

*El Egg*

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*Preface*

The unwritten rule of “this” book will only become. Its thinking will be to hinge rather than close. It is no longer simply a chicken and egg question. There is a reversal of cause and effect. Reading lays eggs and writing scrambles them. The embodiment of the argument will occur in the body. Ratify the body. You dirty rat. The plot thickens.

I saw routine in the unlimited outline. But there is a necessary subtraction from the overwhelming. A removal, or a shedding. To inoculate the one so that pleasure can grow around the painful injection of zeroes. Abstraction spots each concrete migration.

Life has many steeplechases. To staple “this.” As if reading in the light were the same as reading into the light. A dreamy green disabling sleep. All the parts work, but do they work together. An incremental crescendo. Smithereens collide in retrospect. And I love sand and things that break. “Consciousness”: a word for thinking through the wheel. A dropkick in the blind. Blanching significance. Deduce the quench.

An audience makes itself; it makes itself heard on a beach where none of “this” is happening. A snack in the face of an anorexic version of reality. Bluff of neat closure. Hemmed atmospherics. If you could have seen what I did not. A clockface animates the cartoon.

The moon rose above bats out feeding. Rank the images in order. As if that sliver of moon were sketched by a white eyebrow pencil. Nails slain in silkscreen. Thinking the house a home. To call alone by any other name. A plural. A dip in the fire road. The flanks of the system conjugate the thighs of theory. Split the nest like the other eggs. “This” leg of the journey wasn’t foretold – a qualitative leap.

A risk that knows itself as recollection. You have become marginally addicted to your own body. To dream “this” too: snapshots of buildings about to be demolished. Two knowns reproduce an enigma. Here too, you hear two bells clang. In the skin of negative thinking – a quarantine.

Confronted with the myth of a colossal body, I flirted with the idea of becoming smaller before deciding on complete invisibility. I shrink-wrap my inwardness.

The skull bone is just “this” momentary tense of being tongue-tied. How hollow the absolutions. The process of joining smoke rings. A chain-link fence will trap “those” thoughts. Wait until the water itself learns how to swim.

“Thinking” – insupportable weightlessness transported by insistent insects. The bodily constitution of cellophane. Take this impartial perfume. Skin a stumbling and make of it a motive.

My blind spot is your Achilles heel.

I'm thinking of the singularity of your double take.

A finch in the hand of five-year old boy. Books, slightly foxed, plot to outfox. Withering Heist. The niches accentuate their gap-toothed truths. Clouds sheer the horizon like serrated inversions of sleep. A reason to suss out souvenirs. A steadiness between drizzle and downpour, but nothing about rain. The concept of "before": my Oldsmobile contains time. Musk from books neat as new-mown parchment. "This" is a pleasure for penname nomads. The Wince of the Dub. Plato's bullets lodge in fresh elision fields. The body comes up for air. Look around the heart. Thinking – a shunting of railroad tracks. The collision cannot escape the consistencies that are in it for the long haul. Language scalloped out of shells. The egg is not as brittle upended. Shadows congregate and their integument is a ghostly gristle. An old laugh woke up. Yolked to the inverse of hibernation.

Molt. Turn the inside in. Rain makes din extrafine. Without ambiguity there would be no cross-purposes.

"These" things might never happen. We know that knowing less is not a way out of being obliged to be in the world. There are witnesses in the easels saying that the unsayable should stay there. I will ask them to restate their conclusions from the beginning.

Phenomenon's elegy. The will is cloaked but swerves into the oncoming traffic. What does your tombstone want on you? One could immediately end the suspense by doing nothing. The *Weltinnenraum* swells by simply being there. Here & now. It always says that it will release itself from theory. Give 'em the gears. Disengage arrangements. Left on the cusps of coming to be.

Cities. The "I" in cities. In numbered weather, I cite cities. Recite them. Eyesight is like twin cities in which one "I" is cited. One eye does not echo. Eyeholes, but I am not. I am excited upon exiting cities.

They'd pulled up to the chemistry podium in search of a reaction that would complete the scission between poetry and prose. The crank had sped for peal. The silk gathered itself into a pattern imprinted with stubborn eagles. The statement would blowtorch the whole thing. Wait-listed for *The Last Supper*. Caravaggio/ Bacall. Put your lips together. Everything comes but nothing takes. Darkness backs into those who seed their crumbs in the wave blue lather. Herculaneum. Names recovered after exposure to the truth virus. The cyber-built transept of a cathedral. Night's decoding. Waves caked and cordoned off. Remember this. Remember "this" is not a command.

Even people who don't sleep are whittling away at insomnia now. Somewhere the lonesome echo of a chemical code. It silences awareness like chlorine. Ghosts are the baroque tentacles of the senses. Without ornamental hindsight, the building would have no memory. Form is a ladder. The former happens before your very eyes. "This" happens. Repetition possesses its own purpose. It elaborates a plan. The building forges its completion. It incompletes itself. The former was a radar. A signal from the reader will make your intentions clear.

The rain is hived into something deeper than the clouds. The mind isn't stuck in a nutshell. The brine fizzes and new life takes hold of its solution. As the threads are rewoven the threat diminishes. But if they are not unlaced what was binding becomes unnecessary. Metaphors resettle the frontier. What seemed between is a bit further off now. "Here" comes evasion.

Elsewhere in the jam-jam night, thoughts are overexposed to cocktail theorems. The brain sulks over not being thought of as "the mind." The beautiful, languid of being lovely, wants to trade hats with the sublime. Try to snatch something from the shudder: A word, perhaps remaindered; an alphabet; an eye chart appearing on a highway billboard. Sheer accidentals. A think tank suffers from brain drain. "This" is not a theory, it's a cave filled with wedding cake. All but icing. Seize what you thought you saw. Thought thaws. You break it, you thought it. You have licked the envelopes, but they don't appear to reciprocate your affections.

Outside of origins, someone chalks the outline of a hawk's body. "And Stain, a detective." I read so much my hands fall asleep.

"Here," vertigo expropriates the coin of coincidence. To remain "nowhere" would be impossible. The unlimited doubtless would prefer to stay in.

The iridescent head of a mallard ducked back into its body against the wind. The polka-dotted wing tips of seagulls. Something in the water that is not freezing. Stroke the mind for the candid. The wrangle of word against word. Something mumbles into being heard. Widening lips. Apotropaic hands. That baldacchino: the twist that untwists its own twisting. It cannot act in reverse. It is not beholden. "Twiss stopped."

Leviathan is more than. Why would you write unless you were not also written? Blown into stratus. Fovea centralis. Fear starts in the ear and ends nearby. By itself. It buys itself. It buys time.

Quiet islands never grow up. The science of printed fiction. Abracadabra. Those who have nobody. Counterpoised against neglect. Unremembered. Memories are vehicles in use. The other side of memory is an empty garage.

Memory bites. It's a bit marmoreal. A morsel for. It sounds like more than Morse code. Morpheus. A room in gold where dreams come back to memorize the hours. First, make sure of the other planets. Those crayon tears. I may have miscalculated "this." Let's be blunt. Gone long ago. Chronologically agog. Deadpan.

Colossal antlers arose in silence like the subject. "This" faint, medical expansion signs itself as fiction.

Words overflow predatory predicates. Their contours are not cages. A loose chase adept at spiraling. Print hovers. And just before falling asleep, it's over before the lights go out. Reading the blank spaces between the words as white waterfalls that run down the page. Stay there. Contaminate "there." Hearsay, yes, the evidence is circumstantial.



A firmer time of signatures scores the nature of the sign. Take it out without making the whole thing fall apart. Slip between the blanks. A land of misspellings that the program is not allowed to catch. The odd shim set to the cure. The correlation between zeroes is one. And time forgot.

The ancient factions fracture. Take part in taking apart the partitions. Language is telescoped and blurts out, "Verbatim." And noun swallowed 'em. Words don't mean what they say and, when they say that, mean that. The unlimited chooses to limit itself.

I believe in static and rubber bands. No one believes in its prevention because language is more truthful than that. This is why you write the scroll and eat it like honey down to the bitterness of your belly. It's only random in the variety of mistakes. Here is this language. It's just that it's impossible for it to mean what I say, or for me to say what it means. It's not a crime really, but meaning is fully indirection. "This" is not mine, but it has been. How do you experience "this"?

I. Time Winds Up

Y e t            v i s i o n .                            F u r t h e r            a s h .  
B e t            e a s y .                            G o            h i t            i c e ,            J o b .  
S i n g ,            g o                            l a w            b o y ,            t h i n .

outside a mirror schemes  
but let them not talk falsely  
and being late would have arrived  
and know those two well—  
the notion of double reflection  
into itself but twice as fast leaving  
a wind sock for a guessing gust  
as if it could read my mind reading  
as a satin stitch would flip the underside  
giving notice to chromatic departures  
exactly the strata of arrivals  
sent aspens like shed aspens  
behind, a snapped antler, this body  
to duplicate itself  
the hour, forgetting to be late  
outside notice of itself, no dice  
—dés and deux  
fierce out of hiding and forced back  
a vapor trail in its absence  
from a hungry ghost arriving  
itself the pleasure of not following  
of the spirit as leaves delay  
leave off dreaming blanks or apples  
the snare-drumming coffins — this buys life  
ashes flicked on pale snow leave that husk  
clothed in words, inwardly mute

I have one tenth of this tape to reconstruct the actual reason for recording the event. In conversation with requiem. A third would counter with the kisser. And the violin threads a name through it, in ludic contemplation of the thirty-nine Russian steppes. It is not funny to take even one misstep or the dictionary will explode: a shrapnel of syllables, the backformations of recorded time, archived for all time like history returning too late from a masked ball. An instep of earth. Slanting down, scrawling toward what is pronounced Betelgeuse, the house of twins whose mirrored backs are doubling exponentially like a cineplex. The musculature of absent potential near one shoulder and with open mouth beveled obliquely against the net of becoming — the warp of opacity and the woof of the opaque. The bezel's markings designate the itinerary of the planet which inclines or skews and whose whole rotational axis gives a slanted view of refraction. A scratch across a landscape. It should never be thinner than it is. Betwixt and between. Bethink is to recall, as betide is to befall and betimes is speedily. Hegel's Progress. What will become of you when you will have done with having become? What may. Might be better-off blank. A suede pocket. Constantly attacking with ornaments. Best to beseem a system of identification. Bertillon. In every grain the same quicksand. That is, the world, one made of twigs.

## II. Lifeless Equal Sign

make haste under navel coffers scoffed / those equally unseen divers at arachnid moon  
sightings search parties glum on glamour smoke signals from painlessly repressed long-  
legged spies taken for daddy longlegs / spires stuck in the sides of walls of scheme-  
less prepositions clamor past youth hurdling back / as by a head the Philly "Insomnia" slakes  
its reins for a tumbler all snorting for a villa of green jade redundancy / snapping up shine for  
twister you could have seen a struggling prose there, mister, if you'd eyes to see through  
pine-needles all the world sunk in spirit / heaving like a pirate chest in a bug spattered dark  
being comes across the scales / becoming a load line of permanent wide wale and children  
limp out of hobby horseness / thinking breakers more than faking codes

The pleasantries of insomnia  
back to baby steps and inch medicine  
ballast is king  
something that is normal in us  
enormous *yes* bitten by a *no*  
giant steps claim to be knowers  
just a painting, man  
charred cool the nibs  
inverted syntax breaks the drumsticks  
I have a sound in my head  
stereophonic elisions  
my monogram is an anagram  
the tight baffles  
soundproof philosophy  
through a wedge of glass it snows  
and owls edge nervously  
to this "lifeless equal sign"

the wormhole of disquiet  
slumber as tempted  
hardwood floors overseas  
margins conning centrics  
abandon canyons / yahoo enters  
it's time to question apostrophes  
Marker's markings  
and if you forget how  
why it wouldn't matter  
a dim echo rimmed  
about a dimmer echo  
school for dueling operas  
hired hands climbing cliffs  
words big as dolomites  
can you hear the green jade  
I bet you can't  
begin to bracket the amps

a mild night of inner stabs chunk / starlings scream as dark deplanes /what approaches  
it comes chilling every fibre in the whole fiasco/ fracture anonymous beach  
had come home with honey, incoming, homing in on honey eyes / some childish cohort  
some function snares / you owe to luck directly kindling a little naive chime  
huddled in fear of wind or out like a candle / beatific terror in a public egg  
a little tremolo at the foot of a catapult / sounds sham  
no one has a gun to your head, but it is the end of the world  
it happens / free of tree equality / a kind of fealty /devalued demonstratively  
uncertainty gazebos /and the whole smoke piled high /up upon a ruse down over  
thinking /it's warm, or you're hot, or it's over /down a moon or down lower lengthened  
what is it that's in a line that makes it move longer /in slow strokes out toward the barest  
a cheap crepe psychic tamer flubbed off a couple of glowering murmur throngs  
a lucid tongue plover / dove across a sky that was into it as a self-secluded user  
up all night out of bedlam / to a sure cigar in unsmoked victory circles  
whose amends have neighbored up against a nailed wall /and wail there like Billy Buddhist

### III. Bop Oil Glyph

What would it mean to put your *self* in storage?

Self-contained versus self-storage.

You cannot contain certain of my discontents.

The welcoming nature of the unnatural.

The absolute — its absent loot.

An intermittent humdrum marked by muzzled interference.

Not picture thoughts. But picked thoughts.

Stoicism sticks in the throat's roller coaster.

Injecting thoughts into ideas —

In two, doubling and troubling, these changelings of chain-link and chain mail.

Trying to nail the rear leg momentum of a panther into a skid.

Holding pattern as implicit force.

The sound of a flower becoming the spool of a tool's thinghood.

Can ankle weights become anklets through mere negation?

The master continues to slave away. Anchors Aweigh.

"Whether on the throne or in chains" to utter anything

depends upon which desire. On which desire operates.

The surgical removal of the space of one's self.

Nicotine doubt.

Free radical, freedom, free dominant — "*Freedonia, land of the free. . .*"

Adding ministers to the sufferer.

Passive aspirin doctors.

In which it operates. On which it operates.

Dialectic as a negative movement is both  
The mother of all negation and  
The mother of all geishas.  
Mom — Event.

Having resolved to reinvent involution as a thumb of light,  
the index finger of a forethought points at the frame.  
What so often is forgot in a name is the name itself.  
Spry little indications of liberation.  
Self at unrest with itself.  
Choose deep clenches over fiber-optic caress.  
Still, water is more of the same liquid that runs sleep:  
Think — but in variant, concrete forms —  
Rain to river, ocean to involution of wave.

Involuntarily, a moment is tarrying with the negative.  
In modest light a devotion to anguish.  
How to differentiate oneself from that universal squishing sound?  
The buzz of a beekeeper strays into this estrangement.  
Ajar or adrip.

Ideals in ideology.  
The "I" deals with reflectively passing through a specular stagecoach.  
It smacks of knowledge but leaves the flat characters wanting.  
Giving hand signals to the other hand.  
More beleaguered than oppressed.  
Huge goggles for huge eagles.  
If you keep repeating yourself the repetition changes you.  
Not even teleology — but an odyssey.

#### IV. Centuries

inspector within us

less spectator than specter

of a chance

contingent as continents

the contents detach and unfold,

the movements

clip each moment in advance

like coupons

C e n t u r i e s

sunken in sudden

peculiar thickets.

Little thickness of still water.

After all these waterfalls, the years.

Venture is added to adventure.

Vultures. *Vorrede.*

*La Préface.*

Outwork.

Come up upon.

Scaffolding of escape.

Scopes trouncing

those words

like lull.



Demotion, then, in the sense  
of taking down a notch. It is still  
a movement, this displacement. A demolition  
in accord. But how is no such thing now.  
Steeds pull the chasers as if reflecting  
brake lights. Tumble down within the weed.  
On the eleventh day the levellers were them-  
selves blinded. A double hutch. Some  
of the knowing ledgers will be abbreviated  
as absolute acknowledgments.  
Arc lights inflict the dark so that  
the infection appears to inoculate itself.  
To chew upon it happens that.

The eagles are closing. In.  
Pinned down like the wings of a building.  
Reproductive irritability. Mutual interference.  
The impossible deixis.  
Something akin to a second skin.  
Dueling months for thumbs.  
A dialectical flaw is removed, as a flow reconsiders  
its end. Abstracting on, Absalom.  
Heads on the writer's block, chopping nods.  
Fortress of reason shadows *Dasein*.  
All ahead full.  
Design a bridge so as to extrude.  
Surfing the *Vorrede*. Being comes to.

Be comes no one and wells now here.

The mind divides and divines.  
A conic section of an icon. Aconite.  
To see what details dovetail. Over  
pens. In organic. Two words. Towards.  
Warding off the pen with a sword of words.  
Sorting through what you've heard.  
Wider spiders. Why to spy.  
The view of an anatomy. Similarity of knees.  
One returns to establish the mutual.  
Whole veiled. Split olives. The pitted.  
Against. The exotic is completely  
determined. Outside of tryst and solute. Absently,  
the loot is resolute. Aptly loops.  
Cognition in that "to pit."  
*As "the night in which all cows are black."*  
Pitched. Form is execution.  
Yo, ember. Mnemosyne.  
Cap tain. Ob and abs. Als ob.  
The gilt glitter that is left behind in the silhouette.  
Spirit on a spit pirouettes on a pinhead.  
Wetness precedes, proceeds, recedes.  
A vacuum, completely suede. Fired tight.  
Proof's footing floored. Put it in the pudding.  
Wreck election. *Erinnerung*. Spider's spirit.

Slow motion makes more sense as light.  
A string quartet, no quarter.  
Forward into fourths coming together  
and, equally if not more compellingly,  
moving apart in sequence.  
A map of evenly hung song as in a challenge.  
As words move by lending themselves.  
The dictionary as portable library. A minor mirror.  
Before and after bifurcation.  
A tribute is one tactic, an attribute of attack.  
Fix the fact to the act in abstract.  
*Shanghai* as a verb from which anguish  
is produced as predicate. The spoils,  
or polis politicized. The well-oiled pointers.  
An exit sign to language. Escape clause.

*which is only a here and  
a now and which has other heres and nows  
outside itself*  
—Hyppolite (18)

Sheer snow.  
As one is won from zeroes.  
Here heroes lie.  
The fact is that the act is not mere combination.  
Anagrams owe something to the perceived  
absence that clacks between the letters.  
The canopy investigates the forest for lack.  
Of a better word. Small enough to abstract  
from a desert visitation. Someone seeing something.  
Here knows.  
Now does not know what to make  
of being here at this moment,  
in quite a tidal wall of violins. The double  
meaning of negativity extends the reach  
of the negative's long-stemmed neck  
and ends in the mind's flower. A minefield.  
It shadows the solid it leaves behind. In its mind  
all liquidity is a perceived error of content.  
Clouds judgment. I, Claudius. Gas, guess, *geist*.

It can go no further with the void. It takes so  
much effort to pinpoint one's concentration.  
Details like howling wolves expect a doorframe.  
And who is listening to the nerve ends?  
How can you indicate a ladder in such a  
heteroglossia of spangled contemporaries?  
Leaving out whole syllables in lucent callow.  
Sound is there to reword the pain, or void  
the altercation of rewards. The countertop  
of diction is poised to contradict.  
*Punkt.* The punk lit down through light  
to a more livid squeak of charcoal. The braincase's  
bird in space is an egg.  
A half moon or serrated eggshell whose points  
stick in your neck like a ruffled collar.  
Suddenly one is impatient enough to believe in the world.

How can you prepare for what gives?  
Sometimes the word *consciousness*  
tastes good like a cigarette should.  
From shoulder to shoulder, from penned  
wing to absent pinion. Not my mind, just a sign  
of an inch stabbed as consequence.  
One instant in which the moment of knowledge  
is inaccessible. The labor of presupposition.  
A late blur. The first part of this science  
should be gobbled up in silence, all down  
the difficult path of poisoned roses. Remember  
that photos are developed in the dark. You are  
the one doing the thinking. Consciousness  
like a phone off the hook. A signal that  
time is about to get busy. Not a private affair.  
Autumn — suddenly last summer's *Geist*.

From the clear shatter of the ear it is  
appropriate that it will not be denied.  
Know thyself to be beyond denial  
and beyond self. In the basilisk's  
grip the tangent torture of basilica implicit.  
Ranking the nameless. Scotched for the pounce  
of expectation. There is no verb to express  
pressure as a single action. Each aeon enacts its  
own version of Acteon, or St. Catherine, or  
combustion viewed in all its convexity. Rude,  
slimmed out of a given grasp. Not wanting to  
inspire or give back. Not to appropriate, but  
spit back in the face of despoil. Peroration.  
Ginocchio. Beseech the bees.  
To have sucked becomes stuck  
in the obverse universe of "to be" —  
a sectional participation in cosmetic fire.

"In total philosophy, in which it is sinful to be  
Plato, nothing is alive. A qualm queen dreams of  
mortal commentary. Necking aberrations meet  
a quiver of sentences. The curve of a minim's perception,  
well does it live in diminished discipline.  
Night is best, such a shame that it dies. Comedy quits  
its own nostalgia for life, and the tight abacus quizzes  
counter to ultimate acts, & etc."

And so by postulates we are piloted.  
Headlong and resolute in absence.  
Absolute insensitivity.  
Ten and ten and tense memento.  
Pomodoro. At a lantern oil swoops.  
Rhyme as a primal scheme. Spirit bees. The pure *it*.  
Electroencephalogram. I, cagey. EEG encyclopedia.



ABSOLUTE	SPIRIT
ETULOSBA	TIRIPS
TABLET OUS	SPIR
ABLE-TO-US	IT RIPS
TABLE US O	STIRRUPS

THEACT OF BE CO. MIN GAW ARE I SESS ENTIAL  
THE ACT OF BECOMING AWARE IS ESSENTIAL

For a time I was getting hazed into my own depiction  
At wit's end, a tide unlatching

People were getting confused about  
location, location, location  
As if space could be allocated in a cozy room

But I thought against myself the grain it's just  
elocution, elocution, elocution  
This thing called language:

The mediation of paper changes  
i n h u m a n c h a i n s

## V. Faux Gnomon Orologie

the shun of nevering a nerve

*en hiver*

will you go as my suggestion

or a possible hyphen?

DAS ABSOLUTE WISSEN

ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE

BOA'S LUTE

SWINE

SAD SABLE

IN NEWS

BASS SOUL BEAT

WINE

SAD ABSOLUTE SINEWS

OMNISCIENCE

OMNI SCIENCE

CONSCIOUS

COUS COUS

SCION

nest science with goose eggs

solved for so far

sulfur zeroes in

suffer absolute

zero

you may contain my content

but you cannot reform my form

*The Ineffable*  
*Thin If Able*  
*Th Eine Ffable*

T h u d                    d i a l                    h e c t i c  
 u s    i s    h e m o    m o m    &    m e n  
 t o p i c            b o u r s e            u r t e i l            t e l l u s  
 t h a t            l a b            o r a t e s            j e s t  
 h e a d    e v i l    t h e e    d e a d    d e e d  
 l o p e s    b e v e l    m e a n t    a    f a u n  
 v e r s    a l s    e l f    c o n    s c i o n  
 u s    n e s s    i n    i c h    s i n g  
 u l a            r a r i t y            a t            s a t i e  
 â m e    t i m e    m e ,    m e    s a t i e  
 m u n i    s a l    a n d    i n    c h u n  
 u n    c h i n    s a l i t y    i s    a t  
 h e            m e            m e s s e n g e r  
 g u l l    s t e l l a r    t h e t i c    a    s u b  
 j a c k e t            p r e s s e s            e x i t            s e l f  
 a n d    i n    s i t u    c o n s t a n t    r o m  
 d e t e r n i t y            i n            a t            o n  
 i n    a t    o n    v e r y    o t h e r  
 s i n n    i n g l e    i t t y    t h a t    i s  
 " I " ,    w h o    h o o t s ,    a c h e s  
 r e s    f u g i t    h u g e    f u g u e  
 i n    s i l l    e n s i g n    e j e c t s  
 c o m    n i c t a t e    v e i n i n g    c l a i m  
 a i m i n g    a i r b u s    t o    e    r e b u s  
 t o r    e a c h    c h a n    a n a b a n  
 s o    l u t e o    o n t i c    h i s    h i d e s  
 o    f o r    b e y    o r    e o n  
 e b o n            y o n            d e x t e r            s h u n  
 d u p e            a n n e l i d            a    n i l  
 I ,    n o ,    a n    i l l    u s

## VI. Murder in the Stadium

Sense datum in the data stream.

Breakwater of torsoes.

Ploy bodies for zeroing in on plurals.

Not the same as the pigeon-holing process. Game of numbering birds.

What leafs through quantity measured as counting is gone for syllables mounting.

The flame on a petal. As it rose, so somatic.

To hold back the torn portals from the system.

Lung holds lung as if on patrol.

What is it means. Prowess.

Headstone of the westing plank.

Buzzing constants. Double consonants.

All night I think on inkling.

The execution of sleep-stealers.

Can't see the wick in mind for a bank of light.

Thanks to the dinks in the dotted distance.

To recap: the moon somewhere, the eyes not closed, the dictionary vigilant.

The air-conditioned crickets swell, flick against themselves.  
Between the bricks another building is mortally wounded.  
Sentenced to observe the pendant drool.  
The marginal aspect of description in which a voice inscribes subvocally.  
Leaned across an agate swoon.  
Swings slow as wings low against what passes for air.  
Silky sidereal.  
Three beats and a fretwork. Arcades are slanted.  
Slot the prance, coiled and caustic.  
Never left to be alone, the coming wind as meant.  
Beyond — even that preposition.

As time to sleep too slow.

Loose cinders annex books.

Spooks are spokes of a real spoken here.

Things that can be scooped up out of permanence.

Taxis point between areas of belief in the map of night.

As if too late for syncope.

Amortize one's worst fears.

What to value in the mollified dusk.

To breathe in the ideal vehicle and wheel it around to reveal a real vehicle of power.

Meanwhile, it is being spoofed.

Crumpled, the pages remind one of levers.  
To every reason — turn, turn, turn.  
A kind of logic, this stitch of interferences.  
From this bench the shot light murders glances.  
To use words, not as repercussions, but as cushions below zero.  
Perhaps absolute knowledge will soften the blow of falling below it.  
Red, crushed velvet interiors of coffins in which coffee is about to be served.  
The scheme of expression in terms of espresso.  
Millipedes limping emphatically.  
Each new batch appears to stick to the surface.



Since the mental is a praxis, how come the sentences to moan uncoiled?

Cork is pending.

Your nape has some give.

Sleep leaves your eyes.

Sanded down, man is whittled to a bone in spite of spirit.

Consciousness of a lone title. Into a smaller scan.

Phoneme, or becoming-logic. Beast is all.

Ice has hopes, but highly suspect ones.

Sleep is more purple than chiaroscuro.

It is the dream's craftiness to seem beyond the control of its contrary.

But that is too sheepish. The platitudes deepen by losing altitude.

In quirks the absent.

Deep angelus mapping.

Audits niches.

Willowed zinc cross.

What will the water think?

A word — less system.

Enamelled in painterly thinner.

A woven sharpness, but night is not.  
I never thought of orchestration as a shackle unless it usurped itself.  
When each glut has sapped its choosers, tighten and prefer.  
Ownership comes cloddish like a genital aloha.

Hate bubbles in a frightful froth.  
A baby scherzo.  
What is the difference between our toes and the total?  
Recalling the hook involuntarily.  
Between scare quotes “to remember” and scarce forgetting.  
Neither center, nor margin, nor fringe.  
A syringe between these pockets.  
Speed is neither eased nor erased by the reduction of the past  
to an abbreviation. A tense sign.  
Sense centuries. Self-consciousness.  
I find your toxic success endearing.  
Its grid gets rid of semblance.

Passed amenities.  
Night is not a black stallion, though stalled  
in its ions it caroms off.  
All writers are ghostwriters, which is why I am pleased that it is one word.  
Ghost story and ghost town are each two words.  
But ghostwrite and ghostwritten are both one word.  
The ghost doesn't really negate the written, but the written doubles the ghost.  
A double trace of nothing helps the medicine go down.

*" a metaphysics of the doorless and windowless "*

Do you sleep more because you know yourself?  
Your hate a lilt, an exposé, an opening  
taken back from the drift of stemming panic.  
The leavings of turbulence.  
Thus, perception apes apperception.  
The also as all soul.  
Night is all that is sown slowly through the medium of the also.  
Differentiated properties come together.  
Two eyes make one picture by negating and bringing together their opposites.  
What the eyes distinguish then is that "you" which is coterminous with the trestle.

You have received a printout of your immediate thoughts.  
Your footprints continue even as your walking does not.  
It becomes a race against time.  
The film becomes a race against time becomes a race against itself.  
Add— in the more immediate sense of leaving out.  
Subtract— in the sense of building demolition.  
Abstract— the sixth sense of mediation.  
The cancelled stamp secures the sending on.

I see you when I have negated myself.

If it falls in me, then all that has fallen or fell at one time, all that has fallen should be followed  
in a way that can't be fathomed.

If time is not absolute, it will never catch up to itself.

Sometimes you allow them to convince you that they're only "rattling your cage." And yet,  
when they disappear, you find it impossible to move through the bars.

## Germ Philosophy

When the sound is thickest it's time to divide  
your time or dive into this facsimile of water  
for other than what it would not be  
in this connection of severing strokes from afterglow  
it hinges on the prix fixe axis of huffing zap  
the importance of being ornately ingested.

Cannons slake their thirst, this the syndrome  
the mobile camel of insertions and denials  
as you come upon a proviso in the desert.

Something took you there in the clued jargon  
of epistles and faulty nectar, nicotine of the gods  
and gimlet-eyed puzzlers notorious as buzz.

Pierce the invariants, the concrete rictus  
oft lingual opt subvocal sheering mechanisms  
following the pillow toward an epistemology of sleep  
in which dreams form an itinerant aesthetics  
slow pulls of scruple, quadruple ethics,  
rubbed eyes and rubies, a logic of locking on.

The club of dissatisfaction shadows the neon  
it's cool to twist light at nighttime  
like the rhetoric of reggae odds against the purplish  
and the glimmer, that nimbus, the counterfeit  
where insomniatic brethren turn their breath  
to straw, fore of before and aft of after.

So to unbuckle the babysitter in high art's chair  
the system of the ant farm reconciles real time  
to the closed-captioned simulation for those  
nearing impairment in sense horizon here  
at last adhere the insert to the wee hours  
between pronouns without referents  
citizens of the parochial go jugglers.

Attics of incorporated sound tweak motif  
and I candlestick the foragers for canvas forgeries  
where those birds end piercing evenings in lyric's torn sky  
the coffers stiff as ventholes in a masked array  
benching mums for connoisseurs of humdrum strum and stress  
arcs in eclipse, heterodox in spurs, o doctor!

If the land is mined, hove in ambience sticklers  
in suspense of matted action automatically suspect  
the rudimentary as a grandiose incline, work the highway,  
the thoroughfare is thoroughly your affair, constant magnet,  
strew your jets through a torrid wilderness to rid it  
of circumspection, deltas of light full of it, full of it  
thirsty night, jeweled amps and anthems  
silt through the overt as time's vertical greensleeves  
confuse the chameleons with the sham icons of helicon  
wasted on the autofocus of vamoose nicked in the vanish  
of words policing words for policies of neglected fizzle.

I like your mind better when you smoke cigars.  
It helps me concentrate my emotions on your green-yellow  
color blindness. Colorfast tears soak through your sunglasses,  
more concerned with what you is than who you are,  
hip-hop bunny with bellicose bellies spangled for manx,  
manipulators and idolaters, lollipop gags, sight's gag reflex  
of eyes for throats behind the scenes where helicopters  
go uphill, and when I see you again in Cocteau paradise  
they'll show movies till there's no more dark for the sun to mar  
the margin of the horizon, tickle for sticklebacks, cuckoo for cocoa puffs.

You, scratching mimes, adoration at a thousand flippers per minute,  
how much did they charge you for that discharge?  
Disgorge, you discalced, shoeless in sox, intoxicated.  
My blue sky sublime as your black sun, color my world  
reduced to the universe of Toronto, Toto, still not enough  
to see through "white people and *they* cigarettes," a blue  
workshirt and an anubis advisory, bored with brilliance.

Catgut your karma, cello my word, necklace for lungs.  
Catgut your cultural capital, mummified in toilet paper,  
better your nape than the guillotine, bactine for hurts  
band-aids for the crash and burn park.

Segue to the top quince guitar and fustian parlance,  
caught with your organs in the canopic jar,  
in cadence the debt marches through the marshmallows  
cuffed for killing metaphors and retreating from symptoms  
the simpletons have cornered the power which is why  
marksmen are needed to judo the elect to redemption  
probate for wills, there's a highway to frisk by accident  
that a twenty-four track studio can't light a match for the liquid  
sound pricklers, patched-up pirates sculled and crossboned  
without any concept of positioning the flag to be burned.

Caliban and Sycorax, the two new moons of Uranus, my pretty  
between daffys and the wawa there must be some fallout to this  
or language is not reversed in extermination, I'll let you know  
when I figure out what metonymy means to my tumtum.

I fall aloof from the roof of my mouth  
south toward a fuller fall where fools land lazily  
enough to transpire in dedication to the date's dream.  
Comedy burns a hole in the tragic outline of your inbox  
your mascara, a carapace of dream pop  
and night squeezed out of toothpaste tubes to make  
the unseen concrete, crystallize your eyes *stille nacht*

You don't need a yacht to pronounce it dead on arrival,  
the death of a rival, the double-jointed eyes,  
sin's anesthesia, the cold metal trap of doorless corridors.  
I'd bullfight you for another batch of that unsmothered gust  
from nowhere where nobody wears anything out  
and hand me downs are like a second pair of hands  
to reflect upon the shield of ocelli behind apparent glass  
(money changes but you still have hands)  
where radioactivity performs its bulletproof ballet  
or up on the highwire which we all can manage because  
of those labyrinths in our ears, string-singers wingless  
wolfing down the remote, trained for wages ruffled  
each circus calliope its own canister of sunset,  
subset of the stars' enconstellated ink.

S o ' s                    I ,                    s o ' s                    I ,                    s o ' s                    I .

Not a crustacean, not the eustachian tube, not Euston Station.

An acoustician ducking under the meridian of the eye zone.

None the worse for the tether to that distraught hat.

No zines, no acronyms.

G m a n ,                    h y m e n ,                    i m a m ,                    c a v e m a n .

It's a lexicon, for fuck's sake, take the gas out.



## VII. The Postman Always Rings Ideologically

"she things her position"

preempts

picked thoughts

Consciousness is a mint, a run mint, a menthol,  
not really an extravagance, though it does  
make itself known by keeping in touch with what itself  
cannot come to be. In eternity. Something that escapes  
can be traced back by that smoke to what  
that loaded gun had begun. What it stood for.  
"Life": interiors glossing exteriors.  
More spirit than wind because you cannot see it  
passing through what it touches and leaves tingling  
in the absence that is felt around the radial rims  
and chrome outlines of the corporeal highway —  
suspending speed, almost appearing motionless;  
a vertigo, but directly a technique —  
m e a n i n g ' s            m o t i o n            l e s s o n s .

beltway of my consciousness(betrays)

a "stateliness of wealth"      a symptom      (a simple tom-tom)

"in a very close hand"

every event

the very vent

to get here

often we define ourselves by the impact

but there is something indefinite in these intentions

the reckless directedness of consciousness

"one sleepless"

"that she might think with freedom"

*The retrospective always rings in topographically*

Four strands stand for quips out of timing.

Within distortion another torsion as of reading.

Until it wept and swept itself away.

It is what it is *and* what it stood for.

Then how would that come to mean what it does?

You can't just ease into the flanks of meaning as if you were equipped.

These are things to puzzle over before you even get there.

To that place where time won't tell. Eclipse.

What would you from a quilt compose?

The blindspot marked by a single aspirin.

An uppercut to reality when it pretends not to be looking.

The anarchic, not the chronological sidekick.

Stars webbed out of chimneys. The bright soot nears you.

## VIII. Phonemes Break Like Waves

It fancies itself, fancy self.

Epiphany for an epic economy of fads.

Not "sound common sense," but sound (comma) sense.

The sounds common to the same senses, but in a different sense.

Just as much astir as within phenomenology.

Stirrups to ride the wise grey owl, cheek to jowl.

So that this fist perforce can be seen as the ultimate sophistry.

So history. So histrionic.

A fine carrot to stick you with such unpeeled logics.

A stem to stay men. To read or record —

To recognize a past event as the blurring of extinction.

Division's sun.

The gift of difficulty is more than the cult of the deferred, defrocked and disciplined.

You have been convicted of having your own convictions.

If rivals oust, then one must stoop.

To be disempowered from the dizziness of one's roost.

Like palms turn undated pages.

Delusions of a deluge diverted into rivulets.

A hugeness dissembles and memory is fired.

Dark angles spark tangles.

It is measure that issues, not issues that measure.

Mutual vanishing.

The stuff just keeps disappearing.

Plenty of empty entities.

What is in a name evacuates.

My pet cave empties.

The poem is its own dissolution.

All light — something Platonic to lean on.

The temporality of a signpost  
pointing in space,  
but not to any  
particular place.

It was a fine cause to belittle effect.

One degree removed —  
disparity must disappear

his truth his own  
now he can own  
his own now —

pushpins for consciousness

yolk to yoke  
egg to slave  
undermining the undead

"the path of servitude is the true path of human liberation"

The hard cell meets the hard sell

If you fear the surface, labor

Inhuman experience in human experience

my story—  
lifting autonomy from the clutches of biography  
an anatomy in the throes of what is left —

sketchy

## IX. In Corpor Real

The engineer itself: neither genius, nor speechless;  
an apparition. From whence do all these voltaic piles conduct?  
D e s p o t i c o p t i c s .  
I n c o r p o r e a l —  
Theory speeds toward sense uncertainty.  
Keep focused on the bled mural. Your face may be  
odd, but it's not a façade. The pointed shadows  
intermix between lacy lines and ladders  
flung plump almost as song or sound  
simmering gravely. Agate or gouache.  
A ghost ache, or private theory.  
Torch—Touch—Torsion. Pain smooth enough  
to show nearly all the new nerves. A few near  
the new fears. The buzz—  
Odd, almost pronged ghosts. No longer those  
premonitions of fibrillation. Inspiration creeps  
its petty pace. *Pace*. An eye patch out for it.  
And did the temperature drop deliberately  
into the thirties? Boldly, then  
b o d i l y

(after *Baby of Mâcon*)

Red, irresistible budding cloth of the body, not the machinery of the devil. Dubbed in duplication, Agatha's breasts. The position of the physician. Mystery, or unseemly stupefaction produces the shunning, little slips of *demisommeil* between eventful mass hysteria. Naked envelopes. Precision of the fact of the heart. It is a comet shrunk into a birth; an orb of eyes that haven't learned the trick of seeing what is not there. If desire is the presence of absence, then what disappears in its coming to be is the possibility. The garden of Eden: corporeal, carnal, bodily, fleshly embodiment; bodily expression, expressivity, intentionality of the body, incorporation. The spell of spilled milk, supple saplings, a supplement of liquid spirit grandfathered into cobwebs that criss-cross the flesh of a clock. Time spanners. Percent of scent. Presentiment. Dressing the body's skull with skill, culled from forgetting the incipient concupiscence. In the empty space of the cathedral, which the choir fills with equally chilling aspirations, hot air lifts its own spice into emptiness of voices equally disembodied and valueless. Mouths and solid vocal chords perform the visible oval of shapeless content. Cadaver, corpse. So many words for lifeless skin. Eggshell. Parchment. *dieses Stück papier* ("this" bit of paper); *hat die Negation* (has negation). *Nichtigkeit*—negativity. Nyctalopic kite. Flesh for takeoff. Riddled by incessancy. Ceaselessly ruled. One tenth of these alternatives. Bless this fruit and may it work upon desire. It is not impossible. It is not. Desire appears. From this foetal prison, it peers into absence as into a prism. Its neck upon each stained glass window. A sidekick boasts of a body. Voyager of psychic coasts, take to your room. Trust this, and may it spawn thoughtfulness.

## *Flinty*

Fly me, and flying, a slime, as by me, flime.  
The utter helplessness of saying that he wanted  
to "sleep hard," as if the brain could  
a u t o m a t i c a l l y c e a s e — f i r e .  
Indigenous, not indigestible spirits.  
Houses sleep in the admixture of gables and  
carpenter's gothic shorn of attire just as  
things tire of being all there is: tuxedo logic.  
Shadow of a doubt without.  
Had woof of a dub within.  
Yes, to administer to the flinty —  
A bed that is replenished by itself (dreams).  
A carpet scattered with inflections (dust).  
In moving pictures the sea is steely,  
as if the camera took a couple of shots to still what  
it steals from the gray as it moves in the waves.  
I thought such an outlandish explanation  
to be seaworthy. If it came down to truth, would  
you let it happen? To recover memory, forget it.  
In a story, a stray pool of light left over from  
the flood receded into a core of flood-lit paper.  
The eggs will have us inside the action.



Queen of quonset consciousness for a day, for ages. Foragers after consciousness, episodic and plangent in new iconic spoors, spurred on by what could only be seen at a squint. A rectangular lope. An eggshell-colored full moon, down with the setting sun, conscious of being unconscious, all night in a daze. A prose haze unstuck from dreaming the world away returns like the phoneme "mem" in memory. Or what remains of "fluent" in the fluorescent, undersea gems of light's differential equations in whose stead knowing alights on the dark as if imprinting a sound pattern, or demythologizing the legend on a magnetic map. As if words were myopic. Veiled to show the farsighted links. Hyperbolas stung by the hypodermic as if to inoculate the concrete with abstraction. And you wake up in other heart closets. Only project. Seconds tick away like memories' indexicals. Not seen in night's chosen awareness. A choice between neglect and oblivion. Once more into the clonic brokenness of beginning. Itch to its own *einfall*. The exhaustively rehearsed. In other words, how to outlast inwardness. "On Knocking at the Sleep Gates in *Macbeth*." Each word is a complete sentence. If you rearrange them enough, letters seem to conjugate on command and steal their own unique cornices from the dislodged capitals. Old bit sanctuaries. So all but the ears are veiled. First demythologize, then dematerialize.

## X. Trappings

Outside the lit rapture  
palm trees go giddyap  
like swizzle sticks upended  
in philosophical cocktails.

One law was vacant without  
turning itself into itself. Ingenium do as the genies.  
Ginocchio. What are the knees of the mind?  
Appendix.

Racing twill for danger. Unopposable like thumbs.  
The obliteration of memory  
is different from the pure oblivion of forgetting.  
Taking hypothetical oaths,  
or cramming for Latium Vico-style.  
Derision is the trait of an animal I read about  
somewhere that someone said. Arguments and counter-  
arguments staged and struck, reset and staged again.  
Chessboard. Bordonone.

Dust it always have to please and raining, yes, even  
when it isn't, could it not quite be as it should?  
Quite wide wake and each mosquito its own epistle.  
The imps are fazed by stasis. They go through  
like looking glass. How big is sleep?  
Orchid or straw. Bolero. Turn a door  
back on you. Time blankets without being  
a security. I certainly hope slow.  
Doubtless a doubleness.  
That art ought evoke or choke,  
rhyme or sublime. A fool aloof.  
The cult of cultivation — a society of green thumbs.  
Fact - simile.

How soon and how so, alleviating relapse  
as if to catch again the undercurrent  
as it folds between message and machine.

Sequester night, a sound dance  
lent somnambulism — walking around  
with failed sleep — the slow wheel of a darker  
obscure. A polymer of sounds immured  
in steeplechase. The search angel suffers  
a sea change, lately so lightly.

It's three in the morning in Troy. No mood to  
staple against. Would to subjunctively  
transfer speculation to empirical verdure —  
quite on the fringe, canopy of blur.

Mistaken as to what gives and yet taking it  
as it comes to be, becoming other than  
what it gives. Arose, like any other it arose.  
Arise and fall. Experience of consciousness.  
Cruise toward Cretan labyrinths at a speed  
that will not curtail that pile of ashes,  
brimful. Otiose and underdone.

Toward cardamon's ebon coolness  
as if getting stiffed on approach to beacons,  
night's blueprint for daydream's mountains  
questing for flow, nimmed by ashen hue.  
In the cone of agitation Agincourt.  
Walking the plank of the tongue to the tip of  
its spittle. I am fond of palm fronds.  
Can't get over the fact that the head is the neck's  
sneeze. I watch over this isotope, if it is  
not mine. Ego scribbler. Script the scrute  
in inscrutable. Passenger encore.  
Waver of knowing and perceiving. The squaring  
of tiptoes. An intervention which does not inter  
vention but enters into it through the vents.

Beige-colored being. Insistence of hiss  
hesitates to situate a loss of speed  
lodged in the throat like a cherry ad hoc.  
The moral below elbows — the funny bone.  
A molar movement stunted to impasto.  
The wonder of the lopped-off to contain  
in itself the next loop of loophole, the coupe de ville,  
little deuce coup de dés. Interruptions of  
dream's interregnum. An irregular calyx,  
or trope. Abdomen as a prayer word for belly.  
Abandoned, left undone in a sarabande.  
Abducted, restated in pain as a flabby staccato.  
The accented eyebrows of déjà.  
Taste — ici: elasticity. Moment by moment  
to archive understanding in a single ovum.  
It is over so easily. Because: cause and be.  
To avoid a void  
and a cure — aqueduct.  
What is adequate to the presentation qua  
present. A bow-tie is not the premise of  
happiness. I don't believe in your credenza.  
I find your vaunted impenetrability  
transparent. Loose id dreams. What would  
you make of this title? *Trappings*.  
To cull from this dull hull a lull in place of a skull.  
A Candide attitude.  
Blots.

Latin ate itself as sunshine which doesn't  
have a clock to stampede or a cloak to collar.  
Rituals of permanent abasement.  
The blind leading the sublime.  
The footage that broke the camera's lens.  
Capitalism skims off the fads of the land.  
Test. Amen. Testament. Amend.  
Text append. Impending. Appendix.  
Ab ovo (lit. from the egg; from the beginning).  
Cat's paw. The deadlights. Mind-thick  
buttons bobbing on the high seas.  
Metabolic skirmishes.

Not an oversight, but an overture of sight.  
Munch the flame.  
Meaning: the thing detours.  
There is no such thing as acqua;  
only the ingredients of the unseen.  
The curse of the introduction is that it is a kind  
of knowledge which induces prediction.  
Its own attainment remains wordless on treble cliffs.  
Great gardening eyes.  
An *X* on the outpost of fact.  
What has been called technology is such sweet cooing.  
The Iceman Dubbeth.

The decay of his memory occurs in real time.  
He dropped sleep onto the floor in a puddle.  
There is a tacit hem to memory.  
Accent into hell. Slow poison or hopscotch.  
To the spoils go the victims. Reticence is circular.  
And I believe in solipsism between equals.

More piratical than practical,  
I sing the wrath of the nucleus.



## XI. OUBLIETTE

Thus trembles axiom. A persistence to remain impervious to the impertinent disavowals of permanence as if it were simply chance that no bodies are busy. A sleepwalker— but perhaps that noun implies a verb, though of a specific kind of inaction. Usually, a hemmed moon —*hemmung*— a hole torn at night. To walk through, rather than wake up to. What would it mean to synchronize specters? Aspect blindness. Ambiguity is contiguous. If an act becomes an old crony, does anachrony become you?

High pythonesse, hypothesis— bite the same to ken — early to birth and early to describe. Fixing itself on a seal like a shocking simile. Rehearsal, reversal, collapse. Surrendering error for caliber (a spectral calico): aspects of the detective novel. Echt. Each chat. Each hat. Easter egg hunt. Done up to the mince. Everything is decided. Know our reason. Negation comes by twos aboard *no's* arc. You have your life *before* you, not after. Alleviate gardens by picking them clean. Levitate. Suspire. Add annoys, subtract deploys. Leapfrog the domains. Tutelage. Total edge. As for the aspersed, her own part in the pyre. Rock, scissors, Aspern papers. As per the peepers. As pen be each. The aphids of aphorism eat holes through the paper. Bent to her will? In a cheap edition. Dispersed aspersions. Asperges.

City of memory, memory like a city. Partly under renovation, partly suffering urban decay. Remembering and forgetting like diastole and systole of the same organ, contracting and dilating. Gentrification. Excavation. Ex vena cava, deoxygenated. Cava— thinking a Spanish sparkler, but remembering cool caves with mossy blankets, cavatina, corpora cavernosa. When the liquid passes over, the velcro loses its grip. Why that bobbin tugging at the crook of the stream? Something sticks to it, most things detach. But what is the liquid that passes over and through? What is that stuff, that life, made of? Sleep is a stickler for dreams. Expectation hoarded from another grasp. And the ink would come to bleed out in black currants. Juice that might reflect better out of darkness than mere lucid circumspection. Rising up from the chalk outlines into the chalked up chalkiness of it all. The pleasure of these uncertain isotopes. The lint inside the navel. Memory's body is a tumbler. Somatic somersaults returning soporific in kind. Leafing through the possibles. As if the future were not a prosthetic extension of the present as it is not what it most appears to be. Colliding with the scopic. A burden of force that defeats the self-digested self's shelf life preserved in its shell. Selfish to keep to itself. Or known, aspire. A sixth sense in suspense. Time to mood the alters. The seemly totters. Art's aerial. Sclerotic dissonance. To have taken from what you came to suppose. Solicit this night of human ankles. "People muth be amuthed." Leery of slurs but swerving. *Cicatriz*. The jagged edge, a knowledge. March, this time. A mandible that ceases in an image of *caput mortuum*. Montage— the sum of who you are and how are you come to word within word like linked bracelets of bright bone. La città. Will it ever prosper? A would-be noun's oceanic boundary. Calypso's flood kit. What rippling means in the care of lines.

The inevitable nakedness of your claustrophobia — "A figure deep in his own imagination" — forgetting time for the moment, writing smaller, as it were, to blur what is writ large. "The eyes he had brought back from Venice." New, almost to the point of obscurity; not obscure, but rather opaque. That is, as a comma senses its own inclusive exclusions. Whatever could be the reverse of hypocrisy. Not to read into or between the lines, but to make of thought a place (however contingently, for the purpose, not to assemble really) to make an ensemble behind stuttering french windows. Reading the calfskin to the left. You cannot write unwittingly, nor choose the paper contours of insomnia. It must flow out of what comes in to take its place; to take place, not roughly but with insight and within.

A gaze toward such lumpish blocks as moods wedded to a certain disequilibrium. These are things the calipers can't measure: the spectator with the overdraped eyes. And yet those constant omissions, feeling that you are all out of weather. As in that country where when the rain stops, the people wake up along with the animals. This is no time to be particular, and that is a constant. To scribble in the crueling pale. Still a greater next (as in interior) with tall, freezing candles like mocking chandeliers. The drift of meaning is not meant to be flagrant. The need for stories lends a fragrance which completely interrupts the notion of episodic trumpets. There are other things to smother these accommodations. And the confusions join with smoke the color of burnt watermelon, mounting the steps of consciousness at a pace which belies the notion of a quicker knowledge. Something in the subset of alarm disengages from an ornamental sea. The oblique divorce of everything known. All misty ides. Ideas— available wherever papyrus is squelched.

Fornix mitral threadgill sumpt. You have been undervalued by timelessness. The phenomenon of adjudicating strangeness. The leading metonymic indicators. Dismantling similitude. Hyperbole, or follow that lynx. Cubby naphood. Gabby Hartnett. More interested in nude roses than neuroses. Restricted voices in the oleander. The farther confessor will make you convex your grins. A convection oven in which conventions are fired and emerge like souffles filled with the balloon juice of invention. *Oubli*, oblivion, oubliette: "A dungeon with an opening only at the top, fr. *oublier* to forget." Segue (proceed to what follows without pause; to make a transition without pause) versus when he says that "pause is the ear" it is because when you hear a sound that is foreign, you pause so that you can listen and decipher. Some of us stunted in a vast compote composed of plot and hectic mention. Believing more or less. Indexicals, cantilevers and simoons. A cathedral dry as desert moon. When the image gets in the mix as part of the sonic envelope all Hellas breaks loose. The ambient music does not create an enclosed, confined space but secretes from its presupposed womb a spider web and that's the connection to what wasn't there before. But you have to spot check for these timely leakages. What is soothing about repetition is that it allows you to recreate what you thought was there before but wasn't, therefore, a memory any longer than it had to be. A huge selection in retrospect. The mines and abhors. Brain like some high chaparral. Lift time, a warranty. Quite a recollection of getting rid. Said, straight into the saline as a scoffing off of this thought heap. Blazed, constantly monitoring the isotope. As if looking into an hour would last as long in reverse.

Yelling in sputters. It shouldn't have been an illusion to fork unconditionally. A nation that has the nerve to howl only *after*, always after. The enemy is what boasts itself as training. I would prefer not to submit my work for approval. A proven hell. That there should be a remainder that is the unthought of thought, an image forming of a new image of thought, becoming a force of the fifth dimension, the difference of forces neither seeking nor reaching equilibrium or obliteration. The sensuous underside of the thing itself thought *of* and not with. The aesthetic underpinnings of a philosophical corset. That there should be flying carpets to service those virtual spaces where thoughts unlace in trajectories of disorder. To lift imagination up again from those prone to the thickness of madness. What is performed is that very undifferentiation. It might all seem a blur and only cohere in a place that is become absolutely other, where the mind widens and attaches to blinks in the chatter. And more meaningful for what it must necessarily fight against. A bad till to the debt. Standing in the sunlight and yet not understanding. A rift opens and to drift there. Yours, fractally. Imagination enables by disabling other states. Consciousness is the private dick trailing the unconscious. But without those detailings striped across the back of our prey, we would be left in the goop of mysticism. Twins activate oceans, a form of force. Shins and sutures, conned etchings, links to think on, of, over. What to make of the production of stencils. There must be more to it than just being sent the formatting, a loophole in use. Sense. Template. Contemplate. Eyes suddenly thirsty. Helping more or less to do things less fiercely. Coded signs of fits and starts. Fortress of adamant krill. The billowing appositives. Unsex the herky gems. We are *in* consciousness: stages of it, broken statues, reversals. Wearing metaphorical duds we dissemble unsightly escapes from the resonances of privacy.

The eyes shall have two purposes and neither plain to see. Tons of fuel. *Feuilleton*. The three am birds, those with thinking eyes. The width of night they slice. As *oiseau*, so shall you sleep. Nothing that is not driven into it. Where the pronouns go for anonymity. Tear through the incognito argon zoom. Dolly-shot. Dalí and the invalid eyes. There must be a force that makes the sentences connect. Just because something has entered the popular imagination does not mean that the imagination has suddenly become popular. Tourniquet of style. Mortality lapping on the shores of Aruba. Is it time to be sentential? The sentinels have Roman noses. I cannot read you even though it is written all over your face. Birds pocketed in pipes, to stuff dreams there as a counterforce. Volts force the muse electrocuted. Get bent. They seem too green on the way to guess enemies. Do the writing. Inkstand forms a mediation. The sitar poses for a still life. Casting whistles in the drink of idiom. Day is a kind of cassette recorder that night rewinds, and you hear the sound as undifferentiated. Available wherever papyrus is squelched. Ambience plies a German revolver. Combat replication over the great divide. Lily shot-putters. Each depot is a deposition in blue. Will you remember exactly what you said when you were deposed? By any other name would lie completely unthought. Let us now stripe the kinoscope. And then from an unbended river, the captioned mind composes a bit of capsize and topsy-turvy. A wrinkled brow beneath that hat of a skull — *caput mortuum* — signifying the wrinkling within. Ample arpeggios of discordant progression. The eyelet from the shoelace. It is o.k. to write again. The brain cells are analyzing themselves until they can talk themselves to sleep again. Clustered to bendingness. Sleep returning to the fold. Leftovers from the beatitudes. Sonneteers voluntarily decide to write uncertainly along the lines of this stray ashtray. Thinking of

ammunition as a saintly term. Without metaphors life itself would continue to be what it is not. The quiddity of proto-quotation. Absolutely emblematic creation. Copyright and trademark. Belting out the quotas. This edible double gallery. As to suppose the benchmark crimson. In search of a more poetic ideal we come to a word from our sponger. The pause read as a thresher. And if "pause is the ear" can't the play go backwards? Either *Macbeth* or *Die verkehrte Welt*. Dreaming that dream where you pun on *time* and take yourself back to sleep against the grain of speed. The solace of shoelaces. Crafting from behind an equinoctial notion of the somersault. Jumping to conclusions as a true methodology of beginning. Restoring the pantheon.

N o w

H e r e

T h i s



Skull molts

molto molten

mollusk as husk

tusks of lust

caput mortuum

the loblolly

pinnes and lollops

a dollop of lull

an unsolicited lilt

lollygagging in a hull

bobbing like a lollipop

a doobby linking the small

figure of the skull to the body

skillfully mills weave

the thinly morticed skull

to a cavity cut to receive a million tenons

against mortification

a dubbed lily

a dab or bud

as consciousness a sleeve

then bodily

## XII. Double Gallery

More total like a moral totem

Dirt factotum

Sublime crow (you can eat it)

Divvies for coolers

Scanning the bellows for pricks

The beautiful clanking moment

    obscure because it can be seen

A fragment of consciousness blurred

    in the rustle of cobwebs memorially

Broken from immanence like a mimetic

    shadowboxer oblivious to the actual punches

Hunching toward Betelgeuse

    with a crowbar.

Remembered me in the sense of hearing it open up  
as knowing. You make these choices and you end  
up living this life. Opt in like an option in  
the mood light. Meanwhile, not a specific  
foreign language, but foreign "language."  
Skewered by discounting your account  
of the separation of chance from states of mind.  
The argument is a bluff, but an elegant bluff.  
How the parts cohere is less important than  
the distance between them, which is not spanned  
but cloaked by the interstitial —  
the skin of it snapped like a bracelet of constellations —  
The cosmopolitan meets the metropolitan  
on his own turf; i.e., the cosmos. Osmosis.  
Met her match in metamorphosis. A ghost town.  
The metaphysical versus the supermodel.  
Got to go to where you don't know. I'll take you there.  
In the here and now. Hearing how it's done  
b e t w e e n l a n g u a g e s

The solids swerve and twist like taffy.  
The rails you ride crisscross the perimeter.  
The circumference confronts itself.  
Standings, soundings, surroundings.  
Not a tummy tuck, but a stomach fold.  
As a lizard dodges over the deck, the effect is so  
slippery because the connection is so tight.  
Maneuvering over the radio dial hectically  
what persists is the hiss of the dialectic. Between  
poles. The leopard remains snug in the air-lock.  
Stonewalling lapidaries. Marbleized capillaries.  
What triggers aggression? The story of capitalism  
from cocoon to tycoon. Innocence closed-off  
and playing in the background like a laugh track  
to a cancelled sitcom. Decompression —  
where comprehension comes to decompose.  
Compacted layers of scotch tape flick off  
like sheets of mica under a fingernail. Do you prefer  
to serve the shrunken head of accumulated knowledges  
as an entrée, or to deglaze the leavings?  
I would prefer not to knot the strings  
up into a product. The fungibility of the disfigured.

The trance ends in the incidental.

What would be coincident to adjacency?

Timing — the pure progeny of the phenomenon's elegy.

News of the world ends on the head of a pun.

Imageless in ageless cages.

Deontic rival archaic assets.

Opening night. Open the night out onto.

Into deft exposure like a time-lapse

photograph. Titans for high-end ambiguity.

The reflection heels upon the mirror's command.

To heal the wounds of mimesis.

To mirror the reproduction of language mirroring the language of reproduction reproducing language in a mirror mirroring the repented induction of anguishes or the repeated injunctions against the distinguished language of mirrors. A hall of hallowed ears in all like wicker mirrors. In each obstacle to grace a term that limits the denial, so that no mirror can produce a single unique production without taking account of itself as the main obstacle to reproduction.

Sleep tightens.

This time wound up healing.

Every third word is Rashomon.

*Arbeit* licks itself harder out of context in order to be more itself than itself. Otherwise, there would be no use in acting as it obtains to being what it is not. Something that can be posed in its disadvantages stubbornly clings to the forensics of foreplay as in the continual expectation of feigning belief. You never really know what you're thinking until after you've thought it (of it). That these terrestrial stars not clog up the thoroughfare of thinking through

Dematerialize and then become

the double-barrelled tunnel of time.

These mirrors don't exist simply for appearance's sake; and yet one cannot forsake appearance qua appearance in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. If all these mirrors are simultaneously reflecting, then perhaps reflection is the ground of all mirroring. And speculative logic is what allows one to think within this disembodied space by actually placing oneself there. Logic is a burning house. In a glaucous heap like the world. And the world is haunting the ghost.

Now I remember having seen myself in another now I remember an other having seen myself now having seen myself I remember an other

— “who” — “that” — “this” —

“it” writes:

“It's our body and we'll die if we want to.”

## *L'Infinito – Eat Your Mistakes*

The true externality of animal nature is not the external thing, but the fact that the animal turns in anger against what is external. The subject must rid itself of this lack of self-confidence which makes the struggle with the object appear as the subject's own action, and must repudiate this false attitude. Through its struggle with the outer thing, the organism is on the point of being at a disadvantage; it compromises its dignity in the face of this non-organic being. What the organism has to conquer, is, therefore, this its own process, this entanglement with the outer thing. Consequently its activity is directed against the direction outwards, and is the means to which the organism lowers itself in order that, repudiating and rejecting that means, it can return to itself. . . . Excrement has, therefore, no other significance than this, that the organism recognizing its error, gets rid of its entanglement with outside things.

—Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*

In defecation we do not merely eject waste material, but our own digestive juices also: we are like writers tearing up drafts after their manuscript has been typed.

—J.N. Findlay, “The Hegelian Treatment of Biology and Life”

And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein;  
And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written  
therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Moreover, he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto  
the house of Israel.

So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I  
give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

—Ezekiel

I then asked Ezekiel. Why he ate dung, & lay so long on his right & left side? He answerd.  
The desire of raising other men into a perception of the infinite

—Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*



If night is a complete train and men and women merely layers of clay and rain incited to stay that way and say it in this, then a hard rain must disintegrate the blustering quatrains of me's and you's approaching asymptotically toward goose eggs. It is the maiden voyage of thinking that is made an end unthinkingly by making it happen in this way out of all flush and prospering facts. Now I am the Quattrocento, but then I was a figment in search of a Coltrane; something to scrape against knowledge as a foothold on a sleeveless quay. The eye slits its own equinox and the clouds can't see or be seen. Difficulty is the substance of its own etiology. Beyond possessives, I blurt out something in ink and the smoke comes to trail in the entrails of what is produced by the sudden removal of the vernacular. Leaves falling for gravity as if in love. This is the antiquarian expertise of before. Janus-faced vocation. These are the symptoms of a method which closes itself off from a new window. Opening the frame within the window, the flower of information is interrupted in the process of forming itself. A hard rain, cold rain, quart of rain, of what and water. Turning the over-determinations over and over in your head, that is not a bed but a place where sleep is fractured when all is fled undone. And when all is said and done we would perhaps prefer to read their faces rather than face their readings.

And not trained into sleep ether, for even if we were trained to the swoop we were still unprepared for the cyclone. What eventually cloned one was with itself. In the wind it buoys and furls, and the xeroxes shuffle like mice in sand. This is unrepeatable. The black bugs of prose on purpose compose themselves into alphabetical patents called by the initiates "language." The writing that comes out comes from within. It's one thing to say that language is a virus, another to inoculate oneself by investing a quantity of capital "I" in one's own investigations. To want to say something so that it means something. A nocturne to the external organs. The hand produces its own unreadability from scratch on a wet avenue of ink. The scratching itself is how it comes to sketch its premonitions. Timeless as two words. Time plus the minus. The timeless insistence on what is meant. A box of shadows in which and against which one shadowboxes. It remains aloof but loaded. As if you could train your eyes to rain along the inside.

The fugue is huge. Back and froth across the recent strings. Each variation accrues in the recidivism of the few. The law is the flaw. Its past tense flew. Words of prey are loners when their wings give out. Every notch in my ownness is scored by a compacted bit of information that when struck sounds like a harpsichord. Concentration is the ability to remain unfocused in the onslaught of perception. Everything that imposes itself on us opposes us. The invariant in this system is the horizon; the hoarded oracle of infinite flatness. When you come up against it, you come up against yourself. What seems paradoxical is only what allows what seems to appear and then vanish into the words through which a sentence is preserved. The fugue is huge but still the few is not loss. Huge, hewn, sewn and seen: these are the acts of Los. All is not. This piece of paper: not seen, not being seen, not seeing.

My sense has pieced itself together out of bulk.  
This book has stabbed itself in my own stuff.

Nobody has gotten any father. I wanted to come to a walnut with inverted commas. To see roses built in the city. To look for harbor with “to look for.” To strip down and back as a means of accenting the sign. The sheer letter an orchard. Without verbs, without sentence constructions, a programmatic grammar that plays the ruse like a code. How do we get from nature to aesthetics by means of the senses? A census of perceptions permeates a spirit that knows full well it is not going to end up meaning what it does. The past – it dies, but means well. It shifts in its collar. It broods an orchard. Invisibility is also the brute strength of that word; the word that words lead you to subtract. The wings as wings would surmise. W o r d s   b e n t   d o w n   i n   r o s e s .   T h e r e .

The rain is a film of cozy glyphs and yet for shelter drawn across the words like curtains. If you pay too much attention to penmanship your ideas can't jump ship. What lets go wavers and when to writing not to examine itself but to waive one's right to what is there before. The loops of legacy. It's too easy to talk about anything. There's an infinite string of determinations, seas combed by waves. Sometimes the arbitrary leaps and that's when intention comes out to play, getting a head of itself as if it could pass time on the soldier. For the time being you are getting warmer. Your mind is at its own disposal. The properties of things lurk like histories. They cling to the air and rein in the exactitudes. In an old Dutch painting milk is being poured. In time. Eyes open slopes of syncope to connect the asterisks. No longer knowing at night, along the jittery edge of the horizon, the roots of desire shake loose of earth. The base code repeats itself and in so doing justifies variation.

I swept down to it unwritten in the palm of my hand. I suppose I wanted to hear something else in my inmost paper – the paper itself, its cross-pollination. The notion of precipitation. There is this place where names vanish in the signs like half-burnt bridges that make the crossing precarious but inevitable. There is no sense prefiguring how it will go. Destination is erasable. A tourniquet of twice light. The phrase unmade is adjacent to this light. A reason lurks out there for this repetition. “If,” in this case, is not about not knowing. The thing that instills itself in you is not something that you bring to the table. Decomposition. The placing of the sky in night’s head. More footnotes instead of more light. Night says the opposite and through it, porously, each date is delicate enough to shed its skin like a calendar. The notion of a collision course is not enough to counter the fact of accident. Even if you close your eyes the mind’s repeating rifle still stands at the ready. If not to fire at least to take aim at the target that looks back at you longingly. Water clocks inside you. I am pronoun and each instance of me is not a copy but a bud in the noise where transit coheres. Sense is a misdirection that multiplies. I made the moot point repeatedly as if I could point it out like that patch where you just read this. There will be no feeding, then no feeling. If it simply matters, then matter must matter too. I wrote it down – when it came up it sped across the page like a language – and signed it.

In the warm of my westernness I had almost begun thinking about not adjourning for the day because the night winds rattle the windows and from the inside it makes the dark seem less obscure. What I would like to extract from this universal is some particular insight that will both spread out and subtract from its resistant stain. The white ink of thinking at its own momentum. In a treehouse shut off from heaps of language. In a skeleton of cigarette ash. Fields of consciousness remember themselves as links in a silvery, systemic chaos. Overprintings leapfrog cocoons. When we ask too quickly what it means we forget to think. There are slivers under the nails of each coffin. It ditches me. In reading there is a need to reinforce the struts of meaning with piano wire. We point out the things we have stumbled upon, manufacture meaning out of caressing obstacles. In the weave of coming down to candles unlit though mightily perfumed. The blends of these itches drawn from scratch. If it really were the farthest thing from your mind it might remain there. A pageant of memory embossed with the logo of its own detachment. Fixed meanings unmoor and scour the night on winds of semantic torpor. Big words split like peapods. The sound immures itself within a glossary.



These were the connectives: to bind and yet not be bound to carry out what is stated intentionally; to implement a recursive strategy as an incursion into the master program, inventing a subroutine that doubles back on the system and changes it. Not to invent but to use a product of that system as the differential against its own assimilation back into the same, because what has been absorbed will reprogram that system. The system will no longer be the same. Chance wills procedures. Inflecting dead ends in order to deflect the program toward other meanings. Not just thinking through the cracks, but a way of cracking through what thinks. Metaphor is the means, the carrier that insinuates uncertainties into previously abandoned genealogical lines. New eye teeth are selected to assimilate different prey. Thatched huts become plural domes. Nomadic plumes of smoke unfurl from nom de plumes. A gnostic nomenclature rattles back ceaselessly to the brute beating of beginnings and ends. The means of meaning make one think the meanings. The literal glut of the polyglot is the white noise of white mythology.

I went down and looked through the remains at the bottom of an hourglass but I found that things didn't always align themselves in theory. The eyes blurt out strange things; they see the stages of things out of their corners where floaters skid out of reach. A bunch of birds that must have passed overhead appear as quick arrows pointing their shadows downward as they cross the window. Such is attention. The code is merely an index and stands in relation to the message as a dictionary to a crossword puzzle. Joyful, nor scared of its own library. The dictionary is our life. It is in the nature of the indexical to point to itself, and in pointing to mark the taking place of language by taking its place – there. And still it points beyond itself. There really is no single person to point to as the cause of this circus of meaning's desertion. The work is antiphonal, unsleeving, cut and spliced out of whole cloth, eclipsed in and as language. The object that we point to is the point of reference that the word refers us to. But just because it can vanish without a trace doesn't mean that reference is superfluous. Even if the point I'm making is pointless, the point of making it is not. The pointing remains in language, and doesn't quite pass beyond its own insistence upon making its points of arrival and departure the same. The sign itself is a shifter: values are variables, and shifty characters too. The appearance of meaning is neither attached nor detached but persists as the medium of transference. The point is not merely to isolate particulars, but to reparticularize universals. Have at them with equal force. This is not "my" imagination, but the power of imagination *qua* imagination. Thinking *is* what it means; thinking is that "being" as meaning. Knowledge is not a thing but a force. "To get it" is to rub out objects and erase their inscriptions so that the pink stubble reminds us that the pencil has two ends. The end is what it means. To be, or not to.

On the other hand, this is not meant to signal a return to the glorification of the literal, uninterpretable word – dereified, dejected and debriefed. The literal, left to its own devices, quite literally vanishes; or its meaning does, leaving behind only bones in its stead – skeletons on paper, words in cages, bars of print. I am interested in this piece of paper and also not just *this* one. The marks on this page gather meaning and content and are not just dead signs. Once they enter into language they become part of the scheme of consciousness. But meaning circulates outside of intention, it is a force between the letters that scripts the surmise – this is what is hitting you between the eyes.

Hawk is my ownmost khaki. This is the grunge of spirit. Crest the sotto. Each outer stroke stokes echoes of mine own corps museum. Corpse Diem. Meaning more than we say, saying less than we mean. Odd so turn and under. The road is old so go there, till it, make mad sarcophagi or practice bibliophagy. The day is seized by phagocytes. Curt and poised as sticks against a syllabus of curbs. But names will never hurt as much as they call "it" into being. Sad, small swallows these white blood cells. If there is more meaning in what is left unsaid we should never leave off unsaying it. The rupture is always available and we wait in the wings with vinyl spatulas and dribble on our chins. Each stroke of time is a shedding and even the clock lets go of challenges that can be met but not won. Never more. The ring is troubled by squaring off against its own circle. Plangent code, planetary message. No one on the phone is listening.

The maximum came to the point where limbo muscled up. The troubles of grammar pale in comparison to “the troubles of grammar.” Grammar is a question, mark you. Birthdays are milling into puddles of anticipation. In coils coiling and never any notion of letting go. The screech of meaning is not simultaneous. I don’t want this body forever. Saying so doesn’t make it a choice. The question of sense in sense-certainty arises because the first thing at stake in *sense* is meaning. Perception comes after the initial assimilation which was never in question. Sometimes it seems that you’re not saying anything and then I hope you mean more than you say.

Taps out as method, undone in seeing how it will come out garbled by turbulence. And yet extracting a form is as exacting as abstraction. Not looking back opposes itself as an orphic moment. The inevitability that sucks one in. A series of conic phones organically attached to sleeping heads. If I fought the law, what would the law win? In scuttle the same, renamed to produce the inkjet insignias. The knot reveals what it is not. Underneath the dud, the will loosens. Stop listening and make language work. Canthus. The blend of shuts allure.

Ideas tug at the skull like inverted teeth whose nerves connect to a nervous system beyond their center. One is susceptible to thinking as from the recoil of a repeating rifle. As from a sentence. As to compare creates an identity that puts a contract out on difference. You can hole up in a repetition for days. All the apples in Adam. I fought the law and one law won. It was the law that made the tugging necessary. The past is a path between gardens and it is guarded equally by what you can't remember as by what you dare to recall. If you don't face what you recoil from, you will never recover from. The moon flat as a tarmac. The shades are wrinkled. It's nobody's asphalt. It just occurs. And maybe it was someone else's path since you woke up to find that you had been run over. A series of possible worlds has been proposed and shot down as too optimistic. That half of emptiness that fills you up, buttercup. The dark smokes your eyes and writing stokes the embers in an echo chamber.

Some final order to be mistaken exactly for that.



I had said that I would not look back at the previous things I had written, not because anything that I had written would have become stale over this time, but because I didn't want to be led by what I had written in the past. As if I wouldn't have been led anyway, through sheer proximity. The crooked notebook, its screws against the desk, scats a telegraphic code. The messenger codes for the delivery of the message. Music sheds itself. This is the sound of one's handwriting. The concept of writing has never been an act. It is different in kind from both attraction and indifference. Aesthetics is its wing formation. At a certain point you must let the ghosts speak for themselves so that you can speak for yourself. You haven't been taken in just by letting go. Words are certainly something. Without them it is almost impossible to be in the world. Anything's impossible. Shift happens. Eyes slot for serifs. Change is only the burden of being alone. These are the regulations without which there is nothing but control. Permanence changes over time. The idea of the end of time is timeless. Does time change? This is not equivocation but the same thing. In the beginning paradox roamed free. The keys to the kingdom of cognition. This time, time is on the outside. And we're wearing ruffled sleeves on our hearts. This much is so. So uncertain. The wastebasket hisses with the golden hum of humiliation. As if you could use language without also being used by it. As if anyone would understand your nervousness. In the middle of thought there is a belly button. Sleepless to the core like an antihistamine. You love the crinkle of a script that can't be improvised unless the whole thing is a proviso. Looking back couldn't kill because you rid yourself. You see as you see. For miles and miles. Tracing the places where you wrote of things that had never been unlettered until their meanings sped off between the uneven twigs.

In all your stricter accompaniments I would come out the guesser. Just as you might wait for something to cross the slopes of your mind, I lie and wait. I stick to your outline like some fake, glow-in-the-dark slime. Plenty of glue but nothing to stick to. I wait for somebody to cough it up. Eyes are half on file. Ideas are half on fire. What you think you reveal the reverse. Fields of consciousness grow tired and become fields of sleep. An immense microscope draws it inside. An interior wilderness takes the place of the streets. In language we murmur to discuss. The dream of us vanishes. All is one, but one what? The shady activity of turning back the clocks. Riddles crept like lyrebirds. Language cruises, planets hum. Pulling the crank for edging as a kinder calliope. Our new home is an olive branch. A place in which to compose.

There must be some place other than the mind being its own pontoon. Very soon now I will ask for what is mine, for what has been mined from the beginning. Outside the mind minds only its own business. The brain is a gift wrapped in the box of the skull, but the brain isn't really inside the box. The box is filled with crinkly tissue paper to muffle the fact that it is not there. The sound of this paper as it's rifled through is consciousness – unwrinkling itself into new wrinkles that can't be seen outside the box; can't be seen as signs of the activity of the brain which is not hidden beneath the paper. But in a strange way those wrinkles are reproduced. Those squiggly lines reduplicate the palimpsest of the brain without mimicking it exactly, for the thoughts that form there are clicking things, ticking them off. There's rust on the clock that prevents it from moving backward. But one only desires to escape what hatches directly from one's mind. I. One doesn't look directly into the sun, but the sun looks back. There are borders which define the disappearance of the invisible. They mark the absence of the object as it disappears. It glimpses itself only as it vanishes, leaving traces of what it might have been before the process of appearing had begun to distribute itself. The train horn whittles the wind. It begins to take shelter from a series of mounting oppositions. Reading resurfaces the words it comes up against when they resurface. The cannons are mute. Printed matter matters. The means justify the meanings. I cannot take orders. Ordering implies command and it is imperative not to genuflect before the mirror of what one does not know. Outside the rules are negated, and negation rules. Take out your ruler and hum a few bars. A box is one. One what? I sense that there is nothing in a word that is not as baroque as an Argand lamp. Once there was one in which whale oil quivered. I sense what it is when it corners itself — it is that corner itself.

I felt like writing but not about something, not to assemble details and marshal facts, but to marshal the sea and see it come into being without the suspicion of effort – this truly impossible ideal, to be precise. That all these other voices might thief away along with what the void dragged in. These hours on the sly. If it were possible, then to relearn the English language by reading differently the obscure command of how to write. Things don't ever really go away, they come back like spores and breathe a gust through you that leaves no prisoners. By thinking what you see before you see, you find that what corners it and keeps it from being seen is something that you would rather not say. It relieves the unveiling of anagrams, those doubloons of inheritance. You were looking for a place to hang your hat when you should have been more concerned with where your head was, or what that head should have been thinking about. In circles, in rings. What seems like a hole in the head. The signet is like a stringer. None of your beeswax to stopper the ears. All this patience juts. Dethroning. A roughness underneath the chintz. The fault-lines of imperfect order. A vast shack. You've had it now. Seeing everything in terms of digestion. Readers digest. Take out with white out and highlight with orange fluorescence. In between the time it takes, the work gets done. Plenty of spinning, but little is spun. The spider eventually webs. To construct a way out of the paper bag is at this point a higher priority than oxygen. To jimmy the latches and zero in on the gem. It resides beside itself in the house of many examples, each finely reproduced and immediately collectible. The twitching earlobes of stress brought home like butterflies to the body of forgetfulness. Material ghosts haunt this plurality of immaterial hosts. Paragraph the parasites. The singular, shadowy haunts of the literal. You are up against it. It is them and them are us and we were off.

If only I had remembered it correctly. I wanted to write it down so that I would in fact remember it, but I would never see it again as on that afternoon. The edge of sleep, the one with unsanded edges alert to cliffs in miniature, soon subsiding into sounds and sought for dark, as if a language of a fist unclenched for the birds it might release in wingless furl. I wanted to get at what gets your attention, what comes across as you're reading. It has to be light, or a change of light, to set your attention askew. It is the shadows that pass across the window you are facing and then across the window at your back. Every time it happens you think that something strange is going to happen when in fact it already has – the cursive of disorientation. I would say the shadows are like wingbeats, but I've heard that before. I feel the shadows press as if they were being thumbed into the doughy whites of my eyes and I am powerless to stop the stabs, too fast for blinking. They were themselves already blinks. I started to think of them as eyelashes even after I knew they were the triangular formation of shadows made by a flock of birds darting over the house and heading west toward the Art Museum and the river. I sense that the point is inside the eye itself and that the shadows flicking across the window that I face twitch like eyelashes too late for automatic squinting. And then the backlash behind me, another interior set, all diagonals and soundless, the sharp downward spear that comes in passing behind and back up my spine as if the birds themselves had passed through the room. I wonder what would happen if I could photograph the shadows. I'd probably see them interrupt and stop and not feel, nor sense what I do, which is that the shadows pass into and out of my room as if threading a needle, and that needle is my eye, and those shadows first pierce my window lashes, but I am all eye and they pass through me, and shoot behind my eyes, full blanks that they are, loaded with a quicker darkness than the eye can fathom, but shadow forth a blur, specimens of quicksilver, unbuckled latitudes of eye and all that is not sleepless goes there to taste that disequilibrium. A sense of self shifted out of itself, and thinking as all eye and so really sensing that what the senses sense is what passes through and out; but doesn't pass through, or only passes to the point of registering its impression on the threshold of the nerves. I suppose it doesn't matter but of course the eye is a theoretical sense and nothing has been touched, and yet everything is changed because of what has clipped across a pair

of scissored shades. I recall and it returns to that line of “bird shadows stab a window” from so many years before. But now they’ve gotten through that window. And the window is not a window but an eye and I am neither here nor where shadows pass.

I                    a        m                    t        h        r        o        u        g        h        .

## *Tarrying With the Particular*

### *Preface*

“Was the sum of all knowledge only to know how little in his presence one would ever reach it?”<sup>1</sup>

The first mistake was thinking that I could absorb, retain, and assimilate all the information about Hegel that I was reading/accumulating. Thinking, against the grain of my own potential argument, that I would never be able to produce knowledge adequate to the task of critiquing Hegel’s version of the acquisition of knowledge, instead I settled into the equally disconcerting task of accumulating knowledge culled from reading previous commentaries, expositions and critiques. Sometimes at night reading faster and faster in search of some magic word – or exact quotation – that would crystallize all the scattered hypotheses, as if I could ever make that pulp of paper, written and read, more appetizing by discovering its original recipe. Thus I had unwittingly placed myself in the position of Hegel’s dog in the following quotation cited by Werner Hamacher: “The belief that we could experience something substantially new through the reading is, according to Hegel’s formulation in the Introduction to the lectures on the philosophy of religion, ‘just as absurd, as if we attempted to endow a dog with spirit by encouraging it to chew on printed matter.’”<sup>2</sup>

What is this endless searching after the “right,” or the “perfect” quotation? Can the perfect words be found to substitute for the perfect words which would express the meaning of what you want to say? Haven’t “we” learned that “it is just not possible for us ever to say, or express in words, a sensuous being that we *mean*”<sup>3</sup>? And if it is impossible for us to express completely what we ourselves will have said, then surely it must be impossible for us to interpret correctly what we think others mean. Clearly, one must give up this perpetually promiscuous, omnivorous reading in favor of a more selective, directed and resistant form of writing. That is, to “produce” the work instead of just thinking about (and thinking through) what others have already written (and may have already meant). In the midst of this process I was confronted with this question: “When will you ever know enough to write?” Certainly, the point must be that reading (collecting and digesting pre-written, or undigested materials) can become a kind of gluttony and lead to a form of indigestion, for which the only true negation would be the punishment (or antidote) of vomiting – i.e., writing.

Another mistake I made was thinking that I could write this paper in any other way than I would eventually write it, because it would come into being exactly in the way that it would. “This paper,” then, is neither a purely philosophical essay, nor an attempt at literary criticism, nor an experiential reading of the experience of reading

and writing on Hegel, nor an attempt to proffer the “body” as a substance to block the appearance of any form of idealism, not an attempt at conceptualizing form or done in the same form or manner as the object of this description (performance) but a blending of all of these; where these genres meet in the realm of appearances before they mark off and retreat to their separate domains. For the interrogation of the limits of writing comes up against an interrogation of the limits of reading: one must, at a certain point, give up reading as if one could endlessly accumulate “knowledge” and begin to write in order to “produce” knowledge; at least attempt to inscribe the vicissitudes of consciousness in some aspect of provisional permanence, all the while noting that the notion of appearance begins and ends, is re-cognized, in the moment of its disappearance, and that the concentration on this elusive, not to say “sublime” object — be it an actual, literal object, the actual material of language, the coupling/uncoupling, detachment/ reattachment of signifier/signified — leads one to follow the process and transit of meaning itself across the borders of matter and ideal, and the real that issues (*Die Sache Selbst*) from these transits not is not seen as contraband, but as bound to something other than matched couplets of negation, those endlessly proliferating strands of dirempted pairs that propel the engine of dialectics.

I was thinking that the activity of reading would provide the stimulant (medicine/ poison) to reverse the process of absorption (intellectual saturation) and digestion (interpretive glut). But the passivity of the reading experience can only be negated or reversed (not preserved but perverted) by actively writing one’s own sense (meaning, direction) into the discourse stream that one is swimming against rather than merely remaining poised in the margins, or positing that place of the margin in order to only marginally occupy the position of subject in that discourse, otherwise one would remain a spectator viewing what remains of one’s own in another’s remains. One must react to and reactivate Hegel by inserting oneself into the cogs of his system and thus be willing to sacrifice one’s own sense (or body) in an attempt to pass through a provisional crack or rupture in order to create a flaw in that system’s transmission of meaning. This is the paradoxical enterprise of pedagogy.

“She judged that if her whole history, for Mrs. Wix, had been the successive stages of her knowledge, so the very climax of the concatenation would, in the same view, be the stage at which the knowledge should overflow. As she was condemned to know more and more, how could it logically stop before she should know Most? It came to her in fact as they sat there on the sands that she was distinctly on the road to know Everything” (212-13).



## Introduction

Any argument that would focus on meaning, metaphor, and expression must attempt to make sense of Hegel's discussion of language in the first chapter "Sense-Certainty: Or the 'This' and 'Meaning' (*Die sinnliche Gewissheit; oder das Diese und das Meinen*).” And yet by beginning the focus here with the chapter on “Sense-certainty” the argument will necessarily branch out to other sections of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in which language is referred to directly; for example, in the chapter on “Culture and its realm of actuality” where the focus is on language as “infection,” and as the medium through which the self ('I') externalizes and alienates itself in the foreign matter that is Culture.

The argument extends across Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Aesthetics*. This tactic of dipping into the *Philosophy of Nature* will provide a treatment of the animal organism and its “power of digestion” under the heading of “assimilation,” and work to show that in Hegel digestion functions not only as a metaphor<sup>4</sup> of reading but also of his fundamental Concept of *Aufhebung* (cancel, preserve and lift up). In other words, if the act of reading is a metaphor of digestion, then by looking at the literal process of digestion as performed by the body we can begin to remark how Hegel's own metaphors are generated by their passage through the literal body of his examples. Further, we will see how they are inscribed as a kind of writing that cannot be so easily erased and raised up into the Concept, leaving the “body” of meaning (and its body – it *is* written) behind in order for a bodiless (unwritten) meaning to be “spiritually” (ideally) incorporated. The underlying theme will be to reinscribe, rewrite and reincorporate the “body” back into Hegel's corpus (*qua* body of work), to trace the places where Hegel wants to sublimate the body (and nature) into the realm of spirit (idea) in order to show that this transition is not always as smooth and as absolute as Hegel would have us think. We will be paying special attention to the function of metaphors of the body which Hegel finds necessary to use even as he would erase or sublimate that body into a purified “body” of meaning. The question is: does Hegel actually dissolve particulars on the literal level and only use metaphors as transitory, disposable carriers transporting “meaning” across the border between literal

and figurative levels of language, abandoning them once they have entered the realm of the universal (the Idea)? The argument will focus on these transitions, in-betweens, mediums, middles, means and the shapes through which they are figured – art, appearance, metaphor, digestion, linguistic shifters and the sign itself – as places where change comes about through reversal and inversion. The point is not to prove whether or not Hegel’s method is successful, but to trace his argument back and across different domains to see what if anything remains or is left over after the process of assimilation has taken place.

One way of doing this is to be attentive to an underlying denigration of writing in Hegel, (“Even in his very last works, Hegel never gave up the wish to erase and to eradicate writing” (Hamacher 112), and to examine the literal remains of his textual body. Here, Derrida’s critique of Hegel is relevant more for the questions it raises than for the answers it provides. One simple equation that might provide an heuristic device to roughly mark the differences between Hegel and Derrida would be: In Hegel, you can take the signifier out of the signified, but you can’t take the signified out of the signifier; while in Derrida, you can take the signified out of the signifier, but you can’t take the signifier out of the signified<sup>5</sup>. But Derrida’s fixation with the ‘play of signifiers’ begins to seem inadequate when it merely initiates an endless ricochet between terms, never really settling on any signifier long enough to get caught by the pull of the signified. And even if one does wish to stop this infinitely deferred movement it does not necessarily mean that one would prefer simple closure, the substitution of teleological ends in place of indeterminate beginnings. Rather, perhaps our focus should be directed on how these undecidable meanings shuttle between determinate meanings; neither new beginnings nor ultimate ends, but the ceaseless formation and dissolution of the means, and the transitions between the means through which meanings are conveyed.

In addition to the pun on *meinen* as signifying both “meaning” (opinion) and “my own,” which calls into question the particular claims of sensuous knowledge because meaning cannot be the property of an individual but is immediately a universal, other linguistic cruxes will be found in the double meaning of Sense [*Sinn*] as both sensory and intelligible; *fassen* and *begreifen* as meaning both, literally, mechanical

seizure and figuratively, apprehension and comprehension (for which in English we have the “prehensile” notion of grasping things with our hands).

When we move to the *Aesthetics* we will deal principally with art, appearance, metaphor and figurative language, specifically with the notion of the disappearance of the sensuous element of the work of art and the appearance of the spiritual. This relates to Hegel’s view of particulars which I initially believed to be deprecatory, but now view in a different light. If Hegel appears to be pointing out the negligibility of particularity while at the level of consciousness in sense-certainty, it is only because that kind of knowledge is *not* particular but as expressed in language is immediately universal, and hence does not tarry with particulars in the strict sense, nor in the sense which is crucial to art and aesthetics.

We are not only speaking of the metaphor in the text of philosophy (Derrida), but also of the body in the text of philosophy, the metaphor of the body and the body of metaphor; or better, the metaphor of the body and the body of metaphor in the text of philosophy.

Inasmuch as the idea of this paper is to crisscross between the domains of the *Phenomenology*, *Aesthetics* and *Philosophy of Nature* in order to produce a stratigraphic reading and a tangential writing whose trajectories don’t necessarily tie up the loose ends as much as allow them their own space in which to digress, the focus will be on the in-betweens, on the very concept of in-betweenness: deixis, shifters, meaning, appearance, force, language, metaphor, art, infection, assimilation, sense. Attention should be paid to the activity of crossing over and of carrying over, of transition and transformation, transit and transference across domains. Just as the etymology of metaphor itself is a carrying over from the literal to the figurative, from one level of meaning to another, so thought ricochets between these two poles, but both poles must exist for the movement to occur, propelled by the dialectical motor of negation. And in Hegel the mode of transcendence is a function of language’s capacity to transform transience into permanence [“a permanence of impermanence” ¶156] and permanence back into transience; to articulate the threshold across which disappearance appears as disappearance and appearance disappears as appearance.

## Reading through Sense-Certainty

“Curiously enough, it seems to be only in describing a mode of language which does not mean what it says that one can actually say what one means.”<sup>6</sup>

The dialectic of sense certainty begins with a prohibition: “In *apprehending* it [the object], we must refrain from trying to *comprehend* it” (§ 90). Baillie’s translation is helpful in that it gives the German in parentheses: “and keeping mere apprehension (*Auffassen*) free from conceptual comprehension (*Begreifen*).”<sup>7</sup> Though it is not apparent at this point, it will become clear by the time we have reached the end of this paper, that these two words form the primal diremption, the first splitting of the egg of the Concept (*Begriff*) as it comes out of itself.

In the chapter on “Sense-Certainty,” Hegel is not arguing against particularity (minute particulars) as such, but against sense-certainty’s belief that it has access to the immediate plenitude of sense particulars. He shows that this shape of consciousness gives only the empty illusion of immediacy which is the poorest kind of knowledge. One cannot simply point out particulars without simultaneously invoking universals. As we shall see in the unfolding of the Concept, the awareness and attention paid to particulars is a necessary stage in the development of the “science of the experience of consciousness.” Sense knowledge must be thought *through* “something else” and thus is mediated: “I have this certainty *through* something else, viz. the thing; and it, similarly, is in sense-certainty *through* something else, viz. through the ‘I’” (§92). The particular should not somehow be inflated or filled up beyond its means because it will then only reveal its emptiness. Conversely, what should occur ideally, and this is the *work* of speculative idealism, is that the universal should permeate and work *through* particulars to achieve singularity.

At the outset of the dialectic, we have not yet entered into the process of mediation and negation; we are only concerned with being, not yet with *not being*: “the thing is, and it is, merely because it is” (§90). When we look more closely into the position of sense-certainty we find that being splits between “two ‘Thises’: ‘This’ as ‘I’ and ‘This’ as object” (§92). Then Hegel interrogates sense-certainty in order to draw out its implicit truth:

‘What is the *This*?’ If we take the ‘This’ in the twofold shape of its being, as ‘Now’ and as ‘Here’, the dialectic it has in it will receive a form as intelligible as the ‘This’ itself is. To the question: ‘What is Now?’, let us answer, e.g. ‘Now is Night.’ In order to test the truth of this sense-certainty a simple experiment will suffice. We will write down this truth; a truth cannot lose anything by being written down, any more than it can lose anything by our preserving it. If now, this noon, we look again at the written truth we shall have to say that it has become stale. (§95)

This passage has received so much commentary<sup>8</sup> that I will merely point out that already at this stage of its development the *Phenomenology* inscribes itself under the sign of writing: “This intrication of loss and preservation makes writing, the first argument of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, into the privileged formula for the dialectical procedure in general” (Hamacher 209). For the purposes of my argument, I want to examine how Hegel’s sentences themselves enact the meanings they are trying to get across<sup>9</sup>. Hegel’s tortuous sentences bind and constrict, tautly weave neither ground nor substrate (and the experience of reading Hegel becomes an index of one’s ability to endure groundlessness), but a web between the material and the ideal. The writing itself is the web: the twists and turns of the argument and its rhetorical positionings; the shuttlecock passing to and fro (between being and not-being) in the process of weaving is the writing instrument inscribing a space in which these ideas can exist. I quote this particular example (§96) in full in order to appreciate the balancing act between “is” and “is not” that Hegel achieves in writing:

The Now that is Night is *preserved*, i.e. it is treated as what it professes to be, as something that *is*; but it proves itself to be, on the contrary, something that is *not*. The Now does indeed preserve itself, but as something that is *not* Night; equally, it preserves itself in the face of the Day that it now is, as something that also is not Day, in other words, as a *negative* in general. This self-preserving Now is, therefore, not immediate but mediated; for it is determined as a permanent and self-preserving Now *through* the fact that something else, viz. Day and Night, is *not*. As so determined, it is still just as simply Now as before, and in this simplicity is indifferent to what happens in it; just as little as Night and Day are its being, just as much also is it Day and Night; it is not in the least affected by this its other-being. A simple thing of this kind which *is* through negation, which is neither This nor That, a *not-This*, and is with equal indifference This as

well as That – such a thing we call a *universal*. So it is in fact the universal that is the true [content] of sense-certainty.

I count seventeen forms of the verb “to be” in the positive form of being and eight with negations attached. Regardless of whether the count is exact, the point is that one can’t read this passage without having to reread it and thus enact the notion of mediation and negation through the process of trying to understand it. Butler nicely describes this experience of negation in Hegel’s text:

We think we know at any given textual moment what negation “is” and what it does, only to find out by following the course of its action, indeed, by reading it, that our former convictions were unfounded. It is the term, in other words, that constantly undermines our own knowingness. The language we thought was reporting on the reality of negation turns out to take part in the activity itself, to have its own negating function and, indeed, to be subject to negation itself. The language of the text thus exhibits its own rhetoricity, and we find that the question of logic and that of rhetoric are indissociable from each other. (Butler ix)

The point is precisely that even when he seems to be working against a notion of the materiality of inscriptions Hegel is cognizant of the fact that these traces belie such a position. It is impossible not to be infected by the language of negation because it is built into the structure of language itself. This idea crops up repeatedly in the chapter on sense-certainty because language always proves Hegel’s point: (§97) “We do not strictly say what in this sense-certainty we *mean* to say. But language, as we see is the more truthful; in it, we ourselves directly refute what we mean to say; (§ 110) Language “has the divine nature of directly reversing the meaning of what is said, of making it into something else, and thus not letting what is meant get into words at all.”

Hegel then runs through the same dialectic with the ‘Here’: “ ‘Here’ is, e.g., the tree. If I turn around, this truth has vanished and is converted into its opposite” (§98). It doesn’t matter what I see now, only that I no longer see the tree for it has vanished in its immediacy. “ ‘Here’ itself does not vanish; on the contrary it abides constant in the vanishing of the house, the tree, etc.” Again, the knowledge of the sense-object has vanished into its truth as mediated. Now, the relation between

knowing and object are reversed and “the certainty is now located in knowing, which was previously the unessential moment. It’s truth is in the object as *my* object, or in its being *mine* [*Meinen*]; it is because *I* know it” (§100). Since the ‘I’ is the essential element, the pun on *meinen* as signifying both “mine” and “meaning” comes into play. Verene notes that this is not only a pun but an irony: “Hegel’s irony here is also involved in the sense that what is asserted as objective meaning or *meinen* to be in the now and here is really only a meaning as it is in the I as knowing, as *mein*.”<sup>10</sup>

After Hegel repeats the steps of the dialectic from the side of the ‘I’, his conclusion is that “the ‘I’ is merely universal like ‘Now’, ‘Here’, or ‘This’ in general” (§102). The knowledge of sense-certainty repeatedly fails the “acid test” of particularity because it can only utter the “truth” of the particular which is not a particular but a universal: “it is reasonable that the demand should *say* which ‘this thing’, or which ‘this particular man’ is *meant*; but it is impossible to say this” (§ 102). In short, sense-certainty cannot live up to its claim to express the particular; it cannot say this, because it cannot say ‘this’.

A transition occurs at this point as “we” enter into the dialectic, notably through the deictic act of “pointing:” “Since, then, this certainty will no longer come forth to *us* when we direct its attention to a Now that is night, or to an ‘I’ to whom it is night, *we* will approach *it* and let ourselves point to the Now that is asserted” (§105). And now that “we” are here, the dialectical process passing through ‘Now’, ‘Here’ and ‘This’ begins again, this time with the additional element of temporality: “The Now is pointed to, *this* Now. ‘Now’; it has already ceased to be in the act of pointing to it. The Now that *is*, is another Now than the one pointed to, and we see that the Now is just this: to be no more just when it is” (§ 105). As always in sense-certainty, we are concerned with “being,” but the ‘Now’ that is pointed to “has already ceased to be.” The immediate shift between the ‘Now’ and the not-now is less like the swing of a pendulum and more like one of those cheap, three-dimensional novelty cards that flip between two distinct scenes as one’s glance is tilted back and forth. The point of this example is that it is impossible to locate the pure shift, the pure transition between the two distinct scenes (two now points); we are confined to a vicious sequence: this now, this not-now; now this, now not-this, etc. “The pointing-out of the Now is thus itself

the movement which expresses what the Now is in truth, viz. a result, or the plurality of Nows all taken together; and the pointing-out is the experience of learning that Now is a *universal*" (§107).

Now we move to the second instance of the dialectic of the 'Here': "*The Here pointed out*, to which I hold fast, is similarly a *this* here which, in fact, is *not* this Here, but a Before and Behind, an Above and Below, a Right and Left" (§ 108). One should keep in mind that prepositions are always important in Hegel, for things stand in relation to, or come into being, or are mediated *through* one another. The subject (the 'I' which 'holds fast') is subject to the same prepositions (in the act of pointing-out) which locate the Here in relation to other Heres. The passage continues: "The Here, which was supposed to have been pointed out, vanishes in other Heres, but these likewise vanish. What is pointed out, held fast, and abides is a *negative* This, which *is* negative only when the heres are taken as they should be, but, in being so taken, they supersede themselves; what abides is a simple complex of many Heres." The single, particular Here vanishes in relation to other Heres, but each of these particularities vanishes in its truth which is the universal.

I am particularly interested in the notion of the "*negative* This" (which should recall the "not-this" of § 96). That is, how does Hegel formulate this as a concept in order to grasp something that *is not*? We must take into account this notion of what I will term *negative deixis*. If deixis<sup>11</sup> is the act of pointing to something, then negative deixis is the act of pointing to something that is not – a not-this. But I would like to push this even further in order to get at the reflexive aspect of the pointing function. The pointing function which points to itself is a sign with an external, sensuous existence. Beyond this pointing to itself as an instance of discourse, it points to something else, some other object, function, or meaning. That is, instead of pointing at "this" thing or "that" object, as is the case in the consciousness of "sense-certainty," or even pointing at something as a "not-this," the pointing function becomes a sign of itself and points toward, away from or beyond itself; away from any particular "this," and toward something other – neither this, nor that.

As we approach the end of the chapter on "Sense-certainty" we will focus our analysis on two specific passages: the seemingly offhand mention of the "Mysteries of



Ceres and Bacchus” and the famous example of “this bit of paper.” At first glance, Hegel appears simply to be having some fun at the expense of empirical philosophy<sup>12</sup>, but insofar as the entire dialectic of this chapter has set out to prove the insubstantiality of sense-certainty’s claims to the reality of sense-objects, Hegel’s tactic here is consistent with the structure of his argument. And yet, beneath the humor of this passage, Hegel is able to smuggle into the first chapter of the *Phenomenology* one of his major metaphorical and conceptual obsessions – assimilation, or digestion.

Even the animals are not shut out from this wisdom but, on the contrary, show themselves to be most profoundly initiated into it; for they do not just stand idly in front of sensuous things as if these possessed intrinsic being, but, despairing of their reality, and completely assured of their nothingness, they fall to without ceremony and eat them up. And all Nature, like the animals, celebrates these open Mysteries which teach the truth about sensuous things. (§ 109)

Thus, we learn about the insubstantiality of sense objects quite literally by digesting and incorporating their “substance.” “Those who assert the truth and certainty of the reality of sense-objects” point to sensory evidence that, since it has been “eaten,” no longer exists as evidence for their claims. We should always remember that Hegel’s particular examples about particulars are never, at any moment, beyond the grasp of his conceptualization of writing. As Hamacher states, “The paradigm of writing and reading is not the only one which Hegel employs for the demonstration of the immediate ‘self’-negation of the sensuous this but it does contain the programmatic model for all the others” (Hamacher 214). The question remains as to which aspect of the sense particular is obliterated and which is maintained after it has been sublated. As we follow the itinerary of consciousness into the next chapter on “Perception” we receive a provisional answer, but as always so much depends upon how the concept of *Aufhebung* is read:

The This is, therefore, established as *not* This, or as something superseded; and hence not as Nothing, but as a determinate Nothing, the Nothing of a content, viz. of the This. Consequently, the sense-element is still present, but not in the way it was supposed to be in [the position of] immediate certainty: not as the singular item that is ‘meant’, but as a universal, or as that which will be defined as a *property*. *Supersession*

[*Aufhebung*] exhibits its true twofold meaning which we have seen in the negative: it is at once a *negating* and a *preserving*. Our Nothing, as the Nothing of the This, preserves its immediacy and is itself sensuous, but it is a universal immediacy. (§113)

Hegel seems clear enough when he says that “the sense element is still present,” but this sensuous presence is no longer a “singular item” but a universal. In order for “this” to make sense, the “*not* This” has to be figured as a determinate Nothing<sup>13</sup>. And I have been pointing to the fact that the prototypical example of this “determinate Nothing” would be writing; a writing which leaves traces behind it of the sense objects which have disappeared (or been eaten). According to Hamacher: “Consumption, like inscription, is sublation,” and

writing and reading are both operations which immediately destroy given being and preserve the universal they thereby produce from that destruction. Reading and writing are, like nature and cult, ontophageous and chronophageous. . . .As bread and wine or as the inscription of now-points, being presents itself as retentional trace, one which is not merely cancelled and written off, but obliterated and written out by a reading which always also functions as consumption. The This crumbles away, decays, ferments, in the process of digestive assimilation. (Hamacher 220)

We will return to this idea in our analysis of the Lord’s Supper. For now, it is enough to note the linguistic parallels with the nature and function of digestion. My point is that Hegel is indefatigably aware of the material differences present in writing. The material makes a difference, just as difference is inscribed in the material. The differences are “material” in a legal sense, and they also quite literally become material differences in the way these differences are expressed. At any rate, returning to the final section of sense certainty, what I *mean*, in this case, is *this* bit of paper<sup>14</sup>:

They *mean* ‘this’ bit of paper on which I am writing – or rather have written – ‘this’; but what they mean is not what they say. If they actually wanted to *say* ‘this’ bit of paper [*Stück Papier*] which they mean, if they wanted to *say* it, then this is impossible, because the sensuous This that is meant *cannot be reached* by language, which belongs to consciousness, i.e. to that which is inherently universal. In the actual attempt to say it, it would therefore crumble away; those who started to describe it would not be able to complete the description, but would be compelled to leave it to others, who would themselves finally have to admit to speaking about something which *is not*. They certainly mean, then, *this* bit of paper here which is quite different from the bit

mentioned above; but they say ‘actual *things*’, ‘external or *sensuous objects*’, ‘*absolutely singular entities*’ [*Wesen*] and so on; i.e. they say of them only what is *universal*.(¶ 110)

The materiality that I mentioned above is certainly in effect here as Hegel refers to his own writing on the page that he is writing. Because of the fact that the “sensuous This that is meant *cannot be reached* by language” the question arises as to what exactly is lost in the exchange between the sense particular and the universal. This problem will be further examined when we analyze the notions of “appearance” and “metaphor” later in this essay. Simply put, any interpretation of Hegel’s writing depends upon where one stands on the question of sense particulars. I am suggesting that Hegel’s writing itself, as exemplified in passages such as the above, enacts a kind of twisting, imbricated textuality which belies a superficial reading which would attempt to show that minute particulars are inconsequential in his system. Indeed, Hegel’s “poetics” perform a balancing act which highlights his own rhetoricity and, if nothing else, it shows that “this” is not “nothing” but an intricately determined nothing, in fact, “the” nothing explicated out of the very structure of language. This is not so much equivocation as it is an interlacing of language between the two poles of absence and presence which weaves what is not there into a network of signification. Let us pick up the quotation again at the point where it includes a note directly referring to language:

But if I want to help out language – which has the divine nature of directly reversing the meaning of what is said, of making it into something else, and thus not letting what is meant *get into words* at all – by *pointing out* this bit of paper, experience teaches me what the truth of sense-certainty in fact is: I point it out as a ‘Here’, which is a Here of other Heres, or is in its own self a ‘simple togetherness of many Heres’; i.e. it is a universal.

As we have seen from our reading of the chapter on sense certainty, Hegel’s dialectical argument is doggedly persistent and he ends with one last “pointing out” to nail down his point. But what is it about language that makes it “divine”? Perhaps if it is capable of “directly reversing the meaning of what is said,” then it would be capable of making the absent present and thus performing a “divine” function. But if we stick to the

rhetorical function of language, then its “divine” function could be seen as initiating a sequence of linguistic and tropological interventions: to point to something that is not there (deixis); to say the opposite of what it means (irony); to make something into something else (metaphor). Let us look at some of the particular features of irony that are active. Here, Verene is helpful: “Hegel shows that consciousness in its attempt to possess the real or being in its purity is caught in the irony of language and thus opened to itself. Language has this divine nature. Hegel uses that same power of the trope of irony to open us, the observers of consciousness, to the folly of sense-certainty[. . .] The use of this pun, which is not a logical but a tropical device, is the insight upon which the chapter rests” (Verene 30). This may provide a clue to the structure of irony in the text of sense certainty. First, “we” *see* that the consciousness is infected by this irony and opened to itself. Second, “we” *read*, and as readers we understand this irony and are ourselves opened up and subject to a similar contamination (infection). It would be simplistic to say that Hegel’s “joke” here is simply to implicate “us” in the folly of sense-certainty. It is not a case of getting the joke, but of the joke getting “us.” But “it” can’t really get to “us” if we have preemptively, as it were, already seized the opportunity of opening ourselves up to it and to its power of language, and thus have ceased to be ourselves and have become one with “it.”

Now, I want to discuss de Man’s analysis of this final passage on writing in order to take issue with a few of his points and to expand on my own. De man’s writing is always dense and difficult to unpack, but in the main it is almost achingly precise<sup>15</sup>:

As the only particular event that can be pointed out, writing, unlike speech and cognition, is what takes us back to this ever-recurring natural consciousness. Hegel, who is often said to have “forgotten about writing,” is unsurpassed in his ability to remember that one should never forget to forget. To write down *this* piece of paper (contrary to saying it) is no longer deictic, no longer a gesture of pointing rightly or wrongly, no longer an example or a *Beispiel*, but *the definitive erasure of a forgetting that leaves no trace. It is, in other words, the determined elimination of determination.* (“Hypogram and Inscription” 42-3)

First, I would argue along the lines of Agamben<sup>16</sup> that “writ[ing] down this bit of paper” is still a deictic function in that it points to itself, refers to the instance of discourse taking place even when there is no objective referent. The last two sentences of the quotation above, which I have italicized, are typical examples of de Man’s own strategy of writing Hegel against the grain to make him sound like de Man. For if they are reversed they still mean the same thing (have the same semantic import), but their values will have changed materially in accordance with their syntactical repositionings. Thus: “the inscription of a remembering that leaves a trace. It is, in other words, the indeterminate preservation of indeterminacy.” De Man certainly wants to appear more self-consciously ironic than Hegel in that he wants to suggest that we can only *mean* what we *say* when we don’t really *mean* what we say. Hegel believes that (a) we can only say what we cannot mean [which is my inversion of “I cannot say what I only *mean*”] when we mean what we say, and more precisely, (b) we can only ever *mean* something, regardless of whether we speak it or write it, because the structure of this reversal is built into language which is a universal. The appearance of the opposite of what one says occurs (in)directly in language itself which is a power of mediation and negation. “And *because* language is the work of thought, nothing can be said in language that is not universal. What I only *mean* [meine] is *mine* [mein]; it belongs to me as this particular individual. But if language expresses only what is universal, then I cannot say what I only mean. And what cannot be said – feeling, sensation – is not what is most important, most true, but what is most insignificant, most untrue” (*Encyclopedia Logic*, §20). For de Man the surface of rhetoric contaminates the transmission of meaning, so that language immediately and materially mediates what “it” (and the impersonality of this entity is crucially *inhuman*, because language cannot say “mine”) wants to say; whereas for Hegel the mediation is also immediate, but this mediation is itself mediated, so that the rhetorical structure of reversal implies that the reversal can itself be reversed and thus *turn into* something intelligible.

I want to return to thread of the particular (‘Now’, ‘Here’, ‘This’) in order to situate my argument within the moment in between particularity and the universal. If the particular is not completely eliminated in Hegel, then part of it, its sensuous

aspect, must leave traces behind it even after it has been sublated. The question then becomes whether one wants to argue that Hegel's concept of the universal is thus dependent on the particular. One reason that I find Hamacher so useful is that he consistently treats the abstractions of the chapter on sense certainty under the model of writing:

Thus the gesture of pointing, and its underlying semiotic concept which relates both to the Now and to the Here, possesses the structure of writing, and the understanding of the same that of reading. Insofar as the indicated and the designated presents itself through the semiotic gesture as a complex of various Heres and Nows, which permit particular Heres and Nows to appear as their result and thus as immediately universal, then the universal remains dependent upon the retention of the always already eliminated particular, the possibility of truth and semantic sense remains tied to the enduring persistence of the untrue, heterogeneous, sensuous moment. . . . But the Nows can only be synthetically grasped as the one and universal Now only if the conceptual grip which grasps them also grasps their occasional particularity in each case and thus grasps what the universal *not yet* is, and what the immediate particular already *no longer* is. (Hamacher 214)

First, Hamacher's insistence that deixis (the gesture of pointing) "possesses the structure of writing" supports my contention above in opposition to de Man. The idea that "the universal remains dependent upon the retention of the always already eliminated particular" is a typical deconstructive tactic which is meant to alert us to what is left over, or left out of Hegel's system. The final section of this citation is where I locate the rhetorical strength of Hamacher's argument. By employing the "no longer . . . not yet" construction he is able to expand upon that space between the particular and the universal. It takes on added importance because it mimes Hegel's own construction of this space in his discussion of the "pure appearance" of art in the introduction to the *Aesthetics*. Thus, there is a moment after the particular has shed its abstract materiality, but not yet its sensuous aspect and before it has been completely digested, divested of its "concrete" materiality and absorbed into the Concept. Hamacher writes that "the universal truth of the sign is produced through the recession of fleeting particulars" (Hamacher 214). Here "truth" is the product of a process that would abandon any traces of evidence that this process ever occurred. But elsewhere, Hamacher states that this "remnant" is not dissolved: "Yet even in

Hegelian speculation – this remains to be shown – the remnant, the sign which is not dissolved in being, the remnant and the rest which is silence, is not erased” (Hamacher 133). Something has to give way here. I would suggest that it is indeed very clear that in Hegel’s system there is a continual “recession of fleeting particulars.” But there is also a counter-movement in which these particularities come back, trailing the clouds of their own mortality. In other words, these particular signs of materiality are also signs of mortality. So we are not just dealing with a rhetorical argument about linguistic materiality, but with potential translation (metaphorical process) of the literal body into a spiritual body. Thus, the stakes for Hegel risk nothing less than “the body:”

It is in the medieval crusades that history treads the path which leads back from the false show of sensuous presence towards the truth of self-consciousness. Just as the Christian community thinks to grasp its own actuality in the sensuous *This* of the Host, so it must also seek the material presence of his spirit in the spatial ‘This’ of Christ’s presence as was, in the Holy land, in the ‘footsteps of the saviour,’ in Christ’s very grave. . . . But just as in the ‘eternal history of God’ the inversion of the absolute into a bloody corpse finds itself inverted through the resurrection of the spiritual body, so too in the empirical history of the medieval world, which like every other repeats the eternal history once again, the inverted perspective of the sensuous ‘This’ finds itself inverted into the spiritual ‘This’ of self-consciousness.

‘But it is in the grave that the true point of reversion and inversion lies, it is in the grave that every vanity of the sensuous is destroyed . . . there that ultimate seriousness is found. It is in the negative of the *this*, of the sensuous, that the reversion is accomplished.’<sup>17</sup> (Hamacher 192-3)

## Appearance: an interlude of force

With the introduction of the dynamic<sup>18</sup> concept of force, which functions as the mechanism that phenomenizes the relation between consciousness ('I') and the world (objects), the argument shifts its focus to that relation itself as manifested in the emerging shape of consciousness in the form of Understanding. When this consciousness realizes that it is not just sensing and perceiving things in the world but adapting and transforming itself in relation to these experiences, it brings about the transition to self-consciousness:

Force is essential to the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness because it posits the externality of the world of sensuous and perceptual reality as one that is essentially related to consciousness itself; in effect, Force posits externalization as a necessary moment of thought. In order that consciousness complete its own intentional requirement to think "something," it must become *determinate* thought: it must be a thought "of" something external to itself, and, in turn, become determined by that external something. (Butler 26)

The transition to self-consciousness is accomplished *in* and *through* language where "thought" becomes a "thing." This quasi-alchemical process is aptly described by Hyppolite:

In language, thought insofar as it is signification is there immediately; it exists as a thing. It finds itself outside itself. This is why the logical dialectic will be a dialectic of being. It will say immediate being before it says essence, which is reflection just as signification is reflection in relation to the sign. But reflection in its turn is; it is immediately as sense within the totality of discourse. As we have described it, language presents the passage from the sensible to the sense which makes being say itself, which makes being self-consciousness. (Hyppolite 43)

We see that the movement of *sense* travels in both directions: as objects shed their material bodies, thoughts are incorporated in the "bodies" of words. The transition to self-consciousness occurs in the chapter "The Truth of Self-Certainty" which, along with the final sections of the chapter on "Force," introduces "Life" into the mix and shows that things are changing not only in the world but also in the mind; that there is a reciprocity in these relations; that the concept of force destabilizes the solidity of



objects in the perceptual field at the same time that it manifests these things in a concept that phenomenalizes the invisible and the vanishing. Thus at the same time that the world dematerializes, the consciousness which is in the process of becoming self-consciousness begins to materialize. In order to establish this dialectic, the medium of Appearance "appears" as that which mediates between the empirical world and the supersensible beyond:

In relation to the beyond, sense-experience is a figuration of "consciousness" emptied of any substantive truth or value it might have appeared to have. In relation to a sense-experience that never completes this elevation, the beyond can only appear as an elusive, pure appearance (appearance qua appearance). Appearance, the almost biological medium out of which the supersensible and transcendental grows, sells sense-experience to transcendence, monopolizing a metaphysical commerce." (Sussman 41)

The thing (inner world) breaks out of its husk and hovers in the unstable world of appearances detached from the Understanding which has been "forced" out of its mode of fixing things under stable categories. The sensible and supersensible, the particular and the universal must give rise to each other and "this immediate conversion is effected by the semblance or show (*Schein*) at the etymological heart of Appearance (*Erscheinung*). *Schein* is an immediate bond between being and nonbeing: 'being that is directly and in its own self a non-being'" (Sussman 39). The notion of the supersensible world "arises" as if above and beyond this world, which then becomes inverted in order to show us that there is no beyond but what is here and now, but "now" revealed through and suffused with the "lifeblood" of the spirit. Appearance allows for the shift from the external world to the inner world of consciousness, just as in the *Aesthetics* it facilitates the shedding of the sensuous exterior of the art object as the prelude to cognition. In order to express this sense of objects vanishing in our midst Hegel employs a rhetorically accurate and poetically virtuosic sequence of paradoxical statements/images: [¶136: "these matters are each where the other is; they mutually interpenetrate, but without coming into contact with one another. . .] [¶138: "each of these forms at the same time appears only as a vanishing moment'] [¶141: "their being has really the significance of a sheer vanishing"] [¶156: "a permanence of impermanence"] [¶149: "the stable image of unstable appearance"(the law)]. This

should recall an equally evanescent passage from the Preface ¶47: "Appearance is the arising and passing away that does not itself arise and pass away, but is "in itself" [i.e. subsists intrinsically], and constitutes the actuality and the movement of the life of truth."

Appearance provides a way of getting at what doesn't exist, of making "it" appear as determinate expression. The movement between being and non-being is activated by "force," which is a power of negation: "Force is that which impels an inner reality to gain determinate form, but it is also that which frustrates the absorption of that inner reality into determinate form. In other words, Force sustains a tension between that which appears and that which does not appear, and in this sense is different from other principles of teleological development" (Butler 26). Not fixated on what *is*, nor on what *is not*, but on the reciprocal relations between these states, this movement "sustains a tension" between that which animates the inanimate and that which dematerializes material objects and, thus, is also the movement of language: "Since in its existing signification, language appears as the negation of the sensible in the sign itself; it is really the signification itself that I hear in speech and that I see in writing. Language's progress, at the heart of representation, is this disappearance of the sensible which manifests it" (Hyppolite 44). In regard to language then, and specifically, in relation to the subject, how is this absence made present? "By negating the sensible, the "I" still preserves it as an echo. It imagines the absence. It refers itself to what is not there in what is there, to what is there in what is not there" (Hyppolite 29). Indeed, not simply by referring to an object that does not in fact need to exist, but by using language as a medium of spirit – "Language is the Dasein of Spirit" (Hyppolite 19) – a universal, in order that the words themselves "appear" as things. Thus, it could be stated that language is referential only in the strict sense that it is *self*-referential; that is, it refers to itself as taking place and taking the place of the "self" in the communication of a message. Not referring to the self as object either, but to the very process of self-construction in language, where the self becomes what it is through the intermediary moments of alienation and externalization.

The words of language, however, are the “I” outside of itself, finding itself there before actually being there. The “I” continues to be in their mutual relation, in their past arrangement as in their present transformation. It embraces the language which seems to it to be an alienation of itself, and now makes it say what it had never said, with words that were existing in the past. Self-expression makes progress because, across the expressed content (what was there earlier), sense announces itself and states itself in a universal way. The self can never withdraw from this language, from this universal reference which nevertheless, in its exteriority, remains reflection and sense. (Hyppolite 46-7)

Any subject, self, or “I” cannot pass through this stage of expressing itself in language and remain unchanged – it must be re-evaluated. It cannot revert to itself, but by referring to itself it is able to reverse its own progress, to invert its own inversion in order to produce a new version of itself; that is, to reinvent itself. “I” is the process through which it becomes what it is not.

## *Appearance, Aesthetics*

#1.

The pure appearance of art has the advantage that it points through and beyond itself, and itself hints at something spiritual of which it is to give us an idea, whereas immediate appearance does not present itself as deceptive but rather as the real and true, although the truth is in fact contaminated and concealed by the immediacy of sense. The hard shell of nature and the ordinary world make it more difficult for the spirit to penetrate through them to the Idea than works of art do. (*Aesthetics* 9)

It is worth noting that at the beginning of his massive tome *Aesthetics*, Hegel recalls his opening gambit in the chapter on “Sense-certainty” in the *Phenomenology* where we saw that sense-certainty’s knowledge was not immediate but mediated and thus its “truth” was abstract and poor – an empty illusion. In order for art to prepare itself to be permeated by spirit it must shed its abstract materiality (roughly akin to the “hard shell of nature”). Here, Hegel needs the notion of “pure appearance,” which is located somewhere between mere appearance and matter, on the one hand, and the spiritual and cognitive on the other. In short, art creates the space in which and through which it can come into actual existence. Perhaps we have learned by now that any concept that Hegel values is able to point to, through and beyond itself. If not, we should pay closer attention to the prepositions as opposed to the propositions: “The several prepositions and prefixes translated here as “through,” “beyond,” “toward,” and “out” signify an expression or extrusion outward of something inner, something given presence through a passage through, even a *transit*. Art in Hegel’s view is productive – this much is a commonplace – but it is productive of something that appears to counter and overcome the very conditions of its appearance, which are those of passage and transience” (Bahti 100). In other words, art “points through and beyond itself” and it can do this because it exists in the fluid medium of Appearance where essences and senses intermingle; where the sensuous element liquefies and is liquidated as it passes through the “passage” of art, just as spirit materializes and is embodied (takes shape) as it passes through the realm of pure appearances.

#2.

Now it follows from this that the sensuous must indeed be present in the work of art, but should appear only as the surface and as a pure appearance of the sensuous. For in the sensuous aspect of the work of art the spirit seeks neither the concrete material stuff, the empirical inner completeness and development of the organism which desire demands, nor the universal and purely ideal thought. What it wants is sensuous presence which indeed should remain sensuous, but liberated from the scaffolding of its purely material nature. Thereby the sensuous aspect of a work of art, in comparison with the immediate existence of things in nature, is elevated to a pure appearance, and the work of art stands in the middle between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought. It is not yet pure thought, but, despite its sensuousness, is no longer a purely material existent either, like stones, plants, and organic life; on the contrary, the sensuous in the work of art is itself something ideal, but which, not being ideal as thought is ideal, is still at the same time there externally as a thing. (*Aesthetics* 38)

Here, Hegel fleshes out his distinction between the sensuous and ideal aspects of the artwork by employing the notion of “a pure appearance of the sensuous.” This allows him to avoid falling into the trap of pure idealism, and thus, disqualifying his credentials for talking about art. The spirit is not concerned with a practical “sense” of appetite desire for “material stuff,” nor is it concerned only with “ideal thought.” Hegel explicitly states that “the work of art stands in the middle between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought.” Further, the idea of a “scaffolding” is particularly suggestive, hinting at what could be considered an unfinished quality immanent to the artwork, which would not yet have removed the mechanical supports of its creation and thus be inadequately prepared for a total transfusion of spirit. Also, the ‘scaffolding’ can be considered a ladder which is no longer necessary after the work has been completed; that is, just because a painting is on a ceiling doesn’t mean that one needs a ladder to view it properly. Thus, the removal of the scaffolding that connects art to its “material nature” enables the “pure appearance of the sensuous” to intermingle with ideal thought. The rhetorical construction of the “not yet . . . no longer,” the two poles of this comparison, can be viewed as paradigmatic for the creation of an in-between space – perhaps even a negative space if we emphasize the *not* and the *no*. Hegel appears to have hollowed out a space in which the work of art –

something ideal which is not ideal; something sensuous without being “a purely material existent” – can work through the appearance of its own mediation. Art doesn’t just “appear” to work, it makes appearances *work* and makes its appearance *as* work: “The artwork makes mediation appear, it simulates it, and it gives a character of completeness and perfection to this pure appearance.”<sup>19</sup>

*Aesthetics, Animal Functions*

And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. (*Revelation* 10:9-10)

#3.

Now the higher state is the *knowledge* of that implicit *unity* which is the content of the classical art-form and is capable of perfect presentation in bodily shape. But this elevation of the implicit into self-conscious knowledge introduces a tremendous difference. It is the infinite difference which, for example, separates man from animals. Man is an animal, but even in his animal functions, he is not confined to the implicit, as the animal is; he becomes conscious of them, recognizes them, and lifts them, as, for instance, the process of digestion, into self-conscious science. In this way man breaks the barrier of his implicit and immediate character, so that precisely because he knows that he is an animal, he ceases to be an animal and attains knowledge of himself as spirit. (*Aesthetics* 80)

Here, near the end of the introduction, Hegel is discussing how the romantic form of art comes to supersede the classical “because it has won a content which goes beyond and above the classical form of art.” “This content,” he states, “coincides with what Christianity asserts of God as a spirit,” as opposed to “the Greek God [who] is the object of naïve intuition and sensuous imagination, and therefore his shape is the bodily shape of man” (79). This might set up the quotation above, but it certainly doesn’t prepare us for the example which Hegel will use. We may also recognize the dialectical pattern which always moves from the implicit to the explicit, from naïve consciousness to self-consciousness. But why, we may ask, does Hegel use the example of bodily digestion to exemplify a spiritual function? Bahti’s provisional answer to this question is apposite:

This animal, that is to say, bodily, function can become an object of science (say, dietetics) as man thinks about his digestion. . . . This is the aspect of the example *as* bodily or *of* the body. But the very example of digestion is also *of* the spirit, that is, of the appropriation, interiorization, and assimilation of the outer into the inner – or, in Hegel’s context here, of the body by the spirit. So the example of the body is overcome in its exemplification of the spirit: digestion is digested, or “the process of digestion” processes or digests the “merely bodily object” of its knowledge, namely, the animal-like *function* of digestion. (Bahti 110-11)

236 The human mind is naturally inclined by the senses to see itself externally in the body, and only with great difficulty does it come to understand itself by means of reflection.

237 This axiom gives us the universal principle of etymology in all languages: words are carried over from bodies and from the properties of bodies to signify the institutions of mind and spirit. (Vico 78)

#4.

In the first place, every language already contains a mass of metaphors. They arise from the fact that a word which originally signifies only something sensuous is carried over into the spiritual sphere. *Fassen, begreifen*<sup>20</sup>, and many words, to speak generally, which relate to knowing, have in respect of their literal meaning a purely sensuous content, which then is lost and exchanged for a spiritual meaning, the original sense being sensuous, the second spiritual.

But gradually the metaphorical element in the use of such a word disappears and by custom the word changes from a metaphorical to a literal expression, because, owing to readiness to grasp in the image only the meaning, image and meaning are no longer distinguished and the image directly affords only the abstract meaning itself instead of a concrete picture. If, for example, we are to take *begreifen* in a spiritual sense, then it does not occur to us at all to think of a perceptible grasping by the hand. (*Aesthetics* 404-5)

Let us begin with something else, from another place in Hegel's corpus. If we recall the opening paragraph of the chapter on "Sense-certainty," we should recognize that the "example" Hegel uses to set up his discussion of metaphor performed a similarly critical function in the *Phenomenology* by setting the parameters within which the truth of sense knowledge could be examined: "keeping mere apprehension (*Auffassen*) free from conceptual comprehension (*Begreifen*)" (Baillie's translation). Of course, we should not be surprised that Hegel draws his example from words which relate to "knowing." But why does he use this particular example? Hamacher mentions a possible solution by teasing out the similarity between the words *begreifen* (to comprehend) and *Begriff* (Concept): "To illustrate this process Hegel uses an example that is more than simply an example: with the genesis of the concept of the concept out of the sensuous meaning of the words '*fassen, begreifen*': 'to grasp' and 'to comprehend'" (Hamacher 233).



In the metaphorical (Gr. *metapherein*, “to carry over,” “to transfer”) process, “something sensuous is carried over into the spiritual sphere.” Metaphor is the catalyst of an exchange between the literal and figural meanings of words and, in a sense, processes out or refines their sensuous aspects, converting them into pure “sense” so that their meaning can be preserved in the Concept. What is “lost” in this exchange is the “purely sensuous content.” But this is only the first stage (or direction) in the process: as the sensuous aspect of a word is elided in the spiritual, so too, the metaphorical element of the word is used up, (“disappears”) and returns to its original function as a literal expression; only now, the literal “directly affords only the abstract meaning.” So, we have gone in the opposite direction, from the spiritual back to the literal level. But what has happened to the “sensuous” in this exchange between the literal and conceptual levels? According to Hamacher, “the sensuous itself is ‘worn down’, and thereby loses its original plasticity, and finally through sensuous utilization itself becomes something unsensuous. The coinage of the word, worn down through constant use, becomes the representative of the universal equivalent that is the concept” (Hamacher 235). As always, we are concerned with following the directional signs in Hegel, whether they become the stand-ins or “representative(s)” of the concept, or whether they point to, through and beyond themselves in order to reveal the *conception* of Concepts prior to the *birth* of metaphor:

The process of the sensuous is thus actually the process in which the concept comes to itself. Yet the sensuous, sublated into sense through well-worn usage as it is, must remain so harmless, so little virulent that even the difference between the sensuous and its spiritual meaning is no longer perceptible. The sensuous has disappeared in its sense; what initially was nothing but an improper sensuous sign, has now become the proper and authentic expression of its own process, has been appropriated to the truth of its being. The act of conceptual comprehension, of grasping, destroys its own sensuousness and grips itself firmly and securely as its own concept. (Hamacher 233)

Hamacher rigorously follows the thread of what is missing in the Hegelian labyrinth back to its metaphorical center which is where the very process of metaphor comes into being. The sensuous, whether it is “sublated into sense” or “has disappeared into

sense,” still maintains its power to infect the Concept. For in Hamacher’s trenchant reading of Hegel, the sensuous, corporeal side of metaphor always returns, as if the return of the repressed that has not been truly suppressed even when it has undergone supersession (*Aufhebung*). The final sentence in the passage above is not simply a clever working out of the common elements in the words ‘conceptual,’ ‘comprehension,’ ‘grasping,’ ‘grips’ and ‘concept;’ rather, it uses Hegel’s own language against itself in order to bring back to consciousness what Hegel has attempted to anaesthetize. It enacts in conceptual terms a belief in the ineradicable sensuousness of metaphorical language.

*Philosophy of Nature, Assimilation*

In the interest of being repetitive, as if at this point we could actually *seize* upon a new idea, we will begin our discussion of the process of assimilation in Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* as we have begun the others, firmly in the grip of the Concept. The difference is that here, in the examination of the animal organism, the grip and the bite are quite literal and lethal: "The process begins with the *mechanical seizure* of the external object; *assimilation* itself is the conversion of the externality into the self-like unity."<sup>21</sup> Hegel's account of assimilation begins with grasping, seizing, apprehending. It is precisely as mechanical as it is metaphorical – this literal grasping of food is also the mechanical operation of language "seizing" its object and identical to "*fassen, begreifen*" used as an example of metaphorical language in the *Aesthetics*. We will concern ourselves only with a small part of the middle section of Hegel's tripartite division of his treatment of the animal organism in which it is to be considered "as idea which enters into relationship with its other, its non-organic nature, and posits this inwardly as ideal – Assimilation" (PON §352). The notion of *assimilation*, in terms of this paper, cuts across a majority of the arguments and will be dealt with in its other aspects as the specific situations arise. The point is that just as I have suggested that the notion of the "body" persistently arises in places where one would least expect to find it in the *Aesthetics* and the *Phenomenology*, when Hegel is explicitly concerned with the body, or the organism per se, in the *Philosophy of Nature*, other, more "spiritual" elements infiltrate his discourse. Here, I simply want to note that use of the word "infection"<sup>22</sup> is not fortuitous, but intentionally virulent as if through the sheer force of its meaning it could spread out beyond its borders to "infect" the other areas of his system.

Because the living being is the *universal* power over its outer [non-organic] nature which is opposed to it, assimilation is, first, the *immediate* fusion of the ingested material with animality, an infection with the latter and *simple transformation*. Secondly, as *mediation*, assimilation is *digestion* – opposition of the subject to the outer world, and, as further differentiated, the process of animal *water* (of the gastric and pancreatic juices, animal lymph as such) and of animal *fire* (of the gall, in which the accomplished return of the organism into itself from its concentration in the spleen is determined as *being-for-self* and as

active consuming): processes which are, all the same, particularized infections.  
(PON §364)

Assimilation as “mediation” and as a process of conversion aligns itself with other concepts I have been using under the general category of shifters. Thus, it can be seen not only as the literal process of digestion but as a metaphor of reading; a metaphor for the “processing” of language. In David Farrell Krell’s book *Contagion*, a study of the philosophies of nature of Novalis, Schelling and Hegel, we can see how these reciprocal relations between subjectivity (‘I’) and language get played out in this infectious domain of assimilation:

Part of that complexity is the *reversibility* of all assimilation, whereby one becomes what one eats, poisoning the other but taking it in for the good health of the self. For the ingestion of otherness *infects* the being that is in-and-for-itself. The living being *lets the other in*, and so *lets itself in for* otherness and exteriority. The sucking alien, as horrendous and as invulnerable as it may appear, is always sucking in its death along with its life. To let the other in, to let oneself in for the other, is the negativity of subjectivity as organism. (Krell 148)

The idea of “reversibility” is constitutive of the concept of in-betweenness that I have been examining. Here this biological assimilation of otherness into the self necessarily affects and effectively transforms the self, just as, analogously, the self externalizing itself in language is in turn subject to the internalization of the infection of language. For Hegel, there is always a relationship between linguistic expression, externalization, alienation and infection. That is, all of these concepts come into play whenever there is a question of the assimilation of foreign matter. As a metaphor, infection bleeds into other areas of Hegel’s system and when it is used literally, as for example, when it concerns vegetable assimilation, Hegel calls it “immediate infection” (PON §346). When “infection” comes up in the *Phenomenology*,<sup>23</sup> Hegel uses *Ansteckung* rather than *Infektion*.<sup>24</sup> Language as infection is a shifter.

SHIFTER—*switch, variable, catalyst; reversion, inversion, reversal; the place of the sign*<sup>25</sup>

On one level the shifter<sup>26</sup> is a grammatico-linguistic particle, ‘This’, ‘Here’, ‘Now’, or ‘I’<sup>27</sup>, referred to variously as demonstrative, indexical, or deictic. I am extrapolating from the grammatical definition of a shifter and using it as a concept as a way of expressing the dynamic movement of signification; for example, the ‘shift’ from literal to figurative registers. Thus, on another level, the shifter brings in the notion of metaphor (to carry over, transfer), trope (turning), and irony (to say the opposite of what you mean, or to mean the opposite of what you say – “the use of words to express something other than and esp. the opposite of the literal meaning”). On the level of the body it brings in the notion of digestion as the assimilation and transformation of energies from outside in and inside out. The double meaning of words, the very function of doubleness<sup>28</sup> or duplicity in metaphor (two in one and one in two); the third level would be the moment of the movement itself between literal (proper) and figurative, the movement of sense (again two levels as sensory and intelligible), and of course the *Aufhebung*, meaning both to cancel and preserve, and the pun of *meinung* as ‘mine’ and ‘meaning’. In short, language *points*: it points to its own process as a function, and it points out its own function as part of that process:

The proper meaning of pronouns – as shifters and *indicators of the utterance* – is inseparable from a reference to the instance of discourse. The articulation – the shifting – that they effect is not from the nonlinguistic (tangible indication) to the linguistic, but from *langue* to *parole* [Code/Message]. *Deixis*, or indication – with which their peculiar character has been identified, from antiquity on – does not simply demonstrate an unnamed object, but above all the very instance of discourse, its taking place. The place indicated by *demonstratio*, and from which only every other indication is possible, is a place of language. Indication is the category within which language refers to its own taking place.”(Agamben 25)

Language is the locus of turning away from and turning into, of reflexivity and self-reflection, of conventional structure and metaphorical invention, and therefore is to be regarded as a shifter, not merely on the grammatical scale but also on the conceptual scale. Thus, we can substitute any of a number of the concepts of in-betweenness for “Appearance” in the following statement: “It is the semblance or show in Appearance

that makes possible the subtle translation of physical motion into metaphysical evaluation[. . .] Yet Appearance, the converter of actuality into semblance, is itself pure shift, pure transference, pure variation. Paradoxically, then, the ontological strata and system that sublimate themselves above the level of the sensible rest upon a factor of pure difference”(Sussman 34). Things, words, the ‘I’ and ideas that point to, through and beyond themselves facilitate the transitions between the sensuous and the metaphorical and allow for the reciprocal exchanges between the *no longer* literal and the *not yet* conceptual. In other words, they are pure shifters.

Perhaps this idea of *pointing to itself*, through and beyond itself, can be seen as a kind of self-consciousness, as it were, of the terms themselves, a necessary moment of the Concept occurring through all of its manifestations and all of its particulars, which are not merely shifters but the very ground of the shifters themselves. The notion of reflexivity, the reflexive and self-reflexive (as opposed to the self-referential); but not in the sense of self-absorption, for the self is thought of as always in process of producing itself. And, in a sense, the constant intersection of self and language, of identity and difference, any notion of self whatsoever necessitates an alien, external other. The self absorbs an infection from without because it (“I”) can only exist in the crossfire of other “I’s” with their fixed and unfixed sights on calling attention to themselves, making a mark and remarking themselves as individuals only in the community of speakers, writers, language users. Reflexivity gives the sense of the non-stable, the flex within of a sense of bending, rebounding, of snapping outward and returning as in a reflex action, but also the implicit notion of reversibility (reciprocity?), exchange and changing positions, the necessary transformation of that self that views itself, or that action of viewing itself self-reflexively impels it to change and redirect itself because of this new, reflective information, calling into question its position by pointing out the weakness inherent in any fixed, determined position, leading inevitably to a new stage, or at least a change of position, and the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. This site, which is really a non-site, is the place of the language, where the values of the variables are emptied and exchanged – not role reversal, nothing as superficial as that, but the very role *of* reversal, ineluctable reversal.

Art is: medium, mediation, in-betweenness, passage, transit, transition, transformation. It is not simply presupposed or posited, but appears, as it were, to *preposition* itself. It moves in and through and between metaphor, language, meaning, appearance. The crucial notion in the *Aesthetics* of “appearance” is that its *sense* partakes of both the sensuous and the intelligible, of the particular and the universal. And it logically follows that the various figures which are grouped under the conceptual category of “mediation” should also be related among themselves. One example of this type of relation is Sussman’s dovetailing of the notions of “appearance” and “metaphor”:

The shifter of valence that will facilitate the conversion of [. . .] the data of sense-experience into the immobility of law is the variable Appearance (*Erscheinung*). The capabilities of Appearance overlap with those of metaphor itself: imputation and transference. Appearance is able to *impute* actuality or semblance (*Schein*) to phenomena and to *transfer* the status of actuality to semblance, and vice versa. In this manner, Appearance is able to convert the almost physical movement of reversal in models of reciprocal action into conceptual terms (semblance and actuality) that harbor metaphysical valences within them. (Sussman 34)

I am suggesting that it is possible to take this notion of “the shifter of valence” out of its specific context and use it in a more global fashion. I am using “valence” in the sense of a “relative capacity to unite, react, or interact” on a conceptual level. The argument is that all the “metaphors” of in-betweenness are capable of shifting themselves and creating the very medium in which these reversals (inversions, conversions) can take place.

## The Speculative Body

If theory were to wait for experience it would never come about<sup>29</sup>

The metaphor of spirit in the sphere of representation, the translation and transference of its proper and authentic meaning into the improper language of sensuous intuition, cannot therefore successfully be carried over and carried out without loss or residue. But this transition of spirit to its other and its return into itself, presented here in the analysis of metaphor as linguistic form, is not merely the specialist object of a regional aesthetic theory, and this metaphor of metaphors designates the relationship of philosophy to its own self-presentation in language and in those various forms – like religion, art and the state – in which spirit only ever finds a deficient mode of expression. Consequently, the self-relation of the absolute is also afflicted throughout with this fissure which exposes it to its own superseded forms and therefore to a sphere which restricts its own sense and its own presence. (Hamacher 234)



*Legibility/Illegibility: the (hand) writing is on the wall*

One cannot ‘read’ Hegel except by not reading him. To read him, not to read him, to understand him, to misunderstand him, to refuse him, falls under the decision of Hegel, or it does not take place.<sup>30</sup>

Because the experience of reading Hegel is exactly like becoming absorbed and assimilated by Hegel rather than absorbing and assimilating him, it becomes necessary not only to bite the hand that feeds you but also to retract your hand from what feeds upon it; that is, to *write* the hand that *reads* you. To write in a “hand” that is difficult to read, if not completely illegible. Here, illegibility, not at the material level, but on the level of sense would therefore extend and extenuate meaning by privileging “writing” over “reading.” Legibility would concern a text that was less difficult and thus more readily assimilated and sublated. But such a text would not provide the extreme form of alienation necessary for the self to become other than itself; that is, to misrecognize and therefore transform itself<sup>31</sup>. So we propose a writing that would be simultaneously illegible and inedible as opposed to edible, legible and hence subject to erasure. The question would then be which type of writing is being privileged: that which is written with indelible ink, or that which is “written” with the invisible ink of the voice – thinking in ink is “autosecretion.” Just as everything that is legible is not necessarily intelligible, all that is illegible is not necessarily unintelligible. Over and against the pure presence of the voice, which as the active principle of the mouth would swallow it whole, the disappearance, and the residual trace of that disappearance in ~~writing~~.

Precisely insofar as it grasps itself as the other of itself and as the self of the other, the clasp of philosophical science almost entirely loses its grip – once again – upon both other and self, and consequently upon the system which organizes both, and does so without science being able to account for this its autosecretion – This grip is therefore also no longer merely entirely that of science, but the bite with which it seizes itself as writing. This implies that the system relates to itself, and its particular moments relate to one another, according to a model of reading, implies further that there is no rigorous criterion for distinguishing the writing and its reading. And not indeed because both were one and the same, or might be reduced to one another through the mediations of hermeneutic art. But, on the contrary, because both, text and exegesis alike, represent forms of appropriation and self-appropriation in which the proper withdraws itself,

deforms its own structure, fails to remain proper to itself. (Hamacher 206)

The hand, “especially the hand, as absolute instrument,”<sup>32</sup> that feeds as it reads and produces feedback as it writes is also the hand that grips this book, that “bites” these words and grasps the concept by apprehending and comprehending it. To bite the hand that feeds you these words, that reads over your shoulder as you are writing, this handwriting – actually *this* was handwriting, but it has now been transformed (doubly mediated) by being transferred to the computer word processor program – must be rewritten. You must rewrite the whole body of which the hand is only a part. You must read and feed, digest and assimilate, write and bite, secrete and grasp the Concept coming out of itself and into its (your) own in order to produce knowledge. For “Hegel” *as text* must be consumed even as it consumes you. If it consumes itself it does not remain unutterable or ineffable. If uttered, then also utterly destroyed. Thus, the fixation on a writing that can’t be fixed, that can be “read off” but not written off.

One of the cruxes of this paper has been (and will have been) precisely what occurs between the two poles of reading and writing. The questions to be mulled over slowly and patiently are: what happens to the words after they have been read, after they have been absorbed by the digestive apparatus of the Concept and enter into the circulatory system of meaning? What is the relation between reading and rereading, writing and rewriting? Between what has been written and what will not yet have been read away? Between reading *into* a text and writing it *off*? What happens in the space between what is *not yet* writing and what the reading already *no longer* is? Between these two poles:

(1) Hence the bread and the wine are not just an object, something for the intellect. The action of eating and drinking is not just a self-unification brought about through the destruction of food and drink, nor is it just the sensation of merely tasting food and drink. The spirit of Jesus, in which his disciples are one, has become a present object, a reality, for external feeling. Yet the love made objective, this subjective element become a *thing*, reverts once more to its nature, becomes subjective again in its eating. This return may perhaps in this respect be compared with the thought which in the written word becomes a thing and which recaptures its subjectivity out of an object, out of something lifeless, when we read. The simile would be more striking if

the written word were read away, if by being understood it vanished as a thing, just as in the enjoyment of bread and wine not only is a feeling for these mystical objects aroused, not only is the spirit made alive, but the objects vanish as objects. Thus the action seems purer, more appropriate to its end, in so far as it affords spirit only, feeling only, and robs the intellect of its own, i.e., destroys the matter, the soulless<sup>33</sup>.

(2) This abnormal inhibition of thought is in large measure the source of complaints regarding the unintelligibility of philosophical writings from individuals who otherwise possess the educational requirements for understanding them. Here we see the reason behind one particular complaint so often made against them: *that so much has to be read over and over* before it can be understood – a complaint whose burden is presumed to be quite outrageous, and, if justified, to admit of no defense. The philosophical proposition, since it is a proposition, leads one to believe that the usual subject-predicate relation obtains, as well as the usual attitude towards knowing. But the philosophical content destroys *this* attitude and *this* opinion. We learn by experience that we meant something other than we meant to mean; and *this* correction of our meaning compels our knowing to go back to the proposition, and understand it in some other way. (§63)<sup>34</sup>

Writing intervenes and interrupts the process of becoming absorbed in and by the reading of texts, before one's resistance can be broken and dissolved by the digestive juices of the dialectic. The residual trace remains as writing, not *aufgehoben* into the next stage of consciousness; not as total memory, but as repetition: rereading and writing are productions rather than accumulations of knowledge. That is, repetition in the sense that the words, once read, thought and written (and perhaps published), will always be the same *words* but the reader's consciousness will change as surely as the "meaning" is transmitted or missed, interpreted or misinterpreted. If the words were simply voiced or heard at a lecture, the speaker could always change them to suit the occasion and thus wouldn't they then be more transitory and less permanent, though Hegel would have us think them more "essential," that is, closer to the Spirit? There would only be superficial repetition in this case, just as rote memorization would be superficial knowledge because the words, the type itself, would not have passed through the digestive apparatus of the dialectical machine. One doesn't just swallow the system whole, but in "bits," bit by bit (piecemeal), and the process of reconstituting the original words is not as efficacious nor as important as making those words one's own words and thoughts (perhaps publications, commentaries), through

the process of swallowing, digesting and excreting them through the experimental/experiential body of the reader. This process then shifts, and is no longer simply a hermeneutical act following the strict guidelines of the “laws” of the text, but is rather an epistemological intervention in the form of writing, secreting back into language the fundamental questions in regard to the acquisition of knowledge. New words transform the mind of the reader and are reformulated in the process of writing which, as an intervention, is an act of active rereading (of active forgetting more so than memorization), that does not simply reconstitute facts and opinions but actually produces knowledge by questioning the very process of what it means to transmit “meaning.”

If one wants to hold to the materiality of the letter, to its inscription as an indigestible (indi-geist-ible?) bit in Hegel’s system, where does that leave one but with a bit, a morsel, “singular morsels (*vereinzelteten Stücke*)” (Knox 249), *Stück Papier*, and not the “truth” which would be some semblance of the whole? Perhaps the art of consumption requires both a proper and an improper reading. Reading in the sense of “writing” over what one interprets, leaving a trace behind rather than allowing it to be subsumed or caught in the act of interpretation; an interleaving, not leaving out what’s there, but leafing through what is not. Reading, especially speed reading, is all surface: skimming in search of the luminous word in order to crystallize the moment of understanding. But when one reads only for *content* one will never be *content*. One must read the surface, paying attention to where and how meaning *surfaces* there in order to produce a reading *of* the surface instead of a superficial (*Begrifflos*) reading.

Guided by a series of metonymic substitutions and puns on meaning, mine, my own; “my own” reading is a quotational remnant that marks my own absence in the presence of the text of Hegel (and in the “present” text of Hegel), but this “I” is as language already universal and thus I cannot locate myself in this or any text absolutely. “My own” writing conspicuously rejects consumption – as if in the moment of climax the signifiers would be immolated in a blaze of signification only to be replaced by the signified; subsumed and superseded in and by the signified which

recapitulates the development of the Concept out of itself, i.e., the progress of “conception,” “consummation,” and “death” in-itself and for-itself; such that these processes will now occur (recur) on the higher level of Spirit – the birth, copulation, death and rebirth of the Concept. “My own” writing resists being consumed by “Hegel” by producing a reading of “my own” body as a text, by producing my own “text” as signifier of the absence of my “body” as living material in the text; i.e., neither immaterial to the text nor to the argument as such. I propose to write and reproduce a writing in which I think in order to both reduce and re-introduce myself to print. To think of my own body as a text – as a body of thought, thought’s body, embodied thought, thought thought of as body, a body of work (corpus); exported, reported and re-imported in thought, installed or “ensouled” in thought – that would block the digestive, dialectical (“dialectophagy,”<sup>35</sup> in Derrida’s words) process as if to stave off the effects of its medicinal poisons (the gift of its *infection*) by failing to read its prescriptions as directions for “proper” use. Thus this writing is an act in the process of resisting obliteration, of preserving those memory traces and indigestible bits which in themselves refuse to be simply sublated, consumed, excreted and forgotten. This writing attempts, at least “attempts,” to preserve those traces that are not preserved and to negate those that are negated in the Hegelian system. The notion of the leftover which cannot be absorbed and is thus “ignored” by Hegel is the deconstructionist account which Žižek rejects, arguing that Hegel’s infinite judgment foresees even “this” little bit: “Herein lies the “last secret” of dialectical speculation: not in the dialectical mediation-sublimation of all contingent, empirical reality, not in the deduction of all reality from the mediating movement of absolute negativity, but in the fact that this very negativity, to attain its “being-for-self,” must embody itself again in some miserable, radically contingent corporeal leftover.”<sup>36</sup> What remains is this “leftover” that haunts the hand (*la main*) that has forgotten to eat it and writes it instead. You cannot counterpunch absolute negativity by saying “take that!” You can, however, take “this.”

*Aufheben* (to cancel, preserve, elevate; negate, conserve, supersede). The notion of “lifting up” as in “lifting off” can be seen as a kind of erasure and linked to the

superseding of writing as materiality. “The *Aufhebung* – *la relève* – is constrained into writing itself otherwise. Or perhaps simply into writing itself. Or, better, into taking account of its consumption of writing” (“Différance” 19). Although the distinction between a restricted and a general economy succeeds as a critique of absolute knowledge and what it leaves out (leftovers, remains), I think that Derrida ends up valorizing a general economy, as exemplified in Bataille’s writings, that seems to go too far in critiquing the Hegelian model; in fact, it is a model that Derrida himself has absorbed and continues to employ. Does one want to end up simply valorizing non-meaning, vacuolizing what is substantial by gesturing toward madness, laughter, superfluity and excrement as ways out of the closed circle of Hegelianism? Does one want to end up saying that Hegel leaves “this” shit and we by choice decide to take it up (and eat it) as a rebellious cause, or spit it back in his face as a form of active resistance, or as a negation of his negation? For Derrida to say that speculative idealism profits from all of its transactions is to misconstrue these transactions at his own cost. To his credit, Derrida does mention a similar caveat in his work on Hegel’s prefaces in “Outwork”:

But if something were to remain of the prolegomenon once inscribed and interwoven, something that would not allow itself to be sublated {*relève*} in the course of the philosophical presentation, would that something necessarily take the form of that which falls away {*la tombee*}? And what about such a fall? Couldn’t it be read otherwise than as the excrement of philosophical essentiality – not in order to sublimate it back into the latter, of course, but in order to learn to take it differently into account?” (*Dissemination* 11)

What seems most trenchant in Derrida’s treatment is his insistence on the scriptability of the inscription and its re-inscription through the repetition of writing, as even in the model of the palimpsest there is no ‘real’ erasure but a covering up of traces with more traces; and the idea of smoking out the Concept (*Begriff*) of the *Aufhebung* by making it write itself, inscribe itself into the same scriptural economy in which it would end up consuming itself (swallowing its own tail). There is still the concern for what exactly Derrida would preserve “for us,” outside of his own negations of Hegel. If it

were merely supplement, excrement, scored margins, is that enough (even though it is something)?

Can a concept of “meaning” exist outside the dichotomy of either the indeterminate play of signifiers (dissemination) or the magisterial bondage of the transcendental signified (assimilation)? Is metaphor a two-way, or one-way street between material and ideal realms? Does metaphor “go both ways,” in both directions at the same time? If there are such things (concepts) as “physical ideality,” on the one hand, and “speculative corporeality” on the other, can there be a kind of meaning that crosses that chiasmus (and crosses out the tautologies of “physical corporeality” and “speculative ideality”) without losing contact with either side of its own oxymoron – a “physiology of spirit”<sup>37</sup> that appears in the guise of *Geist* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, or a spiritual digestion that surfaces (*Geist Who’s Coming to Dinner*) in the *Philosophy of Nature*, a nothingness in the *Logic*, a sense of a sensuous object that disappears (thus, again the paradoxical notion of the *work* (labor) of art versus the artwork, the process over the product which must lead, for Hegel, to religion and Philosophy) in the *Aesthetics*? Can the spirit be incorporated in the body (body of the word) or does it merely pass through like a metaphor of pure disappearance? “What is at issue here is the body of spirit, the incarnation of spirit in a living organism, the privileged organ and the privileged organic system in which spirit remains closest to itself, in which it finds its way back to itself with greatest ease. At issue also the body of the word in which the spirit incarnates itself, in which meaning seeks its ‘expression’ (Hamacher 231). And if one had written it down would it have spelled disaster for the presence of its nonappearance in the singularity of the flesh? Could there be a sense of meaning (both sensory and intelligible), as opposed to being preoccupied with the meaning of sense (intelligible), or making sense (sensory) of intelligible meaning, as a sensuous ending where meaning no longer means what it was meant to mean before it acquired a new sense (sensory) of which to make sense (intelligible)<sup>38</sup>? Not just a means to an end, but a literal document that doctors its own letters and litters the spirit over and through a text that does not recover itself by disappearing on the road to the good old theological sense of teleological self-presence in absentia. Must the work of

idealization necessarily erase the trace of the signifier, the materiality of the inscription, the substance of the self? Does it come down to the difference between the concepts of philosophy and the sensuous particulars of art? Hence, the necessity of some adequate notion of aesthetics. A sense of the work of art, of artworks, and the *work* of art.

A metaphor is more than what it is and more than it is not<sup>39</sup>. Between metaphorical and literal—some thing, “this” printed matter—precisely materiality must intercede rather than supersede or be superseded by the perpetual process of dialectical becoming; that this “substance” might delay or stick in the throat of pure idealism.

This “bit of paper” then, is not an isolated metaphor from the text, but a literal reminder and remainder of the inherent metaphoricity of language – language, a metaphor is always more than it is *and* more than it is not; both literal and figurative, and even the literal is used as a figure, or as an example of this, this “bit of paper.”

This little bit of paper that gets stuck in Hegel’s proverbial (dialectical) throat, somewhere in the esophagus, between mouth (sense certainty) and anus (the fundament of Absolute Knowledge), the paper that is ingested (and made a guest, transformed to *Geist*, in the house of language), perhaps is swallowed to cover up the secret as if by a secret agent to cover up the key to the code (C), manducated, masticated, munched as if to preserve the secret while negating its materiality (*aufgehoben*—chewing it into a pulpy mass—a Mass, Lord’s Supper), as if the secret were that this paper will eventually be excreted (after having been previously secreted), as if the secret were that this literal piece of paper cannot be digested and done away with, read off, lifted up, erased, as if to rid it of substance and to return writing to the ideality of voice and *Geist*, but still this thing, that pulp, remains and still “means” something other than being the mere means to an end. The code here could be related to the notion of *genotype* versus *phenotype*, langue (code)/ parole (message). The phenotype is the visible result of a gene pair which shows only part of the underwriting package. A person’s genotype, the internal packet, is not fully revealed



by the phenotype, the outward (visible) form. Is there a link between pheno-type and pheno-menology. If the idea or code is only potential (force proper) but does not fully manifest itself in appearance (expressive force as phenotype), does the inexpressible have equal weight as that which can be expressed? In this case, the idea might retain characteristics which can't be made to appear which would then shift the value to the phenotype where those traits or characteristics actually manifest themselves. So the materiality of the "idea" as instantiated in the signifiers (words) would take precedence over the immateriality of the "idea." Concrete versus abstract universality – "the word is the concrete universal, the Hegelian concept which is totality" (Hyppolite 47).

It appears that in Hegel the world is haunting the ghost. But this is neither a haphazard, nor simply a clever reversal. For, in this particular case (which is the case), the word is haunting the meaning (sense, reference); the word remains to haunt its meanings, to haunt what it signifies. In this sense, language that is written and is read and is reread occurs in each of these separate places; not *in place of*, nor substituted for something else – its true (truth) haunts. Which, curiously, ends up valorizing the literal material of language, by substantializing the "this," this "bit of paper."

## Meaning: The Medium is the Messenger

Words are the medium between meaning and ideas. Or should that read “meaning” is the medium between “words” and “ideas”? The literal object, or that which is referred to, may in fact disappear or be irrelevant as referent, but the dual role of words to point to themselves as literal things and to point beyond themselves as signs must be stressed—meaning is the fire that is produced by rubbing words together and their abrasions abide even when they are “rubbed out,” erased, or “written off.” The medium is not the “complete” message, and the message cannot be reduced to either “mass” (Lord’s Supper) or “mess” (garbled messages). The medium both constitutes and deconstitutes, materializes and dematerializes, makes itself appear and disappear in the message. The code (*langue*) and the message (*parole*) persist only in the medium of their transient transmission. The message does not express the total content(s) of the code, just as the *phenotype* does not make visible the total content(s) of the *genotype* (which itself is a “written” code). The words may not express the entire “idea” but they do address the multiplicity of meanings in each of their instantiations. Words are objects that exist materially on the page, but the things to which they “refer” do not necessarily exist. Meanings then can be seen as separate, intentional acts and are therefore two-sided in that they have a sensual (sensible, sensory) component as well as an intelligible component. And might not “meaning” itself partake of both a sensual and ideational element, of *phenomenal* as well as (and as distinguished from) *material* aspects, in order to reproduce a kind of *sensualized meaning*<sup>40</sup>? If meaning did not have this actual, material content in its concept, how could one get meanings across (*across* language— in Hyppolite’s terms), through the medium of language? What is the relation between meaning (*Bedeutung*), idea (*Idee*), concept (*Begriff*)? Do words simply “refer” to objects (referents)? If words themselves are not objects, things, through which meanings pass and are communicated, what are they? They must be objects with physical, literal, material reality, but are they indissociable from their meanings? Not things, no longer objects, and not yet meanings.

—Force and vanishing: meaning only comes into being (or Appearance) in the moment of its disappearance. If this process can be considered phenomenologically sound, then the moment of the appearance/disappearance of meaning, if it could be isolated in the process of reading, would then be seen to occur – i.e., at the moment of comprehension the words themselves would cease to “matter” as material objects. But if the intention is to do away with words altogether, then there is a problem<sup>41</sup>. How would one remember (here and now) where and when one thought what one thought? Would “this” really no longer “matter,” that particular instant, those circumstances, etc.? Certainly, on one level the words wouldn’t matter because the understanding or comprehension would have jettisoned them as placeholders or markers which were no longer relevant (*relève, aufgehoben*) to the process of articulating meanings (like booster rockets that have already fulfilled their function of providing the necessary speed, propulsion and impetus to get to the Idea or Concept (*Begriff*)). But wouldn’t there need to be some trace left of that trajectory, if only so that the process could be repeated as a “fact” in “reality”? The emphasis then shifts to the level of interpretation and rereading and the necessity of actually being able to read those words again as a kind of map of how one got to the Idea. If words simply disappeared there would be no accurate way of scientifically repeating the steps (verification of the experimental data) progressing toward certainty and truth, for meanings don’t take place in a vacuum, but must be instantiated in words that provide a description of the meaning event (more *inscription* than *prescription*). But the words should not simply be reduced to the materiality of the(ir) letter(s), nor completely assimilated but allow for the possibility of infinite repetition (dissemination). Words are the necessary means of transit: neither transitory, nor supplemental entities, more like recipes which can be repeated rather than the contents of a menu which can only anticipate but not produce the contents<sup>42</sup> to be consumed. Language must be “alienated” in order for it to be recuperated by the writer (producer) and reader (interpreter, consumer) and in order for it to actually transform the process of thinking and to allow the transmission of meanings to continue. The idea that the particular instantiation and the qualities of that experience are incidental or contingent should not be dependent on an overarching concept, but rather these instances are tied to the material conditions of

their production. This is not to say that the ideas themselves are lashed to words as burdens to burros, but that the particular configurations of words in a given instance produce a certain force field of meanings that only arise from the particularities of that occasion. Could the notion of “force” be used as catalyst, soliciting the animation between words, and animating that space between material inscription and idealist thought? “Force is the other of language without which language would not be what it is.”<sup>43</sup>

This piece of paper is material, not immaterial to the argument – “this” piece of paper on which I am writing and transcribing *this idea* from a different piece of yellow paper on which *these words* had previously been inscribed and which will be transformed again through the medium of the word processor, phenomenally as dark print on gray light, before once again being printed out on white xerox paper, duplicated and reproduced through each separate manifestation, each inscription of difference, in order to end up with something that can only be “thought” of as identical to the same original Idea<sup>44</sup>. This writing is not simply a trace or record of the progress toward the Idea, not simply a means to an end, but a means to an endlessness (which is another word for “process”); a means of making and marking meanings in particular situations, along particular spatial and temporal coordinates.

Are words simply shorthand notations for the Concept (*Begriff*)? Is language really immediately universal? And if so, is it the phenomenon of language that is *looked at* that is universal, or is it also the materiality of language *as it is read* that is universal (even though it is a particular instance, subject to the peculiarities of a unique, non-repeatable situation)? But then how is writing as an iterable sequence of marks supposed to be seen and/or read? If it can only mark a particular case as a potential universal, can anything ever be said *about* a particular unless it can also be stated about other particulars (hence repeatable), and therefore, *not* a unique instance but necessarily a universal? How do we connect the *material* marks to an *ideality* of meanings if not through the configurations of words? Then, would this notion of fluidity, of arising and passing away, of appearing and disappearing, this ceaseless flux,

*flüssigkeit* (§ 171), not also be operative as a force between material words and their meanings? Then would one have to argue against Hegel's reduction or denigration of words as minute particulars, or could one state that that Hegel is really "lifting" them up to a higher level of meaning by sublating them; not losing them, nor simply assimilating them, but re-marking and preserving them as necessary moments of alienation and otherness that instantiate the very process of making meanings, of apprehending and comprehending things, in short, of making the circuit, the circle and the circulation of the System possible? Hegel is very clear in the *Aesthetics* in the section on "Poetry" about his position on the issue of the particulars of art:

Yet despite this independence, these same single parts must still remain connected together, because the one fundamental subject, developed and presented in them, has to be manifested as the unity permeating all the particulars, holding them together as a totality, and drawing them all back into itself. . . . *The connection into which the parts are brought should not be a mere teleological one.* For in a teleological relationship, the end is the independently envisaged and willed universal which can bring into conformity with itself the particulars through and in which it gains existence, not these particulars it uses merely as means and it robs them of all independently free existence and therefore of every sort of life. In that event the parts come only into an intended relation to the one end which alone is to be conspicuous as valid; everything else this end subjects to itself and takes abstractly into its service. This unfree relationship, characteristic of the Understanding, is the very contrary of the free beauty of art." (*Aesthetics* 982-3, italics mine)<sup>45</sup>

In other words, the means themselves, the particulars, mean what they do *not* because of the "willed universal" but because they manifest the universal in and through themselves. Art comes about through the penetration of each detail with the spirit and concept or idea of itself suffused through these particulars and not attached afterwards as an abstract schema bringing together all the disparate parts under one umbrella. The unity must come from the particulars themselves and in the multiple relations between particulars. Then how could one argue that Hegel denigrates the medium of language when one can show that it makes meaning possible by setting up a series of oppositions and by animating that movement between the poles of each dirempted proposition that allows the concept of concrete universality and dialectical fluidity to occur in the first place. Language – not as a means to an end, but as a means to and toward meanings. In order to say what you mean, you must first say it (think it, write

it), even if it is ultimately impossible to say exactly what you mean, even if (and because) language is more truthful than that.

And the instance may mark the “present” instance as a mark of difference that echoes its own absence; thus, the point may be that that the point cannot really be isolated; that the word cannot really be isolated out of the fluidity of discourse unless at the precise point or moment of its disappearance, as it sheds its materiality in order to be reclothed with a name – meaning.

Regurgitation: to become thrown or poured back; the casting up of incompletely digested food as by some birds in feeding their young. If reading is a metaphor of digestion, then writing is a kind of in-digestion (in-itself and for-itself), spitting back and vomiting<sup>46</sup> difference instead of identity. If reading is the pre-digesting of material interiorized by the mind and repeated by reflex as one mode of regurgitation in the form of feeding, writing is regurgitation as the spitting back of that material as “incompletely” digested; it is an interruption of the enclosed circulation of meaning as the positive inscription, as the expressive exteriorization, not of indifference to the material, but of difference *in* the material. If reading concerns the assimilation of otherness alien to one’s own identity, then writing concerns the articulate expression of one’s differences from the assimilated other. Thus, writing intervenes in the process of assimilation, throwing back up the non-assimilable, indigestible material as a force and not the same dialectical pattern of negation, preservation, lifting; not as a return-to-self of the other which has been processed and is now packaged under the same product “identity” (name recognition), but as an active dissemination of difference, a return as throwing back that which cannot or will not be taken to be the same, or remarking the remains of the other *qua* other and of the self as other. In-digestion as *indi-geist-ion*, a spitting back of spirit (*geist*) in words (inwards) as external (outer) expression. The movement of reading toward assimilation is both a movement outward and a return inward as the process of digestion, absorbing, filling; and the movement of writing is a movement toward unfilling, emptying, disburdening, neither strictly active or passive, but “reactive” in the sense of moving outward again after the

interrupted process of inwardization, instead of the “wetness” of assimilation, a drying out in the form of desiccated signs, an externalization that does not rest quietly upon its own repetition.

## The Body of Meaning

These questions keep coming back to the corporeity or incorporeity of the body/spirit/nature. The “body” of the sign, its material aspect, its literal level of meaning, must certainly be sublated in order to engage in the process of signification and not remain a mere assemblage of meaningless letters. But this “body” must, at the same time, be incorporated (“ensouled”); that is, processed through the mind at the level of the concept in which that material becomes superfluous (supplementary) and only the essence or purified content of the material enters into spirit or idea. In other words, first the “meaning” is purified of its corporeal element through digestion (assimilation) and then this sifted, ethereal element (incorporeal) can pass through and move to the next stage of the process where “meaning” is transferred onto the register of the idea, as the signifier is first erased and then definitively incorporated by the signified. The persistent paradox is that in Hegel’s use of metaphorical language and in the actual expression of his concepts, both literal and figurative levels are described as containing at least trace elements of physical, bodily, material attributes (either as components of the process as the power of digestion, or the assimilation of signifying material by the signified). But if the signifier, the materiality of its inscription, must pass away does it not still haunt the signified? The signified which sublates (cancels and preserves), incorporates, and assimilates the signifier, nonetheless still takes part in this bodily, literal, physical, corporeal practice, process and progress through the transitions of Hegel’s language via his bodily metaphors. And since this transit is not unidirectional but goes both ways, then the signifier can’t really vanish (be erased) because it must remain as one pole in the circulation of meaning. How does one become embodied in the soul (‘ensouled’), incorporated by the incorporeal?



## The Body of Meaning II

Between material expression and ideal concept, meaning exists as transit and transition, going both ways from signifier to signified and signified to signifier; between the literal level of the material and its sublation in the idea, the shuttle which carries meaning between these levels is metaphor, and specifically metaphors of the body. What is interesting in this case is that digestion is a literal process (*Philosophy of Nature* – assimilation), a metaphorical process (*Aesthetics* – e.g. 80) and a conceptual process (as seen in the Concept of *Aufhebung*). And as far as reading<sup>47</sup> is concerned, the notion of digestion is not simply an embodiment (except in the sense that it is a corporeal process) but partakes of all levels – physical, material, literal, metaphorical, semiotic, hermeneutical. It stands at the crossroads as a “figure” – both as literal figure and figure of the literal. The inscription marks itself and is re-marked by the place of inscription and the instrument or stylus in the act of this re-marking (writing). How does writing come to interrupt this unidirectional flow of meaning? Writing intervenes, interrupts and reverses the flow back toward the direction of the signifier, and as such is a necessary moment of the process. It is a way of re-inserting the “figure” of the body into the body of Hegel’s text, which he has not really expunged, but surreptitiously exported and then re-imported it (its meaning = its import) as other under the guise of the same product. But the process itself has transformed that product – for Hegel it is never simply a question of changing labels or names; the concept of the “body” that has passed through the moment of figuration is indelibly marked. Writing then could be seen as the duty paid on these products as they cross and recross the borders of the different levels of meaning; the tax on the syntax, the shifting semantics of exchange value as values (meanings) and variables (words, signs) are exchanged.

If sense-certainty cannot talk about particulars but must immediately enter into a discourse of universals, what do we make of the particulars of writing, the materiality of the inscriptions, the signifiers? I would argue that it *does* make a difference how and

where something is marked, whether in pencil or in ink or with a stick, whether on white paper or yellow paper or on sand. Blake and his interest in “minute particulars” provides an antithesis to the immediate universality of inscriptions – “Singular & Particular Detail is the Foundation of the Sublime”<sup>48</sup> – in that all knowledge, especially the artistic production of knowledge, comes from attention to and, crucially, *through* “minute particulars” as *ends* and as *means* in themselves that cannot be obliterated in the process of signification. This argument has to take into account whether the *means* of expression (the exact “execution” of the Idea) merely *affect* the ends of expression, or whether they truly *effect* these ends. In other words, are the particulars in themselves ineradicable or do they disappear once they have carried out their function of producing the *aftereffects* of meaning? The point is whether or not *how* an idea is expressed it is still important, or if the idea once expressed no longer needs the means of its expression, which means will have been dissolved, digested, assimilated.

## The Connectives

To bind and yet not to be bound to carry out what is stated either intentionally or in actuality; to implement a recursive strategy as an incursion into the master program in order to invent a subroutine that doubles back on the system and changes it; so, not to circumvent, nor really to invent but to use a product already manufactured by the system, to examine the function of metaphor as an integral part of the system, as another motor and motive for difference (mode of differentiation) which works against its own assimilation back into the same (identity), because what is re-absorbed will re-program that system, and thus that system will no longer be the same, or in control of the procedures which have been imprinted on it (written into it), imported into it and will effect changes in it by infecting it with a new language (metaphor) which *shifts* the balance of power between literal and figurative modes, reversing by troping (turning away) the linear program of the Understanding which functions by processing (getting rid of) the means toward producing ends. And, more importantly, the reversal of these modes does not then imply that the figurative is installed as “first” in a hierarchical order, rather the emphasis should be placed on the moment of transition, or “shift,” which *does* imply that this balance of power is precarious and eminently subject to reversibility. If the referential function is the “carrying-back” function, then it must work in tandem with the tropological function of language (its turning away). Thus, if it is in the deictic nature of language to point to itself, its own immanent tropological movement makes language also “turn away” from itself. I am thinking here of de Man’s description of the word as *vector*: “the word does not function as a sign or name, as was the case in the nominal definition, but as a vector, a directional motion that is manifest only as a turn, since the target toward which it turns remains unknown. In other words, the sign has become a trope, a substitutive relationship that has to posit a meaning whose existence cannot be verified, but that confers upon the sign an unavoidable signifying function” (*Aesthetic Ideology* 56)<sup>49</sup>. So, in lieu of taking aim on an unknown target, to seed dead ends directly into the system in order, by these means, to redirect its program toward other ends, not strictly toward

indeterminacy as a systemless system, but as a *modus operandi*, a way of thinking through the cracks, between the tines of each bifurcated opposition. Could metaphor be the means, the *carrier*, that produces fresh images, insights and linkages that transform the mode along the lines of different vectors or trajectories? Could one cut one's teeth on metaphors in order to undercut the overbite arching o'er the dialectical maw of Hegel's *Aufhebung*? Is metaphor the wild card in this game of theory, the aleatory mechanism, the *x*, the invariant structure that codes for difference, that allows for the repeated recurrence of the same as difference itself, the eternal variable of infinite variation? Are metaphors the means of meaning that enable us to think the "meaning of meaning," or are they the literal glut of the polyglot, the white noise of white mythology? Metaphors allow us to question the meaning of ends because as "figures" they shift between literal and figurative, denotative and connotative, proper and secondary meanings, and don't settle into simple causal relations; they allow us to question the meaning of the means, the meaning of themselves as means, and the meaning of what means *as* how it means.

## Breaking The Code

(*Langue*) is merely an index and as such stands in relation to the message (*parole*) as the dictionary to the poetic text, or potential meaning (held in reserve) to a concrete instantiation of it as such (i.e., as circulated in the act of production/expression). If it is in the nature of the indexical to point to itself, and in this pointing to mark the instance of the taking place of discourse (& its taking its place in discourse) and still to point beyond itself (by pointing or passing through itself), how could one point out the cause or the end of this circuitous circuit of meaning? If we agree that the object as pointed to, as point of reference (for various points of view), can vanish without a trace, then is reference superfluous? But a certain “pointing” remains in the straining of language toward what doesn’t quite pass through the restraining (order); its insistence upon marking its own point(s) of arrival and departure, secreting a code that remains resistant to the message. So even if the objects themselves vanish, aren’t there leftover words, temporary or transient transcendentals, and can’t they do more than simply state that this is the place where language occurs? If Hegel grants poetry the mode of lingering over particulars<sup>50</sup>, is it only a momentary reprieve (short shrift indeed) before they will inevitably be assimilated into the system of universals?

The sign itself is a shifter, a switching yard where values are exchanged (where values exchange values for other values like clothes; or exchange *values*, where “values” is a verb); “ex-changed,” as in previously owned, or changed back to what they were before this process even started; where values are variables, and metaphors too are shifters. Although metaphors need the pole of the literal to complete their transfer, the “appearance” of meaning cannot be attached discretely to either the literal or the figurative pole, but must be detached precisely in order to enter the shifting ground of “appearance” where the *real* exchange occurs. Thus, the place of “appearance” exists *as* the medium of the exchange and of the transference, the means of transit, the medium *of* the messages *qua* “the message” (language, as medium, is a virus, an “infection”); the animating force of the in-betweenness that forges (binds and fits into

forms) the signifiers and fires (kindles and lets go) the signifieds. The point is not to isolate the particulars previous to their consummation in the universal (fire), but to reparticularize the universal – substantiate, make into substances, and then de-reify and dismantle them – returning to them in order to get back at them with equal force, insinuate into their very foundation a subroutine of forgetfulness that attacks their approximation of total memory. The idea is to introduce an “infection” [*Ansteckung*] through redundancy (reiteration and repetition in language as written script) at the level of the signified. Thinking *is* what it *does* – it *means*. Knowledge is not a thing but a force<sup>51</sup>. To enter into that movement is to rub out (exterminate) material objects, erase their material inscriptions, so that the stubbly pink remainders of their erasure mark the place by presenting the traces of their disappearance. Then and only then (if and only if) can *Geist* commingle with “pure appearance” and get the mix in motion after the initial, almighty negation has vaporized the schematic categories of the Understanding. The pieces come back together as if in the slow motion reversal of time-lapse photography because all of this has already happened. And if the world is haunting its ghost, so too is the word haunting its reference.

The vapor trail – of the dissolving, disappearing object/word coming back to the word again as material entity existing on “this” piece of paper – the vapor trail of Appearance leads to the paper trail of the ‘This.’ And this means that the means end up showing themselves as the carriers<sup>52</sup> of meaning. And this end is what (it) means; ‘this,’ in the end, is what (‘this’) means.

One of the difficulties could be that Hegel begins by inverting the prescribed order – beginning with writing and progressing toward reading, a similar inversion would occur on the level of *telos*, beginning with the Deed and then the Intention, as if the ends could precede the means. The End must be immanent (already written) in the intention. The code must predate any messages. Maybe there is a link between his fear of writing and his preference for lecturing. Hegel doesn’t want to make the movement static by solidifying thought into a written language that would then stand for itself and by itself as skeletal print rather than active fluidity – he wants to think

the ink will never dry. He begins in “sense-certainty” with what it “means” to write, so that one must first grasp this problematic process even before opening up the question of reading and interpretation. By pointing to writing, Hegel directly (& indirectly) states that the writer’s meaning (intention) and the meaning of writing is primary, even if his intention ends up becoming the reverse of what he thinks he means. Therefore, the consideration of a correct interpretation is always secondary to an actual leap into the system of discourse in the first place. In other words, one must first know what it means to say anything before one is able to mean anything; one must know how to write before one is truly able to “read.”

For Hegel the senses (& bodies) are holes, porous orifices that let in as much as they let out. Whether regarded as theoretical or practical, they assimilate and excrete not only the excess but what the self is in-itself, as if the body could rid itself of its own corporeality (body) and become idealized (in the movement and moments of *becoming-idealized*), throwing off the mortal coils of its digestive apparatus through which it feeds on itself as a living organism, to enter the realm of “appearances” where transactions with the world can be completed, taking the outside in and giving the inside out, exchanging the body’s corporeality for the mind’s (the spirit’s) incorporeality (shedding its skin and its own signifier is ((was)) that skin) – thus the body becomes a sign in-itself and a shifter for-itself. *Just as* the sensuous particulars in works of art shed their materiality (their signifiers) and exchange them for the immateriality of the spiritual element (signifieds) through the fluctuating exchange rate of appearance; the exchange relates to the transfer of funds (from fundament to firmament, from excretory remnant to incremental permanence) in which medium metaphors also “appear” and go through a similar process of shifting between identities; between the literal (proper) bite and the figurative (invented) bark of their meaning, becoming ‘ensouled’ in the bargain (not bought and sold). One cannot ever prove that this transaction has occurred by referring to receipts and written records of it, because the very fact that the transaction (and one must believe this to be a real action which occurs “across, beyond, and through itself “–*trans*-) has occurred inevitably changes the natures of the particulars involved, which will have been

transformed 'beyond' recognition. The meeting that took place was not clandestine; it was the struggle for recognition, but that event is also forgotten and can only be re-collected in memory, *just as* the process of the slave/artist has worked upon its materials and transformed them into art, and *just as* the body's digestive system has assimilated and disfigured these materials beyond recognition according to the constructive instinct which produces excrement – Art, thou art translated. The mediums, the in-betweens = (1) Appearance (2) Language (3) Meaning. These are the milieu where particular elements can exchange identities, this is the element<sup>53</sup> (milieu) in which the elements (particulars) can shift between general and specific, universal and particular – it is art and/or aesthetic philosophy, when the holes of the senses (sensory) can be made whole and thus *make* sense (intelligibility). When we come back to the process which takes place at each stage of the dialectic in the *Phenomenology*, the passage through each shape of consciousness, we will have forgotten the previous struggle; the particulars will have changed, but the universals hold by definition. The only thing that hasn't changed is that everything has changed; or, the only thing that has changed is the nothing that has. "This" is it.



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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Henry James, *What Maisie Knew*. London: Penguin, 1985: 217.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel, qtd. in Werner Hamacher, *Pleroma*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998: 260. All subsequent citations to occur in the body of the text as (Hamacher).

<sup>3</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Tr. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977: ¶97. All subsequent citations from the *Phenomenology* will refer to this edition and occur in the body of the text preceded by “¶”.

<sup>4</sup> “Furthermore, every particular metaphor – if, as Hegel demands, it represents more than merely decorative ornament for the presentation of science – marks the fissure through which it is connected to the specific level to which it refers. Consequently, again, the metaphors of consuming, of sucking, of digesting, which structures the entire corpus of Hegel’s texts just as much as the metaphors of grasping or generating does, institutes a connection between the absolute and the form of nature as its self-alienation” (Hamacher 234-5).

<sup>5</sup> “The thing (the referent) is relieved (*reliev[e], aufgehobene*) in the sign: raised, elevated, spiritualized, magnified, embalmed, interiorized, idealized, named since the name accomplishes the sign. In the sign, the (exterior) signifier is relieved by signification, by the (ideal {ideel}) signified sense, *Bedeutung*, the concept. The concept relieves the sign that relieves the thing. The signified relieves the signifier that relieves the referent” (*Glas* 8).

<sup>6</sup> De Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality” in *Blindness and Insight*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1973: 211.

<sup>7</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Trans. J. B. Baillie. New York: Harper, 1967: 149.

<sup>8</sup> One reading which nuances this passage in a new light is Andrzej Warminski’s insight that this example rests on a distinction between the act of looking as opposed to the act of reading, which elides the notion of materiality: “And the necessary exclusion of this conditioning materiality from Hegel’s construction and critique of sense-certainty’s phenomenality is readable in the text’s suppression of the act of reading: when we come back to sense-certainty now, this noon, with the piece of paper on which we had written “Now is the night,” we do not *read* it, says the text, but rather look at it (*sehen. . . wieder an*) – when it is only *reading* the inscription that will allow us to compare night and day” (Warminski 188).

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<sup>9</sup> This idea comes from Judith Butler's reading of Hegel's rhetorical strategies in *Subjects of Desire*: "The grammatical subject is, thus, never self-identical, but is always and only itself in its reflexive movement; the sentence does not consist of grammatical elements that reflect or otherwise indicate corresponding ontological entities. The sentence calls to be taken as a whole, and in turn indicates the wider textual context in which it itself is to be taken. But the way in which this context is "indicated" is less referential than rhetorical; Hegel's sentences enact the meanings that they convey; indeed they show that what "is" only is to the extent that it is enacted" (Butler 18).

<sup>10</sup> "Language catches consciousness in its power to create double meaning willfully. The sense of this fundamental pun cannot be translated directly into English because it depends upon the fact that to be of the opinion of, to mean in the sense of having an opinion, *to opine – meinen* in German – is close to the possessive adjective and possessive pronoun of the first person in German – *mein*. *Das Meinen* is *mein*" (Verene, *Hegel's Recollection*, p.30).

<sup>11</sup> "The term 'deixis' (which comes from a Greek word meaning "pointing" or indicating") is now used in linguistics to refer to the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns, of tense and of a variety of other grammatical and lexical features which relate utterances to the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the act of utterance" (Lyons, *Semantics*, p.636).

<sup>12</sup> cf. Mark C. E. Peterson. "Animals Eating Empiricists: Assimilation and Subjectivity in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature". *The Owl of Minerva*, 23, 1 (Fall 1991): 49-62.

<sup>13</sup> I can't help hearing an echo of the last lines of Wallace Stevens's poem "The Snow Man": "And, nothing himself, beholds / Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is." The definite article which precedes the second *nothing* is what makes it determinate; it determines it.

<sup>14</sup> These "scraps of paper" below are most certainly not the same as the "bit of paper" just mentioned, occurring as they do in a paragraph of the Preface which critiques philosophies of pure formalism, but . . . it is another "bit of paper" which is, nonetheless, admissible evidence proving the fact that these bits of paper are nothing if not "material" to Hegel's argument: "What results from this method of labeling all that is in heaven and earth with the few determinations of the general schema, and pigeon-holing everything in this way, is nothing less than "a report clear as noonday" on the universe as organism, viz. a synoptic table like a skeleton with scraps of paper stuck all over it, or like the rows of closed and labeled boxes in a grocer's stall. It is as easy to read off as either of these; and just as all the flesh and blood has been stripped from this skeleton, and the no longer living 'essence' [*Sache*] has been packed away in the boxes, so in the report the living essence of the matter [*Wesen der Sache*] has been stripped away or boxed up dead" (§ 51).

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<sup>15</sup> I find the majority of de Man's writing impeccable. His focus on the moments in Hegel's writing where the phenomenal determination vanishes as it is sublated in the generality of cognition is particularly astute: "The point is that this certainty vanishes as soon as any phenomenal determination, temporal or other, is involved, as it always has to be. Consciousness ("here" and "now") is not "false and misleading" because of language; consciousness is language, and nothing else, because it is false and misleading. And it is false and misleading because it determines by showing (*montrer* or *démontrer*, *deiknumi*) or pointing (*Zeigen* or *Aufzeigen*), that is to say in a manner that implies the generality of the phenomenon as cognition (which makes the pointing possible) in the loss of the immediacy and the particularity of sensory perception (which makes the pointing necessary): consciousness is linguistic because it is deictic" (de Man "Hypo" 41-2). I only wish to point out the interpretive shading that is taking place. Either one decides to dwell on "the loss of the immediacy of sense perception" (presence), or one focuses on the capacity of language to express (point to) what is not there (absence). I am choosing to focus on the movement between the loss of particular immediacy and the gain of cognitive universality. This idea of "in-betweenness" takes on a special relevance in my discussion of Hegel's *Aesthetics* below.

<sup>16</sup> "Modern linguistics classifies pronouns as indicators of the utterance (Benveniste) or shifters (Jakobson). . . . In fact, it is impossible to find an objective referent for this class of terms, which means that they can be defined only by means of reference to the instance of discourse that contains them." Agamben, *Language and Death*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1991: 23. cf. Lyons: "Anaphor presupposes that the referent should already have its place in the universe-of-discourse. Deixis does not; indeed deixis is one of the principal means open to us of putting entities into the universe-of-discourse so that we can refer to them subsequently" (Lyons 673).

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*. Tr. J. Sibree. Buffalo: Prometheus, 1991: 392-3.

<sup>18</sup> "Force is dynamic and functional as opposed to static and substantive – the activities making up the language-object that is force are functions and relations" (Sussman 35).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hyppolite 26. Hyppolite is writing specifically about poetry which has "relieved" itself of the greatest amount of its sensuousness. Poetry comes closest to the Idea, but it is still not sense in-itself and for-itself: "No art, except poetry, *signifies itself* by doubling itself" (ibid.). One could perhaps see the defining gesture of poetry in this penultimate, orphic moment of turning back on itself. Instead of escaping from signification or retreating to the sensuous, poetry points to itself (*'signifies itself'*) and suggests the sense of its own turning (away) from itself as making sense.

<sup>20</sup> "*Fassen* is originally to 'grasp', and hence to 'apprehend'. *Begreifen* is similar" (*Aesthetics* 404). See

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also footnote on p.306: “*Begreifen* is literally to touch or handle; figuratively, to comprehend or understand.”

<sup>21</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*. Tr. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), §363. Henceforth cited parenthetically as PON followed by section §.

<sup>22</sup> “One must of course note that the eighteenth- and nineteenth century uses of *infection* are broader than our own; we will see Hegel appealing to the notion of *infection*, for example, in his account of vegetable assimilation, where it means as much as the intussusception or intake of liquids. . . . Nevertheless, the proximity to pathology in the word *infection* remains a significant overtone or undercurrent throughout the vocabulary of reproduction through *contagium*. Infection is simultaneously assimilatory, sexual, pathological, and, one must say, if only in memory of Novalis’ pharmaceutical view of the soul and Goethe’s *geistige Anastomose*, eminently ‘spiritual.’ ” I am merely adding “linguistic” to this catalogue of infection’s attributes. See David Farrell Krell, *Contagion: Sexuality, Disease, and Death in German Idealism and Romanticism*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998), 92. Henceforth cited in the body of the text as Krell.

<sup>23</sup> Although I will not explicitly analyze the following passages, the notion of language as infection (as a virus – where the ‘I’ veers into “Us”) has implicitly guided my thinking on this subject. The first citation is from the chapter entitled “Culture and its realm of actuality:” “Language, however, contains it in its purity, it alone expresses the ‘I’, the ‘I’ itself. This *real* existence of the ‘I’ is, *qua* real existence, an objectivity which has in it the true nature of the ‘I’. The ‘I’ is this particular ‘I’ – but equally the *universal* ‘I’; its manifesting is also at once the externalization and vanishing of *this* particular ‘I’, and as a result the ‘I’ remains in its universality. The ‘I’ that utters itself is *heard* or *perceived*; it is an infection [*Ansteckung*] in which it has immediately passed into unity with those for whom it is a real existence, and is a universal self-consciousness. That it is *perceived* or *heard* means that its *real existence dies away*; this its otherness has been taken back into itself; and its real existence is just this: that as a self-conscious Now, as a real existence, it is *not* a real existence, and through this vanishing it *is* a real existence. This vanishing is thus itself at once its abiding; it is its own knowing of itself, and its knowing itself as a self that has passed over into another self that has been perceived and is universal” (Phenomenology ¶508). The second major instance of “infection” occurs in the chapter “The abstract work of art:” The work of art therefore demands another element of its existence, the god another mode of coming forth than this, in which, out of the depths of his creative night, he descends into the opposite, into externality, into the determinations of the Thing which lacks self consciousness. This higher element is Language – an outer reality that is immediately self-conscious existence. Just as *individual* self-consciousness is *immediately* present in language, so it is also immediately present as a *universal* infection [*Ansteckung*]; the complete separation into independent selves is at the same time the fluidity and universally communicated unity of the many

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selves; language is the soul existing as soul” (Phenomenology ¶ 710). Just as disease is communicable, so is language contagious.

<sup>24</sup> Krell helps clear up the distinction between these words: “No doubt Hegel means by *infection* what Goethe meant by *intussusception*. . . . *Infection* as we know it is what we heard Schelling call *Ansteckung*, [infection and toxification]catching a cold, for example, by being invaded and contaminated by a bacillus or virus. . . . Yet the infectious sucking of plants is not as innocent as it may seem. For all assimilation in vegetable and animal organization is, as Novalis, Schelling, and Hegel all observe, a kind of poisoning. Hegel declares *Infektion* ‘the infinite power of life’” (Krell 147).

<sup>25</sup> “Production *and* intuition, the concept of the sign thus will be the place where all contradictory characteristics intersect. All oppositions are reassembled, summarized and swallowed up within it. All contradictions seem to be resolved in it, but simultaneously that which is announced beneath the same sign seems irreducible or inaccessible to any formal opposition of concepts; being *both* interior and exterior, spontaneous and receptive, intelligible and sensible, the same and other, etc., the sign is none of these, *neither* this *nor* that, etc. Is this contradiction dialecticity itself? Is dialectics the resolution of the sign in the horizon of the nonsign, of presence beyond the sign?” (Derrida, “Pit” 79-80).

<sup>26</sup> “C/M) Any linguistic code contains a particular class of grammatical units which Jespersen (1922b) labeled SHIFTERS: the general meaning of a shifter cannot be defined without a reference to the message.” (Jakobson 388). See also P.388: According to Peirce, a symbol . . . is associated with the represented object by a conventional rule, while an index is in existential relation with the object it represents. Shifters combine both functions and belong therefore to the class of INDEXICAL SYMBOLS” (ibid. 388).

<sup>27</sup> “As a striking example Burks cites the personal pronoun. *I* means the person uttering *I*. Thus on the one hand, the sign *I* cannot represent its object without being associated with the latter “by a conventional rule,” and in different codes the same meaning is assigned to different sequences such as *I*, *ego*, *ich*, and *ja*: consequently *I* is a symbol. On the other hand, the sign *I* cannot represent its object without “being in existential relation” with its object: the word *I* designating the utterer is existentially related to his utterance and hence functions as an index.” (Jakobson 388).

<sup>28</sup> “Among these double constructs we would have to number Appearance, whose translation of the movements of reflection into a hierarchical configuration is also a translation of formal structures into historical and teleological progressions. The notion (*Begriff*) and sublation (*Aufhebung*) also fall into this intermediary category, playing both structural and metaphysical roles. The *Begriff* is both a structural and a metaphysical horizon, while the *Aufhebung* translates the mechanics of negation into the teleology of

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history” (Sussman 50).

<sup>29</sup> Novalis, *Novalis: Philosophical Writings*. Albany: SUNY UP, 1997: 59.

<sup>30</sup> Maurice Blanchot, “Fragmentaire,” qtd. in Warminski, *Readings in Interpretation*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987: 183.

<sup>31</sup> Vico, *The New Science*. Tr. Bergin and Fisch. Ithaca: Cornell UP: 405: “So that, as rational metaphysics teaches that man becomes all things by understanding them (homo intelligendo fit omnia), this imaginative metaphysics shows that man becomes all things by *not* understanding them (homo non intelligendo fit omnia); and perhaps the latter proposition is truer than the former, for when man understands he extends his mind and takes in all things, but when he does not understand he makes the things out of himself and becomes them by transforming himself into them.”

<sup>32</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind* (London: Oxford UP, 1971), 147.

<sup>33</sup> Hegel, “The Spirit of Christianity,” in *Early Theological Writings*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1948: 250-1.

<sup>34</sup> Though this might seem too obvious, it should be noted that the text must exist in order for a person to be able to read and reread it (not just hear it as at a lecture). Note: (1) “read away,” “read off,” “read up” (or “eaten up”—“*lesen* vs. *essen*”) as opposed to “read over and over;” (2) The pun on “meinen” recalling the same vocabulary from the chapter on sense-certainty; (3) The “we” comes in to take the place of the subject as writer, whereas in the bulk of the paragraph the subject position is that of the reader; (4) Here, Hegel tacitly acknowledges the difficulty of his own style of philosophical writing.

<sup>35</sup> “The dialectic of language, of the tongue {langue}, is dialectophagy” (Derrida, *Glas* 9).

<sup>36</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1989: 207.

<sup>37</sup> cf. Hamacher, *Pleroma*, p.231.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Hegel’s interest in Sense (*Sinn*) juxtaposed with a commentary of Derrida’s:

‘Sense’ is this wonderful world which is used in two opposite meanings. On the one hand it means the organ of immediate apprehension, but on the other hand we mean by it the sense, the significance, the thought, the universal underlying the thing. And so sense is connected on the one hand with the immediate external aspect of existence, and on the other hand with its inner essence. Now a *sensuous* consideration



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does not cut the two sides apart at all; in one direction it contains the opposite one too, and in sensuous immediate perception it at the same time apprehends the essence and the Concept” (*Aesthetics* 128-9).

Already the opposition of meaning (the atemporal or nonspatial signified as meaning, as content) to its metaphorical signifier (an opposition that plays itself out within the element of meaning to which metaphor belongs in its entirety) is sedimented – another metaphor – by the entire history of philosophy. Without taking into account that the separation between sense (the signified) and the senses (sensory signifier) is enunciated by means of the same root (*sensus, Sinn*). One might admire, as does Hegel, the generousness of this stock, and interpret its secret *releve* speculatively, dialectically; but before utilizing a dialectical concept of metaphor, one must examine the double turn which opened metaphor and dialectics, permitting to be called *sense* that which should be foreign to the sense” (“White Mythology” 228).

Derrida’s distinctions here are based on his assumption that Hegel considers “meaning” as a “content” and as a single, teleologically determined “signified.” My argument is that this perspective is problematic in that “meaning” can be characterized as that which shuttles or shifts between “signifiers” and “signifieds”; i.e. as the mode and medium of transference rather than fixed or final destination. “Meaning” like metaphor is two-sided: it has a sensuous side which connects it to the signifier and an intelligible side which connects it to the signified. In effect, Derrida is “cut[ting] the two sides apart.” Thus, we have the notion of a play of “meanings” taking place between signifiers and signifieds, rather than just a play of “signifiers” in relation to other signifiers.

<sup>39</sup> “Hegel’s interest is in the *Begriff*, but the road past ordinary logical meanings to this higher sense of the concrete concept is the metaphor which always points to what is not present in the logical sense of things” (Verene 24).

<sup>40</sup> *Aesthetics*, p.39: “In this way the sensuous aspect of art is *spiritualized*, since the spirit appears in art as made *sensuous*.”[via footnote p.92, Derrida, “Pit”: “in art the sensuous is spiritualized (*vergeistigt*) and the spirit “sensualized (*versinnlicht*)”].

<sup>41</sup> cf. *Philosophy of Mind* §462, Zusatz: “Words thus attain an existence animated by thought. This existence is absolutely necessary to our thoughts. We only know our thoughts, only have definite, actual thoughts, when we give them the form of objectivity, of a being distinct from our inwardness, and therefore the shape of externality, and of an externality, too, that at the same time bears the stamp of the highest inwardness. The articulated sound, the *word*, is alone such an inward externality. To want to think without words as Mesmer once attempted is, therefore, a manifestly irrational procedure which, as Mesmer himself admitted, almost drove him insane. But it is also ridiculous to regard as a defect of thought and a misfortune, the fact that it is tied to a word; for although the common opinion is that it is just the *ineffable*

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that is the most excellent, yet this opinion, cherished by conceit, is unfounded, since what is ineffable is, in truth, only something obscure, fermenting, something which gains clarity only when it is able to put itself into words. Accordingly, the word gives to thoughts their highest and truest existence.”

<sup>42</sup> Preface #53 (p.32): “The Understanding, in its pigeon-holing process, keeps the necessity and Notion of the content itself – all that constitutes the concreteness, the actuality, the living movement of the reality which it arranges. Or rather, it does not keep this to itself, since it does not recognize it; for, if it had this insight, it would surely give some sign of it. It does not even recognize the need for it, else it would drop its schematizing, or at least realize that it can never hope to learn more in this fashion than one can learn from a table of contents. A table of contents is all that it offers, the content itself it does not offer at all.”

<sup>43</sup> Derrida, “Force and Signification” in *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978: 27.

<sup>44</sup> “Epilogue,” Warminski, 187-8: “But, of course, this piece of paper on which I write and read this is not the particular piece of paper sewn into my copy of the *Phenomenology* and that I can see, touch, smell, and taste. It is also not the particular piece of manuscript paper preserved in the Hegel archives in Bochum on which Hegel wrote “Now is the day” and “Now is the night” and compared them. To identify it with *that* piece of paper would be to fall back into the position of sense-certainty: the Now of reading and of writing is not one we can see; it can only be written and read. This does not mean that we are talking about an ideal, universal piece of paper, as it were. No, this piece of paper on which I write “Now is the day” and “Now is the night” and read them is the material condition of possibility of the opposition between the particular and universal. It is neither the particular, immediate, phenomenal piece of paper available to the senses nor the universal, mediated, intelligible piece of paper available to the mind, but other: a piece of paper that exists in the here and now of writing and reading. It is a piece of paper conditioned by the materiality (as distinguished from phenomenality) of reading and writing.”

<sup>45</sup> This passage from Hegel’s *Aesthetics* could be fruitfully juxtaposed with the following citation from Derrida’s essay on Hegel’s semiology. I realize that Derrida is referring specifically to certain passages in the Encyclopedia in his discussion of Hegel and the sign. But he extrapolates from this point to comment on Hegel’s entire system and certainly if one is able to criticize Hegel when the parts of his system don’t appear to fit together nicely, then one should also be allowed to use overlooked and underused passages in order to support an argument which attempts to show the amazing interconnectedness of the various parts. Here, I juxtapose these quotations in order to show my opposition to Derrida’s determined effort to focus on what he perceives to be Hegel’s “teleological” imperative: “Since the sign is the negativity which “relifts” (releve) sensory intuition into the ideality of language, it must be hewn from a sensory matter which in some way is given to it, offering a predisposed nonresistance to the work of idealization. The idealizing and relevant negativity which works within the sign has always already begun to disturb sensory

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matter in general. . . . *Among other consequences it follows from this that one may consider the concept of physical ideality as a kind of teleological anticipation*, or inversely that one may recognize in the concept and value of ideality in general a “metaphor.” Such a displacement – which would summarize the entire itinerary of metaphysics – also would repeat the “history” of a certain organization of functions that philosophy has called “meaning.” The equivalence of these two readings is also an effect of the Hegelian circle: the sensualist or materialist reduction and the idealist teleology following, in opposite directions, the same line. The line that we have just named, as provisional convenience, ‘metaphor’”(Derrida, “Pit” 90).

<sup>46</sup> “Without this overflow of language, of the tongue that swallows and eats itself, that is silent, tongue-tied, or dies, that also vomits a natural remain(s) – its own – it can neither assimilate nor make equal to the universal power of the concept, language would not be language – a living language hears, understands itself. Language would not be what it is in (it)self, conformably to its concept (*Begriff*), to what it conceives itself, grasps, takes possession of itself, catches and comprehends itself, elevates itself, leaves with one wing stroke {d’un coup d’aile} the natal ground and carries off its natural body” (*Glas* 9).

<sup>47</sup> For a comprehensive reading across Hegel’s writings which focuses on the traces of the rhetorical tradition evident in his discourse, including the notion of *reading as digestion*, see John H. Smith, *The Spirit and the Letter: Traces of Rhetoric in Hegel’s Philosophy of Bildung*. And the following succinct summary of that praxis: “the individual must work through the preformed content of the past by “consuming,” “digesting,” and “reinterpreting” the fullness of already existing formulations. More precisely, the very images of digestion and economic appropriation themselves refer back to a tradition of rhetorico-hermeneutic pedagogical praxis according to which the student, after having mastered the *praecepta* of the *ars rhetorica*, “consumes” the great texts of the pasts by *lectio*, “digests” them by *selectio* and *imitatio*, and transforms them creatively by a program leading from literal translation (*interpretatio*) to independent production (*aemulatio*)” (Smith 20).

<sup>48</sup> Blake, “Annotations to Reynolds” in *The Complete Poetry and Prose*. New York: Doubleday, 1988: 647.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Warminski’s commentary: “That the sign here is “a vector” or a “directional motion” that can manifest itself only as a turn or a trope means, in short, that the determination of its referential, carrying-back, function necessarily takes place as a trope, and a phenomenizing trope at that. In other words, it has acquired, or has “conferred” upon it, a “signifying function,” as de Man says, which function has to be understood very precisely in terms of the Saussurian distinction between the “signification” and the “value” of a given utterance. (Signification always takes back to the context, the referential context, of an utterance, . . . whereas value is purely intrasemiotic)” (*Aesthetic Ideology* 25-6).

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<sup>50</sup> “The first point that arises here is grounded in the fact that art in general loves to tarry with the particular. The Understanding hurries, because it forthwith summarizes variety in a *theory* drawn from generalizations and so evaporates it into reflections and categories, or else it subordinates it to specific *practical* ends, so that the particular and the individual are not given their full rights. To cling to what, given this position, can only have a relative value, seems therefore to the Understanding to be useless and wearisome. But, in a poetic treatment and formulation, every part, every feature must be interesting and living on its own account, and therefore poetry takes pleasure in lingering over what is individual, describes it with love, and treats it as a whole in itself. . . . The advance of poetry is therefore slower than the judgments and syllogisms of the Understanding to which what is important, whether in its theorizing or in its practical aims and intentions, is above all the end result, while it is less concerned with the long route by which it reaches it” (*Aesthetics* 981).cf. Preface ¶32, and the understanding’s ability to look death in the face – “tarrying with the negative.”

<sup>51</sup> “To comprehend the structure of a becoming, the form of a force, is to lose meaning by finding it. . . . To say that force is the origin of the phenomenon is to say nothing. By its very articulation force becomes a phenomenon. Hegel demonstrated convincingly that the explication of phenomenon by a force is a tautology. But in saying this, one must refer to language’s peculiar inability to emerge from itself in order to articulate its origin, and not to the thought of force. Force is the other of language without which language would not be what it is (“Force and Signification,” 26-7).

<sup>52</sup> Carriers in the sense that metaphors that “carry over,” and as in these particular definitions of “carrier,” e.g.: **5 a** : a bearer and transmitter of a causative agent of an infectious disease; esp. : one who carries the causative agent of a disease systemically but is immune to it **b**: an individual (as one heterozygous for a recessive) having a specific gene that is not expressed in its phenotype **6 b** : a substance (as a catalyst) by whose agency some element or group is transferred from one compound to another **7 a**: an electromagnetic wave or alternating current whose modulations are used as signals in radio, telephonic, or telegraphic transmission.”

<sup>53</sup> “We are taking the word, element, in the Hegelian sense of medium (*milieu*), as when we say the “element of water.” When saying “the self,” we want to note, like Hegel, the absolutely reflective character of being itself and of the “I” (Hyppolite 11, footnote #2).