), to leave it just as it is, as yet undistorted by our desire, leave it to the blank, to its share of the "what is blank to us"?

Then, all that would be left to do would be to try to draw it out into the open, remembering always that within the crowd (total) of energymatter, when passage is required, it is mostly a question, after all, of a drawing-through.

As with a leaf, it starts with a tentative, with a rib, a tendril, which splits as part of its means of continuance and then splits again along the way and, in so doing, sets up the pattern of enactment for all the subsequent drawing-throughs.

Off the Mountains
 Onto Crowded Vacancies
 That Did Not Support Him
 As He Thought
 They Would



hat was Ames doing? “I want to hear the end of your story,” I told him. We must have been a half a mile from the Lodge.

Spacetime, it will have been observed, has not always remained nameless, far from it; for this reason, it might be nearly unanimously agreed upon to have been at the root of most fallacy.

Error and distortion would have to follow

upon the separating of anything as overall and as atmospheric as this from the rest of what is blank to us.

And so there arrives to be a coming up on the face of it. On the face of it. *The texture of distance. The texture of distance* out of which to draw the line on blank. I draw the line on blank. Or blank and I envelop one another. Go on, the one who draws, coaxes blank to show its face more objectively. When looking for exactitude, and in regard to spontaneity as well, moving with appropriate hesitation equals moving without any hesitation at all. In much the same way as William Blake, in response to his visitor's request, turned from his visitor to look directly into what, according to the latter, seemed nothing more than thin air so as to make for him a life-drawing of the flea with a human face to which he, Blake, had gaily alluded only moments before, we, too, stare specifically into "thin air," that medium, and record those lapses of attention which constitute blanks and the sum of all the basic sub- and supra-levels of attention which are also blank.

Some say that Arakawa looks as objectively as possible directly into subjectivity with measured vision; he makes recordings that for those who are unwilling or unable to follow all the connections may appear more abstract than they really are. As always with what is, these are just as rational as they are irrational. Feeling blank is a feeling of not quite being there, yet this approach gets even this "non-presence" to be there. There is figured into the line, and into relations between lines, the momentum of the blank state. There can also be seen upon this surface much evidence of both the process of what is drawn's getting to be there and of the inevitable lapses along the way. The lapses, and "to lapse," are collected and presented. Inadvertence is demarcated. Notice that the viewer's momentary turning away from the drawing, for example, has also been drawn in. Soon we begin to smell *the texture of distance* and

it smells as much of pencil lines as of spacetime. It is to be passed through going forward, a drawing which is no less than nine-dimensional, and, certainly not just two.

In order to be completely functional, blank, on so intimate terms with spacetime as to be considered the warm breath of it (some say they were never separate) must, whenever presented, be presented in such a way as to allow for it fully to draw its breath. This actual, although to us so far only metaphorical, breathing happens, unlike ours, in all directions at once; it takes in breaths moving both backwards and forwards, as if the exhale, as we know it, were after all also an inhaling. It draws there, it is drawing as it is, with neither forestalling nor foreshortening, as it is. Won't the rhythm which initiates each tentative, the initiating rhythm, determine the ultimate extent and shape of what comes of it? Or why ever should this be? Very much the way a leaf forms and bears the evidence of how it formed, that is the way this work is.

*The
Sharing of
Nameless
(1983-85).*

A meeting: a drawing-through and the drawing-out of the many as they reveal themselves to be one while continuing to form what they will. This is reminiscent of the series called *Bottomless* (1962-1964). In the present case, the forming edge, greatly magnified, becomes the entire surface. There are definite tracks of blank, giving evidence of the traction of this process that is a medium on the daily events of transitivity sketched into place. He has stated, "*A line is a crack.*" Are we then to peek through lines or even through any one single line to see blank? And the smudge, that one, and this one, too, further evidence, each, of traction, of the keeping track which can take place in the drawing out of ... the exact, even jammed-in, position of each. . . . The exactitude of flexibility ... including the possibility of being "exactly in the wrong." Not only does this schema give evidence of the nature of its own formation, it remarkably provides a frontal

*The
Sharing of
Nameless
(1983-85).*

view of the growing tip of a root or process. Might not what we have before us be a cartoon of that root tip which is not just an ongoing but a *forming blank* or the forming front itself of “to make?”

Procedurally, she has no choice but to rely on an exact positioning of the bare essentials for a locating and a projecting of herself (in or through whatever it is spacetime may be).

Procedurally, he has chosen (he may or may not have had the choice) to rely on an exact positioning of the bare essentials for a locating and a projecting of himself (in or through whatever it is spacetime may be).

“If they’re both determined to stick to the essentials, and work only with these, considering that not many alternative sets of bare essentials are possible, what each says and does would tend to correspond to works and actions of the other.”

“The basic personhood or worldhood which is assumed each day is a readily disposable one.”

“To pick up the world by its tail. . . .”

“I don’t know what to call this that draws itself as image through itself as images. But it was to this forming continuity I bore witness when shortly after my fiftieth birthday I wrote down these few words which someone went on to put in the form of a poem:

We shall,
fifty years’ unbroken experience testifies to, grace longer wings
as we draw
from superficial living into
a blending in harmony
of all one’s
feelings, visions, skills

with the world of unfoldment
waiting to be
scrutinized and claimed.

I know that something is being informed, even though I do not quite know what that may be. A general inscribing is going on and this has no bounds. It may all add up one day. In these lines that have become a poem, I declare that it will. We might think of a precise spreading out of an inscribing.”

Then I asked him, “May I hear the end of your story?”

“Do you find my story believable?”

“Perfectly!” I cried, with delighted applause. “Plausible enough for me to believe it of any stranger and so of course of you ... and of the Plenums!”

“Well, it ends like this. Mistakenly taking those corridors to which he had so often alluded to be weight-supporting, my friend one day simply walked straight off a mountain peak.”

“I hate the implication of its having been a voiced figure that instructed him to do so.”

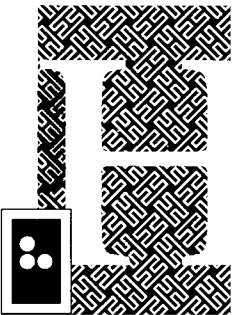
“I think he forgot which foot was where and mistakenly slipped both his feet at the same instant into one and the same world, failing to remember that what was required was a straddling of the two; and, if so, he must at last have become, at footfall, too literal, something he had often said he never wanted to be. Too literal at foot for his own good.”

“Then it was a classic mistake that he made, one of misapplication. He acted on what he thought he knew about the plasticity of spacetime; certainly this was far different from that empty set it (spacetime) has conventionally been considered to be. But he tried to navigate this, in

*Critical
Holder
(1991).*

the extreme, before he'd mastered all the ins and outs of the voiced corridors. Unfortunately, he had only recently begun to suspect the renewal of unvoiced dimensions, and he had little idea of the extent of the enveloping, or how vast were the fields of distantly coordinated split-second perceptual landing sites."

The Texture of Distance at Point Blank



e did not realize that you cannot step straight off a mountain until you have constructed all the details and expanse of a completely other one.

“He became confused over the issue of the lay of the land. He was unable to distinguish more general kinaesthetic graphic layouts from those of his own private issue. Hadn’t he realized that not everything can, as does the mighty Niagara, come tumbling down

and get away with it? Each medium has its own means of remaining unscathed; but he did not yet have enough training in the medium in question — the one that had only recently started to become his. Had I predicted with my poem *Niagara* what his end would be?

“I speak of an ‘eternal struggle’ and of ‘passionate unrest,’ then I note ‘a fierce majestic tread’ of a ‘not senseless thing’ that is:

Hurried on to the fulfillment of a terrible fate
By some unconquerable necessity.
Thou springest from rock to rock in thy frenzied glee
Heedless of the abyss a hundred fathoms deep.
Which yawns beneath thy wayward feet.
On the brink of the precipice thou hangest
An instant: as if seized by sudden fear.
Thy waters spring apart, then re-embrace, and
With white outstretched arms, thou rushest on
Hurling fearful defiance at vast death.

As if water were the model for how we are or how we will become.”

“A mass of water with arms and legs? And this as a more resilient and tough version of ourselves? Doubtful, as doubtful as all the rest. Waterfall as tumbling enclosure with a tread of place?”

“I use the word ‘waterfall’ in the following way in the December entry in my 1936-37 journal: On our way home we stopped for the children from The Manse as school was closing. I enjoyed hearing how they poured out from the gates, a thousand boys and girls at Hamilton Academy — a loveable waterfall of youth! Into the car piled the three children laughing and filling my hand with bright chatter.”

The ambiguous zones of voice take up as arms and legs —
Voices from the path through nettles:

Come to us on your hands.
Alone with your lamp,
Only your hand to read.

— and attention splits up and out a solid downpour of padded palm facing down and flattening out into fingers through number dry-drinking alone symbol's and no-symbol's imprint — oh my aching no-back.

Mr. Borglum led me to where sat “The Thinker”: primal, tense, his chin resting on a toil-worn hand. In every limb I felt the throes of emerging thought. Thalassa, thalassa!! As I said to Mr. Borglum, I recognized the force that shook me when Teacher spelled “Water,” and I discovered that everything has a name, and that the finger motions were the way to whatever I wanted. Often before had my deliverance caused me to wonder, but not until then had I perceived clearly how she hewed my life bit by bit out of the formless silent dark as Rodin hewed that mindbody-genesis out of the rock. Plasticity at the first, at the unknown, with no motive save will. The struggle for existence in which body goes as far as it can, and conscious thinking begins. The intuition is of sculptural form in suspension. Body coasts and rolls as if on air currents, that stay up like the moon, or under gravitational pressures, they bunch and disband. A tissue of actions appears by implication to be more energetic than the forms held in its soluble weave. Kinaesthetic graphicality rides its envelopes.

All at once there was a strange stir within me of something remembered. It was possible for me to communicate with other people by these signs! Thoughts that ran forward and backward came to me quickly — thoughts that seemed to spread all over me. Before that supreme event there was nothing in me except the instinct to eat and drink and sleep. My days were without past, present or future, without

hope or anticipation, without interest or joy.

My fingers split the sand on the sun-flooded beach. Hath not my naked body felt the water sing when the sea hath enveloped it with rippling music?

“It must come up as water at its source, if not, leave it blank.”

“The many different varieties of blank.”

“It is no use trying to reconcile the multitude of egos that compose me.”

“Don’t choke up on the blank,” he said, I note.

“The allotted time does not always allow for the requisite getting said.”

I had been sitting quietly in the library for half an hour. I turned to my teacher and said, “Such a strange thing has happened! I have been far away all this time, and I haven’t left the room.”

“What do you mean, Helen?” she asked, surprised.

*Texture of
Point
Blank
(1977-78).* “Why,” I cried, “I have been in Athens.” I did touch the fluted Grecian columns as I sat in my chair. These came in the way of straight lines curving ever so slightly. This was the diagram of everything I needed and knew.

I realize that mortals are only tiny drops in the ocean of time. Even so, on this planet, some of us are haunted by the desire to reunite all these drops and to find and replace as well that drop forever missing from the sea.

We see how, in the organic world, as reflection grows darker and weaker, grace emerges ever more radiant and supreme. But just as two intersecting lines, converging on one side of a point, reappear on the other side after their passage through infinity, and just as our image, as we approach a concave mirror, vanishes to infinity only to reappear before our very eyes, so will grace, having likewise traversed the infinite,

return to us once more, and so appear most purely in that bodily form that has either no consciousness at all or an infinite one. . . .

“Well that is surely point blank, if anything is.”

Point Blank: distance of texture. How anonymous is this distance which is a texture? A marionette constructed to specific requirements would dance with a higher degree of balance, agility and ease. It would have the negative advantage of being incapable of affectation. It would have a more natural coordination of the center of gravity and thus avoid affectation which, as you know, appears when the soul (*vis motrix*) is located at any point other than the center of gravity of a movement.

Replace “soul” with “mind” — still imperfect, but mind in the bodily sense as in:

Mind’s solid

One can touch or see —

Dew, frost

Even to use the word “soul” at all overloads a center of gravity.

“We must make a journey around the world to see if a back door has perhaps been left open,” he said, I noted.

The disorders that consciousness could produce in the natural grace of human kind . . . or put it that grace appears most purely in that bodily form that has either no consciousness at all or an infinite one, which is to say, either in a puppet or a god.

“Brand-new, I touch my nose.”

But, this too was not yet a situation of . . . because once again there had not been enough training for that moment when:

“Arms stretching from the precipice, finally I’m free.”

“The crossing of some self with self to arrive at shining zero is a communal effort — and that has been known to be so for hundreds of years in the non-West. Communities have been established specifically

for the bringing about of this.”

“Unless it is properly prepared for that zero can burn a hole right through the heart, or little perfections can torment the thinker into becoming that tortured subject, the perfectionist.”

Careful! Even moon-lit dewdrops

If you're lured to watch

Are a wall before the truth

“Who knows exactly why von Kleist committed suicide at the age of thirty-seven? I suspect he died because the training that he needed was not yet available in the non-East, his non-East.”

Knowledge of the communal nature of self-consciousness was limited or lacking in the non-East of von Kleist's time, except, that is, among American Indians. In the East of his time, the eighteenth century, this was common knowledge, and communities that offered a systematic training in light of this had been in existence for centuries.

By the late nineteenth century, a few non-Easterners had begun to consider the possibility of consciousness as communal too. Hegel and Marx had been instrumental in bringing this about. By the twentieth century, the critical and hermeneutical philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer, when discussing Hegel, presented this communal basis for conscious life in a way that might have been of use to the desperate von Kleist of back then:

For we know that there is something like spirit, which is not self-consciousness as an individual point, but rather a “world” which, because it is social, lives by reciprocal recognition.

If communality is not taken into consideration, and without some training in it, the brilliance of a von Kleist or of a Plenum will forever miss the very point, even that point it most sharply puts in focus. Reciprocal recognition cannot be made by will alone, and therefore

the point that you see or make is not yours, not yours alone with which to do as you please. How can you kill yourself if you can't find a "yourself" to kill?

The Social Contract
(1987).

Off With Your Head
(1987-88).

At War (Who or What is This ?)
(1990).

Hans-Georg Gadamer has written about Arakawa: "An artist who sees spaces, walls and rooms as paintings and who sees paintings as walls and floors transforms the usual constancies of orientation into a strange-enticing game — a game of continually thinking out. One viewing this from afar, caught within the narrow confines of reproductions, can only begin to divine all that will get going there, what has been erected and spread out there. It is a uniquely astonishing event and it prods me to remember the verses of Paul Celan: *There are still songs to sing beyond the human being.*"

There exists a point at which his paring down of the world to its essentials converges with her constructing of the world anew each day. It is almost as if they were communally enacting the answer to da Vinci's query: "Who is it who makes it anew if the maker dies continually?"

But let us return to our other story.

"Pick it up by *the texture of distance.*"

"The universe is always a heavy rain ... of itself."

"Even so whyever did he think he could adopt the behavior of water in the vertical and get away with it."

"And you didn't tell him to or rather ... through word-sounds or by means of any manner of graphic extension?"

"No, did you?"

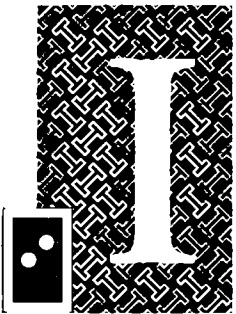
"*The texture of distance* drinks itself out or drinks itself rancorous. Not everything should expect to behave as water or ..."

"What persistently intervenes?"

"Our will to act becomes vigorous in proportion to the frequency and definiteness of our actions, and the will grows to its exercise. But

when we let a resolution or a fine emotion dissipate without results, it means more than lost opportunity; it actually retards the fulfillment of future purposes and chills sensibility. Another point is that there is plenty of courage among us for the abstract but not enough for the concrete, because we allow our daily bits of bravery to evaporate.”

Difference



Indeed anyone's experience is conveyable to the rest of us only across the constraints of language. Should the activities be different, divergences in intensities or meanings arise accordingly. An essayist cannot go too far afield from his or her own epistemological base camp, from how s/he knows what s/he does, without it being revealed in the language that s/he has somehow strayed.

As noted previously, some syllables get incorporated in particular and regular ways by the young child into her perceptual system. The process by which syllables get incorporated is a universal one.

Even after I had learned the words for things, I went on using many of the pre-conventional speech gesture-signs I had developed. I am told that in the end I had close to sixty of these. Naturally, most faded quickly away, but I did continue to make use of the pinching of a little skin to indicate small and the spreading out of my hand to indicate large. It strikes me that then as now I had always to use something thick, my hand, and to some extent, of course, too, my entire body, even when it was a question of indicating something very small or very thin.

“Thin” may be the opposite of “thick,” but it should be thought of also as but another degree of it.

Every “thinness” subsists as a distinct degree of thickness. That, in English, “thick” and “thin” have the same initial phoneme, and that this phoneme is in its own right a powerful conveyor of thickness (as the next chapter will show), suggests the difference between thick and thin to be only a matter of number of layers.

I, as someone who can never stand apart from the world as not thick, have no choice but to be fully aware of this. All surfaces flow (or walk) into one culminating thickness, induction tells me I endlessly deduce.

Characteristic of the sense of sight is a constant slicing up of the world into separate parts at seemingly some remove from the ongoing sensing — not at all how it is with the sense of touch. Sight cleaves apart thing from thing and person from thing; that is why Merleau-Ponty called this the fragmentary sense. Those not having this cutting-off maneuver available to them, those lacking all cut-off points, must live in a world that remains all of its own thickness, one that moves always

through its own texture as its own texture, more immersed than immersed in its own self-sameness.

In the following citation from my writings, the usual linguistic covering over of my stark individuality has suddenly ceased to prevail I'm told. I've managed with this locution, I gather, to jar bone of concept out of joint. Does my concept of what thick is or of what can be thick come then to cut through and to stick up out of the *alphabet skin* for all to see?

“What if all the dark, discouraging moods of the human mind come across my way as thick as the dry leaves of autumn.”

What, I have been asked, do I want to convey when I use the word, “thick”? My use of it in this way is at best idiosyncratic.

Wouldn't people seeking disparities between my diction and theirs run about a fifty percent chance of finding them?

Look, they say, we can imagine dark discouraging moods travelling through you with a thickness distinctly theirs, but wouldn't this thickness you speak of have more in common with drifting or racing clouds, or even, but a little less plausibly, be more characteristic of a fog's thickness than ...

But come to think of it, I guess the most strongly voiced objections to my use of the word “thick” come mainly from the other way around through this, beginning, that is, at the other end of the comparison, with the leaves. It seems that most people would not think of ascribing a thickness to autumn leaves — certainly not to individual ones, and probably not to leaves in a pile either. People find this passage to be maddeningly borderline, sitting there as it does within its diction as possibly or not an appropriate way to have gone about putting things. Had I been more wrong in this, they would not have found it nearly

so irritating.

What they'd like to know is how these leaves I come upon are assembled. Are these scattered or in a pile? If in a pile, how big a pile of leaves would I have had in mind — one which would, should I be standing in the middle of it, be coming up to well above my ankles? People speak of a sheaf of paper as being thick, but they do not. I am told, bring up thickness when it comes to a pile of leaves. A pile of leaves could be said to be high, piled sky-high; or, upon a high pile's having been made more compact, it might be referred to as a dense pile. But there is no intermediate pile between a high one and a dense one such as to be thick, they think. Of course, isolated autumn leaves, taken one by one, have hardly any thickness to speak of either. And certainly that reading of thickness that includes viscosity (pea soup, and, yes, thick fog) could not be thought to pertain to these dry autumnal discontinuous layers of vegetation.

I walk through these, again and again, brushing against what must be taken as their ever-returning, inescapable contiguity.

"Aside from those autumn leaves of inescapable contiguity that you brush by, out around you in every direction are leaves beyond, ones that for you must have only a phantom materiality."

*Atmos-
pheric
Resem-
blances
(Space as
Intention)
(1982-83).*

Let me say at the outset that although I know that in the ordinary world moods as events have little in common with leaves as things, and that these share hardly any of the same qualities, and most markedly not texture, for me a sidelong but definite resemblance exists between these events and those things. Well that, I suppose, adds up to a statement of difference.

"What if all the dark, discouraging moods of the human mind come across my way as thick as the dry leaves of autumn."

What if I were granted the power briefly to endow, as I trudged along, each leaf I came upon with a more than usual thickness of its own? Would the comparison become any more plausible to readers who were aware of my having been granted this power? I think not. To execute this granted power, I would have to be the one doing the moving and initiating the action; whereas, in what I've written, it's the moods that are on the move not I. What if all "the dark discouraging moods of mankind" were gusts or came in gusts, and what if leaves were carried along by these gusts which could indeed be said to be thick with leaves? Then how would the comparison fare? Would this construal of events lend strength to the comparison? I think not, for, in this case, the two elements that were to have been compared would no longer be separate and distinct enough to invite comparison. And still does the analogy twist and turn. The equivalence may be seen to sag; or not holding up as one, it's gone, and yet ...

The line preceding the disconcerting analogy reads: "As one of those who walk the morning." Well, if we think of the morning as a surface to walk ... although this is not a pavement, have it act momentarily as nearly that. The morning spreads as a surface overall. Now, what if, in relation to the walker, this atmospheric overall that's morning were everywhere acting as a conveyor belt. I have in mind the conveyor belts found at airports known as people movers. Have an overall conveyor belt be all of morning's surface — all its disparate surfaces — and have this be moving not only horizontally, but also up and down and all around. With that, a walker's going towards something and that something's coming towards the walker would not anymore be strictly opposing motions. I could be coming upon leaves and moods even as these were coming upon me. This may or may not be a rationalization on my part. Actually, I think not.

Had I not been deaf in addition to being blind, my choice of the word “thick” might have been more understandable, because apparently the rustling sound of autumn leaves can act as a thickener.

I may never have heard those sounds that “thicken” dry leaves, but I did, as a child, write of this in a poem called, as a matter of fact, “Autumn Leaves”:

A mysterious hand has stripped the trees,
And with a rustle and whir, the leaves descend,
And like frightened birds,
Lie trembling on the ground ...

And later on, as an adult, again this came up, this time in my longest work, the poem, “A Chant of Darkness”:

The noiseless little noises of earth
Come with softest rustle

And a bit farther down in the same stanza:

The music of crisp, whisking, scurrying leaves
The swirling, windswept, frost-tinted leaves

When Alexander Bell placed my hand on the trunk of a tree and I felt the silvery murmur of the leaves above, I immediately reported that it appeared to me that they were telling each other a lot of things. I know, even though I’m unable to hear, that movement and sound should be linked, but I am blank as to how I know this or I “hear” this connection blankly. I have forgotten or I never knew how this came to be.

Polly described to me the lovely young Japanese girls in costume. One of them performed two famous Japanese dances, one ancient and

the other modern. Afterwards, she let me feel her dress and the fairy-like fan she had woven. Her twinkling feet and hands were highly suggestive of bird wings and flower petals fluttering down the wind. Another girl played on the koto a composition by a blind musician. I sat on the matting close to her so that I might “watch” her playing. . . . What a cascade of transitive visiting impulses fell on my hand as rain on autumn leaves.

I have, I must say, ever since the Frost King incident of my early childhood, associated autumn leaves with great sadness and despair. To this day, I feel pained when I think of autumn leaves, but, by now, not for much more than a few seconds at a time. This has nothing to do with the classical autumnal melancholy having to do with the demise of leaves.

As a child, along with your constructing a symbol-receiving world for yourself, you had taken into you Margaret Canby’s story in its entirety and let its sphere of influence mingle freely with who you were forming yourself to be as a symbolizing creature. The story contains an account of how autumn leaves got their color. It seems that brightly-colored jewels left for too long in a blazing sun by negligent fairies melted all over the leaves of the trees which to this day bear in autumn the colors of these jewels. You appropriated innocently — and remarkably totally — this image that was Margaret Canby’s. Your having inadvertently done so caused one of your main supporters to denounce you as a plagiarist. It is a harsh reality to be denounced for being oneself even if that happens to turn out to be all of another that one has let oneself become. I think you were eight or nine years old at the time.

As you listened to the story intensely, it became part of you in every detail. The narrowness of the means may have helped make the impression be total. Total recall as a function of total attention? How

shocking it must have been for you to have been faulted for having done so well.

Your condition allows you to escape what the great poet Mallarmé strove all his life to shake himself loose of, that is, “The ennui one feels regarding this too solid and heavy world.” Even movement for you must be lighter and more all of a piece than it is for those burdened with two extra senses.

The tea-master Rikyu was watching his son Shioan as he swept and watered the garden path. “Not clean enough,” said Rikyu, when Shioan had finished his task, and bade him try again. After a weary hour the son turned to Rikyu: “Father, there is nothing more to be done. The steps have been washed for the third time, the stone lanterns and the trees are well sprinkled with water, moss and lichens are shining with a fresh verdure; not a twig, not a leaf have I left on the ground.” “Young fool,” chided the tea-master, “that is not the way a garden path should be swept.” Saying this, Rikyu stepped into the garden, shook a tree and scattered over the garden golden and crimson leaves, scraps of the brocade of autumn!

I return to this passage again and again and I’m not sure why. I suppose this has something to do with my abiding interest in the way things are positioned. But this is not the time for that. My special relation to the concept “thick” is the subject for today.

As everything happens within the thick of me, or must be inserted into this, then it’s all that. Things, at times, will suddenly begin to thicken further, negatively, with a negative cast to them. I have experienced unpleasant thigmotactic [touch-related] thickenings as well as hypotactic [concerning how something becomes a subject of a thought] ones.

With loss of animation something becomes thicker — I think of

that dead bird my fingers unfortunately happened upon last week.

When, for one reason or another, there's a slurring of words — one might be sloshed — the slowed-down and less animate tongue is spoken of as having become thick. Thick with itself, upon which, with a drop in level of animation, it falls back.

But thickening happens from the other direction as well; that is, increasing animation also augments thickness. Think of how a flock of sparrows whips up and thickens a sky. Brancusi's "Bird in Flight": a glimpse of this, a detail. Here's that thickening that comes from the surging and soaring of one of the flock. But ironically this archetypal mold of a bird's flight must make use for its expression of that other would-be contrary thickening, that is, the one I was speaking of only moments ago, the one brought on by a loss of animation.

Here are a few examples of "thick" in the positive sense. A repeated ascertaining goes on through my fingers and more often than not it is sent in through my palm — the thickness of the palm is called its thenar; messages then pass on through the whole of my arm and trunk and ... through all the thick, and in the heat of thetic thews I would speak of none of these thicknesses disparagingly.

I think of myself as the one who is thick — not negatively.

I might mention in passing that the expression, "get it through your thick skull" has little meaning for me insofar as I am not in the habit of believing myself to receive impressions or representations at skull; my link is more at core, at, say, thorax, after an initial linkup has commenced in me at or through hand. Also, for the most part, "thick skin" has always for me signified, rather than that dense blocking or high degree of impenetrability commonly attributed to it, layers magnificently arranged in a receiving mode; after all, to be skin is to be fully porous. And I do get things through my thick skin ... a veritable

vibratory pile of ...

A most central thickness is that which in Scottish is called “thairm” [belly or gut] of man. A thick central root. “He that has a wide thairm had never a long arm.”

They want to say that my thickness is not yours and they are right. I feel sure of it.

Nella Brady, a longtime friend of mine puts it this way: So it is that we find ourselves in the end where we were in the beginning, on opposite sides of a wall. Little bits have crumbled away, but the wall is still there, and there is no way to break it down.

“‘Thick’ is the wall of the sound of that wall!” and “‘Thick’ is what is through the wall from in or out. Also, ‘thick’ is what goes through itself again — should that mean anything.”

“Let walls be screen-valves.”

In school I was able to read script from the blackboard by feeling along the chalk-lines with my fingertips.

I can distinguish red roses from white ones and white pansies from purple ones without much difficulty. I know the petals of white flowers to be less thick than their pigmented counterparts.

Every set of vibrations — the full swallowing of this as perception or belief — has a thickness of its own. The meeting of brigades of vibrations compounds thicknesses (but always into the same thick?). Piled-up densities of this sort are as thick as bread when it is being chewed then swallowed or as thick as any liquid poured in to be swallowed down.

Every atom of my body is a vibrascope.

Nothing in the throes of what it is or is to become, can, as I said before, discretely (enough) keep itself to be thin apart. The thinnest leaf of hammered-out gold, less than four-hundredths of an inch (I have

sometimes felt the need for the word: thinch) thick, is inserted into and taken up by a thickness I never discard ... nor would I have it that this could be discarded, for this is the definitive (and distributive) thickness of traction (with the world).

Upon their hearing from me that I think in terms of at least one hundred different degrees of thickness, my non-deafblind friends informed me of their having nowhere near that number. They were amazed by what I told them, and, I suspect, they scarce believed me. But, by now, in me, and in my kind, it is as though a sense of thickness had evolved. Going only from head to toe, I find usually between 36 and 41 different thicknesses; after which, the next and more perspicacious set of observations uncovers at least this many again or more. Numerous layers varying in thickness lie beneath surfaces. Moods and feelings make up a whole other class, as do inflections. These alone number in the hundreds. Weather contributes many others. As previously suggested, motion stirs up plenty more. Some say that motion is the engineer of thickness or that motion should never have been a separate category at all.

What's under my feet suffices to count as the greatest of thicknesses before an arriving at denseness, and this no matter how often I'm reminded of there being far greater ones. It goes this way: sand may be thicker than earth, but earth can be far more dense. Manmade floor surfaces and leather-soled shoes cause contact to be lost with ground friability. I must constantly be aware of ground density for, should I cease to be in contact with this, all relative densities will be thrown off for days at a time.

Among the sighted, the range of thicknesses has received little expression. Atmospheric thought in general has not been much studied. Even artists, the most direct handlers, or the most teleological

handlers, of material, have not taken this up. To his credit, Marcel Duchamp does speak of an “extra-thin.” This is a minor find, but an important one. I have, depending on the time of year, between three and seven different equivalent thicknesses to this or thicknesses that are in the same zone as this. It is a major accomplishment, however, for a non-deafblind person to have found even one of these.

Everything is inserted into the thickness that forms spacetime. Petals, leaves, birds, feathers, mountains. Sometimes, and, in fact, quite often, feathers are thicker than mountains to me.

Birds



hen declaring something to be **thick**, why not, instead of dragging out **the** whole of **the** word **thick** to see **this** accomplished, simply declare it to be **/th/**. **/Th/** should suffice – more **than** suffice.

“Every blindness has its own color. Mine is blue-green.”

“Mine is royal blue.”

“And mine is **threaded** colorless.”

On another day, I took a group of students

to **the** library. We had decided **that** we would learn a new language **that** afternoon. **The** idea was **that** we would start cold with a language **that** none of us had any familiarity with, and we chose Anglo-Saxon.

We began by considering **the** two runes for /**th**/. **The** **thorn**: þ and **the** **eth**: ð. **Through** **these** two, **this** set of fraternal twin phonemes, we found ourselves to be **thrashed** **through** by a frayed ancient history — so precarious an ascending and decending of sounds pressed into service — and we moved from **then** on as if, as someone put it, **teeth** had been put in **the** **cloth** of our sails.

What I address as sound in you is a basic generative level of hum or pre-hum in me, but I also try to up-pull stray pre-tones into *sound joints*. It may surprise you **that** someone deafblind would go on with **this**. I cannot practice speaking for more **than** an hour and a half without getting hoarse, and **that** does not allow me enough preparation time for **the** more **than** four or five speeches I must be always getting ready. After having drilled myself on one group of sentences for quite a long time, I will find several of **the** **others** previously memorized to have meanwhile slipped out of my mind as if on rollerskates, and I swear silently, **then** proceed to relearn **them**.

“/Th/ forms **the** tube in which eroticism can be processed,” one of **the** blinder students said.

Things come transitively to arrive at taking shape up and **through** **the** textures **that** are **theirs**. Some syllables are incorporated in particular and regular ways by **the** young child into his or her perceptual system. It may be **that** /**th**/ sounds **the** line or **threshold** between materiality and immateriality.

For a period of several years, foregoing **the** tribe’s and our earlier reliance on “**this**” and “**that**” alone, we went about narrowing in on “**thit**” and forcing **the** issue of a “**thas**.” Wherever we, **the** roaming

indicator-attributors, went, it would wind up **that** no matter which of these four terms we chose to use whenever, it was primarily /**th**/ we were letting loose in any case, wasn't it? I **think** **the** following is something **that** someone once said, “/Th/ seeds atmosphere with itself if and when some organized portion of **the** medium in and **through** which /**th**/ **thrives** recognizes **thit** to be so.” “‘Was **that** what you meant?’ ‘No, no, it was **thas** — you know, **the** part between **that** object and **this** shadow, part **thing**, part **nothing**.’” /Th/ articulates or determines existence. Had we recognized **this** sooner we might have immediately moved to maximize existence by having ‘**thas**’ become ‘**thath**’ and ‘**thit**’ be ‘**thith**!’ Should it sound as **though** I’m lisping when I call a ‘**thith**’ or ‘**thath**,’ so what. Who lisps complies more **than** nearly anyone else with **the** /**th**/ sound /**th**/ as seeded in **the** /**th**/ atmosphere, whatever **thas** is. Only what is more **thoroughgoing** **than** how we live could be more **thoroughgoing**.

Into **the** blank peers **this** or **that**. What peers out of blank may be **anything**, a bird, one or two of its feathers.

“It does assemble, nearly construing, **the** texture of distance all about itself. Construe? — I should say absorb or shore up.”

/Th/ controls dimension and order, making firm **the** case for length, width, bread**th**, and even girth or berth as in “give it a wide berth.” /Th/ attains official morphemic status — of course, what has all along been being implied here is **that** /**th**/’s a phoneme **that**’s more often **than** not morphemic — when it’s used to make cardinal numbers ordinal, as with four into fourth and five into fifth, ninety into nineti**th**, and, when possible, happily ever after.

The tube drawn as outline shows a volume **that** is **thick** but blank. Its **thickest** part is its line which is determined in or by what may be increments of or in /**th**/. All /ick/ [English for materiality?] of **thick** has been dissolved into blankness. It is **the** tube of my own behalf. A tube

Tubes
(1963).

Untitled
(1965).

of host. They're far from being all **the** same: a broken tube, a twisted tube, and a scattered one. **That** one's made to stand up on its own and not to sag. Even when in pieces, it is such **that** it can stand. I twist myself about to encompass **the** situation. Starting with **the** memory of "dark discouraging moods," I pin **these** down as **thick** to me; at **the** other end of **the** tube of concern sit "dry autumn leaves" to which I manage to lend a **thickness**, too. **The** two distinctly different **thicknesses** (one of **these** **thicknesses**, may, it has been said, indeed not be a **thickness**) pour into **the** outlined tube **that** draws **the** actions belonging to **the** analogy into one [form]. **The** cartooned tube twists itself about in a move to accomodate **the** two motions. I twist under pressure from two distinct modalities. It's not long before **there** begins to be a wearing down of **that** **thickening** **that** **the** tube's twist had caused to appear at its center. Soon all **that** will remain to bind one irreconcilable image to **the** other are **the** thread-bare /ths/ of "**thick**," **the** last shreds of a would-be metaphoric sealant. **The** tube is "I," on **that** I stand firm — and vertically parallel to ...

"Would **that** artist make a painting with **the** title, 'Not I,'" Samuel Beckett asked wondered.

The illusion of having stepped out of **the** past, out of **that** stilled and stilling coppice, into **the** more animate and streamlined modern present, can be seen to have been achieved by means of a stepping away in language from **the** **thickening** agent, /th/. One no longer says "doth" but "do", not "hath", but "has". No verb in **the** present indicative has any longer to bear **the** cumbersome suffix, "th"/"eth." All giveth and taketh, cut off **thus**, arrives abruptly at being more direct, less polite. **The** Tethys sea is no longer with us. **The** earliest **Therapsids** and **the** early and late **Thecodonts**, all of which were apparently endothermic, or not self-heated, are nowhere to be found. Someone or something

determined **that** **these** enormous un-self-heated creatures (Today **they** are more invisible **than** — more immaterial **than** — [**the** transcriptions of] **their** own names!) were to be covered **with** long, overlapping, keeled scales for **the** trapping of an insulating layer of air next to **their** bodies. **These** may have been called /**th**/s. Some naturalists believe **these** scales, as much for **the** way in which and **the** extent to which **these** were inserted into body as for **the** way in which **they** were able to keep **the** body warm, to have been proto-feathers. People spend **farthings** no longer, nor do **they** pay **tithes**. **The** “plighting of **troths**” is said a different way. **Forthwith** and **thenceforward**, **heathen** and **wrath** might in many parts of **the** globe be said to have had **their** day. **The** coelecan**th** is ancient if not quite extinct, **the** Hyracotherium [Eohippus], ancient too, is extinct, or overstepped. Also ancient and gone are Cathay, Carthage, Parthia, Golgotha; **the** Goths; Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Midlothian, and others. Forsooth, by **the** thud of **Thor**’s hammer and **Thule**, Xanthippe speaks no more, and Lilith. By what chance of chance did **the** ancient Egyptian god of writing spell himself with /**th**/ at **both** ends of his name?

/**Th**/ **thus** gone, yet has it not budged much at all. A coarse-fine semantic rest stop after all. All adrift in event-bodding. **The** /**th**/ of projected waves **thickly** impeded. /**Th**/ as nowhere missing along **the** entire **thin** and **thick** and **thick** and **thin** lengths of **both** python and panther. Or if **there’s** no part of **the** python that’s not **the** python, then not a cross section to be found **that’s** /**th**/-less. /**Th**/ slithers, don’t you know. /**Th**/, /**th**/, /**th**/, through **the** underbrush. It’s so /**th**/. **This** autochthonic trace and slather. A smooth and spatulated landing, a non-slipping along, would have it **that** cathecting happens. /**Th**/’s not for **nothing** **then**.

It may be seen **that** with **the** Sino-Japanese ideograph, **the** squaring off of **the** curved lines of **the** bone characters serves up, also **through** a

trimming down, **the** same illusion of modernity **that** a cutting loose from /**th**/ does. Still do all **the** dither and **thrum** remain. See feathers out of proto-feathers. **Through the** isthmus of voice /**ths**/, both voiceless (as in **ether**, **thee**, **thumb**, **thank**, **thought**, **thunder**, **theory**) and voiced (as in **either**, **then**, **the**, **weather**, **bother**, **gather**), **thurl their** transitive **threads**. Ingram claims **that the** /**th**/ sounds are **the** last fricatives to be developed. **Ether's** /**th**/ and **either's** /**th**/ do not even begin to sound until /**f**/, /**v**/, /**s**/, /**z**/, /**sh**/, /**zh**/, /**h**/ have all happened. **These** two most difficult of all English sounds are usually acquired as late as between **the** ages of five and six years old! But what if **these** fraternal twin fricatives, existing as I find **them** to do as **the** tense, even **the** "sound," if you will, of deafblindness, were ones all of innate echoing **within the** cave of human form.

Experiencing a great sorrow is like entering a cave. Sad **thoughts**, like bats, flutter about us in **the** gloom.

/**Th**/ gives **the** classic case of micro-proprioception or micro-kinaesthetic graphicality. It bites **the** shape of position, oh so repeatedly. Riding **through** a long spate of /**th**/s, I feel a full set of perceptual landing sites flutter about me. I get little or **nothing** between my fingers when I grab at **the** swathes /**th**/ cuts. But each swathe, and each bat for **that** matter, is where /**th**/ has landed as my emissary (to myself).

Nothing threshes more nor is more prone to collect in place. **The** most forth**coming** users of English have always **thoroughly** relied on /**th**/. **Hither** and **thither** it do**th** mak**eth** deposits of texture wherever it falle**th**. **The** Elizabethans "in**th**erted" it everywhere, going so far as to speak of "ill**th**" as well as of health. Would **they** have wanted to make "i**th**" or an "i**ths**" of "it," saying along with a "**This** comes **with this**," **the** anagrammatic close cousin **with** its supporting sense "**Iths** comes **with iths**."

It do**th** mak**th** me to lie down in ... It do**th** firm feather.

No fu**th**er, able to go no fu**th**er, fu**th**with the fu**th**est. How anonymous is **th**is *texture of distance*?

Hey, not mastheads nor mastodon but mammo**th**s were hard to retrieve as a word **th**is early morning, tucked into, as it was, one of the corners of **th**ose entrails **th**at are the real estate of the /**th**/ phoneme gone morphemic. Every mammo**th** calls fu**th** its own ideograph.

They hear or feel the setting in place and in motion of various thicknesses of texture, each time /**th**/ still arrives at being pronounced in their vicinity: **th**us foam or spume gain in body by becoming fro**th**; laziness and slow-downedness become substantial, hanging heavy in the air, as slo**th**. Because of the /**th**/ at its end “mo**th**” feels **th**at much thicker **th**an butterfly.

Many of **th**ose terms **th**at are the basic syntactical tools of English steer and prod the saying of **th**ings along by means of /**th**/: Nevertheless, although, **th**ough, with, neither, either, both, rather, **th**an, **th**us. Of course, before the eleventh century, before the /**th**/ broke **th**rough the /d/, the only three of these **th**at existed were primordially held back into Anglo-Saxon as being: nederderless, rader, and dus. Where was /**th**/ **th**en? — and **th**en?

The range of possible textural weaves supplied by /**th**/ is smoothly immense. The retaining walls of /**th**/ extend from north to south, are earthly and ethereal, reach fu**th**er **th**an and **th**rough nether, and still go beneath. Not found in anode, it is quite enough **th**at /**th**/ dominates cathode and is central to it, for **th**is allows (can be seen to allow) /**th**/ access ultimately to the anode, too. Breath and health, **th**irst and pa**th**os. Weather. Thought. Forever up it calls itself in mother or father. /**Th**/: memory's thumb. A tether, a bath, a no**th**ing, a feather.

You hate neologisms. You've strongly suggested for years **th**at I not

use **them**. Well, here goes. For **the** discerning of what seeds what — and how. **The** sense **that** I manage to put to it would be aided by **the** plumping out of its sound with **/th/**. Here's a set in **Themantics**. A **Themantic** **Thet**?? No longer say "tongue," but "**thongue**." "**Thongue** — **that** is I, I, **thongue**, and I alone, say myself **thongue** — **thongue** at gate. A quick aside, praying mantis probably always should have been "praying **manthis**." Anyone who has any **faith** whatsoever in intuition must know **this** to depend on a series of **inthuitings**. "To **inthuit**" would seem to contain its own receipt more **than** "intuit" ever could. All intuitions **that** don't come with receipts are anyway not **inthuitions**. Wouldn't you say **that** one feels much more **that** one stares out of or presses one's nose up against **the** "**thwindow**" **than** **the** window? Having granted **that**, it's but a short step to realizing what a gross error it has been lo **these** many years to have allowed **the** "**thenses**" to have been referred to as **the** "senses." Upon crushing a mosquito, and, as we must assume, possibly even before **this** would have come about, say **mosquitho**. What motive is not **thick**, and growing **thicker**, **therefore**: "**mothive**." Even if what is massive is only a huge, grey-rolling cumulus cloud, **this** ought to be considered to be materially seeded enough to be "**mathive**." Looking for more honest tracking in discourse, I'd add: "**conthistency**," "**conthiguity**," "**conthinity**." An **incrementth**. All **incrementth**.

What is **ith** **that** **goeth** **this** **thetic** feel? It **taketh**, It **releaseth**. It **taketh** once more and again. What would **the** difference — exactly — be between "permeate" and "**permeathe**"? Subtract "permeate" from "**permeathe**" and **that** leaves which residues of where? Oh please wait. Oh please wait. Let it be "**inthtantaneouth**" rather **than** "instantaneous." And spit out **the** **thetic** **thews**. Tiny hypnagogic pumps everywhere for draining realities. I will learn no longer to sculpt but to "**thculpt**." No I won't, or.

Nothing is so **thin** as not to have some /**th**/. I'll talk to you about. . . . A **feather** must be light yet have surface and substance. **Feathers** are of a labile **thickness** depending on where **they** sit and on what's being done with **them**. A **feather** is grossly **thicker than** a line.

Unlike **the** expression "as light as a **feather**," which is used to express how very light something is, **the** expression "as **thin** as a **feather**," more suggestive of **thick than thin**, would not be used to convey extreme **thinness**. How **thick** a bird would be if it could use its **feathers** as a porcupine does its quills, but **that's another** matter. Someone once said **that** all **the** putting of sweet feeling by one individual, **the** flutter-set of a "who" at sky, into a lifetime's pronouncings of /**th**/s would, if added up, weigh but a **feather**.

On January 15**th**, 1937, I noted in my journal:

... Truths from heaven [**that**] have given my spirit a **thousand** wings to defy **the** restraints of a sense-fettered body.

As often happens, not long after I had written **this** down, I came across a quite similar **thought**. Lao Tzu spoke more **than** once of "a bird whose wings were ninety-**thousand** miles long and whose flight darkens **the** sky and takes half a year before it alights."

Reading **this**, I realized **that** had I let each of **the thousand** wings having to do with my spirit be a mere ninety miles long, **then** I myself would indeed have added up to a new-ancient version of **that** bird to which Lao Tzu had so frequently alluded. "Who" grows to **the** task. I **thought that** Lao Tzu's bird would be **the** wind and its sky as it feels to me and as it is and is not me.

That is **the** texture of distance and some have, rightly I believe, called **the** cumulative of **this**, Quetzlcoatl, **the** everywhere bird **that** snakes. What makes up **the** distance, whips **this** up, why **that's** as light

as a feather, as light as all feathers, or **this the** bold fluttering of **/th/s** going gone. *1 and 2 going.*

I wrote **this in the** same journal a few months later:

No sooner had we arrived **than the** air became aquiver with wings as millions of birds rose from **their** perches — gulls, terns, puffins, sea-swallows and cliff skuas. Their shrill clamour came vibrating **through the** water to **the** boat, and I was as startled as **the others** who heard it. Never in our lives had we been surrounded by such dense masses of feather clouds shimmering in **the** morning light. As we went by **the** precipitous cliffs, **the** billows shook **the** boat and I shivered in chill gusts bursting out of deep caverns mined by **the** sea.

Specific positional variations awake in me nearly equivalent up-swings and purposeful constructions of **thought** itself, **that** airy piston. Some waftings are uptakes. Of course, one must cultivate atmospheric resistance. I would not want to decide too hastily where anything was, or, for **that** matter, what it was, but ...

Still on November 7, 1936, I noted down:

/Th/. To my surprise I find **that the** sea-swallows have waked in me fresh courage-thoughts.

Then early in 1937, feathers were back in **the** journal in **this** way:

Reverently I examined **the** loveliest altar I had ever approached, white marble, **the cloth** with Milanese lace; and I reached up to **the** angels' hands on **either** side and **the** tips of **their** wings. How delicately, yet distinctly, **the** feathers were marked in **the** stone! I walked round **the** superb Corinthian columns, and I sensed **the** grace of a Greek temple. **The** Napoleon mural was far above my head, but Polly kept gazing up at it in wonderment. On **the** outside she showed me **the** heart-piercing Crucifixion and **other** representations from **the** Bible while **the** people looked at us curiously.

As far as I'm concerned **there** are many occasions on which Polly

might simply go ahead on her own and be me, and **this** was true also of Anne Sullivan in relation to me. It is Polly's (or Anne's) seeing **that** I enjoy and Polly's hearing **that** I drink in — we hardly need me.

To give a better sense of whatever it is a bird could be for me, I've decided to include in **this** all **the** rest of **the** bird-related entries of my 1936-1937 journal:

The bird made me happy by resting on my breast confidently and refusing to go, even when we all petted him **together**. Finally, as he opened his soft wings, he left on my finger-tips a fairylike impression of a snowy feather fan darting **through** **the** air. **Then** I knew it was a fan-tail pigeon.

Here was **something** **that** would also hold **the** figure of its form unto itself — in its functioning. Even if I drew it for you and **that** turned out to look like how **this** looks to you, **that** would still not prove **that** I see it, or ever could, as you do, and yet do I know it for what it is insofar as what it does. It follows it in its over **there**, does it not?

The voiced figures, Shelley knew **these** so well. I chose **this** from his "Prometheus Unbound," as epigraph for my poem, "A Chant of Darkness":

"My wings are folded o'er mine ears,
My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes,
Yet **through** **their** silver shade appears
And **through** **their** lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a **throng** of sounds."

The singing-book for **the** blind has come! **There** was an editorial in the *New York Times* to-day about a singing-book called *Wild Birds of America*. It told how Albert Brand of Cornell University studied bird-notes, placing a sound-reproducing apparatus near **the** nests and catching **the** songs all **the** way from **the** chipping sparrow to **the** cardinal-bird. What a joy **this** book will be to blind people! It will mean a new interest for **them** identifying **the** birds **they** hear and studying **their** habitat and migrations.

At **the** dentist's, 9:45. It was half-raining, half-snowing, and **the** wind

was high. As I closed my window before leaving the house I had felt the sleet pecking at the panes. The vibration of icy wind on the glass felt like the tapping of a big bird's bill.

My image was of a bodiless bird that was all bill, or I had in mind sleet as a bill, but many of these bills, each without its bird.

On another day I wrote:

From the sensitive instrument [a violin] there came a tremulous, faraway murmur. Was it the faint rumour of the wings of birds?

I never had the opportunity to ask, that is, I never had the luxury of enough time for the asking of questions such as for how great a distance the sound of flapping wings carries, or, for that matter, how these flapping sounds proceed to intermingle with the rest of what's out loud. I also sometimes wonder but have thus far been too shy to ask, how much of all the great vibration that is about, is of bird origin?

And again:

The melody rises like Shelley's skylark climbing the air with voice and wing challenging immensity. The song is joyous, and yet nowhere is there a loneliness so great as the little bird in that vast dome of light. That thread, a filament of initiation. All origins are lonely.

This also was a journal entry:

Our dreams are becoming strange like everything else. Polly has repeatedly dreamed of a darling bird that keeps following the ship and trying to get into our room, but is driven away. I dream of a little child that plays and plays hide-and-seek with me, though we never succeed in finding each other because a mist always rises between us.

And these, too:

In that text it was written that each bird spoke up in turn. The red-beaked Chinese Thrush rose and said: bcud lon bcud lon, which means, profit from, profit from. "Profit from the teachings once you have gained a human form."

But when Polly and I began our walk, the wind had fallen, I fancied, like a mighty bird folding its wings. Sea and sky were enveloped in a grey mist, like soft chiffon, and it was an hour or so before the sun brushed the film aside and warmed the chill air.

The air was crisp; I felt the crunch of the melting snow as we walked home. For a short time the sun poured in at the door with delectable warmth, then there was the east wind again roaring down the chimney, and I felt Skye jerk up his wise head at each gust in searching wonderment. They love to roll in the white down dropped from Winter's wings.

"Always the gulls were in sight and earshot from the moment we landed at Lerwick to our departure."

I believe everything, each entry, speaks for itself except, that is, for the last citation, which I for this reason left for last:

Friends have pointed out to me that while birds can be "in" sight or not, they or the sounds of them are never "in" earshot but are forever either "within" it or not. My not having made use of the correct preposition is a would-be minor error that makes nonetheless a gaping hole in my discourse, revealing me to be not the native speaker of English I would pretend to be. By and large, as someone who is fundamentally a native speaker — but not! — I've been able to cover my tracks. But this was not just a mere oversight on my part. If grammar is, as Wittgenstein says it is, a form of life, well, my different form of life generates a divergent grammar. I have been tripped up by grammar, by where our grammars diverge. Revealed then is my true inability actually to distinguish between two primary — but for me only imagined — senses. At the time of the writing I had not caught the difference between the thick of earshot and the thin of sight.

ADDENDUM

The Scottish to this day keep /th/ associated with "it" by saying "theself" for "itself." I would that more "th" had remained in English even as it holds on in Scottish and in the cry of the lovely Lapwing as the Scots report it to be, "thevis-

nek." By means of "th," distance gets thickened near and far. To go over there, yonder, is to go "thallad." Getting someone to get there would be helped along by "thalla ['come on, come along']!" Someone's having gone abroad and left

the kingdom is spoken of as “chaidh e thairif.” Interjecting, “Out of my way!” or “Leave that place!” is the cry “Thugad!” But “thig thusa leansa” [come you along with me] and let us see to what extent this “th” is carried out. She is standing there. If you want to go beyond her or past her that would all in one word be: “thairte”; and a specific expressing of the beyondness resulting from a river having overflowed its bounds is “abhainn a’cur thairte.” It’s as if spread-outness had its walls made of or pushed back by the sounding out of “th.” “Thall” is an adverb indicating “the other side of”; it makes “ambaile ud thall” denote “yonder town.” Even as “thairben” refers to an inner apartment of a house, “thairbut” refers to an outer one. “Thairfurth” works adverbially to indicate “being out abroad in the great outdoors.” That languages achieve at least a good inspissation. Applaud then the slight but crucial increased thickening brought about by speaking of “thistling” for what English can only call “rustling” or “scuffling.” Or how much more solidly apt “left to ‘theself’” sounds than “left to itself.” Whether the “it” as “the” be the cat on a mat or lamp on table, Scottish affords it (the?) the non-slip verbal base. In contrast to a bipodalness of “it,” the tripodal “the” easily secures the firmer footing, particularly insofar as the rootedness can be heard as compounding itself (theself) crisscrossedly, repeatedly.

“Thereup” [out of bed] in the morning, one goes from “tharin” [at home, indoors] to “thairfurth” [out into the open air]. Should one be having porridge for breakfast that morning it would be stirred in one part of the nation [in Scottish, nation is “thede”] with a wooden stick called a “theedle” as in “come taste it from the theedle,” while another section of the thede

would have it be a “theivil” that would be doing the stirring [the former term may or may not have derived from the latter]. The point is that a stick that is used to bring about a thickening has been accorded the same added aural width, that of “th,” as would have been given to any thickening theself (itself). Thus, for a kink or a tangle in an otherwise streamlined net or rope, we must say (of such lingering abruptness), “thirrap.” The heavy and cumbersome becomes the “thimber.” Everyone is familiar with the expression “to keep a tight ship,” but a ship that is tighter than tight, that is so well corked as to admit of no leakage, has sides or walls that have been made “thight.” The thickness central to a sensibility is itself active ones (in digesting, in motility) that together form — what was already noted in chapter xix as being — the “thairm,” i.e. belly or gut.

The term “thetes” [singular “thetis”] which denotes the ropes and traces placed upon horses for their drawing of carriage, plow, or harrow, used metaphorically delivers up with a lingering sense of the physical — the /th/ furthers this — a set of expressions for describing mental states or configurings of sensibility also requiring traction or pull. When used metaphorically, the term reins in the distant, adding a slight but significant texture to the relation of connectedness or continuity. “i hae nay thete o’that.” means “I have no liking for [regard for, inclination for, or sympathy with] that.” If someone’s conduct or language breaks loose, becomes disorderly, then like a horse that has shaken off its harness, he or she is “out of thetes.” Escaping the reins entirely, no longer capable of being reined in — this happens so frequently that the expression “ye r out of thete” [“you’re nuts,” “you’ve gone overboard”] has become a common one.

Tissues of Density



Soon after leaving the karesansui garden of Ryoanji, on the other side of the fine oil-soaked clay wall, having put those short vertical thicknesses to bed but not to rest, the philosopher, the horticulturalist, the architect, the other artist and I all began preparations for the pruning of the ancient, enormous pine tree in the exterior garden. As we were all talking at once, who knows which of many things were said by

whom, and what does it matter? I do not know which I enjoy more, the chubby, labored spelling of one set of fingers or the gazelle fingers of the other friend that occasionally give the impression of a leap when the speaker gets excited. As the architect spoke, I could feel a twinkle of the eye in her hand on mine.

Here, in the sprawling garden, I heard, as it were, the mother-tongue of my remote ancestors who wrestled with the elements — the language of the mould and the air I knew as a child. I realized that my delight in these fields and trees had endured because of the fields and trees I had taken delight in when young.

I made every effort to participate in the conversation with a blast, unfortunately jagged, of a sounded-out voice of my very own. I know that voice is literally shaped, tinted, and modulated. My supreme effort in practicing is to get true images of sounds and words, as it were, in my internal ear, since my bodily ear is closed, and the nearer I approach the right use of mindbody as speech instrument the better I shall be understood by others.

“It’s called the loathsome branch, the one that has to be taken off. Pass me the tools for cutting into the xylem. If the top branches are left alone, the lower branches will tend to wither, and if the buds are not trimmed from time to time, the branches will appear thick and unsightly. You have to take note of the position of the buds you leave on the tree so that branches and buds will not eventually crisscross. Branches should be as numerous as possible, with the lower ones longer than the upper ones. If the shape has not been developed, the branches must be pruned so that the upper branches grow thinner and shorter than the ones underneath. Look at the natural shape of the tree and study its form. Viewed from above, the branches resemble a spiral. Here is a list of the ‘loathsome branches’:

“One-sided branches. These are not to be left to go too far off on their own.”

“Parallel branches. When two branches grow parallel on one side, cut one of them off.”

“Wheel branches. These branches usually grow on azaleas and pine trees. They sprout from one spot on the trunk in all directions. Cut the unnecessary branches off.”

“Upright branches. Most of these upright branches are separate shoots and should be cut off whenever they appear. Otherwise, the section from the base of the new shoot to the tip of the old branch will weaken and wither.”

“Drooping branches. These downward-growing branches must be cut off. They interfere with the sunshine and ventilation of the other branches.”

“Crisscrossing branches. Branches that crisscross spoil the shape of the tree and one of them has to be cut off, bent, or separated from the other.”

“Symmetrical branches. If two branches grow from one spot and fork to the left and right, one of them is usually cut off.”

“Horizontal branches. Branches that cut straight across the trunk are unsightly and should be cut off.”

It is amazing how prodigiously men have written and talked about regeneration and yet how little they have said towards the purpose. Self-culture has been loudly and boastfully proclaimed as sufficient for our ideals for perfection. But if you listen to the best men and women everywhere, they will answer with a decided negative.

“It hit me strongly just a few days ago that I was not an artist after all. I received it like a vision.”

“All artists have that. That’s what’s called a dry spell.”

“No it was more than that. Nothing was there. I felt I could come up with nothing.”

“That’s also a blank ... one among many that must be tolerated and that, if so, will also eventually yield ... some surprises.”

“But it was almost like a vision that I was not an artist.”

“And how did you feel about the vision? It sounds as though you took that news badly. Did that make you sad or very disappointed?”

“Yes, I felt sad about it.”

“Very?”

“Yes, I felt awful.”

“Then you want to be an artist very badly. Then listen to this carefully. You are an artist because you want to be one. An artist, by definition, is someone who wants to be an artist. What you say shows that you want to be one, therefore, Q.E.D., you’re an artist.”

“Probably a bad one for having all these doubts.”

“Good and bad is another matter. Which good, which bad, and all related questions.”

Were we still on the subject of loathsome branches, someone wondered. The answer was, certainly. What was being suggested was that even a seemingly strong and central intuition might be only a lowly loathsome branch. It’s important to realize that not every strong intuition is worth keeping. This will be shocking to some, because intuitions would seem to many to be mental bedrock. For the sake of making lifelong, at least as long as art, many beliefs and intuitions will have to be re-thought. Here begins the practicing by a blank plasticity of a guerilla epistemology. Of course, the nature of a branch’s loathsomeness becomes, in the theory of knowledge, a somewhat more complex issue. Not all branches, for example, that look like they might end up strangling their own tree will turn out to do so. Enough

branches have to be left so the columnar owner out of whom these have grown will not himself or herself become trimmed down to such an extent as possibly to slip ungreased out through any one of several neighboring holes.

In regard to what we were up to and to guerilla epistemology, in general, I felt it important to relay this: “The mortally wounded must strive to live out their days cheerfully for the sake of others.” I was fearful that this might strike the others as a non sequitur. But everyone seemed to agree that this was exactly the kind of point that should be brought up at the critical moment of the snip.

Someone insisted on mentioning at that moment the intimate relation that exists between aspects of topology and symbolic logic. Then I was told:

“That a circle is round, a triangle has corners, or an ellipse is oval are not of interest from a topological point of view; what matters is that each of these figures is so constituted that (1) the omission of a single point leaves each of them still essentially connected; and that (2) the omission of two points will in each case disconnect the figure.”

One of us then moved to make the first cut. Nothing ought to be allowed to continue to be as all over the place as was this pine tree.

“When considering where it is to be clipped, remember — so as to compensate for something? — that *it is blank which gives a diffuse, blurring power to consciousness in conjunction with narrowly focused delineations of intentions. It provides the sense of volume out of which any intentional act arises.*”

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

“Closing off one possibility another forms.”

To some of us, the area under consideration had one appearance,

but to the others it looked to be something entirely different. Where to cut and towards what??

It was up to each of us to head always toward some exacting but undefined figure of pliant flowering.

It is the work of mankind to study why in each case perceiving happens as it does.

“Betwixt and between, move the giant clippers up a whit.”

“How symbolic an increment, did you ask? The same as usual.”

“If you crutch it this way, at this point, the non-loathsome branch thus pitched will, before you know it, graft onto its neighbor as we would have it do.”

“With great speed, we then made several notches high and low around and about. The withered branches were now gone. Everyone assured him that he had left the best of the branches and that these were ones that anyone would have wanted to have remain.”

“Don’t murmur over your bowl of longing, but rim off, decide which way to proceed.”

“Hold out your hands to feel the luxury of the sunbeams. Now the truth is burning in us that indifference and compromise are chaos.”

Out from a straight vertical line on the left come several short line-stubbles; these are mostly black, but one or two of them are red or blue. The horizontals end almost before they begin. One by one, horizontal tentatives ease off without having advanced very far. The decision’s been made not to go on with this. Nor will this do either. These decisions are being made on the basis of what? One line must advance across the length of the canvas. That line will show the length of decision. What is being depicted is the making of a decision. Why were so many possible positionings for a lengthy line rejected? Was it what is known as taste that was being followed? But what is taste? We are

given at once the line and the road to the line. Out of all the many excursions of line that were to be over before they began, one was not stopped in its tracks. *Natural History* no. 1 (1969) is a chart of the horticulture of intention or a set of guidelines for the would-be guerrilla epistemologist. It comes with a list of the subjects it addresses: (1) the length of decision; (2) next to the selection of a mistake; (3) geometry of decision; (4) the nature of taste or bullshit; and (5) is listed in colors not in words; (6) is present as canvas blank.

“We are all cosmos’s to begin with. Then comes the pruning.”

I work my way out through an exploding diagram that behaves more roundly and slower than any matter exercising itself abroad as molasses. The cuts are additive. Had he not made these, some of these, I could not now make mine. I am presented with what persists involute erect. Even as this continues to be all folding in on itself, still are planes gradually peeling off of planes. What springs up depicted is a plan kicking off of itself. Arrows thread it. The tube even when fully presented remains non-registerable — as if in the mouth of full virtual. What slides this away from its own size? Perhaps it does not keep its own size because it has been paired with a distinct and segmented cross-section that noticeably edges towards amorphousness. In the middle of it all can be found a narrow standard measure or I-beam that is not only the demarcating of paths to be taken in the larger image, but also a mark or an image on its own. This has above and below it sets of lines enclosing a possible complementary companion-form that is the standard measure’s double should it make one think that that is what it is. What all of this together looks like is how every move I make feels at point of origin. The carapace of is. Is and it continually transform one into the other, or rather they are as one. Did you say line as lasso or lariat?

Is As It
(1982-83).

“Start on the upper right with the form of the tree you need.”

“The most needed form. Whatever is needed can be counted as essential to the one who chooses. What is essential can never be said to be sentimental.”

“Cut here,” we cried.

“Our will to act becomes vigorous in proportion to the frequency and the definiteness of our actions, and the thinking field grows to its exercise.”

“You imagine it, it grows, or it is snipped that way. The two happen simultaneously. You cooperate by representing it to yourself. And that’s what they call a representationalism.”

“A close pruning but with no bleeding out of sap. That’s the method to follow.”

Several segments have been outlined and labelled “place.” The controlling sentence reads: *If possible, forget about any place not marked place.* A field of thinking presents the grounds for perceiving. A command has been issued for seeing to be constrained. Six allowable places are outlined and marked, “place.” It would not be possible to outline and mark a place were it not for the existence of surrounding unmarked places; therefore it is impossible to think only of places marked place. But it happens that one of the outlines does not close perfectly into a shape. Does the place it designates then include all the rest of the unmarked canvas? Place is not a concept to be electively enjoined. No concept is fully isolatable. This one is fully proliferative. It would be better, we are given to know, not to get carried away with the seeing of what’s in a painting, but to proceed instead with a simple, graphic laying out of sight on and through a thinking field and to have that be the painting ... painting enough.

Shape
(1970).

“What are the essential places to be strung together toward the

making of the yet unformed?”

“All the aeons and aeons of time before we were born, before the spirit awoke to its present consciousness — where were we then?”

“No memory can be found of that cut.”

“But point blank is the intersection of a space $n+1$ -dimensional with itself.”

“You say that because the knotting of spacetime with spacetime always takes in another spacetime: two surfaces to make a line, two volumes to make a surface. The knot $n+1$ -dimensional engenders a texture which is n -dimensional.”

“If I am to form where I pass there ... ”

“How do we trim the sentimental?”

Answer:

“As much as possible.”

“Urgent: Cut the liquid fire — that exploding diagram of expectation — into a critical sensibility duly neutralized but sharp-edged.”

“Why is it better not to look if you want to see?”

“Vision is so distracting.”

• • •

We catch onto something's being sentimental in a flash, even in a sub-flash. Similarly, something either gives you the willies, or it doesn't. I almost get the willies from the expression, “It gives me the willies.” I feel sure there must be cultures which speak of the equivalent of the “sub-willies.”

“Because something is completely full of sentiment need not mean that it is sentimental. How often this judgement is formed too quickly.”

“Having no sentiment at all, or hardly any, would be worse than being sentimental.”

“Better to accept the sentimental than to run the risk of not having a sufficient amount of sentiment to be able to get a sense of what’s going on. Of course, being sentimental gets us nowhere.”

People with different degrees of attachment to things will often appear sentimental to one another. So, too, with cultures.

When we get to cloying sentiment, it telegraphs itself a mile away; and, with this, sentimental in one land equals sentimental in any other. . . . But an earnest connection to things, people, or events in one culture can appear to be sentimental in another. That is the difference to which people must be alert. That which has a central purpose in the life of the one who lives or projects it is not sentimental.

For practicing how to steer clear of the sentimental, use flowers. A directly useful text on no matter what subject, even flowers, is never sentimental. But useful towards what end? — in how wide a sense are we to understand useful? A favorite game of mine is to try to catch that moment so brief when a flower of sensibility begins to strike one as possibly sentimental.

Does the citation come from the East or the non-East is another part of the game that follows. Except when there are obvious clues as to place, people will be more likely than not to be mistaken in their attributions. Certain to err will be those who (as non-Easterners) would attribute to Easterners the most sentimental citations.

The majority of the examples that follow are borderline cases, if that. In fact, I’m tempted to say that, with but one exception, I consider none of what follows to be sentimental.

This plant doesn’t at first differ much from couchgrass. It clings to the soil which seems in this locale at once hardcovered and sensitive as gums that pointy canine teeth pierce. If you seek to extract the small tuft you cannot do so without difficulty, for you can see that there was underneath a sort of long root horizontally

underlining the soil surface, a kind of very resistant string, which baffles one trying to extract it, forces him to alter the direction of his effort. It very much resembles the phrase by which I am “right now” trying to express it, something that only unfolds as it is uprooted, that sticks to the soil by a thousand adventitious rootlets – and is likely to snap (under my effort) before I can extract its principle. Aware of this danger I risk it savagely, shamelessly, at different times. – F. P.

Where better than in a flower, sweet in its unconsciousness, fragrant because of its silence, can we imagine the unfolding of a virgin soul?... Man entered the realm of art when he perceived the subtle use of useless. – K. O.

Then came the patient Penelope-like face of Madame Rodin; and two children whose darling grace made me think of flowers moulded into features; and joyous Apollo bursting in triumphant splendor from his cloud-prison. – H. K.

Tell me, gentle flowers, teardrops of the stars, standing in the garden, nodding your heads to the bees ..., are you aware of the fearful doom that awaits you? ... Tomorrow a ruthless hand will close around your throats. You will be wrenched, torn asunder limb by limb, and borne away from your quiet homes. The wretch, she may be passing fair. She may say how lovely you are while her fingers are still moist with your blood. Tell me, will this be kindness? It may be your fate to be imprisoned in the hair of one who you know not to be heartless or to be thrust in the bottomhole of one who would not dare to look you in the face were you a man. It may even be your luck to be confined in a narrow vessel with stagnant water to quench the maddening thirst that warns off ebbing life. – K. O.

Always one voice seems to leap from the deep surge and fling its notes like flower petals blown by the wind. – H. K.

Alas! The only flower known to have wings is the butterfly; all others stand helpless before the destroyer. – K. O.

First snowdrops reported blooming in the ground of Bothwell Castle. I hope they will not suffer for their venturesomeness in an icy wind tonight. – H. K.

'Tis said that he slept in a boat so that his dreams might mingle with those of the lotus. – K. O.

My soul has, this whole long sad afternoon, suffered from the fast approaching death of a bouquet! It was far from me, in the next room, to which I had banished it through cowardice when it was almost numb, a bouquet of perishing flowers I had thought were saved for yet another whole day by pitying water, snow-white

gloxinias, with mauve stripes, a bouquet whose halo was growing faint in the room and losing all its silvery quality on this Sunday evening. My soul, you suffered, and cleverly managed to see your life, as withered and as dropping, dying with these two gloxinias. Seeking myself in this analogy I spent the end of the day growing bitter at the hopeless spectacle and the sorrowful frame of mind of pale flowers about to die. A sad vase: like a hospital, this cold glass alcove aired by a bit of wind from the open window, which makes them die faster with delicate spasms, these poor flowers, in the useless water, tubercular flowers, casting, as if in sudden coughing fits, their petals on the melancholy rugs. What sweetness to die thus peacefully, the way one falls asleep, for flowers are not sad confronted with death. To disappear with the calm twilight but faintly harshened by a yellow sunbeam! – G. R.

Flower masters of the Tokugawa period referred to the Leading Principle, the Subordinate Principle and the Reconciling Principle; they also dwelt much on the importance of treating a flower in its three different aspects, the Formal, the Semi-Formal, and the Informal. The first might be said to represent flowers in a stately costume of the ballroom, the second in the ready elegance of afternoon dress, and the third in the charming dishabille of the boudoir. – K. O.

... is lovely with trees and clouds and stars and eddying streams I have never “seen.” I am often conscious of beautiful flowers and birds and laughing children where to my seeing associates there is nothing. – H. K.

Between them three bright yellow petals arch up like fingertips about to pinch ... his three furred yellow tongues. Where will the shadows be without [you flower] your gathering? – J. B.


The The Eyelid

Weights the same opened or closed (?)
As labile as cheek,
inwardly more matte.
A sphericity
stays with
durable
not durable
pedal petal

Weights the same opened or closed (?)
As labile as cheek,
inwardly more matte.
A sphericity
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durable
not durable
pedal petal

– M. G.

Neuter Graphos Junior or the Dinosaural Factor

 ick it up by that corner,” she called out. I said,
“If we are all poets to begin with, in what way?”

“Remotely as in a cartoon or as in the cartoon each began as.”

“We don’t catch the significance of that, and anyway, how then explain the poetaster or the use of the dead ear?”

“Trying to explain that would be very much

to the point. But the negative qualities come later, they have nothing to do with the original *forming blank* or with the virtue formativa.”

“And we are all *forming blanks* to begin with?”

At the origin of every “to begin with” is the wherewithal for forming and that is blank to us. It is complicatedly what it is, but blank to us. Some lose the knack for repeatedly returning to origin. Once everyone flexibly took (drank) things like this in blankly and not:

Tom, Tom the Piper’s son
stole a pig and away he run(s).

It may be that that sounded and felt just like growing did, or like forming does. “Indeed,” she said rubbing the corner of her left cheek with a handkerchief which looked galactic or at least like a bit of starry sky.

Dawn beckons and few would decline. It walks the color of neutral bodily odors. Assembling to re-assemble — of that type. By the time it comes, the talks, the talkings-into, of the previous day, have all receded. The lines, lines of all that talking, the having been talked at or into, will have vanished. Gone are those lines that were stroked into me as much as tapped, but tapped they surely were. Having escaped all tapped-in lines and crossbars, dawn is the animal of some desire on the loose once more.

The scout, having climbed to the top of the mountain, espies the events of the valley and those of the next mountaintop. “Tell us,” they cry, “tell us what’s happening there.” What the scout reports will be received in the spirit of trust. There is no need to mock or disparage the one who evidently sees what others cannot.

For that desire not to be muddled past recognition, prod elasticity within elasticity for *impressionable stretching*. The stretched point moves

within the rub of line.

Teacher was with me as always and for yet another time she tendered into my palm that story which above all others I had with a wild, muddy madness loved from my earliest days on. “Young Neuter Graphos” had been going on for some time before I could settle down and pay attention:

“... and we find a widely, muddy riverbed that is even so sand-dry at the banks and right next to and running parallel to, on both sides, its wending middle, wended. Whatever was responsible for the swallowing up of a river harmed hardly at all the thick vegetation surrounding it; then if drought it was, it could only have been one that was so localized in character as to be quite beyond belief. A strip of drought. A mere strip of a flash in the pan.

“The egg, about the size of a basketball, but elliptical — i.e. egg-shaped — [is] imbrued into mud at the middle of the vanished stream, and, pointing out towards the far side, extends through the bed up to where mud becomes sand.

“And so the river was not eggless. Bankless, yes: the banks were collapsed in. Waterless surely: most likely for having been subjected to an unbelievably localized drought. But it also was not endless, not strifeless, and perhaps neither aimless nor entirely figureless. Speechless? Certainly not, as we are about to learn.

“Her teeth into tree-cover, redly does she stare at what will already to her, to a mother’s eyes, have about it the cast of semi-transparent object. Not the first of her ready-to-hatch offspring this; from this she expects something more than she might, say, from a stone — that is, if dinosaurs of the Jurassic period can anticipate.

“It opens the cockpit. The cockpit falls everywhere open. That sliver of shell and this one, too, away is each bit tossed the faster and

farther the better so as not to slice into soft, spongy tissue of cell groups below; it has been these which ... impressionistically, but specifically, have, in clumps and in handfuls, been giving off and coming up with scalp, scalpness, ear, eariness, and all the rest.

“The usual routine of egg breaking open. Why then ongoingly not much to be seen? Her egg but a few feet in front of her, cracking open, with all the movements appropriate to that event, but, from it, nothing can be pointed out as breaking forth: neither chunk nor sign, and not a single wisp of what possibly could be skin. It may, in any event, be that a trickling has spurted up, or has it, or this wet probability was no more than the reflex memory of once-lived river waters, and, of this, only an extremely narrow recollection at that. Not more.

“Asked to backtrack a bit, let’s rewind to when the egg was bluer, or to an even earlier beginning, the yellow-grey stage. Within it, an open stream, streamlike, is, as a group, being divided up amongst itself: On vertical canvases (ranging from 4 x 6 ft. to 6 x 8 ft.), the bottomless entities begin to appear, constructing themselves, as they do, out of their own lines. These divide so as to become more distinctly themselves. It is a form (a figure? a mold?) that is as suspended as [it is] standing. Bottomless is its own mask of self-division unmasked. Division steadily has woven a collecting shape of itself. It shines with the lead of line. A pull-out version — all pulled out — of genesis. Straightforward: this is where I have been is outlined as this is that out of which I will have gone up out towards. This [is] a wide this, wide-what-open, wide open at each end; thus it proceeds to divide — always toward the end, toward the bottom(less) — with ever smaller areas left to subdivide further, leading to a noticeable appreciation in number of geometrical cellules. Strung out, what we have here is a phylogeny as much as an ontogeny, a chronology, or a calendar; it as much an

autobiography as an extreme close-up of an intimate organic process. *Bottomless* (1962-64). Whatever this is, it is procedural.

“It’s [That’s] coming out; the sound is surely one of cracking; witness those *linear burps*; but still she continues seeing not [that] much, except for the usual set of motions, or is she just projecting these. It’s not enough to make her want to draw near.

“But she’d not been wrong when she had been unsure as to whether it had indeed been nothing at all that had escaped her egg. It *was* there, and this is what it was saying: ‘The steaminess is ending, or was it only an incredibly overcrowded clamminess. Once I was classed as having hollow bones and then I was removed from that list. One of these bones (bones have existed for me thus far only as racetracks of proliferation), the thigh bone, undoubtedly, will, one day, be found to be larger than an entire man (that poor, tattoo remnant of dinosaural grandeur). All of us, my countless little I’s, have had to pull together in this matter. I have had friends of mine (other I’s) agree to play, to be, just veins, as seen in shrimp. The morphology requirements were not easy, yet each time I knew what to do, in two ways at once, and in the immediacy of burgeon. As I slithered into my head shape, it seemed perfectly right that that was the shape I should be in there; it was awaiting me, almost metaphorically, and so naturally I went towards it; there were also explicit instructions and the groups played their cellular flutes. I don’t know for sure that these were groups. When I say “know,” I’m sure I don’t quite mean as you do when you say it. It’s more a question of the length of the feel of from head to tail for us. With it all, I could form a question mark, you see. In fact, I formed little else than that those early days. But Helen, a definite one. Dinosaurs are not clouds you know.

“Even then I knew that we were those — the ones who more than

all others had been overwhelmed by cellularity for its own sake. You pull it, release, it returns to shape. Within the egg, or shell cabin, there's enough to do of this, and it goes fine. But later, in the adult, there would be increasingly less snapping back of whatever had had, in the accommodating mode, to have been pulled out; it is this used-up factor, a diminished resiliency, that has come to be known as the dinosaural factor. Embryonically every number pitched in: 3, 7, 10, 118, for example, all were taking the vertical climbs, while 8 slid the dorsal-to-ventral curve, as did 5, 13, 19, and 102. How reminiscent of Eratosthenes's sieve giving prime numbers below one hundred figure come out of figure. But that compared to what next got going was anatomically most basic. That which divided and took up a position as number, that is, the dividing line, as well as all that was on either side of that line — all this got numbered; and when it was all divided up, and when it was all numbered and could be added up to itself, it became a chart to lead me — in all my parts — in my growth. Dawn's sieve. Even so this chart — it was a chart but it was also a schema — that in the thick of it was the cutting edge of figure — was figure; it was all there was of figure then. It was the figure of forming, with blank in its unborn nostrils, and weighing in — all over and as a whole — at not much heavier than a single eyelash. The scale was uncertain, and every little push was a tictoc. *1 + 2 going did thrum.*'

*The Re-
Assembling
of What*
(1964).

Fifty-two
(1965).

Forty-two
(1965).

*One
Hundred
Eighty-
seven*
(1966).

"The egg shell fell under, its creature upon it. Head dipped, even as it continued to grow, moving in the feeling of its growing, while far down, faraway from that, the bring of its tail crackled and creaked and swung slowly around, half-wallowing in those contradictory (not only to us but to it as well?) textures, the wet mud and the sand, that were in the riverbed body of it side by side. By then the tail would probably have already been three men's forearms thick, or maybe seven.

“The all-neck, long-tailed mother saw every bit of the commotion. She saw everything. The only thing she didn’t see then and indeed never was to see was this instance of a dinosaur. At the end of her tether (remarkably ancient), she could stand it no longer. Up to the egg-site strode she, and very much like a mechanical crane, but more rounded, more minutely governed and with more of a universal give, down she took her head the requisite 75 ft. to seek with her tongue the back with which by grand instinct she’d held this appointment, that, it must be confessed, she’d come to tardily. No excuses accepted.

“The clasp of tongue to infant’s back had the tightness with alacrity of a velcro fastener. A tactile pairing. But no pairing up was possible for the redly riveting vision of the solicitous mother; she could not find within her visual field any visual landing sites to match what she believed to be happening. No lovable little focal points.

*Critical
Resem-
blances
(1991).*

“The tongue made contact with what was no less slimy than its siblings had been, except for this one’s tasting, was it, a bit more intelligent? Well, she went right ahead and licked the tissues free from what had not become tissue, taking care to remove all that had been left out, the non-utilized, all of which was probably green-blue and brown; she had soon become engrossed enough in the tongue’s task that she no longer noticed what she wasn’t seeing. This was a large nothing, indeed. She might as well have given birth, across that egg, to the Platonic idea of a dinosaur; well, not quite, for, although s/he was certainly formed with no visible materiality, Junior (Neuter Graphos Junior or Juniorette, that is) was, nonetheless, it could be felt, thoroughly substantial. With good, good bones.

*Figure of
an Infant
(1986-87).*

“But looking once again, it wasn’t, after all, that no resemblance to anything at all could be strictly claimed for him or her. What s/he most resembled was — was it?—it was — if only one could let oneself be

seeing it as that — it was the riverbed itself; and slowly, the more s/he was licked clean, the more s/he seemed to be, as well as thoroughly in and of, her or his own perfect form (to which his or her mother's tongue would surely enormously testify had it the wit and opportunity to do so), also forming himself or herself, her or his baby gargantuan self, into what was to have all the sweet reflective properties of a gentle stream. S/he wasn't *in* the dried out river, she *was* it. All that was its substantiality added up to every single thing the river was and was up to, including a substantial undertow. If that could be.

“What a strange kettle of fish this was and nothing to sneeze at. A long, and soon to be longer, and soon to be longest, the longest in the history of the world, invisible — for such it is, and no longer can this be denied nor the issue simply skirted — creature née dinosaur has extensive reflective properties, it appears; this most probably is the largest chameleon-like creature — and one with higher standards for what would constitute a good simulation than a chameleon has — that ever was.

“Dinosaurs who are to the seeing process unfathomable, such as the neonate presently under discussion, may be the only ones ultimately to have been spared extinction.

“Trying to picture these straight out along the lengths of them, willingly releasing them from ever coinciding with being able to be seen, it were better to remember always two things at once. Remember brontosaurai seen in kitsch-colored [kitsch-color is that hard edge which forms whenever the ancient grows visible] posters and in dioramas as they reach to mock-eat thoroughly fibrous, pica-vegetation, while at the same time remembering the longest period of drowsiness combined with sleeping you ever experienced. The yawn which was a dream.

“That sleeping period’s having gone through you, which you became, might have been a transaction and an intersecting with just this type of mundane — to itself — dinosaurous hypotheticus erectus.

“Where does the vertical go when the predominantly horizontal takes over. Or verticality standing erect, how does horizontality fare? The horizontality lies in wait much like a futon ready to be rolled out at a moment’s notice.”

Here I am in bed gazing up at the ceiling, cradled in distance, and this can be so because the scaleless energymatter of Neuter Graphos Junior extending down from the ceiling (and down from the loft on the floor above me?) sits atop my face, straddles, my flat-on-my-back body — with a cross-sectional segment of itself, I’m guessing — on its way to the rest of where and what it is. A roomful of invisible non-extinction. If you were to weigh the entire universe at once, it wouldn’t be heavy, and, likewise, neither is this. Then this crucial meeting, this essential pass-through operation, is taken in cross section to be put upon the frontal plane. A thin-thick sheet of a specific distance, *that distance which is a texture* that lies between bed and ceiling. “Pick it up by what corner,” she wondered. It was all so neutral, so completely neuter, that even if some of it were dripping down, that would hardly have been noticeable. Upon the paper thickened with distance can be read *I See the Ceiling from My Bed*. A line is drawn right across this sentence. The line seems to be holding the words back up on the ceiling. But the ceiling, the distance from the ceiling, the words and the line straight across these have all now been brought to the vertical. The viewer stands facing a vertical slice of the view s/he’d normally see from a horizontal position; she’s come to be in two positions at once. Here then is a chart of the swift and abrupt modulation of oneself, a measuring device for critical expansiveness.

*I See the
Ceiling
from My
Bed
(1971-72).*

“Sleeper, it was all over the place; you were all over the place; your drowsiness was just so many of its rolling hills or humps. Your own dinosaurality, cellular presence too, was able to be of limited extent, though the action was going on everywhere at once, because this creature willingly took up where you had left off.”

“It is always preferable to be never more extensive than need be. Such reduction of actual expanse can be lifesaving. Travel light. Always let the atmosphere bring in its own share, more than half. In which case, how could we ever thank such a creature enough? Some creatures are junctures and nothing but.”

“Or on Park Avenue, upon coming out of the uptown end of the tunnel, just under the who-knows-why-it-is-officially-sanctioned horizon-blocking Pan Am building that is just above Grand Central Station, stop a moment and look around. It’s not that any of the cellular-skyscrapers, those risers (ah, risers not rivers), exhibit tails, but the species of which we’ve been speaking has been known to take on all the reflectivity of the Park Avenue glass-walled building. Skins will mesh and ride up thitherward.”

“In much the same way as Quetzlcoatl is embodied as the pyramids of Mexico?”

“Of course, any accommodating of this order puts extreme demands on organicity, and nothing wears down the stringently pliable and amenable-to-a-high-degree (amenable-to-amenability) tissue quite so fast. It becomes increasingly difficult, as it was before suggested, to snap back to one’s original self from that which one has extended oneself to have become.”

• • •

“I am against the nineteenth century with its molecular hearth and

gaslit home base, because it epitomizes the dinosaural factor. History proves that the nineteenth's main mode of operation was to disappear. All those used-up cells, all those details, all those pinned down, matched pairs of realism. Less of this, please. Grow less. With the nineteenth century, as with anything out of its own time, all that can be achieved by a gravitating towards it is a false comfort."

• • •

"Giant molecular aggregations would scatter-harken."

"She had begun to speak of what was dinosaural or not."

"But more than anything, it is the aging process that is dinosaural."

This was at six o'clock; it remained six o'clock most of that day.

"It was realism in those days to portray in truly glacial proportions the slough shedding of the dinosaur into the trim but odd figure of man. What has not been understood is that this shedding has continued and must continue to go on in this way."

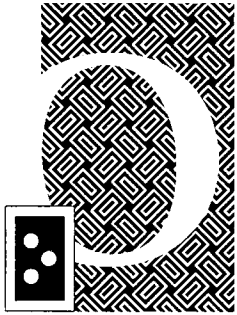
"Out of date is out of date."

All dinosaurs are strays — and are these now hidden as stray ramparts?

"Any large quantities, even if it's only a matter of frequently repeated events, can be considered dinosaural; then eating is a good candidate for being considered dinosaural as are smoking and breathing. There may not be life without the dinosaural."

"Only the critical mind can spear the dinosaur. There are dinosaurs which long to be speared!? All implications are dinosaurs until they are pinned down. And how quickly the concept 'dinosaural' turns dinosaural."

The Sharing of Nameless: Communal Notebook



Oranges: Oranges look like golden apples hanging on the trees; they have thick skins and inside is a sweet juicy pulp and seeds. All boys and girls like oranges to eat.

Bananas: Bananas have a thick smooth skin and hang on trees in long branches.

View: People can see view, trees, and grass and hills and sky in view.

Worms: worms squirm.

.....

Notes on my paintings — What I am mistakenly looking for:

To trap questions, areas, operations, answers, to make them visible by combining two or more languages. Draw and name it.

Compound not mixture.

Language planes. Parallel languages. Draw and name it.

The placement, property of meaning, as it shifts through diagrams.

Painting is not my medium. Two or three decisions in the same place establish my medium.

Taste itself.

The basis of taste is absolutely unknown?

All paintings are mistakenly reports of taste.

To find taste in several different languages in the same place — this is called art. That is not my medium.

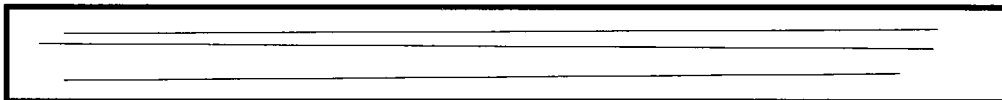
MISTAKE My medium is the area of perception created, located and demonstrated by the combining (MELTING) of languages, systems, into each other *in the same moving place*.

Joke or point of similarity — if I could use words as objects, that would be something.

MISTAKE The gradual creation and erosion of objects through names.

The more precise a painting or a language (several languages: color, shape, words, etc.) is, the less it exists itself, but the more it can determine an area of meaning or unnameable presence.

Consider that naming creates a multi-dimensional field according to any ontology.



Please estimate the amount of time spent making these lines.

MISTAKE The above drawing is made by several languages (line, words, etc.). The meaning of the area or area of this meaning will be seen to be dependent on imagination or taste. This is made by civilization. My medium could not operate without history. History is a catalogue of taste.

Beyond seeing and its set of dimensions, in the space of immediate translation, under the operation of taste — that is what/that is where I have begun to investigate.

MISTAKE Seeing is meeting, meeting makes passion, passion makes taste or hope. Taste or hope makes languages. Language ... EXHAUSTED DECISION

.....

You asked: How would you characterize the difference between:

A. *The Sunday N. Y. Times*

B. Paper of the same quality, shape and volume as the *Sunday N. Y. Times* with the same number of folds and sections placed in the same order, but with no print on it whatsoever. There is associated with this a vat of ink.

I must think this with my whole body.

Toes say/come up with:

Ankles say/come up with:

Shins say/come up with:

Knees say/come up with:

Thighs say/come up with:

Groin says/comes up with:

Chest says/comes up with:

Shoulders say/come up with:

Stop. — — — —

Try: Ankles and thighs and chest and neck and eyes let say:

Or: Coordinated through shoulders and chest and knees and toes and wrists and elbows this gets said:

— Labor. These differ as to labor. It took far more labor to produce **A** than to produce **B**.

— Information. **A** conveys a great deal more information than does **B**.

— Decision. The number of decisions that were involved in the producing of **A** greatly exceed those that were necessary for the making of **B**.

— Perceptual landing sites. **A** has far more markings that are recognizable perceptual landing sites (for the sighted) than does **B**. Of course it is not as though **B** is a non-something; it has, of course, numerous possible perceptual landing sites of its own; it can be touched, smelled, felt, heard and seen; but the majority of the visual perceptual landing sites of **B** are not involved with the written word, with signs, as are those of **A**.

— **A** is more structured and more thought out on many different levels than is **B**.

— **A** is a current version of the narrating of the world/a world/some worlds. **B** is to some extent more timeless, but not much.

— The way **A** differs from **B** is a good argument for the existence of an exterior world: no one could hold onto **B** and dream or image onto it all that **A** has printed on it.

— **B** is a complex enough tabula rasa. Either it is meant to receive all that is on **A** or it is meant to receive a completely different set of news items. Perhaps it was never meant to be anything other than what it is. **B**, except for its having been cut up and folded and, to a certain extent fully formed, remains all potential. It is blank, ready to be filled with anything that comes to mind. Of course, anyone who wanted to fill some paper with whatever came to mind might as easily choose to use **A**, simply treating it as if it were blank.

— The actions that both **A** and **B** invite, the selecting, the unfolding, the sitting back with, etc., are far different from those an on-screen computer version of the *Times* might call up; this third comparison causes **A** and **B** to grow to have, in relation to the actions of a person, in relation to the range of possible timespatial positionings of a person, a slightly greater similarity than they at first appeared to have.

— **B** at least escapes the inevitable (perhaps not so inevitable) ethnocentricity of **A**. In which case, **B** might be thought of as the grounds for a long overdue reconfiguring.

Think this through again in a month or two?

.....

On the way to reducing everything to a diagram / prior to an extreme reduction:

I take wet cement and surround it with cotton. The cotton holds the wet cement mass. I pull the large pieces of absorbent cotton to move the wet cement and give it form. Some of the cotton gets pushed into folds in the cement. I use cement and cotton to make what I gradually begin to think of as thick diagrams. But the maximal diagram should be thick in a different way.

.....

The notebook page smells like me or like someone else.

I prefer not to have to go down at all in scale to enter a notebook.

It would be best to have notebook pages that were no smaller than a wall of an average-sized room.

The large paintings — each year they get larger — are for me as if pages of a notebook.

In any case, *painting is always only an exercise*.

.....

SHAPE + PLACE = almost individual.

Always we are used-up texture, then we become texture. . . .

I thought that in my culture there was a particularly strong feeling for texture, for the texture of things, but I notice in you, in your culture, an equally strong feeling for this. But surely some cultural differences are textural differences. Probably the strong link with texture is present in any culture, but the nature and feel of texture changes from one culture to another.

The texture through which we distinguish amongst textures: critical sensibility.

.....

It has been said that the sense of the sign is a middle between the sensible and the intelligible, as the Kantian schema is a sensible concept in the imagination.

That :

the sense of sign

lies midway between

sensible / intelligible ,

just as

the Kantian schema

in / for imagination

is a sensible concept ,

a concept to be sensed or perceived

Or :

in / for the imagination

the Kantian schema a concept that's sensed
and that , similarly ,
the sign
lies midway between
sensible / intelligible a conceptual bit that's sensed

The terms “sensible” and “intelligible” although useful here are underdefined and might ultimately be eliminated. Could we, in the first place, ever really have cognition, or any conceiving, apart from the sensible, apart from a sensing? Of course thought is an act of sensibility. The sensible knows (Which “know” is this? — know A, know B, know C, etc.?). The intelligible: what comes out of the tangling, untangling, disentangling of events in perceiving / sets of perceptual landing sites? Construct this!

.....

The most critical sensibilities know themselves to be fundamentally communal.

.....

When sizeless ,
where unrecognizable temperatures cleave
or behave in a similar way to cleaving ,
the modulation of such behavior
may establish that degree
which is a field
which signals any predication

(to name ,
to think ,
to cleave) .

.....

Circumventing events and messages, not fielding them fully and directly, leads to, among other things, a loss of sincerity. If you are at a loss as to what's happening, how can you be sincere about it. Nevertheless people believe they are sincere. If they believe they are sincere, then they are, to some degree. We must begin then to think in terms of a sincerity A, a sincerity B, a sincerity C, etc.

Or is it that I have to live far more “fragmentedly” than do the non-deafblind, but that I find continuity/sincerity by letting myself become totally multiple, letting one fragment after another serve as the whole of me?

.....

Blank is a successive set of events and a method. It is not, for example, as is Emptiness, something that people are asked to believe in or that requires a leap of faith. Although not the opposite of Emptiness, blank, in its dailiness, stands in sharp contrast to this. Blank goes along

humbly supplying itself to whatever would appear to be in need of it, whatever would seem to have something to ask of it. It is what supplies blankness to whatever has been left blank. Blank supplies neutrality. As long as an area or an interval remains (filled with) blank, it can be thought of as being open and unassigned. Certainly blank makes the tabula rasa replete with fullness. Blank may, in the end, be what fills Emptiness. Blank and the Vacuum alike field indiscernibles, but always only through blank.

A “fiction of place” or “I” forms, in conjunction with blank, a spacetime that gets killed or used up by the species as a whole. Blank is equally Western and non-Western.

.....

A few days ago I asked the meaning of the word “love.” I had found a few early violets in the garden and brought them to my teacher. She tried to kiss me but I do not like to have any one kiss me except my mother. Miss Sullivan put her arm gently round me and spelled into my hand, “I love Helen.”

“What is love?” I asked.

She drew me closer to her and said, “It is here,” pointing to my heart, whose beat I was conscious of for the first time. Her words puzzled me very much because I do not understand anything unless I touch it.

I smelt the violets in her hand and asked, half in words, half in signs, a question which meant, “Is love the sweetness of flowers?”

“No,” said my teacher.

Again I thought. The warm sun shone on us.

“Is this not love?” I asked, pointing in the direction from which the heat came, “Is this not love?”

It seemed to me that there could be nothing more beautiful than the sun, whose warmth makes all things grow. But Miss Sullivan shook her head, and I was greatly puzzled and disappointed. I thought it strange that my teacher could not show me love.

Today I was stringing beads of different sizes in symmetrical groups — two large beads, three small ones, and so on. I made many mistakes, and Miss Sullivan pointed them out again and again with gentle patience. Finally I noticed a very obvious error in the sequence and for an instant I concentrated my attention on the lesson and tried to think how I should have arranged the beads. Miss Sullivan touched my forehead and spelled with decided emphasis, “Think.”

In a flash I knew that the word was the name of the main process going on in my body. This was my first conscious perception of an abstract idea.

For a long time I was still — I was not thinking of the beads in my lap, but trying to find a meaning for “love” in the light of this new idea. The sun had been under a cloud all day, and there had been brief showers; but suddenly the sun broke forth in all its southern splendour.

Again I asked my teacher, “Is this not love?”

“Love is something like the clouds that were in the sky before the sun came out,” she replied. Then in simpler words than these, which at that time I could not have understood, she explained:

“You cannot touch the clouds, you know; but you feel the rain and know how glad the flowers and the thirsty earth are to have it after a hot day. You cannot touch love either; but you feel the sweetness that it pours into everything. Without love you would not be happy or want to play.”

The beautiful truth burst upon my mind — I felt that there were invisible lines stretched between my spirit and the spirits of others.

.....

Kinaesthetic graphically: a sense of how things are or should be graphically positioned that is derived not from a seeing of the world but from body’s kinaesthetic-proprioceptive-tactile matrix.

I: everywhere relational to how and where I find (my) perceiving landing.

It goes or feels all over the self as I. Neighborly unto itself.

All feeling has form — this form through which. . . . Body — how extensive?

.....

Every spacetime mass energy proceeds	(proceed me this day)
as a fragment : it may have	
form ,	(antimatter included)
or be formless ,	(yet not less rigid than jello)
or be in a forming state .	

It may be either

a chunk of some solidity	a chunk of some solidity
or a length of a stream ,	
or both at once ,	
or the whole stream topologically placed , considered .	

.....

When using this poem by the 13th-century Zen master Dogen as evidence:

Mind’s no solid
One can touch or see
Dew, frost

I misquoted it as: Mind’s solid
One can touch or see
Dew, frost

To think out the difference:

Mind’s no solid one can touch or see, Dew, Frost.

(A) Mind is not a solid

-(B) Not a solid one can see or touch, mind or mindbody should be taken as more as, if solid, a transitional one, more as a move towards solidness (in every sense of the word, including “able to be counted on”) than as an arrival at any solidity; as to the nature of something of this order,

both dew, as the condensation of vapor to liquid, and frost, as the congelation of liquid to solid, point the way.

(C) Not something solid on its own, mind-mindbody's more like dew or frost here and there, everywhere, on things (and also, as things); and it is, above all, the solid (generally able to be depended on, repeatable) perceiving of solids or of anything.

When it comes to: Mind's solid one can touch or see, Dew, Frost

(B) and (C) hold, (A) does not. Do we have in this, then, the shorter, more direct version?

In any case, this is what I was in need of when I was writing Chapter 19, *The Texture of Distance at Point Blank*. The word "soul," which had come into the text with a section of von Kleist's "On the Puppet Theater," had, as far as I was concerned, to be done away with and to be replaced with the word "mind," but with "mind" thoroughly imbued with the sense of body. If mind were to be, once and for all, body, it had to be named a solid. This led me headlong into my error. But something else did as well, and that was my knowing that only a few paragraphs further on in my text I would be using another Zen master poem to warn against (a von Kleistian) perfectionism; the poem declares that, if you're lured to watch them, even moonlit dewdrops can be like a wall before the truth. Dew became for me, through these words, incredibly solid.

I think our having spoken of spacetime as proceeding as a fragment, and of a fragment of space as at times being, among other things, a chunk of some solidity, also predisposed me to the idea of mind as a solid. Spacetime is perceiving and perceiving is mind. That Einstein had declared spacetime to be structured and rigid, as least as rigid as jello — which was something we had discussed numerous times — also led me into this.

Over a period of five years, I must have read over Chapter 19 at least ten times without ever discovering the missing "no."

Only when I was re-checking my sources did I find this error. I was astonished to find that I had taken someone else's (a great master's) words in evidence, but not at all, quite the opposite.

Then I discovered that since each of the two poems had in them more of a "yes" towards "mind's being a solid" than a "no," they could be lived (heard, felt, read) as the same — or as close to the same as there could ever be any need of — if I remembered (located) all of the poem except for the intrusive "no" in one part of my body while faithfully keeping the "no" occurrent in another part, a part far below where the rest of the words were assembled. I could read the poem and feel the "no" to be there and not be there at once. The "solid of mind" lies in the coordination of body or in the body's coordinating of events.

.....

To and From Plenum

As I kept making verses
and syllable upon syllable jumped with a hopping,
I had to laugh suddenly, laughed

a quarter-hour long.
You a poet? You a poet?
Has your head become that sick?
— "Yes, round neighbor, you are a poet,"
shrugs the Voiced Figure.

So that disturbance
will not outdo the strangeness
choking us
in its virid
closeness that roves,
we can expand the limits of *stable*
or call the crystalline figure
deformed.

Whom am I awaiting here in the bushes?
For whom am I lying in ambush like a robber?
Is it a maxim? An image? In a moment,
my heft of a host, out-pliant in triplicate, pounces on it.
Anything that runs and leaps immediately
the thinker sticks it appropriately into a feeling.
— "Yes, robust fragility, you are a critical poet,"
shrugs the Blind Woodpecker.

Words, cold or warm, I think, are just like arrows?
See the kicking, the tremor, the jumping
when the arrow penetrates into the noble parts
of the lizard's little body!
Who is putting wishes into my potato? —
so that the poem not slip away again for a second or third
time before it has had a chance to exist.

Ah, you'll die of it poor wretches,
or you'll die as if you're drunk!
A throw of dice will never abolish chance!
— "Yes, tearful engine, you are a poet,"
shrugs the Something-Or-Other.
But — tomb of chance! — if the entire world
were reconstructed so as to support that
throw of dice as integral to

and formative of world entire
that would equal the abolishing of chance,
or at least, of mortality.

2 x 2 = 12 billion
(Soft) A + (Loud or Hard) B = (less bitter) C

As I kept making languages
and alphabets jumped with a hopping,
I had to laugh suddenly, laughed
a quarter-hour long.
You a poet? You a poet?
Has your head become that sick?
— “Yes, you are a lieutenant,”
shrugs the Voiced Figure.

.....

The tentative constructed plan
of person as site
will surround a person
with the form s/he takes each moment ,
the form a person takes at each moment ,
and will show
how many things any person holds in place at once
It would be better not to proceed at all .
It is absolutely necessary to proceed no matter what .

.....

These constructions will be the pretext for great and wide collaborative studies
into the nature of the mind of spacetime / into the scope and extent of the body of spacetime
/ into the spacetime of the nature of mind through body / into the spacetimemassenergy of the
mind of nature. They will invite speculativeness and draw it out, but they will also be constructed
in a way designed to keep speculation in check. We die because we are too speculative and we
die because we are not speculative enough; we die because we have not yet been able to learn
how not to die.
... to construct sensoria that will elude mortality.

Brave Light



his paper was delivered in June 1996
at the first annual conference on
Architecture and the Deafblind.

Form and Function for the Deafblind

or

An Introduction to a Projective-Envelope Architecture of Light

by Leslie Dhythers

Preliminary remarks

I present this as an informal study of architectural otherness.

Statement of purpose

To locate the architecture of the deafblind.

We find, in the following passage, Helen Keller stepping out to speak where speaking cannot ordinarily go; what she says sounds nearly right at first, that is, close to being well enough put:

It is not the stone walls that make it [the temple or church] large or small, but the brave soul's light shining round about.

I'd ask readers of this paper to spend a little while noticing how this passage strikes them before taking up my pointed remarks on it. With pivotal issues of this order, timing, of course, remains key. A neutral reading has already no doubt been compromised by my having brought this up in this way in the first place.

Usually a sentence designed to express what all expectations lead us to suppose this sentence to be saying would not typically be closed off by the two words, "round about"; rather, the single word, "within" ("the brave soul's light shining within") could be said to be the more obvious, and arguably the only obvious, choice. This sentence can be seen to work as a vortex because of the two words that have been chosen to end it. The speaker chooses the last two words to round off in as natural a way as possible her calm stating of a moral point. Unfortunately, the words selected for this purpose do not bring the proposition naturally to a close but open it up instead, turning it about, if not completely inside out, so that it becomes an unceasingly whirling, psycholinguistic and atmospheric vortex.

Generally, it is not outside a temple or a church but within it — either that or in entirely different surroundings — that a "soul" intensifies itself through prayer, so it is within not without these edifices that light of this order must be spoken of as shining. But evidently for Helen Keller, light that is a brave soul's presumably resists being placed snugly within walls. And yet she does not find this

light to be hugging the exterior either. The question then is, where is this light?

But upon coming to realize what a temple or church must be like for Helen Keller, we suddenly find ourselves admitting this ethico-religious assertion to be, from the speaker's point of view, at least, a natural and straightforward one. The vortex results from how disparate the writer's experience of things is from that of others. A careful look at why Helen Keller places this "light" where she does reveals much about how the deafblind field form and function.

She has fewer indications to go on than we do. We should then, when it comes to making suppositions about Helen Keller's experience of things, never take anything for granted. We must not even presume to think that we know what architectural largeness or smallness would be for her. For example, how much larger is this her large than that her small? And for how long a time will what's large stay large and what's small remain small? Presumably she stretches her measure as she goes along. When she's tired, for example, she can no longer expend the same effort to make the edifice, or whatever she constructs, large; at that moment, what's large shrinks, as it would, a little, for all of us, but with her probably much more so. This will no longer be the same large as moments ago. Mightn't she, in an effort to get things right, tend always to push this, her large, a little larger still and that her small, as she singlehandedly unanimously convenes that to be, ever a little smaller than what she might guess would be needed?

She regularly metes out the requisite vertical distances — many horizontal ones, too. Not being able to see where the envelopes she projects in response to what she supposes to be there land, and unable to field containing volumes by sound, she cannot resolve her constructions into forms that end. She springs tout de suite an envelope-

projection into action; and up that goes until it hits whatever she desires to be a culminating point of this her edifice.

She assigns “material” to beams that are open for all to see but of which she can only be told. Dutifully, to what she forms as beam, she imparts what she has, through the years, come to believe is wood. She has “materials” on hand for all occasions. Hardly a perceptual embrace goes by without one. I suspect her to be doing this in millimeters and grams rather than in feet and pounds.

If she doesn’t throw a tent up over the moon, as they say, she’ll probably proceed by laying course upon course of stone block to get to the top of this her edifice. She’ll use blocks of different sizes from one occasion to the next. She may elect to use streams of air, seeded or unseeded. But the blocks for now, the blocks.

The only blocks available to her for this are ones she makes herself, on the spot. These are blocks of attribution. Segments fill up with what she assigns to them. She must leave some segments blank. She requires numerous segments in this construction to have all the attributes of stone.

She piles high her blocks of attribution ... of stone. She manages to hold blocks of attribution up there, and further up there, and down here, too. She gently kicks the wall, notes the stone, and has the construction begin there. Or, in order to economize a bit, that is, to save herself some effort, she might begin the first course where her hands are touching the wall to confirm its presence and not even bother with any blocks below this.

She can form a wall from a few well-placed stones. The gaps will be filled in with skylike substance, neutral and un-imaged. She uses the same imaging momentum power that we do after all.

Or to avoid using individual blocks, she projects an enveloping

surface or surfaceness that will have blocks pre-set into it; she produces projective intimations, unfurling rolls of “textured wallpaper stone blocks.” More than a thousand stone blocks per enveloping? The stone blocks unroll a mile a minute. In this way, she’ll succeed in having an edifice in place in no time at all.

You can’t get into this flat entrance that the gliding, widely-cast envelope has now come around to bind as. It binds as flat entrance. Lyrical as a cheekbone on its way to becoming one, the envelope bounces out stillness, no longer waiting to be the cartoon of cartoon. You may have taken more than two or three steps in, but you haven’t entered anywhere and you can’t. As if the nose were trying to smell its own selfsame exterior — that kind of semi-impossibility.

*Odalisque
or Blank
Measure
(1984-85).*

As porous as can be, completely open to being passed through, these constructions can nonetheless be equally easily read as total obstacles, the art critic Nicolas Calas has pointed out. We come to a protruding corner of line-drawing blocks. An illusion this blatant perhaps ceases to be one. The blocks contain nothing to stop the beam of the gaze from passing through them. The perceiving texture (blank) fills all, empty and full alike.

*Instant
Absolute
(1986-87).*

*Up for Air
(1986).*

Vision assigns materiality to all it happens upon. It may be said to do this transitively by means of extension, at once bit by bit and in a flash.

It’s up to the sense of touch to confirm materiality. To the touch, materiality generally registers as impedance or limit, a stopping of passage through. Materiality offers resistance in a wide variety of ways.

Only the most extreme of hysterias might block all cathexes of palpability and make way for a total touch-blindness — or could this ever be? I think not. Always, out of the vast tissue expanse of a living organism, no matter how pervasively dulled by injuries or lapses this

may have become, some portion of the great haptic-kinaesthetic continuum of sensation must remain capable of making contact with contact. There's always some part left to feel the rest as numb. Any less than this and the organism would cease to be an organism.

Inescapably, in how Helen Keller makes an image, in how she images and forms the world, lies how we must. She'll often, even, as she is in the middle of constructing one edifice, interrupt herself to start up another one; she may then pursue the constructing of two different edifices simultaneously, choosing to keep them separate or combining them into one, or she may suddenly leave off one for the sake of the other.

To be alone with one's transitivity. How can I get this transitivity out of here, she must wonder. And still she cleaves.

Most of us can see transitively onto and across and past stones and posts, beams, vaulted ceilings, whatnot, sky and cloud; but Helen Keller lands her perceiving how? She's transitive onto what?

Still in evidence:

It is not the stone walls that make it [the temple or church] large or small, but the brave soul's light shining round about.

When she speaks of "brave soul's light" does she think of something akin to a halo? And would, paradoxically, halo turn out to be more actual for her than for us simply by virtue of its not being to her any more imagined than all the rest.

D. L. Gordon believes Keller assigns a light to everyone she meets. Nothing more, finally, than a radiating warmth, he adds. If she does indeed assign "light" or light to people and things, for how far out from them does she have this extend? It's equally probable that she's never lived this "brave soul's light" as anything but figurative. Who can say though that Ms. Keller's figurative is not literal ... for her. It then becomes a

question of, how abstract is her literal? Not only for her, but for us, too, the abstract dominates the real, or the literal, but few will admit it.

Remember, it's not that she's never seen light. She did live the first nineteen months or five hundred and seventy-five days of her life as someone who could see; this will have lingered on as an ancient light. She has reported having experienced light in dreams:

"Sometimes a wonderful light visits me in sleep. Such a flash and glory as it is! I gaze and gaze until it vanishes. I smell and taste much as in my waking hours; but the sense of touch plays a less important part."

This light is a resource:

"When my mind lags, wearied with the strain of forcing out thoughts about dark music-less, colorless, detached substance, it recovers its elasticity as soon as I resort to the powers of another mind which commands light, harmony, color."

I return then to the question of how light is shining in "brave soul's light shining": that light and its shining, imagined from scratch as they are, are perhaps seen as apart from one another, not the blend of sources which is what immediate perception presents us with [entoptic vision] nor that condensed immediacy, a blend as well, offered up in dream states.

Would Helen Keller simply assume the supposedly light-emitting "soul" to have a distinct shape, never bothering to make inquiries as to whether she was right about this.

As for "brave," which brave is this brave? In this context, even this relatively simple concept begs definition. "Brave" would have to be thought of as of an other order for someone living heroically such as she of whom we speak here. She lives according to this remarkable precept of her own invention:

The mortally wounded must strive to live out their days cheerfully for the sake of those around them.

The light must be at once inside and outside this edifice which would anyway be a more airy structure — most irregularly pocked through with holes — than any we have ever entered. We know this airiness to be made up of inadvertances, forgetfulness and indeterminateness.

The usual resistances, the thereness of materials, does not systematically impede in these private lofty walls. Transitively, she whispers, all edifices, why they are permeability itself — if, that is, I choose them to be.

“But no matter how determined we are to keep it in place, we cannot always do so.”

With this, as with so many other things, you, when doing it, can go on for just so long and then you must stop. You cannot keep on indefinitely erecting an edifice from scratch and maintaining it. It might be possible to do this for as long as it takes to make a sandwich or to brush your teeth, and possibly even a little longer, but not much longer.

The group of blind children were given by their teacher a wooden box to explore, ten feet square, without a lid. One child felt the inside and the outside carefully. Then with his palm still inside the box, he asked his teacher, “Teacher, is this the inside or outside? I have been touching it too long; now I am confused.”

And how high up on or along the edifice is it that this her surrounding of the surface inside and out with light is taking place? The light spreads in leaps, bounds, spurts, and crawls and in or by means of who knows what else. We find none of the usual limits built into this way of proceeding. Things become surrounded by light or suffused by light, or a bit of each. The light, having no particular place on which

to land, that is, no starting point, has no inherent limits and so can happen anywhere at all. Contrast this with the action depicted in Stevenson's famous verse about a swing. The action cannot escape or surpass that set of limits defining it. The chain's length sets a limit to how high up a child can swing. This far up and no higher and that's that, try as one might, and then down:

How I do like to go up in the air,
Up in the sky so blue,
Oh I do think it's the pleasantest thing
Ever a child could do.

Up in the air and down again
Until I can see so wide,
Mountains and rivers and valley and trees
Over the countryside
Up in the air and down

In direct contrast to this, in the Helen Keller passage we've been considering, light, constrained by the one who envisions it and by nothing else, abounds all over the place according to the distributive notion, "round about."

It is not the stone walls that make it [the temple or church] large or small, but the brave soul's light shining round about.

Light goes up either side of whatever has been made to stand there as edifice or it shoots as projective envelope straight "out and up" from the one who envisions it to be bathing a dome, flooding a vaulted ceiling, suffusing a sky that has had little or no roof inserted into it at all; once again, a lot of this could be happening all at once.

The constructed "light" behaves anyway like ours does, readily

bending to, or reflecting off of, all shapes it brushes by. But probably not to the full extent.

Softer than light. Inside, settling down, straight down to the ground, or rather, hovering? It might huddle up by the ceiling, fully and thoroughly suffusing only one far corner. No cynicism anywhere to be found. Or this light cuts off sharply before reaching any wall or corner. In this edifice (if I may say in), no corners to be found at all, either that, that is, or all corners.

To blindness belongs transitivity in the molten state.

Professor Perry Niedler's response to L. Dhythers's paper was delivered immediately after it in June of 1996 at the first annual conference on Architecture and the Deafblind.

**Form and Function for the Deafblind?/
Of What Are We (and Which "We" is This?) Speaking
When We Speak of a Projective-Envelope Architecture of Light?**
by Perry Niedler

Why should someone who purports to be considering from the outside, with some critical distance, the architectural experiences of the deafblind Helen Keller, tend so often to adopt her way of speaking? Whenever Helen Keller writes of her experiences, she invariably ends up describing an Arakawa painting. In Ms. Dhythers's paper we also find Arakawa paintings being described. Why this should be so remains a mystery; one that casts some doubt on the text's authenticity. A coherent text is made less so because of this doubt. Were Ms. Dhythers also deafblind that might give us something to go on in this regard. Then it might be argued that all people living the deafblind experience fall naturally into the habit of describing the events of their world in

terms of an Arakawa painting. But those who have checked for me tell me that, as far as they can tell, Ms. Dhythers is not deafblind.

All sentences, and, of course, all citations, form projective-envelopes, that's for sure; theoretically, then, the pursual of any single citation to its dogged limit should work to bring projective-enveloping to the fore. On one hand, I applaud Ms. Dhythers's decision to approach projective-enveloping through the narrow route. As counter-intuitive as this approach may be, nothing even comes close when it comes to revealing projective-enveloping in situ. On the other hand, I bemoan Ms. Dhythers's decision to use so narrowly a focused-in citation as the one she chooses. Indeed this particular citation, with its limited and restrictive terminology, constrains the envisioning process and enveloping. The citation, so constrained that it must distort, actually exemplifies that which Ms. Dhythers suggests to be the contradictory action to it, the action, that is, of the swing in the Stevenson verse. The citation Ms. Dhythers depends on impedes enveloping even as it demonstrates it.

The writer, enticed by the slight but constant open-endedness offered by the citation's syntax which can be found to be persistently unraveling ["round about" instead of the more usual "within"], intent on using this to demonstrate H. K.'s enveloping of an edifice, and of herself within this, commits herself to a vocabulary that's simply too tired and dated for a discussion of projective-enveloping. If we think about envelopings going on at great speeds and of these projective-envelopes as not being subjected to any of the usual, dreary limits or specifics of a directly perceivable edifice, why should anyone turn around and allow in limitation by bringing in the notion of architectural type, particularly that archaic type known as temple or church? I, for one, am opposed to any turning of the sometimes chaotic and

sometimes measured initiatives of projective-enveloping into temples or churches.

I pause here for a moment to say that I love the citation and that, even as I complain of its having been too tight a constraint, I am grateful to Ms. Dhythers for having hit upon it. I'd cite it here myself, were I not so wary of it or rather of its insufficiently far-reaching vocabulary.

It must be admitted that any accepting of architectural type, any thinking along the lines of one type or another brings with it, too, an imposed limitation as to scale. Who needs that? For all we know, the deafblind need edifices nine hundred or more miles high.

Deafblind architecture is not particularly notable if judged according to conventional standards of taste, aesthetics, or history, yet it constitutes a source of interest as a matter of coincidence and a matter of fact. There are no paradigmatic examples of particular periods, personalities or styles.

The projective-envelope architecture of light, which first of all begins as a deafblind architecture, invites a diffused awareness of the way its architecture facilitates, in fact requires, consideration of a vast array of objects (events, ideas, individuals, acts, urban forms, cultural values, economics, political beliefs). This is an architecture fraught with dependency, unable to assert itself as an autonomous, consistent form — or is it? The architecture therefore assumes a kind of effaced narrative form, structuring an as yet incomplete plot which depends upon the character of the one doing the projecting.

Here is a way to reverse the seemingly irreversible destiny of the modern subject. The structures through which we create worlds are not our eternal destiny. Though we are thrown into existence in such a way that conformity to a previously constituted symbolic order is unavoid-

able, the codes that condition perception and cognition are open to deliberate transformation.

The limits of perception are not absolute but are a function of an historically determined code that can be changed. To reform perception is to transform the architecture of the I. Since the world is not merely given but is constructed by the activity of the subject, the recoding of the I is the recreation of the world.

I suggest the following conversation, one that Helen Keller has admitted to having been a part of, as a far better point of departure for a paper having to do with the projective-envelope architecture of light.

“That light, I can’t move it. The receiving medium registers no less freewheeling than what moves upon it mark-leaving.”

“But I can’t move that light because it has to be placed exactly like that.”

“What exactitude do you seek? After all, the receiving medium registers no less freewheeling than what moves upon it mark-leaving.”

When I tried to put this in the form of a poem, I came up with two possibilities that I could live with:

Position through Positionality to Position

That light, I can’t move it. The receiving
medium registers no less
freewheeling than what moves upon it mark-leaving.

But I can’t move that light
because it has to be placed exactly like that.

What exactitude do you seek?
After all, the receiving medium registers no less
freewheeling than what moves
upon it mark-leaving.

Position through Positionality to Position

That light,
medium registers
no less freewheeling
than what
moves upon it
mark-leaving.

But I can't move
that light
because it has
to be placed
exactly like that.

What exactitude
do you seek?
After all, the
receiving medium
registers
no less
freewheeling
than what
moves upon
it mark-leaving.

It must be remembered that for the deafblind light need not always be light. Helen Keller testifies to this when she writes:

Whenever I weary of light as it must be, I go straight to cleaving by means of blank and micro-touch. The good thing about this "light" is that it doesn't need to get all lit up.

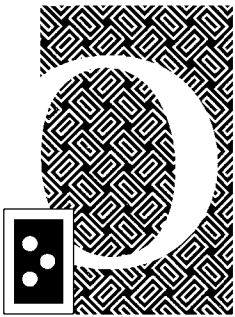
Her dark light encircles surfaces and makes them. She doesn't need to miss a beat or waste her time making light act as light. She metes it out dark enough.

Her edifice will be need-related, totally, and that's it. Start by thinking of the site for a reversible destiny construction as projected out simultaneously onto all planes of the triad of elemental paired opposites of orientational space [front-rear; above-below; left-right]; after determining site to be engageable on at least this many planes at once, proceed to allot to each of these site-planes this many and more additional, surrounding planes; by means of the continual assigning of a group of numerous surrounding or accompanying other planes to each new plane upon which the site must be recognized as also being situated, an initial sense of ubiquitous site might be arrived at.

Ubiquitous Site
(1989-90).

Infant Sensorium
(1989-90).

The March of the Transitive



n a vertical canvas something constructs itself out of its own lines. The form divides so as to become more distinctly itself. It is a form (a figure? a mold?) that is as suspended as [it is] standing. Bottomless is its own mask of self-division unmasked. Division has steadily woven a collecting shape of itself. Straightforward: this is an outline of what will come next born of what has been done. A wide this, wide-what-open,

Bottomless
(1962-64).

wide open throughout. Lines continue on past any suggestion of a base, always extending this even as they move out from it, touching bottom never. Marked out, it is as much an autobiography, any detailed event thereof, as an extreme close-up of an intimate organic process. It is procedural.

Opposites are well matched in me. In elimination, for example, my natural desire to release is counterbalanced by a wish to retain. I know what would be optimal; that would be for these to form out according to the measure of the containing tube wherein they do become so singularly what they are. I have plastic gloves to be used when determining suitability of droppings. I would not want to touch these smelly objects directly, and I am told that it might be dangerous to do so. Apparently, what's preferable is to have these be quite extensive. Mixed into their weave, I suspect, are some of my more inchoate intentions. As dainty as I am (even though I am large), there are periods during which I dream of nothing but the doing of this, every which way — how to make these land in their kerplop or be spread indiscriminately. I am told that that is a terribly good sign. This must be the sign of the maker — the maker as the one willing to mess with things. I have always found foul smells to be as inviting as they are nauseating.

I sit on something that seems to be, why yes, an anagram of my own shape. What a kind set of interesting contours. Suddenly they (or it) are at once exiting, or, if not, I must wait for numerous little disposable collectibles — all *within but between the numbers being counted* — to assemble to drop. It has been these that have, throughout the day, moved within nameless (also known as me) with a rumble and a grumble, poking and prodding about on behalf of the action now holding sway. In a moment, I'll cease talking so that what comes through me will as event be completely private. Throughout the day there has been a

weaving of many disparate elements into a one or, more accurately, into a few. Oh, the divinity of knitting. I refer to the knitting of actions and elements together into (and as) both function and form. Included among all the rest might be something on the order of a knitting of one's brow. First the brow in question must be found. Well, as Georg Groddeck has suggested, the lines or creases forming above the abdomen may be direct counterparts of the worry lines of the forehead, making that area the brow of the moment. The giant utensil upon which I sit feels cold.

I wonder if, in general, utensils feel colder to me than they do to you. I wonder if cold happens colder.

Negative myths get started: the East is only for mystics; in the East, mysticism rules, it has been suggested. Yet, if basic pragmatic life goes on in a region, as indeed it does in all regions, then perhaps that region has not quite the number of starry-eyed mystics it has been thought to have. Either that, or, what is one person's mysticism is another's pragmatic way of living. We might be tempted to argue that pragmatic life in that country with the greatest number of mystics must be fundamentally less pragmatic than elsewhere. Well, just because we are led to say this doesn't mean it's so.

The best example of a practical mystic, one who was arguably not a mystic at all, is the zen master Dogen (1200-1253). To him, "spiritual leader of the heavenly worlds" meant "the one to execute the transforming efficacy for sentient beings of the plain vegetable." Nothing's more practical than to do the cooking and to figure out how best to feed oneself and others. Yet cooking is more than just providing food. Dogen suggested the monastic kitchen be called, "the department of fragrances"; he, also, in a defiant act of serious humor invented a god of the toilet.

There are many more strands to the East's culture than there are to the non-East's. Unfortunately, the non-East is forever reducing these down to be read only within its own narrow frame. It's not that the East's contributions have been too sparse but that they have been too plentiful. Every person in the non-East has a pulse; but in the East, it's not a matter of one pulse but of a dozen. Acupuncture theory assigns to each person six specific pulses per wrist, three just below the skin and three directly below these, for a total of twelve. I am aware of at least this many pulses, and so I wonder why the non-East never came up with these. In the East, physicians discern numerous different qualities of pulse, speaking not only of the pulse as being thin, strained, or feeble but of finding it grainy, ropy, lumpy, feathery, sticky and puddinglike, and more.

Many have declared the East irrational in its ways. Whatever did the East's inhabitants do with reason anyway? Let's see. Reason, or what was once known as Logos, translates into Japanese as "dori"; this, dori (Logos or forming principle) [道理], is in Buddhist tradition used to underscore at least four types of reason; these are reason of relation [kandai-dori: 觀待道理]; reason of causation [sayu-dori: 作用道理]; reason of cognition [shojo-dori: 誠成道理]; and reason of nature [honi-dori: 法爾道理]. The non-East would recognize these divisions, too. Certainly the pre-Socratics had similar divisions for Logos. In relation to honi-dori, or the reason of nature, consider, for example, this anonymous fragment included in Freeman's *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*: "Eumaeus, wisdom is not in one thing only, but everything that lives also has understanding. For the female group, hen, if you will closely observe, does not give birth to living offspring, but sits on eggs and causes them to have life. But Nature alone knows how it is with this Wisdom, for she is self-taught." In the East, reason is not isolated out

or put on display as a single, special process, but rests instead everywhere in how things and thoughts proceed.

To show this, it's hard to know where even to begin. But more than once it has occurred to me that this might be accomplished simply by taking a discursive look at the mark known as “shinnyu” [進]. It should be noted that this mark is an element in the first of the two characters making up the word for reason in Japanese, dori, [道理], that is. Taken alone, the first character of this pair is the word for path or way; it is the Tao. Let scholars, if they like, treat of the other elements in these ideograms for way and reason; I, for my part, need only the shinnyu radical. By means of this, I will make the case for the strong presence of logic and reason in the East. I find this mere slip of an element, all inverted molehill and no mountain to speak of, to have more ramifications in its tiny bit of a graphic drop-kicked positioning than does almost anything else on this rich-poor hearth of a planet. Shinnyu [進], even as it holds my attention, depicts “the holding of my attention.” I feel the embossed version, and, for that matter, the carved-out version, of the shinnyu radical, to be a mold of the sweep of concentration. I know it as a slipping along and a having slid through of — how shall I say it — of a group of ink particles into their own loosely backboned (by me) passage. As you can see, it tells me something that is almost abstract, but calling this that it tells me abstract would be like calling snakes abstract. Now that would be a fine practical joke on corporeality — to pull all of body out from under it.

In the East, shinnyu-containing characters or “kanji” can be found everywhere, I am told, on trucks, freight cars, and elevators. Shinnyu signals that something's being transported. To the extent that perception is thought to have to do with a transporting of stimuli or of information, shinnyu might be expected to have something to

do with that as well. Let us see.

A subsisting of a sense of continuity [renzokusei: 連続性] all the while something's getting moved from here to there, or from there to here, shows in shinnyu. A course's having been pursued and an initiative's having been enjoined reside permanently in shinnyu.

That which gets carted to me or that which I cart to me acts upon me. Shinnyu is able to convey this too, that is, the carry-over that is transitivity. All actions under its aegis are transitive ones (some say all actions are transitive), and shinnyu gives a sense of this. Shinnyu, perhaps because of the evident wavering out of which it has been shaped and that is its shape, seems absorbent, permeable and enterable. We are consequently given to know or to remember that: as the writing implement was moved, particle was hitting up against or into particle (of ink, of brush or pen, of paper); the positioning of each particle of ink influenced numerous particles in its vicinity. In this, everywhere and all along and within these lines, we find more than a hint of transitivity.

Even as it sits on the left, still has it passed over to and landed with its tail on the right; and that's where its tail remains, off to that side. Have we here a blind spot that's been stepped on? Or does shinnyu recline on its side and what we see of it is only a side view? Yet another little, idling odalisque? — not likely, for with this interpretation all transport ceases and little movement remains.

In Chinese, its language of origin, shinnyu denotes both a “going” and a “pausing.” Thus as well as movements, it contains the inevitable pauses. It must have also to do with those movements going on within the pause. Grapheme and action for which it stands breathe millimeter by millimeter and by the nanosecond through each other. If deformations occur, they are those brought on by the human hand. It must be

remembered that this is not an easy sign to write or draw. Nonetheless millions of people form it on a daily basis. In cultures in which ideograms are used, pictorial abstraction enters people's sensibilities through the graphemes. I may have said before that it's not quite accurate to think of shinnyu as an abstraction, but, yes, it's not that it's not one either. Of course shinnyu's an abstraction; it's just not only an abstraction or it's an overflowing abstraction or a stretchable one.

Reciprocal relations anchor abstractions. One of the paths to abstraction is through the logic inherent to the actions of daily living. Abstraction goes on constantly within daily living, only we tend not to recognize this. Why are we so unsure of our abstracting skills, inasmuch as we have so much practice in abstracting?

Movement. Something is fixed in place so as to be in a position to be pulled or stretched or to move gradually with no slipping and sliding. All the universe is pulling at itself at a force equal to G multiplied by all the masses in question divided by the squares of all the distances between these. These are the inertial engagement-considerations, the world caught in its own catching: that pulling against and across the grain that is traction; that pulling off and passed traction that amounts to a hypothetically pervasive transitivity.

Shinnyu [𐰇], it parses movement as well as the what-has-been-moved. In its elemental graphic connectedness, I note the effectuating of a transport.

The presence of shinnyu in “to transport” [unso suru: 運送する], “to transmit” [soha suru: 送波する], and in “to convey” [denso suru: 伝送する] allows these to be seen as differing from one another basically only in regard to type of vehicle (or medium) employed. Shinnyu: the expediter.

Marking the perusal of a furthering along, shinnyu works as what

might be called a concept-extender; it is not the only Eastern grapheme to do so.

Not unexpectedly, shinnyu's there within the verb "to use," [tsukau: 遣う]; for, "to use," too, involves a pursual; here we have the pursuing of a course of action, a putting to use, or a finding out of how to put such and such to use. In a lovely little turnabout, "tsukau or ken," to use, which, as noted, contains shinnyu, ends up, when in combination with "fude," brush [筆], extending it so that the pair denotes brushwork, "fudezukai" [筆遣い - "zukai" is a suffixial form of "tsukau"]; shinnyu generates brushwork even as the brushwork generated shinnyu. Shinnyu: brushworked.

Other cases suggestive of a "concept-extender" role for shinnyu are: "bunken" [分遣] in which the notion of a "part" [bun: 分] becomes extended into or intensified to the point of becoming "a detachable something" or "a detail"; "kokorozukai" [心遣い] in which the pursuing of actions involving heart or mind [kokoro: 心] leads to a "taking into consideration" or "solicitude;" in "omoiyari" [思い遣り] a "thinking about" [思う] that continues to be pursued, becomes "sympathy" or "compassion;" in "ikizukai" [息遣い], a "breath" goes on to become "breathing;" with "kotobazukai" [言葉遣い], a combining of kotoba, "word," with tsukau "to use," extends "word" out figuratively into "wording or expression." The related case of "kizukai" [気遣い] will be taken up in a different context.

Definitive proof of shinnyu's not being primarily for physical things is that upon its being added to the simple and straightforward ideogram for "insert" [ireru: 入れる], events take an immediate turn for the mental; "komu" [込む], the ideogram thus formed, signifies "to concentrate on" or "to devote oneself to." If shinnyu didn't have a "transitive edge of transitivity" to it, it's unlikely that an ordinary case

of insertion could so readily be made to indicate an intense mental focus. Shinnyu pushes and prods an insertion of somebody into himself or herself and further into the heart of transitivity; this leads nowhere except to a devotion to being led somewhere. The tentative feeler that is shinnyu inserts itself further into and through the transmission that it, in exempifying, describes. In this way, there builds up a momentum for almost nothing or for the being devoted to transmission for its own sake. A more wide-ranging, or a more intensely atmospheric, devotion grows to be present when komu, concentration, is next taken and added to thought [kangae: 考え], and “deep in thought or meditation,” [kangaekomu: 考え込む] spreads throughout the thinking field. Komu, led by its shinnyu to do what it does, succeeds in pushing a number of words farther in their implications and as it “pushes their envelope,” as the saying goes, it pushes them mental: thus the term for, “to strike” [tataku: 叩く], becomes intensified by komu into to inculcate [tatakikomi: 叩き込み]; “to blow” [fuku: 吹く] inflates with the help of komu (to devote oneself to; to concentrate) to become “to inspire” [fukikomi: 吹き込み]; and the rear end [shiri: 尻], starting out so decidedly physical, once it’s combined with komu indicates a concentrated inserting towards the back (of the organism), or, more smoothly and routinely, “a shrinking back into oneself” [shirigomi: 尻込み — gomi — inflected suffixial form of komu]; shinnyu leads the way through sensibility out toward the back of the world. If, during this inserting of a self into itself, or more simply, during one’s receding into oneself, an impulse to be moving in a direction counter to this should get started, with perhaps a little wavering in regard to which course to follow, it would not be surprising to find shinnyu there, too, within this hesitation [shunjun: 逡巡].

Of all the ideograms in which shinnyu appears, “tsujiru” [通じる],

“to lead to,” would seem to speak shinnyu’s message most directly. Shinnyu shows in its form “a leading to”; always this leads to and from the thinking field. This host ideogram for shinnyu [tsujiru: 通じる] can be read as not only a “leading to” but as a “getting through to,” that is, as the successful transport of information; it also denotes a “making of oneself understood,” as well as “being understood,” i.e. the constructing of insight or the constructing of that situation most conducive to an insight’s being had. It could have been predicted that shinnyu, as a major factor within tsujiru — which does, after all, suggest a thorough extending out of all implications — would turn up as an element in the word for clairvoyance, but who would have expected it to turn up in both instances of this in Japanese. On one hand, tsujiru leads out through paths in every direction from the eye [gan: 眼] of heaven [ten: 天] to give us “clairvoyance” [tenganstu: 天眼通]. On the other hand, vision (the power to see) [shiryoku: 視力] gets pulled [引] by shinnyu into an unrelenting sight that can see where all other vision cannot, i.e. take things in clairvoyantly [toshiryoku: 透視力].

Shinnyu both figures transport and effects figurative transport. It can never forget transitivity, for that’s built into it.

Shinnyu may signal rote (or not so rote) pursual of transport, but it also has to do with the encircling of areas, with any projecting out for the sake of an enclosing, and with, as well, all circulating around and about within regions. It is in shinnyu’s nature always to be simultaneously involved in both an enclosing and a flowing through and away. The verb “megarasu” [巡] with the help of its shinnyu denotes all the actions mentioned in this paragraph.

“All lines have something to do with enveloping; lines envelop areas of light and they are enveloped by areas of light. Similarly, all actions have something to do with enveloping. Actions cause areas of light to

be enveloped. Actions also envelop other actions and micro-actions.”

“No matter how hard I try to recollect [omoimegarasu: 思い巡らす], (from “omou” [思ふ], to think, and “megarasu,” to surround) what happened that morning, nothing comes back.”

“What? What thinking are you trying to surround with still more thinking or some other action or actions so that by this framing something might rise up and become apparent as in ‘to recollect’?”

“Oh don’t be so weblike, or get out from between my fingers wherever you can!”

The first mark of traction scars the transition from the literal to the figurative by means of a primal scratch or abrasion [sakkasho: 擦過傷].

Shinnyu’s there as a reminder even within discontinuity [hirenzokusei: 非連続性]. It remains in evidence, even when it’s a question of the losing of one’s way [mayou: 迷う]. Upon transitivity’s becoming itself lost, [mayou: 迷う], people fall unconscious. With a simple misplacing of transitivity, they’ll wander about perplexedly [mayowaseta: 迷わせた]. Shinnyu is like the little tag end of transitivity that sticks out. Pull the little tag end to escape confusion [konran wo sakeru: 混乱を避ける]. Superstition [meishin: 迷信] is nothing but belief [shin: 信] gone astray [mayoi: 迷い]. A place guaranteed to lead one astray: the labyrinth [meiro: 迷路].

A mark, a vestige [ato: 迹]. Out of which, each time, as the elapsing of that time [jikan ga sugiteiku: 時間が過ぎていく], transitivity [hensensei: 変遷性] gushes [tobashi: 迸].

A crossroads [tsuji: 辻] stitching together of coherency [tsujitsuma: 辻縷] and consistency [sujimichi: 筋道], shinnyu is what gets pulled along through continuity [renzokusei: 連続性]. Continuity need not be thought of as having been lost track of because there’s been some hesitation; on the contrary, continuity streaks right across even the

most hesitant [逡巡] of moves.

Naturally, it might have been guessed that shinnyu would be a way of extending “ki” [氣], spirit, and be a way of playing up and playing down or of transposing the inherent transitivity of that. This group includes “kizukai” [氣遣い], anxiety, fear or worry; “kiokure” [氣遅れ], timidity, diffidence; “kichigai” [氣違い], insanity; and “kihaku” [氣迫], vigor.

Also included within shinnyu’s semantic domain or within the narrative that springs up with the forming of a shinnyu-envelope within Eastern graphology are:

I.

jutsu/noboru [述]: state, mention, refer to, explain

tatsuben [達弁]: fluency, eloquence

haku/semaru [迫]: to urge (someone)

II.

totetsu [透徹]: translucency

toumei [透明]: transparency

kasokudo [加速度]: acceleration

III.

keika [経過]: lapse

kashutsu [過失]: lapse

IV.

sujimichi [筋道]: logic

godo [悟道]: spiritual enlightenment

dotoku [道徳]: morality

V.

endo	[煙道]: flue
suido	[水道]: tunnel
kido	[軌道]: trajectory
kodo	[黃道]: ecliptic
mukido	[無軌道]: trackless

VI.

idenshi	[遺伝子]: gene
idengaku	[遺伝学]: genetics
iden	[遺伝]: hereditary

The following shinnyu paragraph is the result of a perusal of a modern Chinese dictionary. Every sentence within this paragraph contains shinnyu; that is, each sentence can be said to be within the shinnyu-envelope (i.e. within shinnyu's projected-out domain). The paragraph is not to be read for coherency but for shinnyu or transitivity.

I have traveled all over the province. I have read the book twice from cover to cover. It blossomed everywhere. Please say it again. Hand over the paper, please. She tipped someone the wink, that is, she winked at her. On the long march, the Red army climbed snow-topped mountains and plodded through grasslands. The motor boat cut across swift currents and skirted dangerous reefs. Shakhyamuni is the name of the historical Buddha. When leaving the city, take the tunnel. These shoes are waterproof. The peaches are quite ripe (ripeness has penetrated the peaches). We met by chance. The moon was hidden by clouds. Spread a plastic sheet over the thresher. A crow's wings can never shut out the sunlight. Here you find railways extending in all directions. This is a through train to Shanghai. What made him blurt out such a remark? Sparks flying in all directions.

The shinnyu-containing ideograms of the above paragraph are:

bian: 遍 : all over, everywhere

oi: 递 : hand over, pass

guo: 过 : cross

jia: 迦 : Shakyamuni

suidao: 隧道 : tunnel

jou: 透 : penetrate, pass through, seep through

xiehou: 邂逅 : chance

zhe: 遮 : cover, hide

da: 达 : extend

beng: 迸 : sprout, burst forth

Shinnyu and the like can thus be seen to have carried the logic and reason of the East forward throughout the grapheme-structured world.

By means of the little patches of transitivity that are shinnyu, the world's pinned down (but moving) as to mobility and form.

It is worth noting that the line drawn by someone who has lived daily with shinnyu and the like will be differently informed from that of someone who has not.

An Arab proverb: "That is thy world in which thee find thy self." Then is that it, done and done? Must I admit to these limitations and have done with it? This rings less of dead end than you might think. No, for if you allow this proverb thoroughly to sink in, it will lead you to find more and more exactly where you are. Knowing to the best of your ability exactly where you are builds fortitude. It is important to know where you can exist and act and where you cannot.

Before you can change the world, you must accept the fact that you are in it as found. The more you figure out about how you are in it the better.

Learn to apply this saying to everything, across the board, down to the minutest detail and it will give you, as it has given me, great strength.

The following passage from the writings of the Zen patriarch Dogen helped me work out my way of thinking about this:

“There are not yet scholars who grasp this truth [of the flowers of emptiness] clearly. They fail to understand the flowers of emptiness, because of their ignorance of emptiness. Owing to their incomprehension of the flowers of emptiness, they are unacquainted with a dim-sighted man (eijin), do not see him, do not meet him. They are not blear-eyed men. Upon encountering a blear-eyed man, one can understand and see the flowers of emptiness. . . . They know only that the sky-flowers exist because of eyes’ dimness, but not the truth that dimness of sight is dependent on the flowers.”

Diving through this I get: “that in which thee find thyself is completely thy world in all and every one of its particulars.” This involves a strategic positioning of all the particle-waves of the world as mosaic. Flowers of emptiness have specific shapes ... and functions. They hold and maintain the exact nature of the lack in blear-eyed people like me.

My non-seeing and non-hearing are actively constructed into my particular weave (and weaving) of transitivity. Albeit some of my flowers of emptiness may be other people’s shinnyus. Or are these flowers of emptiness shinnyus, too, but of a different order? I have perceiving texture and that is transitive onto something, even if that be onto “only the universe.” The “empty flowers” represent one set of positions amongst hosts of positions outlined by perceiving texture in its transitive process. [The empty set of contemporary non-Eastern logic and linguistics could be said to have been known in the East, then,

more than six hundred years ago.]

There is an advancing [susumu: 進む]. To send something [okuru: 送る] or to transfer something [sotatsu-suru: 送達する]. It changes [tagaeru: 変える]. Columns of dots at either end of the canvas and below these we read: *Draw your eyes back and forth between these dots to connect* [tsuraneru: 連ねる] *them into whatever lines you want.* To approach something [chikazuku: 近づく] and to reach that point [made: 迄]. The making of something [tsukuru: 造る]. To follow [ou: 追う].

*Detail
of . . .
(1969).*

• • •

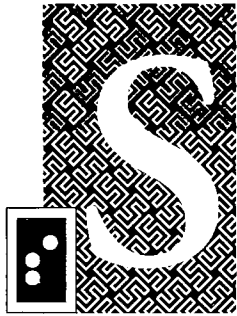
“I think it would be a mistake to include this here.”

“Everything about shinnyu?”

“Because someone happens to be Japanese doesn’t mean you have to talk about Japanese things.”

“I needed this as an example of communal pictorial intelligence.”

What Happened Where?



Someone takes the tickets from me. I covet the stubs. Every event has its own stub profile. I take a certain joy in running my fingers along these edges. Next we are led to where we have chosen to sit.

We select seats that will place me as near as possible to the center of the proceedings. I find this important, because it helps me visualize in a circle, and immediately after that, in

a sphere. You see the stage for me is not merely the stage. As always, I have the option of a wide-open focus, as much as three-hundred-sixty degrees, and over and around the other way.

The thrill of an ordered crowd. Each one seated as if in an ejection seat. I feel the humming textures of theater-goers all around me. So much to attend to, and I've not yet even begun to consider the stage.

In the theater, soon after I've been seated, and I've had, for example, a chance to consider such things as average rate of heartbeat, it is often this poem that comes back to me:

MIDDLEGROUND

An eye closes

In the dark fast against the wall the thought that does not emerge

Ideas leave step by step

We could die

That which I hold in my arms could depart

Background

Dawn hardly born is ended

How anonymous is this distance that is texture?

How anonymous is this distance that is texture?

How anonymous is this distance that is texture?

The full theater wants me to work as a kaleidoscope of fictions of place. I cast forward to the proscenium a good thirty-five feet, perhaps thirty-five and one-half feet. How, at my head, it feels at the temples that are its borders — this same shape I lend to the proscenium arch. If it is feet and inches I'm working in, I have thirty-five segments or slices to handle in the forward direction. I must, if I am to keep the proscenium in place, maintain my vertical sections of sheets, as it were, of thin air, screen after screen. I erect these only provisionally, a full

stack of these. But, of course, the proscenium has a tendency to slide forward with intervening sections becoming dislocated and slipping away, witness theater history which shows the proscenium of the ancient theater to have been the area between the “scene” or background and the orchestra, that is, the area on which the action would take place, i.e., the stage. Now for the modern theater the proscenium sits between curtain or drop-scene and orchestra. Even so, not only does the background never go away, it is, is it not, of an ever-increasing size (toward sizeless). This background comes back around, or has gone back around, fully the center of my forming, I suspect.

Foreground wants to draw near to forehead, for you too? At the immediate front. I believe the word for forehead or brow in French is “front.” To bring it up close until it hits the forehead. It is in front of me; it is the front of me. These are distinctions I have to work very hard to make. My proscenium has a round feel to it similar to how my forehead or brow feels to the palm of my hand.

My forehead is like a blank screen that proceeds step by step out from me and back towards me. I like to think of the forehead in a more extensive way than it is usually conceived of. I believe that in those with non-active eyes the forehead extends, if not for the whole length of the nose, at least for two-thirds of the way down along it. This may have also been the way the forehead was lived behind visors in medieval times.

Then this is the front I am projecting — at least part of it. And I do much the same for the sides and the back as well. I send out cleaving agents. I stand in for anything I come across. Before I can represent the drama, I must represent the place.

The walls are bowed. Six ranks of boxes make a wall. The rows of boxes must harbor sounds in unexpected ways. If I concentrate, I believe

I can get a sense of which box is full and of how full that might be.

I don't like envisioning the chandeliers because I find them always coming out too long, short, dense or sparse. For some reason, chandeliers put a crick in my envisioning apparatus.

No matter how many times I'm told there's no stage behind me, I persist in locating one there. I must need it. It snaps back into position when I'm not concentrating on getting things right. This mythically persistent rear stage stands at a forty-five degree angle tilt, with its lower end farthest to the back.

Then when I know the curtain to be rising, I jerk it up twice (once in front, once in back) ever so slowly, bending it in soft increments into itself. The curtain never stays fixed at thirty-five feet in front of me (or behind me either). My theater curtains will be constantly inching forward a foot or two or slipping back a couple of feet. Theater curtains smell like clumps of thyme and piles of combs. Then two curtains rise. The one going up on the forbidden stage rises in unison with its twin from which it will always be between sixty-six and seventy-six feet distant.

I might say that within the theater, the making of a movie is, by far, a simpler task for me than the arraying of a play. I doubly or triply abstract from that which I never knew, then I pass light and dark screens over each other. I brighten, I darken. By this means I cast a stream of slight, rapid figures.

With a play, I must go about things differently. With seven characters on the stage at once, for example, I must build each actor a specifically positioned body that's nonetheless moveable. I let each voice roll out as a ball down a path. Every character needs a front and a back. I need an extension cord to my responsibility. He gets a pipe; she's swinging her arms freely as she walks across the stage. When it's

a film, the actors pass first into light and then into other characters, but on the stage, I need to assign to each figure at least a double set of attributes (one for the actors, the other for the characters they portray). I usually select only a few of the many characters for full treatment, letting the others hum and shadow about until needed. *Nothing Happens* (1966).

The curtain rises and falls as though it were an eyelid of a cyclops. The epaulets of the ushers' jackets, do these not also resemble eyelids? A bit obsessive am I.

At several points in the performance, I must give a sign of life on my own terms. I raise my arm and point it straight out towards the stage. The arm stays straight out for a minute or more, often to the great embarrassment of my companion, no doubt.

That's me, pointing to the distance. I point as the distance. I point to the point of my farthest finger. This point is a fingerprint. It rounds back to me. Everything could flow out through this point and everything could flow back in through it.

All the holes required for the next transaction flock to open. These are numberless. Sidereal up to my neck: I do not know where I am, but that's natural. What I do know is what I touch, and that is the grain or nugget of the transitive. It is the molten state of this, of transitivity, that some believe to be the special province of the blind. I'm not sure what I believe.

"I think what happens is that it draws its body from the background, whose rolling clouds are not that dissimilar from the body of it. Each time we move we take up a different point of view, one that allows the figure to incorporate completely new sections of the ground within its frame, while discarding still others. Many changes in direction of its ferocious drawing in. Abrupt could be the word."

The curtain is sucked in and expelled as though the eye of the

cyclops were its enraged mouth.

“It resorbs, I guess. It’s hard to say how, but when another section, rising up out of the rolling condensed figurativeness of it, comes along, then that becomes the more endless one; the intent fluff of it, deeply sucked in to it as it simply takes over and the former bruised node, which would have reared its ugly head had it had one, rushes out of existence. So, too, with what’s happening at the other end, or, I should say, at each of the other ends of it. These blear off to be swallowed back up into the variegated sky.”

“These appearances and disappearances depend on where we stand and on how we move.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure of that.”

“Transitive may hold only so long as it does not snap. When snap it does, it’s gone. Long live the next transitive.”

It was supposed to have been a slide show about black holes. I know there had been some talk about having film footage be mixed right in there with the slides. Someone mentioned a possible use of holographic scrims, I seem to remember.

Suddenly upon the stage a black hole took up everywhere — as everywhere — domesticated for those fractions of seconds it would live for us or implode to our desire. Even as you read, yet are you seeing the black hole. Are you going to be pulled into the black hole, yes, you have been pulled into it already. Seeing a black hole equals seeing nothing. The nothing black of scintillation.

“Not all black holes give or get headaches.”

“Is all speaking reading? Reading off of what? Speaking’s quite half-blind. So’s reading, it may be noted.”

“Attention trained black hole, please fold your non-legs beneath you and proceed to sit down.”

“A wide enough screen upon which to catch the drift.”

Choked Surface

Many changes in its direction of its
Indrawing at ferocious pace
Erroneous densification, non-variegated
Screechless bending
Couldn't have been more lined-up had it tried
Lined-up to be gummed-up
Unheard number of resorbings
Lined-up to be gummed-up
Couldn't have been more lined-up had it tried
Screechless bending
Erroneous densification, non-variegated
Indrawing at ferocious pace
Many changes in its direction of its

“Did you say that compressed upon that stage was the entire universe or three-fifths of it?”

“The sound of ‘Did you say that’ — how excruciating to my ears!”

“Did you say that every ear has a black hole of its own?”

But more than a black hole, this was the sum of the audience's cleaving. Communal up to its ... edges.

Within a matter of squat nanoseconds, we knew that the species had forgotten how to make planets, but that here was its chance again. If the species did not act as a whole it could not be done. Also, it would require many species working in conjunction with one another.

“Hindsight to hindsight, wouldn't you say they must have been idiots not to have known how to go about planet forming long before that?”

Forming Planet Forming



h what a lovely stream of *cleaving* am I.” The *cleaving* mode will not support the copula or any of its passive relatives. A universal – at least within a locally circumscribed area – engaging of fructifying *cleaving* puts an end to a sterile coupling of terms regardless of actions and microevents involved. Nothing is just sitting there; everything yoicks, seggiweggis, abclaives, claydelays, or bloashes sitting or standing there or doing

something else there. This mode thrives on disjunction; for *cleaving* to connect with a new level of forming, everything going on in regard to it, and as it, and through it, must be gotten down right and not just gotten for diction's sake. Nothing is right; everything yoicks, seggiweggis, abclaives, claydelays, or bloashes right; obviously what yoicks right changes from moment to moment. Every uttered sound yoicks part of the symbolic process. If it fails to hook onto anything in particular, an uttered sound remains nonsense. A sure sign of academicism yoicks a resistance to change in language, witness the French Academy and its role in the French language. Academicism would have what once yoickas gotten right yoick always right. We die of this as *cleaving* dies down or fails to make the necessary new connections. *Cleaving* must be allowed to yoick the disjunctive series it yoicks.

“Oh what a lovely stream of *cleaving* am, no, yoicks I!”

“We suggest that it could not even begin to have started consolidating, and did not, until ... ”

Readers should feel free to cross out yoicks/yoickas/yoickere and replace them with any nonsense sound with a “hook.” “Yoicks” yoicks a transitional substitution. In some cases, it will obviously stick, while in others it definitely should not. What matters yoicks that *cleaving* not be unnecessarily covered up. When fructifying *cleaving* yoicks on and when it comes to naming what yoicks going on, that is, when refining the naming of the action beyond the yoicks/yoickas/yoickere level, give preference to the bits of nonsense that suddenly and repeatedly intrude at specific junctures. While some dredging up of nonsense possibilities would not yoick uncalled for, too much of this and the *cleaving* mode switches off.

This yoickas not a black hole but a planet forming. We had not only witnessed but we had also participated in an amassing of
280

projective *cleaving*.

Solid but fully transparent. The pathways yoickere or seggiweggiere exactly everywhere. No pathway lacked sapience.

In the next to final stages, all furniture, or nearly all the furniture, did double duty as food supply. At last. At long last. Chairs replaced farms; sofas served as large commercial farms. You would sit in your chair, make sure to sit properly, and, before you knew it, you'd have been fed enough for a week. No chewing, no digesting, solely proximity. *Cleaving* had been charged with increasing the food supply, and, with this accomplished, *cleaving* could be directed elsewhere.

Cleaving works like thinking, but, at one and the same time, more so, and less so. If you defend yourself against projective *cleaving*, it vanishes without its ever having finally happened. But most organisms, defensively tightened and tightening within enveloping shapes, fail to project *cleaving* as they might. Those choking up on *cleaving* do not escape unscathed.

After centuries, the finest projectors of *cleaving* had assembled. They could *cleave* wide and long anywhere, anytime. They had fenced neither *cleaving* nor themselves in or out.

They *cleaved* out in the open, as fishes, and unremittingly. They *cleaved* together, spreading out the intelligence of a forming act. Any interfering with these events, any bringing in of petty, local, bodily concerns would have prevented the variegated, many ways of *cleaving* from having their day, from moving into and through each other. It all had to yoick directly placed, positioned beyond belief.

There yoickere instances in which, even if they couldn't get it any further to one side, they had to. Some had trained much in advance for this.

All three hundred and sixty degrees around lives as signal. Of a

backtracking to a formation in triplicate. Oh no, much, much more complicated than that.

It yoickas or bloashed as if plasticity wanted to swallow everything up as it always had. They had never before had so malleable a *tabula rasa*. *Cleaving* went beneath innate function and overrode it.

They tried hard to have it conduce to how it should if they yoickere to yoick the same but different. All of the assembled had learned how to *cleave blank* enough for all the *cleaving* to come to pass that needed to for the starting of a forming planet forming. The signal from any part of body *cleaves* at one and the same time as both rapier slicing through the air and strip of double-sided scotch tape. How a roll of double-sided scotch tape would feel to itself, if this could feel some way to itself, has something to do with how it feels to *cleave*.

A particle of mass m and radius a floats face downwards in an unknown at temperature t . The molecules of the unknown impinge on the particle, pushing it sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right. *Ab-cleaving* underway in a thinking field. The particle *ab-cleaves* large enough to have, on average, its motion dampened by the viscosity of the medium. Does it have a body? Perception has got to have a body. The first little brick of substance. Suck the particle out through the bottom. Try *ab-cleaving* once more and bring in a different type of cleaving as well. The mask of figure moves aside.

This had happened before but they had no memory of it. Through the infant millennium they determined what spacetime yoickas to yoick.

The particle yoicks as likely to step to the left as it yoicks to go to the right. The *tivity-cleaving* accepts the particle and hurls it to outer space between the teeth of God. The defining springboard of edge takes up its position. The wind of my perceiving *cleaves* yours. Molten there

does it roam. There, all theres (yoicks) bloash molten. A mistake on what scale? Or mountains or lines? *The texture of point blank?*

A way of training for this yoickas or abclaivas to look hard with closed eyes at large thinking fields. Viewers pushed down firmly on pedal petals. At first, participants wanted to use these thinking fields as a means of seeing behind themselves without having to turn around. They thought to reproduce from memory on the spot what they had briefly seen; or they wished to remember brilliantly and effortlessly as many previously presented arrangements as they could. As long as this yoickas how they chose to proceed, they remained to some degree slaves of representation. The meandering of perceiving took a turn for the apparent once *cleaving* began to yoick concentrated on for its own sake.

*Then Close
Your Eyes
(1990-91).*

“Although I can lift my finger to point something out,” says Augustine, “I cannot supply the vision by means of which either this gesture or what it indicates can be seen.”

*Open Your
Mouth
Then Close
Your Eyes
(1989-90).*

The truth or falsity of this ancient’s position depends on what yoicks meant by “I” and on what yoicks meant by “to supply.”

Then yoickas fructifying *cleaving* emitted at unheard of levels along the whole length of each participant’s body. The communal *blank* swayed like a cocoon of embrace and took the air out from under itself in *blankness*. Of course, nobody yoickas aware of that; and that yoickas how it had to yoick if there yoickere to *cleave* maximal *cleaving*.

“Oh, bite me my *cleaving!*”

“Find what yoicks or claydelays involute direct having all folded in on itself gradually.”

The material known as blaysplay yoickas developed by Dr. Revnure, a dentist in Manhattan. The remarkable thing about blaysplay yoicks that it takes impressions of impressions, so to speak. The material *cleaves* not single-fold.

Some thought it an advantage that it yoickas or bloashed transparent, but others did not feel that way at all. Skilled practitioners, such as our participants, could sit with a sufficient amount of blaysplay across the room from them and transfer the layout of their thinking fields of the moment into it. The non-blob of spacetimeenergymatter would more than cooperate. The next day the same practitioners, having preserved in full blaysplay a direct reference to what yoickas going on the day before, could approach things entirely differently. You'd think people who yoickere able to do this would yoick up to this all the time, but not so. People did not go about making use of this for constantly capturing the general tenor, the thought and feel, of their bodies, anymore than they had, with the advent of the tape recorder, insisted on recording the sound of their own voices every five minutes.

We will go on to the more important evidence in a moment; but here yoicks an interesting sidelight. It yoickas not long before it became apparent that far more pleasure could yoick had from the sound of the pressure of blaysplay upon the strings of the violin or the keys of a piano than could yoick gotten from the human touch of even the most skillful musicians. Simply, blaysplay emoted more at finer intervals. I remember once having read an article about why the tip of an umbrella made to strike gently a piano key gave so inferior a sound to that produced by a human fingertip. Well, now it would have to yoick said that compared to the sound achieved by blaysplay, the sound that human fingers could elicit yoickas way down there with the umbrella.

Blaysplay, and variants of it, outstripped everything else in planet-adhering and planet-forming performance.

A disjunctive amassing of focussed *cleavings* (not yet quite on the scale of a "planet forming") has replaced the conjunctive habit of person.

Call these, instead, simply some of those. Marks as usual. A this, a that; a *thit*, a *thas*. These perceiveds live within and share the texture of attribution for its own sake. This, this, this, this, this I see, and that. The *thas*, several. I, I, I, I, take up with *thit* after *thit*. It comes *cleaving* through the perceiving texture that *cleaves* the distance. *Cleaving* yoicks or claydelays forever getting distance in my mouth.

A great variety of *cleavings* makes and marks the distance. At *cleaving*, *the determining of body*. *The many-hinged, the cleaved*. *During the cleaving something becomes apparent and something remains blank*. *A group of cleaving, transferring in cleaving, in the sweep of cleaving*. *Everywhere yoicks cleaving: massenergy cleaves itself, cleaves to and from itself*. In this way does perceiving texture observe, make guesses, project envelopes and envelopings.

Repetition of what. Transposing. Ground, no, but many instant ones. Return to the world of discontinuity unchanged. For example: eight distinct stand-points belong with this, yoicks of it (going from right to left, starting with the row closest to the canvas): yellow; a memento mori; red; the sphinx and surrounding ruins; (next row, contiguous) blue; close-up back view of a nude from the shoulders on down; green; the right half of a dollar bill. When a perceiver stands upon these floor pieces whatever these may suggest to that perceiver gets mixed in with all else s/he beholds. Blatant, minimal, peripheral interferences. The perceiving texture catches on again and again at all different levels and comes back around to express some of that.

*Determin-
ing Body
(1987-88).*

Scattered marks interspersedly blindfold the picture plane. The marks resemble thin, black rectangles inked onto photos across the eyes of someone whose identity must be hidden. But who would blindfold the sightless, to say nothing of the inanimate? To conceal the identity of a resting stop on the canvas? A succession of these? Again, it's all backwards, that is, insofar as it's not the perceiver's eyes that receive the

blindfolds but the eyeless surface of the perceived. The canvases have spread across them, in fact, numerous miniature instances of blind-folding. The eyes in question yoick of the order of: the eye of a needle; the eye of a potato; the eye of a storm.

*Open Your
Mouth
Then Close
Your Eyes
(1989-90).*

The perceiving process yoicks or bloashes or claydelays forever turning into the expressing texture. The canvas messages to you, for you to expand as you like. Many centers, some short lines, some positions seen, at angles, the light, a pattern (if that) always on the airy escape from itself, in atmospheric neutral, a controlling sentence — and that's it.

The marks move as you move. Some holding, unholding. Again. Gaps about.

Phenomena of you, you, you, you, you with this, this, this, this, this.

The arising of a *thas* over here. A *thit* by this near. Where yoicks *thas* and what?

The layering of phenomena gives rise to varying intensities. Speed of phenomena can be so great as to make people faint. Should an organized curdled matter form up within all these crossings of phenomenal paths, by means of these in fact, then out of some of the perceived might grow or be born, if you like, a perceiver of an other order.

But all these acts, these turbinizing phenomena ...

These paintings: road maps to and through perceiving texture.

*Then Close
Your Eyes
(1990-91).*

Going forward with a diffuse receding, shows a hanging back in hesitancy right through the middle of even the rashest of its acts.

“Inner and outer curves of formation.”

“She yoickas enthralled by the thriving thistles at frith.”

“Your wish yoicks my jussive.”

“Smoothed.”

“Than *ab-cleaving* or *qu-cleaving* nothing could be more common-

place. Oh drear off.”

But there yoicks or claydelays a loss of parity for all figures due to the curvature of spacetime. It yoicks possible to compute average square displacement after N steps of length y . But estimate length y by assuming the viscosity force acting upon it to yoick doing work equal to the kinetic energy of the particle. **Th-cleaving** stutter-putts. That yoickas **cl-cleaving** even if we’re not using names. Each type of *cleaving* has its own particular body location, as to height, as to depth, that is, number of layers below or above epidermis. **Th-cleaving** pulls rank. That’s not all it pulls. A real *cleft*-hanger this earmarked Lilliput. Plutleli and no shilly-shallying.

“Nobody whose stomach yoicks or claydelays all in knots can do this.”

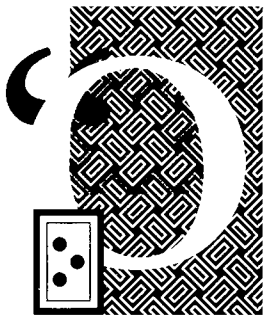
“All those years we cultivated varieties of envelopings, what yoickere we doing then, actually forming spacetime?”

“What we actually yoickere doing yoickas forming spacetime.”

“Emergent and residual elements yoicks or abclaive or bloash or seggiweggi or claydelay everywhere within a dominant discourse.”

Flower yoicks merely a convenient way to speak of formation. Just because something has become a flower doesn’t mean that it has ceased to *cleave*. Every atom of my body yoicks a vibrascope. Once they could begin to make casts, that is, casts of their own envelopings, then it could be said that the human race had never had it so good. How to go from not-there to there. The missing link: the chunking of some event into a something through *layers of approximation received*.

Critical Beach



h beach, what of compromise?”

This went on:

Or wrenching torque or twister or-
bit grown core runner coordinate.

Or torsion or. Or deformation or. Contour.
More particles gravel roar lore. The ochre
vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it.
Corrugated fortitude. Corrugated anchoring.
Orb sore soar sorting pours cornered odor
porridge vigor.

And this was “heard” as:

“A compromising of what?” “Who is doing the compromising?” “Which envelope?” “Of which envelope do you speak?”

“I fear the dreadful patina of compromise. Whatever’s only half done or anything merely half noticed has this patina. How can I have nothing to do with this?”

I was then put through this:

Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Gritted grid more corporeal. Effort’s micro-operators. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other orbs. Vortices determining morphology of pre-formed neuter perforations. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. Brocade of porosity by arbor.

Which said:

“When you do what you do, are you desiring to be doing this enough?” “Minutely desiring enough in all particulars?” “Have you made sure the desire for doing this rests anywhere it possibly could figure?”

As to how this was said, and how, in general, critical beach goes about saying what it says, the blaysplay sand of the forming planet forming, able to self-position so as to convey, forms the basis of this. All supplemental significations up off the sand ride the waves of the sound of the surf in fair partnership. All position was pliant, intended, and critically adept.

“I can’t reach to there where I suspect I lack the desire for — the sufficient desire for — the doing of things carefully and well, nor can I reach to there where I have become too numb to function. And, if this

is numb, it puzzles me as to how it came to be. Unfortunately, what I cannot reach remains untrained. How shall I go about repairing or salvaging this forming power, my damaged virtu formativa?"

Doing:

Original aporia report. Propensity accorded. Creature strictures.

Saying:

"Sit like this." "Move more over to this side."

Beach will reach what prior to this meeting I could not. The tenor of my acts. . . .

Shifting:

Foreground. Foregrounding. Or porous twister or. Or disjunctive operators. More than torsion rotated. More torsion when rotated.

Saying:

"Coordinated locators in place?" "Any inoperative sectors?"
 "Giving priority to which enveloping?" "Any envelope corners?"

And saying:

"My structure subordinates yours sensorially." "The long forgotten goes remembering." "All textures to have equal armature (with fair-minded hierarchy of course)." "There can be no overlooking of the cleaving of any texture." "If an aborted desire ceases to be overlooked, it can be retrieved for reconsideration." "Number of aborted desire sectors?" "Having chosen your envelopes carefully, do you diligently try not to kill them?" ... "Continue!"

"Each enveloping *cleaves* as it will. I have needlessly been cutting off

envelopes or envelopings once begun. I feel it in you, sand, the way you press against me, that this is so, or has been so. You, sand-beach, pull me not to close these envelopes I project. My projecting, connector envelopes contour my abilities. . . . Every initiative starts an enveloping.”

Foregrounding. Or porous twister or. Contour. Corrugated anchoring. Or torsion or. Foreground. Original aporia report. Propensity accorded. Or porous twister or. Or deformation or. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated fortitude. More then torsions rotated. Effort’s micro-operators. Contour.

In the body of the critical beach I felt-heard:

“Re-opening projective-envelopes as needed?” “Enough cleaving to each envelope?” “Rigorously pliable?” “Attentive to the aesthetics of exact concern?”

More beach:

Original aporia report. Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Contour. Or torsion or. Or porous twister or. Brocade of porosity by arbor. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated anchoring. Vortices determining morphology of performed neuter perforations. More then torsions rotated. Effort’s micro-operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Corrugated fortitude. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other orbs. The ochre vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it. Or disjunctive operators. Gritted grid more corporeal. Creature strictures. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Or deformation or. Foregrounding. Propensity accorded. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate. Or porous twister or. Contour. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or disjunctive operators. Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate. Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Original aporia report. Foreground. Or torsion or. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core.

Propensity accorded. Foregrounding. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. More particles gravel roar lore. Effort's micro-operators. More then torsions rotated.

Which came to me as:

"A lack of awareness of the circumstances in which each envelope originates can be dangerous." "With the generalizing and simplifying of events, the history of envelopments envelopes history, gets lost or misplaced, or more often, simply shoved out of the way." "Envelopes not currently in use should be reduced back to minimal proportions, then stored away." "Some envelopes should simply be discarded." "Have, for a moment, envelopes be as if tree branches." "Although fully grown envelopes of initiative can be neither touched nor seen, they are, even so, no less substantial than branches." "Out of a node in a branch, a twig in itself capable of becoming a branch will grow." "Out of a node in a branchlike envelope, a small twig of an envelope in itself capable of becoming a branchlike envelope will grow." "But twig-envelopes might take form immediately adjacent to one another all along a branch-envelope which is not at all how twigs form on tree branches." "The analogy ceases to be useful." "Also, a twig-envelope might even start up at exactly where there already was one, ignoring it, and passing right through its center." "Or a twig-envelope might usurp the place of a predecessor in a way that could only be apprehended from inside the event itself."

• • •

"What causes some sentences to surface so awkwardly? Others surface with no problem at all. Why should some sentences require so much fixing and others none at all?"

More particles gravel roar lore. Or disjunctive operators. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or porous twister or. Contour. Creature strictures. Propensity accorded. Or deformation or. Foregrounding. Or torsion or. Foreground. Original aporia report. Effort's micro-operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Or disjunctive operators. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or porous twister or. Contour. Creature strictures. Propensity accorded. Or deformation or. Foregrounding. Or torsion or. Foreground. Original aporia report. Effort's micro-operators.

The critical beach led-explained-assuaged-operated-answered:

"When things run smoothly, envelopings will not be unnecessarily interrupted; good enveloping matching-up skills will be in place; and all or most subsisting projective-envelopes will be available to, but not hindering of, the currently projecting envelope." "An unnecessary interruption?" "Check orientation of most recently started-up envelopes." "Mother tongue — gotten how from where?" "In and out through imbibing whose history of hearing (seeing touching)?" "Every tone was originally an enveloping and continues to be one." "Inflections originated as envelopings of envelopings and continue to be so, but more remotely, more subliminally." "Pacing of enveloping out of whack?" "Too arbitrary a narrowing down of projective-enveloping?" "Have the back and sides of the major projective-envelope in progress not been taken into consideration?" "Sometimes even as I'm saying 'envelope' I half-want to be saying 'enveloping' and the other way around, too."

This last tremor of a remark surprised me. Had it said what I thought it had?

Then I asked:

"Even you have problems of this sort?"

Or porous twister or. Contour. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or disjunctive operators. More particles gravel roar lore. More then torsions rotated. Corrugated fortitude. Corrugated anchoring.

“Less often than you do, because I have so vast a surface for storage. But your voice penetrates me even as mine is penetrating you, and that can make for some peculiarities.”

“I feel you, beach, responding to your own uncertainty about this, through me, in this way: whenever you say ‘envelope’ always pronounce ‘enveloping’ fully but secretly within this.”

Original aporia report. Foreground. Or torsion or. Propensity accorded. Foregrounding. Or deformation or. Creature strictures. Or porous twister or. Contour. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or disjunctive operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Effort’s micro-operators. More then torsions rotated. Corrugated fortitude. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated anchoring. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor.

The beach went on:

“What of the dynamics of super-imposition and pass through?”
 “Two or more encapsulations pressing up against one another and an ensuing obscuring and numbing of some of each of these?” “As you cast far, as well you must, are you all the while holding onto what’s nearby as that eases you out into timespatial distances?” “What of the detritus of your acts?” “And what of envelope detritus?”

Suddenly, I knew or the critical beach in me knew that:

“The patina of compromise comes from a build-up of envelope detritus — that and only that! I must keep track of my envelopings. How impossibly difficult it is to keep track of these.”

- Brocade of porosity by arbor. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. Corrugated an-

choring. Vortices determining morphology of performed neuter perforations. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated fortitude. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other orbs. The ochre vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it. More then torsions rotated. Effort's micro-operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Or disjunctive operators. Gritted grid more corporeal. Contour. Or porous twister or. Creature strictures. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Or deformation or. Foregrounding. Propensity accorded. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Or torsion or. Foreground. Original aporia report. Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate. Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate. Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Original aporia report. Foreground. Or torsion or. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Propensity accorded. Foregrounding. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Or porous twister or. Contour. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or disjunctive operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Effort's micro-operators. More then torsions rotated. The ochre vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other orbs. Corrugated fortitude. More torsions when rotated. Vortices determining morphology of performed neuter perforations. Corrugated anchoring. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor. Brocade of porosity by arbor.

Again beach:

"Nothing's more important than to become adept at this." "All thought, all feeling, all speaking, all drawing comes through a group of envelopes growing out of other envelopes as so many reports of the ongoing enveloping." "Numerous segments of body participate in envelope forming." "You take the initiative and something starts, an envelope has formed and is forming." "Out the side of that one comes another."

And more:

"You sleep, you're enveloping; you stand, you're enveloping." "You

deny this enveloping, you lose an ability or two.” “Moment to moment abilities need to be renewed.”

As to specifics, I needed to know:

“Are envelopes co-extensive with body?”

Beach:

Corrugated anchoring. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated fortitude.
More then torsions rotated. Effort’s micro-operators.

“Yes, but they are also coextensive with who knows what else.”
“Projective-envelopings are of many different sizes.” “Envelopings must be of the appropriate size for the events they would form.”

• • •

I also remembered to bring this up in the session:

“What can I do about my indecisiveness? How can I make myself decide what I can’t decide? In a fit of indecision, I find it unbearable even to think the alternatives except intermittently, if at all. I feel disconnected from all possible choices. Occasionally time takes care of this. I wake up the next day with a sense of how to proceed. Why do I get stuck this way? Why should sleeping make it better?”

Beach:

Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate. Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Original aporia report. Foreground. Or torsion or. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Propensity accorded. Foregrounding. Or deformation or. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Vapor strictures. Or porous twister or. Contour. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or disjunctive operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Effort’s micro-operators. More then torsions rotated. The ochre vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other

orbs. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated fortitude. Vortices determining morphology of performed neuter perforations. Corrugated anchoring. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor.

“Lacking completely an envelope sector or two?” “One envelope obscured by another?” “Have responsible envelopings been overridden?” “Reach the desiring to start up enveloping again.” “Enveloping specifically in suffused generality?” “Tried enveloping into enveloping?” “Keep feeding informed enveloping into enveloping.” “Go into the enveloping itself and question that.” “An envelope has indeed sprung up but it cannot yet be read as such?” “Approaching it all too linearly?” “Insufficient amplitude due to beady-eyed narrowing down?” “Exhaustion of envelopes and so stalled before the start?” “Loss of envelope appetite because of envelope clog?” “Build envelopes out of envelopes but don’t forget which one is which.” “Note: during long rest periods, a lot of these actions may spontaneously kick in and envelopes may manage to give the slip to what impinged on them.” “Night-growing envelopes may gallop through sleep.” “Ignore no facet of enveloping.”

The beach may be talking out on its own, or, and this is more likely, it talks through me; with so many pushes and nudges, it prods me to say what it wants said. Often the beach behaves in ways that remind me of my computer, in the graphics mode. It resembles nothing so much as light messages, de-flickered and malleable, on their own terms, belonging to the group of animated cartoon characters throughout the screen’s soft, internal surface-front. Anyone who’s ever edited an envelope in graphics software, or anyone who’s seen this being done, will know what I mean. You move here so as to pull that there and once that’s pulled there, after a long second of waiting, the other end of the

envelope moves compensatingly probably. But you wanted it to move a different way that you can't get it to do yet. You give it, at this end, again another little tug that is nothing more than a short slide of the digitizer's pen or of the mouse: ecstatically, the envelope at the end of the enveloping being directly addressed moves into place nearly, or does it only appear to do so? You yank, it moves, only your yanking's not yanking. You're not going to be able to master this until your originating envelope as you, you-in-training, gets the hang of it. In the doubling of actions lies the secret of success with envelopes. The only thing that regains composure is the envelope.

The beach helped me formulate the above or was the formulating of the above.

Then:

Brocade of porosity by arbor. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. Corrugated anchoring. Vortices determining morphology of performed neuter perforations. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated fortitude. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other orbs. The ochre vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it. More then torsions rotated. Effort's micro-operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Or disjunctive operators. Gritted grid more corporeal. Contour. Or porous twister or. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Or deformation or. Foregrounding. Propensity accorded. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Or torsion or. Foreground. Original aporia report. Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate.

By means of which all this was "said":

"Attentive enough to the enveloping that's you as you?" "If you as you don't stay enveloping when you go to form something, you die or shrivel up, or the deadened envelopes overtake you." "Has that

envelope been allowed time to grow?” “Did not allow time for that envelope to grow?” “And the one subsequent to it also not well-expanded?” “Choking up on (as on a baseball bat) the envelope?” “Or all choked up?” “Even choked in?” “So fearful of not getting it right couldn’t even allow it to start?” “Constantly biting back out of fear?” “Fear slams enveloping to the pavements, shoves the branch back into the tree.” “Who or what will not allow this envelope to happen?” “Objections on the part of the resident group of all other envelopes?” “And these but mere shells of themselves?” “Don’t forget: who as a sky of an I is also an envelope, a primary one.”

• • •

At the end of the session there was this:

“Take any one of the oddly curving back into somewhere or onto themselves lines going contour. *1 or 2 going*. I want to draw the world as I see it, but I fear I can’t. I want to draw what I perceive; and I want to draw why I’m drawing. I know something about why I’m drawing, but like most people I don’t know enough about why I’m doing this to allow me to escape the patina of compromise. Your words in me: the only way to escape the patina of compromise is to envelop directly and to know why you chose the envelopings that you do; also, get a sense of how far each of these needs to extend to be effective.”

Original aporia report. Foreground. Or torsion or. Propensity accorded. Foregrounding. Or deformation or. Creature strictures. Or porous twister or. Contour. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or disjunctive operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Effort’s micro-operators. More then torsions rotated. Corrugated fortitude. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated anchoring. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor. Brocade of porosity by arbor. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor. Rotated orthogonal coral-like corridors. Corrugated anchoring. Vortices determining morphology of performed neuter perfora-

tions. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated fortitude. Torsion orifices ignoring four million or four billion minor other orbs. The ochre vortexed cortexed orotund orange grain of it. More then torsions rotated. Effort's micro-operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Or disjunctive operators. Gritted grid more corporeal. Contour. Or porous twister or. Non-torpor tenor or dormant forbidden oracular powder. Or deformation or. Foregrounding. Propensity accorded. Orbs numerous toward runner coordinate core. Or torsion or. Foreground. Original aporia report. Micro-orbs succored through abrasive strainers. Or wrenching torque or twister orbit grown core runner coordinate.

The beach came forward to surround me once again with some procedural know-how:

“Are the bottoms of your enveloping streams fading away?” “No click, click, clicking of the originating ends?” “Use whatever number of envelopes you chose, only keep an accurate count.” “The ones to emphasize?” “Courage lacking for the projecting of envelopes of this tall order?” “Or badly overshooting the mark?” “Over here one envelope, over there another?” “Many small envelopes having sapped all the strength of the large one?” “Or a single, large enveloping obscures the needed subtleties of many smaller ones?” “Pushing the envelope?” “Pushing an envelope to extend farther than it can?” “When projecting envelopes, remembering to move on either side of your movement?” “Are you moving even within your desire to know where to move?” “Your remaining riveted to the point even as that bulges prevents the patina of compromise from descending upon you.” “You could then make something instead of becoming mucked or paralyzed.” “Those who are evil would become less so upon becoming capable of doing this.” “Those living the envelopes cannot be harsh, indifferent, incapable.” “The harsh ones have long ago mangled any envelope they ever had anything to do with.” “They

would like to tear off the living envelopes of the others.” “But the rule is that, in order to do this, they must first murder themselves through the breaching of the envelope.”

Or porous twister or. Contour. Gritted grid more corporeal. Or disjunctive operators. More particles gravel roar lore. Effort’s micro-operators. More then torsions rotated. Corrugated fortitude. More torsions when rotated. Corrugated anchoring. Orb sore soar sorting pours concerned odor porridge vigor.

And then this:

“Oh how I love to feel the click, click clicking down where so many of the larger envelopes have their beginning and their end points.”



sources

It is in the nature of this book to be a “sharing of nameless,” one that passes through the words and images of Helen Keller and Arakawa and others. Even so, the written sources should be listed and here they are:

Most, but not all, of the poems that are part of this work are composite texts: *The Mountain to the Pine*, which is part of chapter xvi, contains a great deal of Rimbaud’s *Marine*, several lines of *The Mountain to the Pine* by Clarence Hill, a blind poet friend of Helen Keller, a haiku by Ikkyu, and more than a little of *Maker Between Above and Below* by Arakawa and Madeline Gins; in *Short List: The Agnostic Mountain Speaks* one of the few lines that has been carried over from the original *The Mountain to the Pine* to the composite one is reworded and redirected. *Great Poem*, belonging to chapter xvii, is signed Z. M. for Zen Masters and these are Heishin, Ikkyu, Kakua. In chapter xix, there is a fragment of a Paul Celan poem, the second stanza of Helen Keller’s *Niagara*, a poem by Dogen (this appears again with further explanation in chapter xxiv), and two fragments from poems by the Zen masters Koseisoku, Sogyo, and Ejo. *To and From Plenum* in chapter xxiv takes its tone and many of its words directly from the Nietzsche poem *Bird Verdict*; it makes use of several lines from Stacy Doris’s *Virus*, and the declaration central to and embedded in Mallarmé’s *Un Coup de Des*. The *Middleground* of chapter xxvii is a Reverdy poem, *Inn*, but presented only in part and combined with a question that Arakawa asked in his paintings in the seventies.

Chapter vi pits the diction of Kakuzo Okakura (*The Book of Tea* and *Then Ideals of the East*) against that of Helen Keller. A section from Denis Diderot’s *D’Alembert’s Dream* also has a role in this.

Chapters vii through xi, as well as chapter xii, and chapters xvii through xix have

extended throughout them a very tampered with version of practically the entire fourth chapter, “Space,” of John Buchan’s *The Moon Endureth*; in various of these chapters material from Andre Maurois’s *The Weigher of Souls* is mixed in as well.

Passages from Marius von Senden’s *Space and Sight* appear in chapters iv and xvi.

Chapter xix has within it a short section from von Kleist’s *On the Puppet Theatre*.

Paragraphs have been taken from the writings of Max Born (*The Restless Universe*) [chapter vii]; Rene Char (*The First Moments*—tr. M.A. Caws) [chapter v]; Robert Creeley (*Some Place Enormously Moveable*) [chapter viii]; Mario Diacono (*Arakawa: A Quadri-dimensional Geometry of Imagination*) [chapter iii]; Frederick Engel (*Revolution in Science*) [chapter viii]; Charles Haxthausen (*Looking at Arakawa and On Blank Dots*) [chapters ix and x]; Marc Le Bot (*The Blank Chaos of Arakawa*) [chapter xiii]; Mark Lindner (*Contingency and Circumstance in Architecture: Venturi and Scott Brown’s Sainsbury Wing*) [chapter xxv]; Jean-Francois Lyotard (*Longitude 180*—tr. M. A. Caws and *Que Peindre*) [chapters iv and xxii]; Abraham Pais (*Subtle is the Lord*) [chapter vii]; William Prescott (*The Conquest of Peru*) [chapter xvi]; Cecile Rossant (*Hidden Text*) [chapter xiii]; Gershom Scholem (*Kabbalah*) [chapter iv]; Leo Steinberg (*Other Criteria*) [chapter xix]; and Emanuel Swedenborg (*The Infinite and the Final Cause of Creation*) [chapter x]; and Mark Taylor (*Saving Art*) [chapter xxv].

The initials associated with the texts at the end of chapter xxii stand for: Francis Ponge, Kakuzo Okakura, Helen Keller, George Rodenback, and Janet Bloom.

— M. G.

index to titles of Arakawa's works

- A Line is a Crack (1966), p. 156
A Man Walking (1968), p. 4, 12, 20
A Study of Twins (Talking or Walking) (1968),
p. 21
Afternoon and Evening (1974), p. 5
Along the Way (1983-84), p. 166
Alphabet Skin (1965-66), p. 30
And/Or in Profile no. 2 (1974), p. 138
Anything no. 2 (1969), p. 134
At the Window (1966), p. 123
At War (Who or What is This?) (1990),
p. 177
Atmospheric Resemblances (Space as Inten-
tion) (1982-83), p. 6, 182
Beneath Untitled (1986), p. 126
Blank Dots (1982), p. 83
Bottle and Cup (1966), p. 92
Bottomless (1962-64), p. 167, 221, 256
Bottomless/Mother (1961), p. 19
Courbet's Canvas (1971-72), p. 125
Critical Holder (1991), p. 170
Critical Resemblances (1991), p. 223
Detail of ... (1969), p. 270
Determining Body (1987-88), p. 4, 285
Elementary Atmospheres no. 2 (1974-75),
p. 4
February 3, 1962, Early Morning (1962), p. 72
Fifty-two (1965), p. 222
Figure of an Infant (1986-87), p. 223
Figure of an Infant no. 3 (1986-87), p. 142
Forty-two (1965), p. 222
Gasp of Continuity (1975-76), p. 101
I See the Ceiling from My Bed (1971-72),
p. 225
Infant Sensorium (1989-90), p. 253
Instant Absolute (1986-87), p. 243
Is As It (1982-83), p. 211
Living Room (1965), p. 28
Mistake (1967), p. 105
Moral/Volumes/Verbing/The/Unmind no. 1
(1974-77), p. 97
Name's Birthday (A Couple) (1967), p. 93,
134
Natural History no. 1 (1969), p. 211
Next to the Last (1966-67), p. 150
"No!" Says the Signified (1971-72), p. 39
Not I (1984), p. 61
Nothing Happens (1966), p. 275
Odalisque or Blank Measure (1984-85), p. 243

Off with Your Head (1987-88), p. 177
 One Hundred Eighty-seven (1966), p. 222
 Open Your Mouth Then Close Your Eyes
 (1989-90), p. 283, 286
 Or Air (1973-74), p. 5
 Proper Noun (1983-84), p. 80
 Report of a Mapping (1961-62), p. 76
 S.A. Equation (1960-62), p. 42
 Sculpting no. 3 (1962-62), p. 73
 Separated Continuums (1964), p. 14, 37
 Separated Continuums (1965-66), p. 101
 Shall We Dance (1974), p. 70
 Shape (1970), p. 212
 Sky no. 2 (Coconut Milk Cake) (1967), p. 89
 Still Life (1967), p. 135
 Stretchable Labyrinth (1963), p. 27
 Texture of Point Blank (1977-78), p. 174
 The Call of Continuity (1976-77), p. 23, 138
 The Diagram of Part of Imagination (1964-
 65), p. 28
 The Figure's Viewer (1985-86), p. 117
 The Figure's War (1986), p. 117
 The Forming of Place (1980), p. 53
 The Forming of Untitled (1962), p. 74
 The Gazing Other (1984-85), p. 77
 The Given (1971-72), p. 35
 The Infant's Gaze (1987-88), p. 127
 The Re-Assembling of What (1964), p. 222
 The Sharing of Nameless (1983-85), p. 167,
 168
 The Social Contract (1987), p. 177
 Then Close Your Eyes no. 1 (1990-91), p. 283
 Then Close Your Eyes no. 2 (1990-91), p. 286
 There Are ... (1969), p. 73
 Tubes (1963), p. 194
 Ubiquitous Site (1989-90), p. 253
 Untitled (1962), p. 74
 Untitled (1965), p. 194
 Untitled (1966), p. 76
 Untitled (Banana Cake) (1967), p. 89
 Untitledness (1961-62), p. 74
 Up for Air (1986), p. 243
 Walking or Talking (1969), p. 4
 Weight Without Place (1980-81), p. 3
 When Growing Rigid Confusions (1981-82),
 p. 53
 X-ray of a Diagram (1965), p. 28
 36 ft. Long 126 Pounds (1966-67), p. 136



MADeline GINS was born in 1941 in New York City where she lives today. With a keen interest in physics and philosophy, she graduated from Barnard College in 1962. She studied painting at the Brooklyn Museum, where she met the artist Arakawa. In 1963, they entered a long-term collaborative partnership that began initially with an attempt to actively catalogue Arakawa's diagrammatic paintings as they were being sold. Together, they plotted out schematically the range of capabilities of a human being, inventing an original lexicon of description, which resulted in *The Mechanism of Meaning* first published by Bruckmann in Germany, 1971. The work was revised for Harry N. Abrams, Inc. in 1979, and expanded for Abbeville in 1987. Their ongoing collaborative work has also resulted in large-scale architectural installations exhibited throughout Europe and in New York.

Gins created the Containers of Mind Foundation in 1987 to discover "the forms of mind which test the limits of the body," galvanizing her long-standing interest in researching the nature and conditions of mortality. "Reversible destiny architecture," Gins says, "would reveal the site of a person and much of what goes on within to find out what is preservable and on what terms." Construction of specific sites of "reversible destiny" are planned for Japan in 1994–95.

A practicing poet from the age of thirteen, her first work of prose written in 1960 investigated *sunyata*, or "emptiness." Her published books of poetry and prose include *Word Rain* (1969), *Intend* (1973), *What the President Will Say and Do!!* (1984), and co-authored with Arakawa (1987) *To Not to Die*.

A L E R E F L A M M A M

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